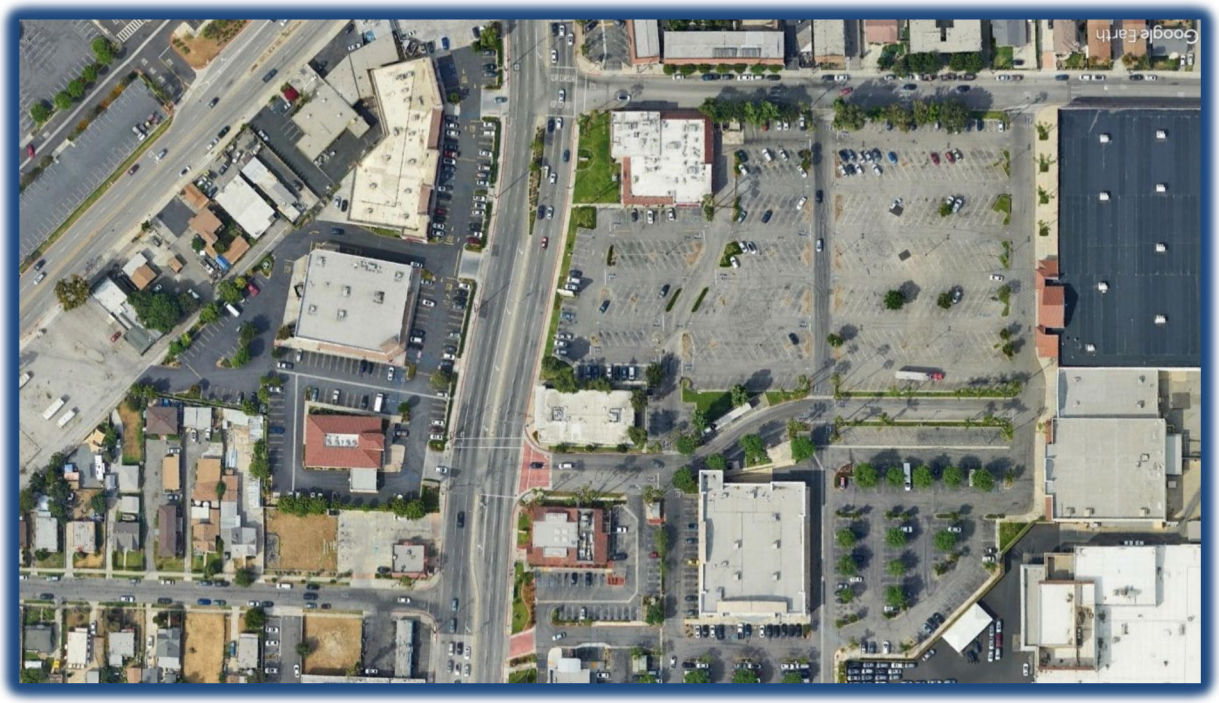


# 3600 Peck Road

## Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration

*prepared by*

**City of El Monte**
11333 Valley Boulevard
El Monte, California 91734
Contact: Sandra Elias

*prepared with the assistance of*

**Rincon Consultants, Inc.**
250 East 1st Street, Suite 1400
Los Angeles, California 90012

**April 2025**

RINCON CONSULTANTS, INC. SINCE 1994

# Table of Contents

## Tables



## Figures

## Appendices

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# Initial Study

## 1. Project Title

3600 Peck Road Project

## 2. Lead Agency Name and Address

City of El Monte, Planning Division
11333 Valley Boulevard
El Monte, California 91731

## 3. Contact Person and Phone Number

Sandra Elias, City Planner
selias@elmonteca.gov
(626) 258-8621

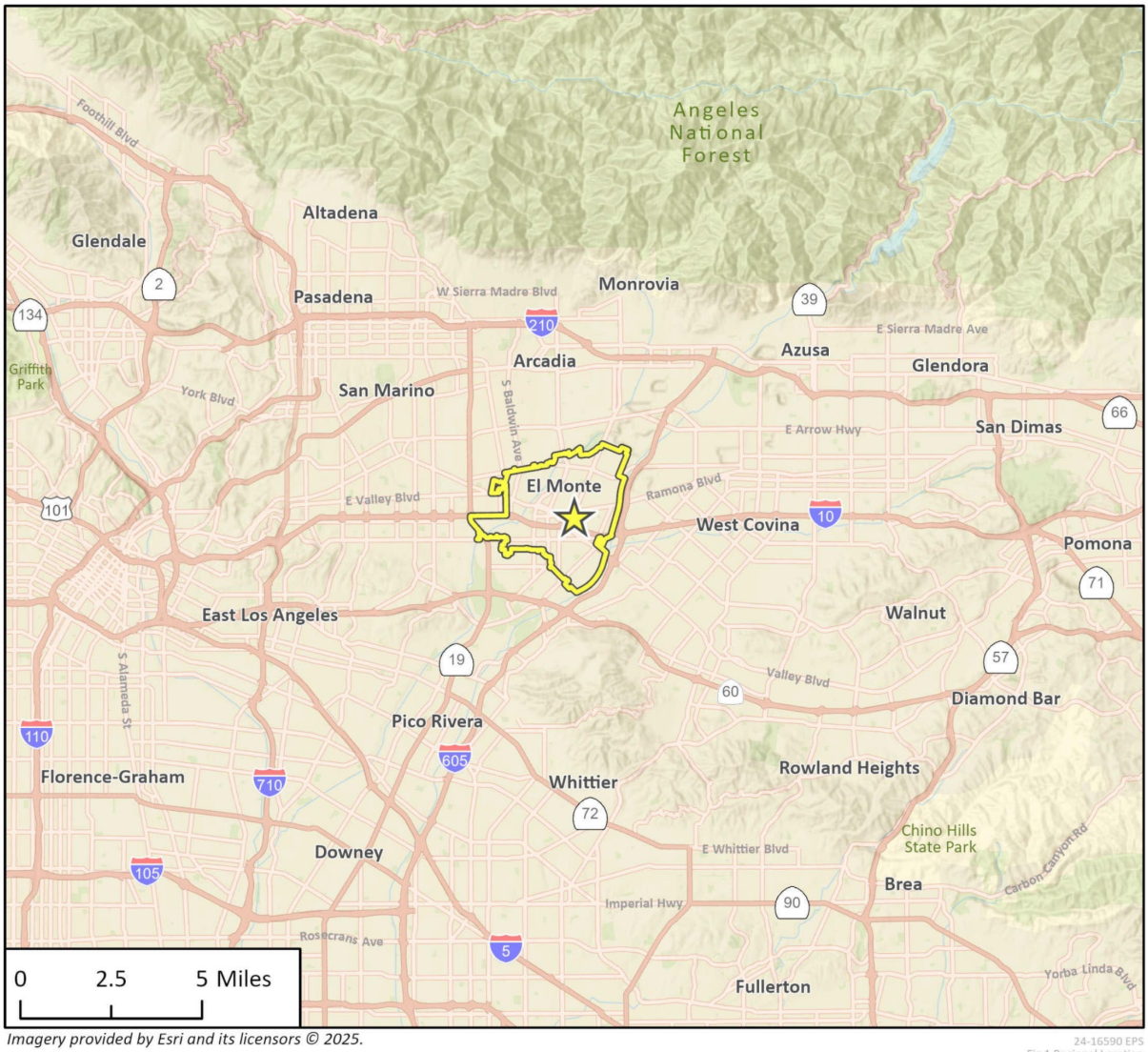
## 4. Project Sponsor's Name and Address

Kane Sawtelle
Merlone Geier Partners
6180 Laurel Canyon Boulevard # 170
North Hollywood, California 91606

## 5. Project Location

The 7.51-acre project site is located along the 3600 block of Peck Road south of the Sitka Street intersection in the City of El Monte, California. The project site is comprised of the following three Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs): 8567-015-055, -057, and -059. The project sponsors are seeking a Vesting Tentative Tract Map amendment to subdivide the site into four lots. Regional access to the site is provided by Interstate 10 (I-10). Figure 1 shows the location of the project site in the region and Figure 2 shows the location of the project site in its neighborhood context.

## Figure 1 Regional Project Location

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24-16590 EPS
Fig 1 Regional Location

Project Location

El Monte City Boundary

N

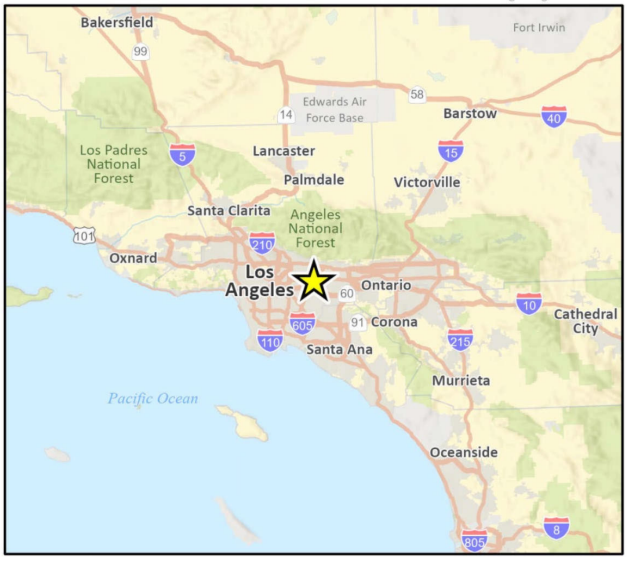

**Figure 2 Project Site Location**


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24-16590 EPS
Fig 2 Project Location

# 6. General Plan Designation

The project site has a General Plan land use designation of Regional Commercial which allows for large-scale commercial uses that serve the community and region. Allowed uses include auto dealerships, department stores, warehouse retailers, hotels, theaters, and food and beverage establishments. The allowed non-residential floor area ratio (FAR) for the Regional Commercial land use designation is 1.0.

# 7. Zoning

The project site has a zoning designation of C-3 General Commercial, which allows for a wide range of retail sales, business, professional, and personal service uses.

# 8. Existing Site Conditions

The 7.51-acre project site is currently developed with commercial land uses. Six existing commercial buildings totaling 52,268 sf exist on the project site, along with 429 paved parking spots, internal roadways and sidewalks, and ornamental landscaping. The six existing commercial buildings include an approximately 20,388 sf Planet Fitness, 2,400 sf Yoshinoya restaurant, 4,633 sf Wendy's and Jamba Juice, 6,000 sf vacant Denny's restaurant, 11,047 sf vacant China Buffet restaurant, and 7,800 sf Big 5 Sporting Goods. The project site is relatively flat with elevation ranging between 285 and 295 feet above mean sea level and gently slopes to the southwest.

# 9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting

The surrounding land uses features a mix of medium- and low-density residential, as well as general commercial. The project site is bordered by Sitka Street to the north, a Target and Lexus dealership to the east, Stewart Street to the south, and Peck Road to the west.

# 10. Description of Project

The proposed project would involve the redevelopment of three of the six existing commercial buildings on the project site. The redevelopment would replace the existing vacant Denny's (6,000 sf), Big 5 Sporting Goods (7,800 sf), and vacant China Buffet (11,047 sf) with a Starbucks (2,400 sf), In-N-Out (3,886 sf), and Raising Cane's (3,612 sf) coffee/fast-food restaurants that would each provide a drive-thru facility. The project would reduce the total size of the commercial center from 52,268 sf to 37,319 sf. Table 1 outlines the existing and proposed development summary and Figure 3 shows the proposed site plans.

**Table 1 Project Summary**

| Existing Building | Existing Square Footage | Proposed Building | Proposed Square Footage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Project Site Buildings to be Redeveloped** | | | |
| Vacant Denny's | 6,000 | Starbucks | 2,400 |
| Big 5 Sporting Goods | 7,800 | In-N-Out | 3,886 |
| Vacant China Buffet | 11,047 | Raising Cane's | 3,612 |
| **Project Site Buildings to Remain** | | | |
| Planet Fitness | 20,388 | No change | - |
| Yoshinoya Restaurant | 2,400 | No change | - |
| Wendy's and Jamba Juice | 4,633 | No change | - |
| **Total Existing sf** | **52,268** | **Total Proposed** | **37,319** |

Each of the proposed restaurant buildings would include a drive-thru, paved parking spaces, and landscaping. The proposed Starbucks building would involve a 2,400-sf building, outdoor seating and bike racks, 19 parking stalls, and a trash enclosure. The proposed In-N-Out building would involve a 3,886-sf building, two outdoor seating areas, bike racks and lockers, 62 parking stalls, and a trash enclosure. The proposed Raising Cane's building would involve a 3,612-sf building, two outdoor seating areas, bike racks and lockers, 37 parking stalls, and a trash enclosure.

**Figure 3 Proposed Site Plan**

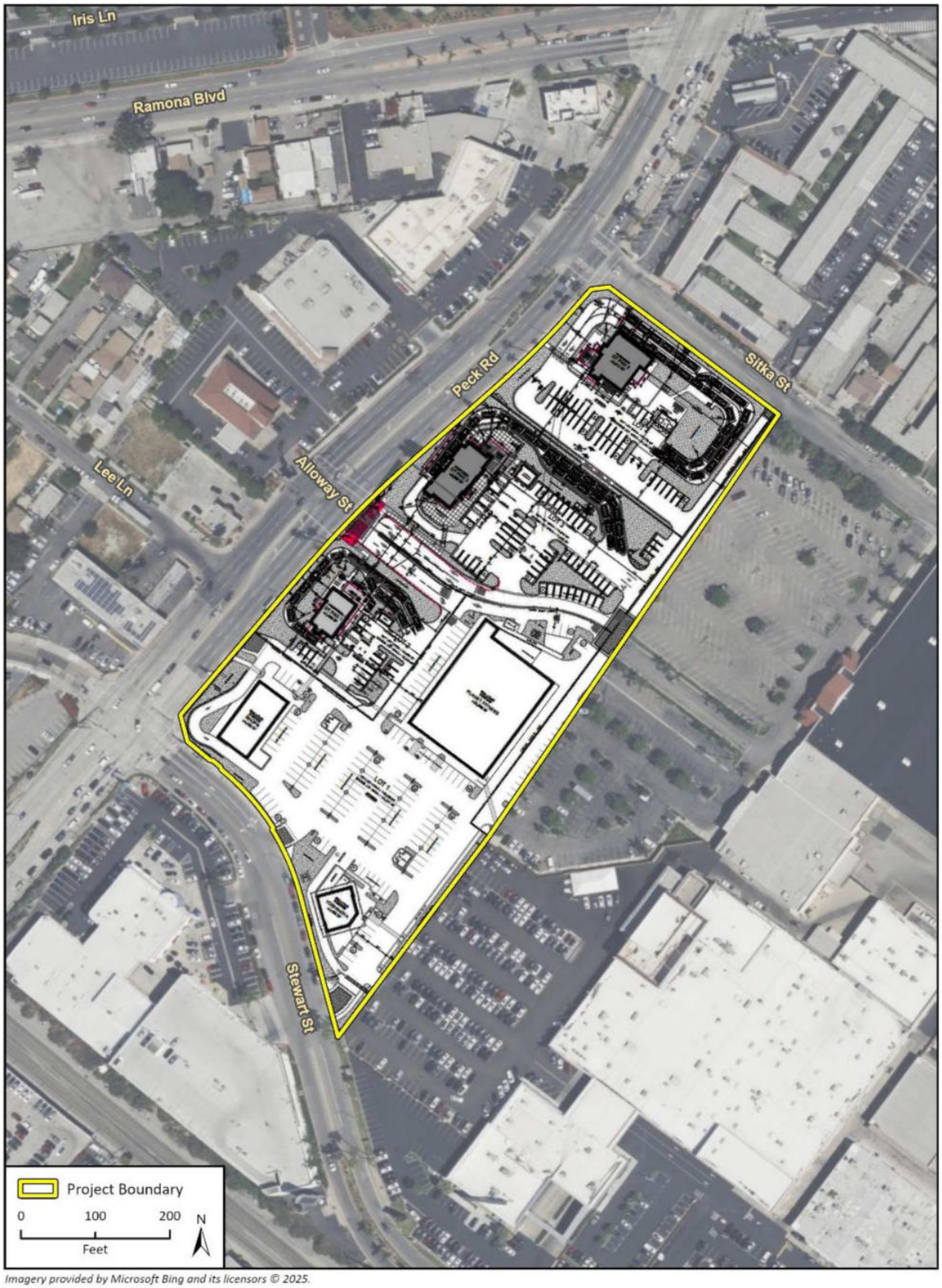


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**Figure 4 Proposed Starbucks Elevations**

**Figure 5 Proposed In-N-Out Elevations**

**Figure 6 Proposed Raising Cane's Elevations**

### *Construction*

Construction activities for the proposed project is estimated to start in April 2025 and end in February 2027. Construction of the project would include demolition, site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating. Because the proposed project consists of a redevelopment, it would involve 4,565 cubic yards (cy) of cut soil from building foundation demolition and removal and 293 cy of imported soil.

Construction work would occur Monday through Friday, from approximately 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Weekend construction is not anticipated. Construction equipment would be staged on site, and construction workers would also park on site.

## 11. Required Approvals

The proposed project would require approval of the following entitlements by the City of El Monte:

- Approval of Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. SUB 2-2024 to subdivide one legal parcel into 4 commercial lots;
- Design Review (DR) No. 4-2024 to review the site configuration, architectural design, and landscaping for the reconstruction of the three drive-through restaurants; and
- Conditional Use Permit Nos. 6-2024, 7-2024, and 8-2024 for the construction of the new In-N-Out drive-thru, Raising Canes drive-thru, and Starbucks drive-thru.
- Minor Variance (MV) No. 8-2025, 9-2025, and 10-2025 to request a deviation from the required loading space.

## 12. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required

The lead agency is the City of El Monte under the California Environmental Quality Act with responsibility for approving the project.

## 13. Have California Native American Tribes Traditionally and Culturally Affiliated with the Project Area Requested Consultation Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1?

The City of El Monte sent AB 52 consultation letters for the project on January 10, 2025. Consultation letters were submitted to the following eight (8) tribes:

- Cahuilla Band of Indians
- Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation
- Gabrieleño/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrielino/Tongva Nation
- Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe
- Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians

The City received responses from two (2) tribes:

- Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation responded on January 16, 2025 to initiate consultation
- Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council responded on January 29, 2025 to initiate consultation

For further discussion of tribal cultural resources in this IS-MND refer to Section 18*, Tribal Cultural Resources*, and Section 5, *Cultural Resources*. The City of El Monte will continue to comply with all applicable tribal consultation requirements of Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1 and all other applicable regulations as the proposed project progresses through the required review and approval process.

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# Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

This project would potentially affect the environmental factors checked below, involving at least one impact that is "Potentially Significant" or "Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Aesthetics | ☐ | Agriculture and Forestry Resources | ☐ | Air Quality |
| ☐ | Biological Resources | ■ | Cultural Resources | ☐ | Energy |
| ■ | Geology and Soils | ☐ | Greenhouse Gas Emissions | ■ | Hazards and Hazardous Materials |
| ☐ | Hydrology and Water Quality | ☐ | Land Use and Planning | ☐ | Mineral Resources |
| ☐ | Noise | ☐ | Population and Housing | ☐ | Public Services |
| ☐ | Recreation | ☐ | Transportation | ■ | Tribal Cultural Resources |
| ☐ | Utilities and Service Systems | ☐ | Wildfire | ■ | Mandatory Findings of Significance |

# Determination

Based on 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 to 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 "less than significant with mitigation incorporated" 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: 4/18/25 |
| Printed Name: Sandra Elias | Title: 4/18/25 |

# Environmental Checklist

## 1 Aesthetics

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, 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. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |
| d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

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

A scenic vista is defined as a public viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the benefit of the public. The City of El Monte lies within a desert valley floor, with the San Gabriel Mountains to the north and the Hacienda Hills to the south. The project site is in a highly urbanized area, surrounded by residential and commercial developments on all sides.

The most prominent visual feature located outside of the City boundary are the San Gabriel Mountains, which are located approximately six miles north of the project site. The San Gabriel Mountains can primarily be seen from the city's parks and along roadway corridors. The proposed project would not change the appearance of the project site as the project involves the redevelopment of three of the six existing commercial buildings on the project site. Additionally, the project site is not within the vicinity of the scenic vista areas discussed in the City's General Plan; the nearest designated scenic vista is the Peck Water Conservation Park located two miles north of the project site. Due to the distance and varying topography between the project site and the scenic vistas, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact to the public views available at

the scenic vistas. Furthermore, the redevelopment would remain within the existing building footprint; therefore, the proposed project would not substantially change or obstruct public views of the San Gabriel Mountains from nearby roadways. Views of the San Gabriel Mountains to the north of the project site would continue to be available in the city and regional parks and roadway corridors. Therefore, there would be no impact.

**NO IMPACT**

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

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) manages the California State Scenic Highway Program, which designates State scenic highways. A scenic highway becomes officially designated when the local governing body applies to and is approved by Caltrans for scenic highway designation and adopts a Corridor Protection Program that preserves the scenic quality of the land that is visible from the highway right of way (Caltrans 2021).

The project site is not within or adjacent to a designated State scenic highway, as identified by Caltrans. The nearest designated State scenic highway is a portion of Angeles Crest Highway (State Route 2 or SR-2), approximately 14 miles northwest of the project site (Caltrans 2019). Due to the distance from the proposed project, the project site is not visible from SR-2. Furthermore, the project site does not contain any scenic resources such as trees or rock outcroppings, nor is it in proximity to any such resources. Additionally, as described in Section 5, *Cultural Resources*, the project site does not contain any historic buildings. Therefore, there would be no impacts related to scenic resources within a State scenic highway.

**NO IMPACT**

*c. Would the project, in non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?*

The project site is in an urbanized area surrounded by residential and commercial development. The El Monte General Plan designates the project site as Regional Commercial and zoned for General Commercial C-3 purposes. The Regional commercial designation is primarily located in areas that benefit from strategic access to I-10 and Interstate 605 (I-605) and allows large-scale commercial uses that serve the community and region. This includes auto dealerships, department stores, warehouse retailers, hotels, theaters, and food and beverage establishments. The General commercial C-3 zoning designation is primarily located along major corridors and allows commercial businesses that serve the community and surrounding areas. This includes a range of food and beverage establishments, retail sales, automotive sales and repair, personal services, and office uses (El Monte 2011b). The proposed uses are permitted and consistent under the existing land use and zoning designations. Therefore, the project would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations regarding scenic quality and would not significantly impact scenic quality in the area. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*d. Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area?*

The main sources of light and glare in the project area are streetlights and exterior lighting associated commercial structures, and internal parking lot lights, as well as vehicle headlights on nearby major streets such as Peck Road, Alloway Street and Sitka Street. The proposed project would not change the use of the project as the project involves the redevelopment of three of the six existing commercial buildings on the project site. Therefore, the light sources would not substantially increase the overall levels of day or nighttime lighting in the area because they would be comparable to existing light levels from the existing commercial uses of commercial building and parking lot lighting. Furthermore, Peck Road, Alloway Street and Sitka Street are already illuminated by street lighting. For these reasons, the proposed project would not result in a substantial new source of light such that day or nighttime views in the area would be adversely affected. The project would be required to be consistent with the City's Lighting Ordinance 2653.1, lighting regulations and regulatory requirements found in the City's General Plan; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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# 2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the 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 or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |

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

The project site is located on Urban and Built-Up Land and not located on or near land mapped as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance mapped by the California Department of Conservation's (DOC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (DOC 2022a). The site contains paved and vegetated areas that consist of non-native grasses, shrubs, and ornamental trees (refer to Section 4, Biological Resources, for details regarding the on-site vegetation). No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

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

The project site is not on land enrolled under the Williamson Act or zoned for agricultural use; therefore, no impact would occur (DOC 2023, DOC 2022b).

**NO IMPACT**

*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))?*

The project site does not include land that qualifies as forest land and is not zoned for forest land or timberland; therefore, no impact would occur (El Monte 2011b).

**NO IMPACT**

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

As stated in Threshold c. above, the project site does not qualify as "forest land." The project would not result in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use; therefore, no impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*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 or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

Due to the absence of agricultural land, forest land, and timberland at the project site, the project would not involve changes to the existing environment that could result in the conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

# 3 Air Quality

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| b. 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

## Overview of Air Pollution

The federal and State Clean Air Acts (CAA) mandate the control and reduction of certain air pollutants. Under these laws, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) have established the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for "criteria pollutants" and other pollutants. Some pollutants are emitted directly from a source (e.g., vehicle tailpipe, an exhaust stack of a factory, etc.) into the atmosphere, including carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds (VOC)/reactive organic gases (ROG),[1] nitrogen oxides ($NO_X$), particulate matter with diameters of ten microns or less ($PM_{10}$) and 2.5 microns or less ($PM_{2.5}$), sulfur dioxide, and lead. Other pollutants are created indirectly through chemical reactions in the atmosphere, such as ozone, which is created by atmospheric chemical and photochemical reactions primarily between ROG and $NO_X$. Air pollutants can also be generated by the natural environment, such as when high winds suspend fine dust particles. Secondary pollutants include oxidants, ozone, and sulfate and nitrate particulates (smog).

Air pollutant emissions are generated primarily by stationary and mobile sources. Stationary sources can be divided into two major subcategories:

- Point sources occur at a specific location and are often identified by an exhaust vent or stack. Examples include boilers or combustion equipment that produce electricity or generate heat.

[1] CARB defines VOC and ROG similarly as, "any compound of carbon excluding carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, carbonic acid, metallic carbides or carbonates, and ammonium carbonate," with the exception that VOC are compounds that participate in atmospheric photochemical reactions. For the purposes of this analysis, ROG and VOC are considered comparable in terms of mass emissions, and the term VOC is used in this IS-MND.

- Area sources are widely distributed and include such sources as residential and commercial water heaters, painting operations, lawn mowers, agricultural fields, landfills, and some consumer products.

Mobile sources refer to emissions from motor vehicles, including tailpipe and evaporative emissions, and can also be divided into two major subcategories:

- On-road sources that may be legally operated on roadways and highways.
- Off-road sources include aircraft, ships, trains, and self-propelled construction equipment.

## Air Quality Standards and Attainment

The project site is located in the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), which includes the non-desert portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, and all of Orange County. The SCAB is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). As the local air quality management agency, SCAQMD must monitor air pollutant levels to ensure that the NAAQS and CAAQS are met, and to develop strategies to meet the standards if they are not met.

Depending on whether the standards are met or exceeded, the SCAB is classified as being in "attainment" or "nonattainment." In areas designated as nonattainment for one or more air pollutants, a cumulative air quality impact exists for those air pollutants. The human health associated with these criteria pollutants, presented in Table 2, is already occurring in those areas as part of the environmental baseline condition. Under State law, air districts are required to prepare a plan for air quality improvement for pollutants for which the district is in non-compliance. The SCAB is in nonattainment for ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ federal standards. Also, the SCAB is in nonattainment for the State standard for $PM_{10}$ and designated unclassifiable or in attainment for all other federal and State standards (CARB 2024). The nonattainment statuses result from several factors. These factors include the combination of emissions from a large urban area, the regional meteorological conditions adverse to the dispersion of air pollution emissions, and the mountainous terrain surrounding the SCAB that traps pollutants (SCAQMD 2022).

**Table 2 Health Effects Associated with Criteria Pollutants**

| Pollutant | Adverse Effects |
|---|---|
| Ozone | (1) Short-term exposures: (a) pulmonary function decrements and localized lung edema in humans and animals and (b) risk to public health implied by alterations in pulmonary morphology and host defense in animals; (2) long-term exposures: risk to public health implied by altered connective tissue metabolism and altered pulmonary morphology in animals after long-term exposures and pulmonary function decrements in chronically exposed humans; (3) vegetation damage; and (4) property damage. |
| Carbon monoxide (CO) | Reduces oxygen delivery leading to: (1) aggravation of chest pain (angina pectoris) and other aspects of coronary heart disease; (2) decreased exercise tolerance in persons with peripheral vascular disease and lung disease; (3) impairment of central nervous system functions; and (4) possible increased risk to fetuses. |
| Nitrogen dioxide ($NO_2$) | (1) Potential to aggravate chronic respiratory disease and respiratory symptoms in sensitive groups; (2) risk to public health implied by pulmonary and extra-pulmonary biochemical and cellular changes and pulmonary structural changes; and (3) contribution to atmospheric discoloration. |
| Sulfur dioxide ($SO_2$) | (1) Bronchoconstriction accompanied by symptoms that may include wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness during exercise or physical activity in persons with asthma. |

| Pollutant | Adverse Effects |
|---|---|
| Suspended $PM_{10}$ | (1) Excess deaths from short-term and long-term exposures; (2) excess seasonal declines in pulmonary function, especially in children; (3) asthma exacerbation and possibly induction; (4) adverse birth outcomes including low birth weight; (5) increased infant mortality; (6) increased respiratory symptoms in children such as cough and bronchitis; and (7) increased hospitalization for both cardiovascular and respiratory disease (including asthma). |
| Suspended $PM_{2.5}$ | (1) Excess deaths from short- and long-term exposures; (2) excess seasonal declines in pulmonary function, especially in children; (3) asthma exacerbation and possibly induction; (4) adverse birth outcomes, including low birth weight; (5) increased infant mortality; (6) increased respiratory symptoms in children, such as cough and bronchitis; and (7) increased hospitalization for both cardiovascular and respiratory disease, including asthma. |
| Lead | (1) Short-term overexposures and lead poisoning can cause (a) anemia, (b) weakness, (c) kidney damage, and (d) brain damage; (2) long-term exposure to lead increases risk for (a) high blood pressure, (b) heart disease, (c) kidney failure, and (d) reduced fertility. |

Source: USEPA 2024

## Air Quality Management

Since the SCAB currently exceeds ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS standard, the SCAQMD is required to implement strategies to reduce pollutant levels to achieve attainment of the NAAQS. The SCAQMD 2022 Air Quality Management Plan (2022 AQMP) is a regional blueprint designed to meet the NAAQS and demonstrate how attainment will be reached. The 2022 AQMP represents a thorough analysis of existing and potential regulatory control options, includes available, proven, and cost-effective strategies, and seeks to achieve multiple goals in partnership with other entities promoting reductions in greenhouse gases and toxic risk, as well as efficiencies in energy use, transportation, and goods movement. The prior AQMP, published in 2016, determined that, with implementation of the proposed control strategy, the SCAB could expect to reach attainment of the 1997 8-hour ozone standard by July 15, 2024, and the 2012 annual $PM_{2.5}$ by 2025. The 2006 24-hour $PM_{2.5}$ did not meet the attainment date of December 31, 2019, which required SCAQMD to revise the plan to meet standard as early as possible. SCAQMD's 2022 AQMP, an update to the 2016 AQMP, was developed to identify and implement strategies and control measures to meet the 2015 8-hour ozone NAAQS as expeditiously as practicable, but no later than the statutory attainment deadline of August 3, 2038 for the SCAB (SCAQMD 2022).

## Air Emission Thresholds

The SCAQMD approved the *CEQA Air Quality Handbook* in 1993. Since then, the SCAQMD has provided supplemental guidance on their website to address changes to the methodology and nature of CEQA since the publication of the Handbook. Some of these changes include recommended thresholds for emissions associated with both construction and operation of the project are used to evaluate a project's potential regional and localized air quality impacts (SCAQMD 2023).

### *Regional Thresholds*

Table 3 presents the significance thresholds for regional construction and operational-related criteria air pollutant and precursor emissions being used for the purposes of this analysis.

**Table 3 Air Quality Thresholds of Significance**

| Pollutant | Construction (pounds per day) | Operation (pounds per day) |
|---|---|---|
| $NO_x$ | 100 | 55 |
| VOC | 75 | 55 |
| $PM_{10}$ | 150 | 150 |
| $PM_{2.5}$ | 55 | 55 |
| $SO_x$ | 150 | 150 |
| CO | 550 | 550 |

$NO_x$ = Nitrogen Oxides; VOC = Volatile Organic Compounds; $PM_{10}$ = Particulate Matter with a diameter no more than 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = Particulate Matter with a diameter no more than 2.5 microns; $SO_x$ = Sulfur Oxide; CO = Carbon Monoxide

Source: SCAQMD 2023

### *Localized Significance Thresholds*

In addition to the above regional thresholds, the SCAQMD has developed Localized Significance Thresholds (LSTs) in response to the Governing Board's Environmental Justice Enhancement Initiative (1-4). LSTs were devised in response to concern regarding exposure of individuals to criteria pollutants in local communities and have been developed for $NO_X$, CO, $PM_{10}$, and $PM_{2.5}$. LSTs represent the maximum emissions from a project that will not cause or contribute to an air quality exceedance of the most stringent applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard at the nearest sensitive receptor by taking into consideration ambient concentrations in each SRA, distance to the sensitive receptor, and project size. LSTs have been developed for emissions generated in construction areas up to five acres in size. However, LSTs only apply to emissions in a fixed stationary location and are not applicable to mobile sources, such as cars on a roadway (SCAQMD 2009).

The project site is located within SRA 9 (East San Gabriel Valley). SCAQMD provides LST lookup tables for project sites that measure one, two, or five acres. The construction area of the project site is approximately 4.2 acres. LST thresholds are generally more stringent for smaller site acreages; therefore, the LST analysis conservatively uses two-acre LSTs rather than five-acre LSTs. LSTs are provided for receptors at a distance of 82 feet (25 meters), 164 feet (50 meters), 328 feet (100 meters), 656 (200 meters), 1,640 feet (500 meters) from the project disturbance boundary to the sensitive receptors. The border of construction activity would occur approximately 75 feet to multi-family residences located north of the project site. According to the SCAQMD's publication, *Final LST Methodology*, projects with boundaries located closer than 82 feet to the nearest receptor should use the LSTs for receptors located at 82 feet (SCAQMD 2009). Therefore, the analysis below uses the LST values for 82 feet. LSTs for construction in SRA 9 on a two-acre site with a receptor 82 feet away are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4 SCAQMD LSTs for Construction in SRA 9**

| Pollutant | Allowable Emissions from a two-acre site for a Receptor 82 Feet Away (lbs/day) |
|---|---|
| Gradual conversion of $NO_X$ to $NO_2$ | 71[1] |
| CO | 953 |
| $PM_{10}$ | 7 |
| $PM_{2.5}$ | 4[2] |

lbs/day = pounds per day; $NO_x$ = nitrogen oxide; $NO_2$ = nitrogen dioxide; CO = carbon monoxide; $PM_{10}$ = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 2.5 microns.

Allowable Emissions for a two-acre site in SRA 9 for a receptor 82 feet away.

[1]The screening criteria for $NO_X$ were developed based on the 1-hour $NO_2$ CAAQS of 0.18 ppm. Subsequent to publication of the SCAQMD's guidance the USEPA has promulgated a 1-hour $NO_2$ NAAQS of 0.100 ppm. This is based on a 98th percentile value, which is more stringent than the CAAQS. Because SCAQMD's LSTs have not been updated to address this new standard, to determine if project emissions would result in an exceedance of the 1-hour $NO_2$ NAAQS, an approximated LST was estimated to evaluate the federal 1-hour $NO_2$ standard. The revised LST is calculated by scaling the $NO_2$ LST for by the ratio of 1-hour $NO_2$ standards (federal/state) (i.e., 128 lbs/day * (0.10/0.18) =71 lbs/day).

[2]The screening criteria for $PM_{2.5}$ were developed based on an Annual CAAQS of 15 mg/m$^3$. Subsequent to publication of the SCAQMD's guidance the annual standard was reduced to 12 mg/m$^3$. Because SCAQMD's LSTs have not been updated to address this new standard, to determine if project emissions would result in an exceedance of the annual $PM_{2.5}$ CAAQS, an approximated LST was estimated. The revised LST is calculated by scaling the $PM_{2.5}$ LST for by the ratio of 24-hour $PM_{2.5}$ standards (federal/state) (i.e., 5 lbs/day * (12/15) =4 lbs/day).

Source: SCAQMD 2009

### *Toxic Air Contaminants*

SCAQMD has developed significance thresholds for the emissions of toxic air contaminants (TACs) based on health risks associated with elevated exposure to such compounds. For carcinogenic compounds, cancer risk is assessed in terms of incremental excess cancer risk. A project would result in a potentially significant impact if it would generate an incremental excess cancer risk of 10 in 1 million (1 x $10^{-6}$) or a cancer burden of 0.5 excess cancer cases in areas exceeding a one-in-one-million risk. In addition, non-carcinogenic health risks are assessed in terms of a hazard index. A project would result in a potentially significant impact if it would result in a chronic and acute hazard index greater than 1.0 (SCAQMD 2023).

## Methodology

Criteria pollutant and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for project construction and operation were calculated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), Version 2022.1. CalEEMod is a statewide land use emissions computer model designed to provide a uniform platform for government agencies, land use planners, and environmental professionals to quantify potential criteria pollutant and GHG emissions associated with both construction and operations from a variety of land use projects. The model was developed for the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) in collaboration with the California air districts. CalEEMod allows for the use of default data (e.g., emission factors, trip lengths, meteorology, source inventory) provided by the various California air districts to account for local requirements and conditions, and/or user-defined inputs. The calculation methodology and input data used in CalEEMod can be found in the CalEEMod User's Guide (CAPCOA 2022). The input data and subsequent construction and operation emission estimates for the proposed project are discussed below. CalEEMod output files for the project are included in Appendix A to this report.

Project construction would primarily generate temporary criteria pollutant and GHG emissions from construction equipment operation on-site, construction worker vehicle trips to and from the site,

and from import of materials to the site. Construction input data for CalEEMod include but are not limited to: (1) the anticipated start and finish dates of construction activity; (2) inventories of construction equipment to be used; and (3) areas to be excavated and graded. The analysis assessed maximum daily emissions from individual construction activities, including demolition, site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating. The three proposed buildings would be constructed separately with overlapping construction phases. Construction of each building pad would require heavy equipment during demolition, site preparation, grading, building construction, and paving. Construction is estimated to start in April 2025 for Pad 1 and Pad 3 and January 2026 for Pad 2, with completion anticipated in February 2027. However, based on construction phase durations provided by the project proponent, construction activities involving heavy equipment would occur over approximately 9.5 months, ending in October 2026.

Construction emissions were modeled in CalEEMod to reflect the duration of activities that would require heavy-duty construction equipment. Construction emissions associated with development of the proposed project were quantified using the types and quantities of equipment for each construction phase as provided by the applicant. The project would demolish three existing on-site structures totaling approximately 24,580 square feet. Based on the square footage of paved area at the project site, it is conservatively assumed for modeling purposes that approximately 1,836 cubic yards of asphalt would be demolished and exported from the site. No soil import or export would be required during site preparation and grading phases. CalEEMod also estimates off-site emissions from worker, vendor, and hauling truck trips. The number of worker and vendor trips are based on CalEEMod defaults.

Operational emissions modeled include energy emissions and area source emissions. For mobile source emissions, the traffic consultant, Linscott, Law & Greenspan (LLG), provided project-specific trip generations based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) rates for the proposed land uses, as well as existing and surrounding uses. Since the project consists of a mixed-use setting, it was appropriate to account for “internal” trip making/interactions that would occur between the various land uses, and that would not occur by vehicular travel on the external street system.

LLG determined that the complementary nature of these land uses results in an internal trip capture where a trip can be made by walking or biking using internal roadways and pedestrian pathways within the multi-use development setting and would therefore reduce vehicle trip generation on the surrounding street system (LLG 2024).

Additionally, because of the retail and restaurant components of the project and existing uses, “passby” reductions were applied. This is typically done to account for conditions when the total number of trips generated by a retail or fast-food-oriented development is not entirely new to the external street system and the trips do not add new traffic to the surrounding street system (LLG 2024).

Based on these factors, the trip rate was estimated to be 61 fewer daily trips. Therefore, operational mobile trips were excluded from emissions modeling and are not analyzed further in this analysis.

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

A project may be inconsistent with the AQMP if it would generate population, housing, or employment growth exceeding forecasts used in the development of the AQMP. The 2022 AQMP, the most recent AQMP adopted by the SCAQMD, incorporates local city general plans and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)’s 2020 Regional Transportation

Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) socioeconomic forecast projections of regional population, housing, and employment growth (SCAQMD 2022, SCAG 2020).

The employment growth forecasts in SCAG's 2020 RTP/SCS for the City of El Monte estimate that the total number of jobs would increase from 30,600 in 2016 to 37,100 in 2045, for an increase of 6,500 jobs (SCAG 2020). Based on applicant provided information, the forecasted number of project employees would be approximately 115 employees. This analysis conservatively assumes that all 115 employees from the project would be new additions to the existing labor pool in the region. The proposed project would account for less than two percent of the city's projected employment growth through year 2045; therefore, the project would be consistent with the growth forecasts contained in the 2022 AQMP.

In addition, the AQMP provides strategies and measures to reach attainment with the thresholds for 8-hour and 1-hour ozone and $PM_{2.5}$. As shown in Table 5 and Table 6, below, the project would not generate criteria pollutant emissions that would exceed SCAQMD thresholds for ozone precursors (ROG and $NO_X$) and $PM_{2.5}$ Since the project would also be consistent with population and housing growth projections for the City, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AQMP.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*b. 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?*

The SCAB has been designated as a federal nonattainment area for $O_3$ and $PM_{2.5}$ and a State nonattainment area for $O_3$, $PM_{10}$, and $PM_{2.5}$. The SCAB is designated unclassifiable or in attainment for all other federal and State standards.

## Construction Emissions

Project construction would generate temporary air pollutant emissions associated with fugitive dust ($PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$) and exhaust emissions from heavy construction equipment and construction vehicles. In addition, construction would result in VOC emissions during the drying of architectural coating and paving phases. Table 5 summarizes the estimated maximum daily emissions of pollutants during project construction. As shown therein, construction-related emissions would not exceed SCAQMD thresholds. Therefore, project construction would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Table 5 Estimated Maximum Daily Construction Emissions**

| | Maximum Emissions (lbs/day) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Construction Year** | **VOC** | **$NO_x$** | **CO** | **$SO_2$** | **$PM_{10}$** | **$PM_{2.5}$** |
| 2025 | 6.5 | 16.7 | 19.1 | <0.1 | 1.1 | 0.6 |
| 2026 | 6.8 | 8.0 | 9.2 | <0.1 | 0.7 | 0.3 |
| **Maximum Emissions (lbs/day)** | **6.8** | **16.7** | **19.1** | **<0.1** | **1.1** | **0.6** |
| SCAQMD Regional Threshold | 75 | 100 | 550 | 150 | 150 | 55 |
| Threshold Exceeded? | No | No | No | No | No | No |

lbs/day = pounds per day; VOC = Volatile organic compounds, $NO_x$ = nitrogen oxides, CO = carbon monoxide, $SO_2$ = sulfur dioxide, $PM_{10}$ = particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less, $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

Notes: Some numbers may not add up precisely due to rounding considerations.

See CalEEMod worksheets in Appendix A.

## Operational Emissions

Operation of the project would generate criteria air pollutant emissions associated with area sources (e.g., architectural coatings, consumer products, and landscaping equipment) and energy sources (i.e., use of natural gas for space and water heating). Table 6 summarizes the project's maximum daily operational emissions by emission source. As shown therein, operational emissions would not exceed SCAQMD regional thresholds for criteria pollutants. Therefore, project operation would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in nonattainment, and impacts would be less than significant.

**Table 6 Estimated Maximum Daily Operational Emissions**

| | Pollutant (lbs/day) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Emissions Source** | **VOC** | **$NO_x$** | **CO** | **$SO_2$** | **$PM_{10}$** | **$PM_{2.5}$** |
| Area | 0.3 | <0.1 | 0.4 | <0.1 | <0.1 | <0.1 |
| Energy | <0.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | <0.1 | <0.1 | <0.1 |
| **Total** | **0.4** | **0.3** | **0.7** | **<0.1** | **<0.1** | **<0.1** |
| SCAQMD Thresholds | 55 | 55 | 550 | 150 | 150 | 55 |
| Threshold Exceeded? | No | No | No | No | No | No |

lbs/day = pounds per day; VOC = Volatile organic compounds, $NO_x$ = nitrogen oxides, CO = carbon monoxide, $SO_2$ = sulfur dioxide, $PM_{10}$ = particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less, $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

Notes: Some numbers may not add up precisely due to rounding considerations.

See CalEEMod worksheets in Appendix A.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*c. Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?*

## Sensitive Receptors

According to the SCAQMD, sensitive receptors include residences, schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, long-term healthcare facilities, rehabilitation centers, convalescent centers, and retirement homes (SCAQMD 1993). The nearest sensitive receptors to the project site are multi- family residences located approximately 75 feet north of the project site. Localized air quality impacts to

sensitive receptors typically result from localized criteria air pollutant emissions and TACs, which are discussed in the following subsections.

## Localized Significance Thresholds

The LST methodology was developed to be used as a tool to analyze localized impacts associated with project-specific level proposed projects. If the calculated emissions for the proposed construction or operational activities are below the LST emission levels found on the LST mass rate look-up tables (Appendix C of LST Methodology) and no potentially significant impacts are found to be associated with other environmental issues, then the proposed construction or operation activity is not significant for air quality. Table 7 summarizes the project's maximum localized daily construction emissions from the proposed project. As shown therein, localized construction emissions would not exceed SCAQMD LST thresholds for $PM_{2.5}$. Therefore, impacts from localized criteria pollutant emissions during construction would be less than significant.

**Table 7 Unmitigated Project LST Construction Emissions**

| | Maximum Daily Emissions (lbs/day) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **$NO_X$** | **CO** | **$PM_{10}$** | **$PM_{2.5}$** |
| Maximum On-site Emissions | 16.5 | 17.9 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| SCAQMD LST | 71 | 953 | 7 | 4 |
| **Threshold Exceeded?** | **No** | **No** | **No** | **No** |

lbs/day = pounds per day; VOC = volatile organic compounds; $NO_x$ = nitrogen oxide; CO = carbon monoxide; $PM_{10}$ = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 2.5 microns; $SO_x$ = sulfur oxide

Notes: Some numbers may not add up precisely due to rounding considerations. Maximum on-site emissions are the highest emissions that would occur on the project site from on-site sources, such as heavy construction equipment and architectural coatings, and excludes off-site emissions from sources such as construction worker vehicle trips and haul truck trips.

See CalEEMod worksheets in Appendix A

## Toxic Air Contaminants

TACs are defined by California law as air pollutants that may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health. The following subsections discuss the project's potential to result in impacts related to TAC emissions during construction and operation.

### *Construction*

Construction-related activities would result in temporary project-generated emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM) exhaust emissions from off-road, heavy-duty diesel equipment for site preparation, grading, building construction, and other construction activities. DPM was identified as a TAC by CARB in 1998. The potential cancer risk from the inhalation of DPM (discussed in the following paragraphs) outweighs the potential non-cancer health impacts (CARB 2022a) and is therefore the focus of this analysis.

Generation of DPM from construction projects typically occurs in a single area for a short period. Construction activities involving the use of DPM-emitting heavy equipment would occur over approximately 18 months. The dose to which the receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk. Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance or substances in the environment and the extent of exposure that a person has with the substance. Dose is positively correlated with time, meaning that a longer exposure period would result in a higher exposure level

for the Maximally Exposed Individual. The risks estimated for a Maximally Exposed Individual are higher if a fixed exposure occurs over a longer period of time. According to the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), health risk assessments, which determine the exposure of sensitive receptors to toxic emissions, should be based on a 30-year exposure period (assumed to be the approximate time that a person spends in a household). OEHHA recommends this risk be bracketed with 9-year and 70-year exposure periods. Health risk assessments should be limited to the period/duration of activities associated with the project.

The maximum $PM_{2.5}$ emissions, which is used to represent DPM emissions for this analysis, would occur during grading and building construction activities occurring simultaneously for Pad 1 and Pad 3. While building construction emissions represent the worst-case condition, such activities would occur for six months, or 5.5 percent for a 9-year health risk calculation period and less than 1.7 percent for a 30-year and 70-year health risk calculation period. $PM_{2.5}$ emissions would decrease for the remaining construction period because construction activities such as building construction, architectural coating, and paving would require less construction equipment. Therefore, DPM generated by project construction is not expected to create conditions where the probability that the Maximally Exposed Individual would contract cancer is greater than 10 in one million. This impact would be less than significant.

### *Operation*

CARB's *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective* (2005) provides recommendations regarding the siting of new sensitive land uses near potential sources of air toxic emissions (e.g., freeways, distribution centers, rail yards, ports, refineries, chrome plating facilities, dry cleaners, and gasoline dispensing facilities). CARB guidelines provide the recommended siting distances both for the development of sensitive land uses in proximity to TAC sources and for the addition of new TAC sources in proximity to existing sensitive land uses. The project's proposed uses do not generate substantial TAC emissions based on the air toxic sources listed in CARB's guidelines. Therefore, the expected hazardous TACs generated on site (e.g., cleaning solvents, paints, landscape pesticides, etc.) for the proposed land uses would be below thresholds warranting further study under the California Accidental Release Program. The project would not expose off-site sensitive receptors to significant amounts of carcinogens or TACs. Therefore, operational impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*d. Would the project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?*

Sensitive receptors in the project vicinity include multi-family residences approximately 75 feet from the project boundary to the north and 350 feet to the west. Construction activities would be temporary and transitory and associated odors would cease upon construction completion. Such odors disperse rapidly with distance. Accordingly, the proposed project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people during construction, and short-term impacts would be less than significant.

The project does not include land uses typically associated with odor complaints such as sewage treatment plants, landfills, recycling facilities, and agricultural uses. Vehicles approaching, idling, and leaving the site may release odorous exhaust emissions; however, odors of this nature disperse rapidly with distance and do not typically result in odor impacts. The project site was previously occupied by restaurant and sporting goods uses and is in close proximity to existing fast-food

restaurants; therefore, it is unlikely that the odors from this project would be distinguishable from existing sources. Additionally, the project site is located adjacent to I-10, so vehicle exhaust is already prevalent in the project area. For these reasons, operational odor impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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# 4 Biological Resources

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 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 state or federally protected wetlands (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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |

The analysis presented in this section is based on a review of available technical information regarding biological resources in the project vicinity. In order to obtain comprehensive information regarding the presence or potential presence of sensitive biological resources (including special status species, sensitive communities, and jurisdictional waters and wetlands) in the vicinity of the project site, queries of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS): Information for Planning and Conservation System (IPaC) (USFWS 2024a), USFWS Critical Habitat Portal (USFWS 2024b), USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (USFWS 2024c), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) (CDFW 2024a), CDFW Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS) (CDFW 2024b) and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Online Inventory of Rare, Threatened and Endangered Plants of California (CNPS 2024) were conducted.

*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?*

The approximately 7.51-acre project site is developed with commercial uses and is in an urbanized area of the city. The literature review identified records or ranges of 35 special status plants and 35 special status wildlife species within the project site vicinity (within a 9-quadrangle search area). Based on a desktop review of aerial imagery, the site contains paved and ornamental vegetated areas. Ornamental trees and shrubs present at the site include American sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), evergreen pear (*Pyrus kawakami*), flowering pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), London plane tree (*Platanus acerifolia*), Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*).

Due to the urban and disturbed nature of the project site, special status plant and wildlife species are not expected to occur on the project site or in adjacent areas. However, although the project site is heavily disturbed, it has the potential to provide minimal foraging and nesting habitat for year-round and seasonal avian residents, as well as migrating songbirds that could occur in the area that are adapted to disturbed areas and urban environments.

Migratory or other common nesting birds, while not designated as special status species, are protected by the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) and Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and may nest in the ornamental trees, shrubs, and landscaped grasses on-site. Therefore, construction of the project has the potential to directly (by destroying a nest) or indirectly (by creating construction noise, dust, and other human disturbances that may cause a nest to fail) impact nesting birds protected under the CFGC and MBTA. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would ensure compliance with the CFGC Section 3503 and the MBTA with respect to nesting birds by reducing the impact through pre-construction nesting bird surveys and avoidance of active nests.

## Mitigation Measures

### *BIO-1 Nesting Bird Avoidance*

Prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities, the following measures shall be implemented:

- To avoid disturbance of nesting birds, including raptorial species protected by the MBTA and CFGC, construction activities related to the project, including, but not limited to, vegetation removal, ground disturbance, and construction and demolition shall occur outside of the bird breeding season (February 1 through August 31). If construction must begin during the breeding

season, then a pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted no more than seven days prior to initiation of construction activities. The nesting bird pre-construction survey shall be conducted on foot in the project site, including a 100-foot buffer, and in inaccessible areas (e.g., private lands) from afar using binoculars to the extent practical. The survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist familiar with the identification of avian species known to occur in Southern California.

- If nests are found, an avoidance buffer shall be demarcated by a qualified biologist with bright orange construction fencing, flagging, construction lathe, or other means to mark the boundary. All construction personnel shall be notified as to the existence of the buffer zone and to avoid entering the buffer zone during the nesting season. No parking, storage of materials, or construction activities shall occur within this buffer until the biologist has confirmed that breeding/nesting is completed, and the young have fledged the nest. Encroachment into the buffer shall occur only at the discretion of the qualified biologist.
- A survey report by qualified biologist documenting and verifying compliance with the mitigation and with applicable State and federal regulations protecting birds shall be submitted to the City. The qualified biologist shall serve as a construction monitor during those periods when construction activities would occur near active nest areas to ensure that no inadvertent impacts on these nests would occur.

## Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would avoid significant impacts to nesting birds. Furthermore, the site would include trees as part of the project's landscaping and would continue to provide nesting sites in an urban commercial area, consistent with existing conditions. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

*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?*

Plant communities are considered sensitive biological resources if they have limited distributions, have high wildlife value, including sensitive species, or are particularly susceptible to disturbance. CDFW ranks sensitive communities as "threatened" or "very threatened." The project site is in a developed urban area and is not located within a naturally vegetated or open space area. The project site is dominated by paved areas, ornamental trees, and non-native grasses and shrubs. These existing shrubs and grasses do not constitute a sensitive natural community. Additionally, based on review of aerial imagery and the USFWS NWI, there is no riparian habitat on or near the project site (USFWS 2024c). Therefore, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities since none exist on the site or in nearby areas. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*c. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?*

No riparian habitats, wetlands, or other water features have been identified on the project site. The nearest mapped waterway is the Rio Hondo, located approximately one mile west of the project site

(USFWS 2024c). The project site is separated from the Rio Honda by a landscape dominated by commercial and residential buildings. According to the USFWS NWI, the Rio Hondo is Riverine and is classified as R4SBCx (Riverine, Intermittent, Streambed, Seasonally Flooded, Excavated) (USFWS 2024c). It is concrete-lined at its closest point to the project site and does not appear to contain vegetation or other suitable riparian habitat. Furthermore, there is no connection of this waterway to the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands or other jurisdictional waters. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*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?*

Wildlife corridors are defined as paths that connect different habitat areas, aiding wildlife movement and interaction between areas that are otherwise separated. These corridors can be important locally, for example, connecting places where wildlife find food and where they live. They can also be important on a larger scale, enabling animals to travel across wider areas of the landscape. Some habitat linkages may serve as migration corridors, wherein animals periodically move away from an area and then subsequently return. Examples of barriers or impediments to movement include housing and other urban development, roads, fencing, or open areas with little vegetative cover.

As discussed above, the project site is in an urban area of the city surrounded by roads and highways, commercial development, and residential neighborhoods. The site is located approximately three miles northeast of the nearest open space (Whittier Narrows Recreation Area) and is separated from open space areas by existing development, highways, and roadways. The project site does not contain any natural communities or habitat that would be expected to support native wildlife nurseries or the movement of species. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts to the movement of native or migratory species or the use of native wildlife nursery sites. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

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

Chapter 14.03 of the El Monte Municipal Code (EMMC) regulates the preservation, protection, and removal of trees on public and private property in the city. The EMMC provides permitting requirements for removals of Protected Trees, which include any public tree, Native Tree, or Heritage Tree. A public tree is defined as a tree planted in the public right-of-way, park, parkway, median, easement or on any other city-owned property. A Native Tree is defined as any tree with a trunk more than eight inches in diameter measured at a height of four and one-half feet above natural grade that is one of the following species: coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), Engelmann oak (*Quercus engelmannii*), canyon oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*), California sycamore (*Platanus racemose*), California walnut (*Juglans californica*), scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*), valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), California bay (*Umbellularia California*, cottonwood (*Populus remontii*), California alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*), arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), California buckeye (*Aesculus California*), and California redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*)

A Heritage Tree is a tree, shrub, or plant located on private and/or public property that meets the following requirements:

- Any woody plant having a single trunk circumference of 36 inches or more measured at breast height, a point 4.5 feet above the natural grade.
- Any multi-trunk tree whose multiple trunk have a combined circumference of 75 inches or more measured at a point 4.5 feet above the root crown.
- Any tree that is 35 feet or more in height as measured from the root crown to the highest point above the root crown.
- Any stand of trees the nature of which makes each dependent upon the others for survival.
- Any other tree as may be deemed historically or culturally significant by the City Arborist or the Economic Development Director because of its size, connection to the city's history or lore, location, or aesthetic qualities.

An Arborist Report was prepared for the project site on March 12, 2024, and is included as Appendix B to this IS-MND (Borer 2024). According to the Arborist Report, there are a total of 68 existing trees within the project site. Of these, two trees meet the criteria of protected Native Trees, 24 meet the criteria for protected Heritage Trees, and 42 were determined to be non-protected trees. Tree species include six American sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), two California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), three carrotwood (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*), five evergreen pear (*Pyrus kawakamii*), five flowering pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), two Indian laurel fig (*Ficus nitida*), one tulip tree (*Liriodendon tulip*), five London plane trees (*Platanus acerifolia*), one unique London plane hybrid (*Platanus acer*), three Mediterranean fan palms (*Chamaerops humilis*), 27 Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*), five pink dawn trees (*Salvia sp.*) and three Tipu trees (*Tipuana tipu*).

The two protected Native Trees are California sycamores. The 24 protected Heritage Trees include three evergreen pear, five flowering pear, five American sweetgum, three London plane, three carrotwood, one London plane hybrid, one Tipu tree, one tulip tree, and two Mediterranean fan palms were. All trees within the project site are proposed for removal.

Chapter 14.03 of the EMMC requires permitting procedures and tree replacement for the removal of Native Trees and Heritage Trees on or near the project site (as described in Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3) and protection measures for Native Trees and Heritage Trees that would be conserved on the project site (as described in Mitigation Measure BIO-3). Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3 the proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources and impacts would be less than significant.

## Mitigation Measures

### *BIO-2 Permit and Tree Report*

Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall file an application for a tree removal permit together with any required fees as set by resolution of the City Council. The application shall be submitted with a report that shall contain information as determined by the City Arborist to be necessary for evaluating the proposed removal of the Protected Trees on the project site and shall include, but not be limited to the following information:

1) A statement as to reasons for removal or recirculation;
2) The number, species, and size (circumference as measured four and one-half feet from ground level) and height of tree;
3) The location of all trees on-site on a plot plan in relation to structures and improvements (e.g., streets, sidewalks, fences, slopes, retaining walls, etc.);
4) Photographs of the trees to be removed or relocated;
5) If the tree is proposed to be relocated, the relocation site shall be identified and site preparation and relocation methods described;
6) Proposed method of removal or relocation;
7) The health of any tree declared dead, diseased, infested, or dying shall be determined by a Certified Arborist; and
8) Protected tree replacement plan the substantive features and content of which shall be established by the City Arborist.

Upon receipt of the application, the City Arborist shall visit and inspect the project site and trees proposed for removal. The City Arborist shall grant the issuance of a tree removal permit if tree conditions create a hazardous condition, pose a threat to health and safety, are dead, severely diseased or decayed, infested, and in a state of irreversible decline, have an abnormal and incorrectable structure or appearance, interfere with utilities, or cause damage to structures. The standard tree removal permit shall be valid for a period of 90 days, unless an extension is requested 14 days prior to the expiration of the permit.

### *BIO-3 Tree Replacement*

All removed protected trees shall be replaced with a tree ratio of 2:1. Suitable tree species shall be selected from the City's recommended tree palette and with the approval from the Community and Economic Development Department. If any trees cannot be planted on the project site, or the immediate public right-of-way, an in-lieu fee may be paid into the City's tree mitigation and planting fund pursuant to the fee schedule as adopted in Section 14.03.130 of the El Monte Municipal Code. The tree fund shall consist of fees generated as a result of tree replacement requirements as well as general donations for public tree planting.

## Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3 would ensure compliance with Chapter 14.03 of the EMMC. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

*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?*

The project site is not located within or near an area subject to an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or any other approved habitat conservation plan at the local, regional, or State levels (CDFW 2023). Therefore, no impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

# 5 Cultural Resources

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |
| b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

This section analyzes the project's potential impacts related to cultural resources, including historical and archaeological resources as well as human remains. The analysis in this section is based, in part, on a Cultural Resources Assessment prepared for the 3600 Peck Road Project by Rincon Consultants in September 2024. The assessment includes a California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) records search conducted at the South Central Coast Information Center (SCCIC) for the project site plus a 0.5-mile radius, a review of historical topographic maps, aerial imagery of the project site, and a geoarchaeological review to assess subsurface archaeological sensitivity of the project site. Since there are no built environment resources more than 45 years in age within the project site and the entire project site is developed and paved with no visible ground surface, a cultural resources survey was not conducted. The Cultural Resources Assessment is provided in full as Appendix C.

The CHRIS SCCIC records search identified five previous cultural resources studies within a 0.5-mile radius of the project site. Less than 20 percent of the overall 0.5-mile records search area has been previously studied and none of the project site has been subject to previous study. The CHRIS SCCIC records search also identified four previously recorded cultural resources within a 0.5-mile radius of the project site, which includes one historic-period archaeological site and three built environment resources. Of these, one is located adjacent to the project site (P-19-190504). Resource P-19-190504 consists of the Southern California Edison (SCE) Rio Hondo-Amador-Jose-Mesa-Narrows 66kV Transmission Line, which has been previously recommended ineligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) (California Historical Resources Status Code 6Z).

A review of historical topographic maps and aerial images reveals the project site was generally vacant and undeveloped, except for the two structures along the western portion as depicted in 1894. By 1923, there was an increase in development within the project site along the western and southern portions. A 1938 aerial photograph shows the project site consisting of rural residences, scattered trees, and vacant land. By 1948, there was an increase in development along the northern, western, and southern portions of the project site. In 1953, a church is depicted in topographic maps at the northwesternmost corner of the project site. By 1954, some residential buildings were removed and were graded. Substantial ground disturbance appears evident on the

1964 aerial. The present-day El Monte Shopping Center is depicted for the first time on the 1966 map. Additional ground disturbance within the project site appears evident on aerial images from the early 1970s through the late 1980s. The existing Denny's, Big 5 Sporting Goods, and China Buffet buildings appear for the first time on the 1992 aerial. Additional disturbance within the project site appears evident on the 2009 aerial. No significant changes or disturbances are noted in later aerial imagery.

A desktop geoarchaeological review was conducted to assess the potential for subsurface archaeological resources to be present within the project site. Sources consulted include CHRIS data, historical maps, aerial imagery, geologic maps, and geotechnical reports. The CHRIS records search did not identify known archaeological resources within or immediately adjacent to the project site. However, there is no record that the project site was subject to archaeological survey or investigation prior to past or current development. Historical maps and aerial imagery indicate that the project site was developed with historic-era land uses (residential, religious). Geologic mapping indicates that the project site is underlain by Late Pleistocene-era and Holocene-age alluvial formations, which have the potential to contain buried archaeological resources because these formations are contemporaneous with the documented period of regional precontact human habitation and are able to preserve cultural material in context. Geotechnical reports indicate that, in general, there is approximately 3 to 7 feet of fill soil below ground surface, which is underlain by alluvium (native soils) up to approximately 50 feet below ground surface. Therefore, although geological mapping, historical maps, and aerial imagery indicate a potential for buried prehistoric and historic-period archaeological resources, aerial imagery and geotechnical reports indicate that there has been substantial past ground disturbance in the project site, with artificial fill soils between 3 and 7 feet below ground surface. Given the level of past disturbance, which has likely resulted in substantial modification of subsurface soils, the project site is considered to have a low potential to contain intact subsurface archaeological resources to the project's proposed maximum depths of disturbance, which is estimated to range between 3 to 8 feet below ground surface.

*a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?*

The project site does not contain buildings or structures over 45 years in age, which is the threshold for consideration as a historical resources per the guidance of the California Office of Historic Preservation. Therefore, the onsite demolition and construction activities would not result in a direct impact to historical resources. One structure over 45 years in age, P-19-190504 (SCE Rio Hondo-Amador-Jose-Mesa-Narrows 66kV Transmission Line) was identified adjacent to the project site as a result of the CHRIS SCCIC records search. P-19-190504 was previously recommended ineligible for listing in the CRHR (California Historical Resources Status Code 6Z) and therefore does not qualify as a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15045.6(a). As such, the project would not result in a substantial adverse change to historical resources and there would be no impact to historical resources.

**NO IMPACT**

*b. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?*

No archaeological resources were identified within or in close proximity to the project site as a result of the CHRIS SCCIC records search. Additionally, the desktop geoarchaeological review

indicates that there is a low potential to encounter intact subsurface archaeological resources within the project's proposed depths of disturbance that range between 3 to 8 feet.

However, it is still possible that subsurface archaeological deposits could be encountered within undisturbed native alluvial soils to the maximum depths of the project's proposed disturbance. Such resources could qualify as either historical resources or unique archaeological resources under CEQA. In the event that previously unknown archaeological resources are encountered during project implementation, impacts to these resources could be significant under CEQA. Therefore, implementation of the following Mitigation Measures is required: CUL-1 (Workers Environmental Awareness Program Training), CUL-2 (Retention of a Qualified Archaeologist), and CUL-3 (Inadvertent Discovery of Archaeological Resources) to facilitate appropriate treatment of any inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources. Implementation of these mitigation measures, along with adherence to existing regulations for the inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources, would reduce potential project impacts to archaeological resource qualifying as historical resources or unique archaeological resources to less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

## Mitigation Measures

### *CUL-1 Workers Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) Training*

All on-site personnel shall be briefed regarding unanticipated discoveries prior to the start of construction activities. A basic presentation shall be prepared and presented by a Qualified Archaeologist or other designated archaeologist working under the direction of the Qualified Archaeologist to inform all on-site personnel working on the project about the archaeological sensitivity of the area. The purpose of the WEAP training is to provide specific details on the kinds of archaeological materials that may be identified during construction of the project and explain the importance of and legal basis for the protection of significant archaeological resources. All on-site personnel shall also be instructed in the proper procedures to follow in the event that archaeological resources or human remains are uncovered during ground-disturbing activities. These procedures include stopping or redirection of work, contacting the on-call archaeologist immediately, and if appropriate, a Native American representative, and establishing an appropriate temporary avoidance buffer. The necessity of training attendance shall be stated on all construction plans and the lead CEQA agency should maintain records demonstrating that all on-site personnel have participated in WEAP training.

### *CUL-2 Retention of a Qualified Archaeologist*

Prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities, the Applicant and/or subsequent responsible parties shall retain an on-call Qualified Archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (National Park Service 2020) to respond to and address any inadvertent discoveries identified for the duration of construction activities. The Qualified Archaeologist shall possess experience and familiarity with historic-period and prehistoric archaeological resources in the region.

### *CUL-3 Inadvertent Discovery of Archaeological Resources*

In the event that previously unknown archaeological resources (including those that may qualify as tribal cultural resources) are inadvertently encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work in a 50-foot radius of the find shall be halted and redirected, and the Qualified Archaeologist shall be

contacted immediately. The Qualified Archaeologist, or other designated archaeologist working under the direction of the Qualified Archaeologist, shall provide recommendations regarding the resource's potential significance and potential treatment in coordination with the City. If the resource is determined by the Qualified Archaeologist to be indigenous in origin, then Gabrieleno Band of Mission lndians-Kizh Nation and Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council representatives (Native American representatives) shall also be contacted to participate in the evaluation and treatment of the resource. If the Qualified Archaeologist and/or Native American representatives determine it to be appropriate, archaeological testing for California Register of Historical Resources eligibility shall be completed. If the resource proves to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources preservation in place (i.e., avoidance) shall be the preferred manner of treatment. If significant impacts to the resource cannot be avoided via redesign of the project, the Qualified Archaeologist shall prepare a data recovery plan tailored to the physical nature and characteristics of the resource, per the requirements of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C), and in consultation with Native American representatives for indigenous resources. The data recovery plan shall identify data recovery excavation, laboratory, and analysis methods, measurable objectives, and data thresholds to reduce any significant impacts to the resource. Pursuant to the data recovery plan, the Qualified Archaeologist and Native American representatives, as appropriate, shall recover and document the scientifically consequential information that justifies the resource's significance. Other treatment measures may also be considered for resources that are eligible under criteria beyond scientific value. The City shall review and approve archaeological testing/evaluation and treatment plans as appropriate, and the resulting documentation shall be submitted to the regional repository of the CHRIS, per CCR Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C). Final disposition or curation of indigenous archaeological materials shall be determined through coordination between the Qualified Archaeological, Native American representatives, the City, and the landowner, as applicable (with the exception of human remains and any associated grave goods, whose disposition shall be determined in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and and CCR Section 15064.5[e]). Any historical archaeological materials that are not Native American in origin shall be curated at a repository that meets the Criteria for Qualified Repositories outlined in *Guidelines for the Curation of Archaeological Collections* (California Office of Historic Preservation 1993). If no such repository accepts the collection, then it shall be offered to a public, non-profit institution with a research interest in the materials or to a local school or historical society in the area for educational purposes.

## Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2, and CUL-3 would reduce impacts to a less than significant level by ensuring archaeological resources are evaluated and treated accordingly.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

*c. Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?*

No prehistoric or historic-period burials, within or outside formal cemeteries, were identified within the project site as a result of the CHRIS records search or other background research. In the event that human remains are inadvertently encountered during ground disturbing activities, they would be treated consistent with State and local regulations including California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, and the CCR Section 15064.5(e). In accordance with these regulations, if human remains are found, the County Coroner must be

immediately notified of the discovery. No further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. If the County Coroner determines that the remains are, or believed to be Native American origin, the County Coroner is required to notify the Native American Heritage Commission that shall notify those persons believed to be the most likely descendent (MLD). The MLD has 48 hours from being granted site access to make recommendations for the disposition of the remains. If the MLD does not make recommendations within 48 hours, the landowner shall reinter the remains in an area of the property secure from subsequent disturbance. With adherence to existing regulations, impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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# 6 Energy

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

*a. Would the project result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?*

## Construction

During project construction, energy would be consumed in the form of petroleum-based fuels used to power off-road construction vehicles and equipment on the project site, construction worker to and from the project site, and vehicles used to deliver materials to the site. Energy use during construction would be temporary in nature, and construction equipment uses would be typical of similar sized construction projects in the region. In addition, construction contractors would be required to comply with the provisions of California Code of Regulations Title 13 Sections 2449 and 2485, which prohibit off-road diesel vehicles and diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles, respectively, from idling for more than five minutes and would minimize unnecessary fuel consumption. Construction equipment would be subject to the USEPA Construction Equipment Fuel Efficiency Standard which would minimize inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary fuel consumption (USEPA 2024). These regulations would result in the efficient use of energy necessary to construct the project. Therefore, project construction would not result in potentially significant environmental effects due to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy and impacts would be less than significant.

## Operation

Natural gas for the proposed project would be provided by SoCalGas and electric service for the proposed project would be provided by SCE. Operation of the proposed commercial development would also require energy demand from electricity, natural gas, and gasoline consumption similar to the existing conditions of the site. Natural gas and electricity would be used for heating and cooling systems, lighting, appliances, water use, and the overall operation of the project buildings. Gasoline and diesel fuel consumption would be used for motor vehicle travel to and from the project site. Furthermore, the project would be required to comply with standards set forth in the California Building Code (CBC) Title 24, which would minimize the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary

consumption of energy resources during operation. The California Green Building Standards Code requires implementation of energy-efficient light fixtures and building materials into the design of new construction projects. The Building Energy Efficiency Standards requires newly constructed buildings to meet energy performance standards set by the California Energy Commission. These standards are specifically crafted for new buildings to achieve energy efficient performance. The standards are updated every three years, and each iteration increases energy efficiency standards. Therefore, the project would not lead to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*b. Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?*

The proposed project would result in a minimal increase in energy consumption during construction, as the project consists of commercial development. During operation, energy consumption of the proposed project would be similar to existing conditions, since the project would contain similar uses to the existing site. The City has not adopted any local plans for renewable energy or energy conservation; however, the City's Community Design, and Land Use Element of the General Plan include the following policies related to sustainability and energy efficiency:

- **Policy CD-4.5 Sustainability.** Encourage "green building" and environmentally sustainable design concepts with respect to energy conservation, water conservation, storm drainage, etc.
- **Policy H-2.2 Major Corridors.** Direct the production of quality mixed/multiuse projects along major corridors, including Valley Boulevard, Durfee Road, Peck Road, and Garvey Avenue to allow for efficient land use practices, improved mobility, and energy conservation.

The project would also be subject to State requirements for energy efficiency, including the mandatory measures for nonresidential development contained in the 2022 CalGreen and Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards. The proposed project would be required to comply with the most recent iteration of Title 24 of the California Energy Code at the time of construction. In accordance with the CalGreen Standards, the project would reduce water use and energy needed to provide water to the project. These sustainability features align with energy efficiency goals established in the City's Community Design, and Land Use Element of the General Plan. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, and there would be a less than significant impact.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

# 7 Geology and Soils

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | | | | |
| 1. 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| 2. Strong seismic ground shaking? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| 3. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. Landslides? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse? | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |
| f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ |

A geotechnical report was prepared for the proposed Starbucks included in the project by SALEM Engineering Group, Inc. (SALEM), dated February 28, 2023, and included as Appendix D. A geotechnical report was prepared for the proposed In-N-Out included in the project by Krazan & Associates, Inc., dated July 28, 2023, and included as Appendix E. A geotechnical report was prepared for the proposed Raising Cane's included in the project by Terracon, dated October 31, 2023, and included as Appendix F.

*a.1. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, 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?*

The project site is in a seismically active area of Southern California. A fault that has ruptured in at least the last 11,700 years is considered to have a higher potential of future seismicity and is considered an active fault by the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act. Faults with evidence of longer earthquake frequency events are considered to have a lower potential of future seismicity. According to California Geological Survey (CGS) and the project's geotechnical reports, the project site is not located in an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone (CGS 2024; Appendix D; Appendix F). However, the site is situated in a region subject to strong earthquakes occurring along active faults. The closest known active faults to the site are the East Montebello Fault located approximately 3.6 miles southwest of the project site, Raymond Fault located approximately five miles northwest of the project site, the Whittier Fault located approximately 6.4 miles south of the project site, and the Duarte Fault located approximately seven miles northeast of the project site (CGS 2024; Appendix D).

To reduce geologic and seismic impacts, the City regulates development through the requirements of the CBC. The purpose of the CBC is to establish minimum standards to safeguard the public health, safety, and general welfare through structural strength, means of egress, and general stability by regulating and controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, use and occupancy, location, and maintenance of all building and structures within its jurisdiction. The earthquake design requirements of the CBC consider the occupancy category of the structure, site class, soil classifications, and various seismic coefficients. The CBC provides standards for various aspects of construction, including but not limited to excavation, grading, earthwork, construction, preparation of the site prior to fill placement, specification of fill materials, fill compaction and field testing, retaining wall design and construction, foundation design and construction, and seismic requirements. It includes provisions to address issues such as (but not limited to) fault rupture. In accordance with California law, project design and construction would be required to comply with provisions of the CBC. Because the project would comply with the CBC, impacts related to seismically induced fault rupture would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*a.2. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking?*

As detailed above under Impact *a.1*, the project site is in a seismically active area of Southern California. According to CGS and the project's geotechnical reports , the project site is not located in an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone (CGS 2024; Appendix D; Appendix F). However, the site is situated in a region subject to strong earthquakes occurring along active faults.

The closest known active faults to the site are the East Montebello Fault located approximately 3.6 miles southwest of the project site, Raymond Fault located approximately five miles northwest of the project site, the Whittier Fault located approximately 6.4 miles south of the project site, and the Duarte Fault located approximately seven miles northeast of the project site (CGS 2024; Appendix D). The possibility of ground acceleration, or shaking at the site, may be considered as approximately similar to the Southern California region as a whole.

As detailed above under impact a.1, to reduce geologic and seismic impacts, the City regulates development through the requirements of the CBC. The earthquake design requirements of the CBC consider the occupancy category of the structure, site class, soil classifications, and various seismic coefficients. The CBC provides standards for various aspects of construction, including but not limited to excavation, grading, earthwork, construction, preparation of the site prior to fill placement, specification of fill materials, fill compaction and field testing, retaining wall design and construction, foundation design and construction, and seismic requirements. It includes provisions to address issues such as (but not limited to) ground shaking. In accordance with California law, project design and construction would be required to comply with provisions of the CBC. Because the project would comply with the CBC and because the project would not exacerbate existing ground shaking hazards, impacts related to seismically induced ground shaking and fault rupture would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*a.3. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?*

Liquefaction is a process whereby soil is temporarily transformed to fluid form during intense and prolonged ground shaking or because of a sudden shock or strain. Typically, liquefaction occurs in areas where there are loose soils and the depth to groundwater is less than 50 feet from the surface. Likewise, earthquakes can cause landslides in areas with unstable slopes and terrain.

The project site is located within a mapped liquefaction zone (CGS 2024). However, the project's geotechnical report determined that the soils have a low to moderate potential for liquefaction (Appendix D; Appendix E; Appendix F). While the project site is in a seismically active area and is susceptible to liquefaction, the project would be required to minimize this risk, to the extent feasible, through the incorporation of applicable CBC standards. The design and construction of the project would conform to the current seismic design provisions of the CBC, which incorporates the latest seismic design standards for structural loads and materials, as well as provisions from the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, to mitigate losses from an earthquake, including liquefaction, and provide for the latest in earthquake safety. Furthermore, the project site conditions would be improved through the removal and re-compaction of expansive and weak near-surface soils, which is described in the recommendations of the project's geotechnical report. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would be required to ensure implementation of all recommendations provided in the project's geotechnical reports prepared by SALEM, Krazen & Associates, Inc, and Terracon; therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1, project liquefaction impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

## Mitigation Measure

### *GEO-1 Geotechnical Recommendations*

Prior to the issuance of grading permits and/or building permits, the City shall review and approve all project plans for grading, foundation, structural, infrastructure, and all other relevant construction permits to ensure compliance with the applicable recommendations from the project's geotechnical report and other applicable El Monte Municipal Code requirements.

Specific design considerations as outlined in the 2023 geotechnical report prepared by SALEM, Inc., 2023 geotechnical report prepared by Krazan & Associates Inc., and 2023 geotechnical report prepared by Terracon shall be implemented to minimize the risk for geological hazards included in the project construction plans. Below is a summary of the specific design considerations for site earthwork, foundation, soil bearing and lateral resistance, and lateral earth pressures for retaining walls.

- Undocumented and uncompacted fill materials shall be excavated and replaced with Engineered Fill. Prior to fill placement aqualified Geotechnical Engineer shall inspect the bottom of the excavation to verify the fill condition. As an alternative, the project applicant may elect not to recompact the existing fill within paved areas. However, the project applicant should be aware that the paved areas may settle, which may require annual maintenance. At a minimum, the upper 12 inches of subgrade soil shall be scarified, moisture-conditioned to near optimum moisture and recompacted least 95 percent relative compaction.
- The compressive or weak soils shall be removed and re-compacted according to the recommendations in the grading recommendations of the geotechnical report.
- Excavated soils generated from cut operations are suitable for use as general engineered fill provided they do not have an expansion index greater than 20 and do not contain deleterious matter, debris, organic material, or rock material large than three inches in maximum dimension.
- A qualified Geotechnical Engineer shall be present during all site clearing and grading operations to test and observe earthwork construction. The Geotechnical Engineer is authorized to reject any material that does not meet compaction and stability requirements.
- To minimize post-construction soil movement and provide uniform support for the proposed structures, over-excavation and re-compaction within the proposed building area shall be performed to a minimum depth of three feet below existing grade, two feet below proposed footing bottom, or to a depth to remove all undocumented and uncompacted fill, whichever is deeper. The actual depth of the over-excavation and re-compaction shall be determined by the Geotechnical Engineer during construction. The over-excavation and re-compaction shall also extend laterally to a minimum of five feet beyond the outer edges of the proposed footings.
- Crushed Miscellaneous or Recycled Base (CMB) containing recycled materials shall not be used as granular aggregate subbase within the building areas.
- Concrete slabs-on-grade shall be reinforced, at a minimum, with No. 3 reinforcing bars placed 18 inches on center, each way.
- Retaining and/or below grade walls shall be drained with either perforated pipe encased in free draining gravel or a prefabricated drainage system. The gravel zone shall have a minimum width of 12 inches wide and shall extend upward to within 12 inches of the top of the wall.

## Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would ensure the project would be designed to reduce the risk for seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction to a less-than-significant level.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

*a.4. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides?*

The project site and surrounding area are relatively flat. According to the CGS and the project's geotechnical reports, the project site is not located in an area subject to landslides caused by earthquakes, nor is it downslope from an area subject to seismically induced landslides (CGS 2024; Appendix D; Appendix E). Implementation of the project would not exacerbate the existing risk of earthquake-induced landslides in the immediate vicinity because the project would not directly result in a seismic event or destabilize soils prone to landslide and the project is not located in an area subject to landslides. Therefore, the risk of earthquake-induced landslides at the project site is low and impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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

The proposed project involves the demolition of three existing commercial buildings and construction of three drive-thru restaurant buildings and associated paved parking and landscaping. Construction activities have the potential to result in soil erosion, particularly during grading and excavation activities. Fugitive dust caused by strong wind and/or earth-moving operations during construction would be minimized through compliance with SCAQMD Rule 403, which prohibits visible particulate matter from crossing property lines. Standard practices to control fugitive dust emissions include watering of active grading sites, covering soil stockpiles with plastic sheeting, and covering soils in haul trucks with secured tarps. In addition, the potential for project construction activities to result in increased erosion and sediment transport by stormwater to surface waters would be minimized because the project would be required to comply with a Construction General Permit, which is issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The Construction General Permit requires the development of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which outlines best management practices (BMPs) to reduce erosion and topsoil loss from stormwater runoff (also refer to the discussion in Section 10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*). Compliance with the Construction General Permit would ensure that BMPs are implemented during construction and minimize substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. Upon completion of construction, the project site would be stabilized with landscaping and paving, and operational activities would not result in soil erosion. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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

Lateral spreading is the horizontal movement or spreading of soil toward an open face. Lateral spreading may occur when soils liquefy during an earthquake event, and the liquefied soils with overlying soils move laterally to unconfined spaces. Due to the lack of nearby "free face" conditions,

the potential for lateral spreading is considered very low. Therefore, lateral spreading impacts would be less than significant.

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 that include, but are not limited to, withdrawal of groundwater, pumping of oil and gas from underground, the collapse of underground mines, liquefaction, and hydrocompaction. Collapse potential refers to the potential settlement of a soil under existing stresses upon being wetted. As discussed under Impact *7.a.1* through *7.a.4*, the proposed project is in a seismically active area and nearly the entire City is within a liquefaction zone. However, the project would be required to comply with CBC requirements. In addition, as described in Mitigation Measure GEO-1, the project would be required to comply with recommendations outlined in the project's geotechnical reports (Appendix D; Appendix E; Appendix F).

Based on recommendations in the project's geotechnical reports, measures related to grading would include, but not be limited to, removal and re-compaction depths and limits, temporary excavations, preliminary foundation recommendations, foundation subgrade preparation and maintenance, soil bearing and lateral resistance, trench and retaining wall backfill and compaction, and lateral earth pressures for retaining walls. In summary, impacts related to instability of the site's geologic materials would be less than significant for the project with adherence to the City's CBC requirements and implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1.

## Mitigation Measure

Mitigation Measure GEO-1 under Impact *a.3*. requires specific design considerations, including the removal of near surface soils down to competent materials and replacement with properly compacted fill, which would preclude potential soil hazards related to unstable soils and ensure that potential soil hazards related to unstable soils result in a less than significant impact.

## Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would ensure the project would be designed to reduce the risk for seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction to a less-than-significant level.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

*d. Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?*

Expansive soils are highly compressible, clay-based soils that tend to expand as they absorb water and shrink as water is drawn away. According to the geotechnical report prepared for the proposed project by Krazan & Associates, Inc., the project site soils are considered expansive (Appendix E). The project site conditions would be improved through the removal and re-compaction of expansive near-surface soils. Mitigation Measure GEO-2 would require the project to implement all recommendations of the project's geotechnical report prepared by Krazan & Associates, Inc.; therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-2, project expansive soils impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

## Mitigation Measure

*GEO-2 Expansive Soils Removal*

Measures to reduce impacts from expansive soils shall be implemented as determined by a qualified Geotechnical Engineer and approved by the City of El Monte Planning Division prior to issuance of a grading permit. To mitigate the potential for expansive soils, all foundations and slabs shall be designed for highly expansive soil conditions. The specific design parameters shall be confirmed prior to the grading stage, and then again after rough grading has been completed prior to the issuance of building permits. At a minimum, the following design considerations shall be considered with respect to expansive soils on the project site:

- Expansive subgrades beneath foundations shall be pre-moistened to reduce the potential for and the effects of the shrink/swell cycles.
- Fat clays (liquid limit > 50) shall not be used as structural fill under foundations, pavements, slabs or retaining wall backfill.
- If expansive soil is used within the zone of influence (upper seven feet) for foundations (liquid limit > 20), the expansive soils shall not be over-compacted or placed with soils having high soilwater contents. The soils shall be compacted to a minimum of 90 percent relative compaction but no greater than 93 percent or as specified by the project Geotechnical Engineer. The soilwater content shall be specified three to five percent over optimum or as specified by the project engineer.
- As necessary, thickened slabs, extending slab edges and additional reinforcement shall be used to reduce negative impacts from any expansive soil movement. In addition, capillary break under slabs shall be utilized to reduce the potential for moisture transport and pumping that leads to moisture infiltration.
- The sand thickness under slabs that is used for concrete curing shall be kept at two inches or less.
- Exterior concrete flatwork surrounding the proposed buildings shall be supported by a minimum 24-inch thick layer of non-expansive fill, which may consist of imported fill material.

## Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-2 would ensure the project would be designed to reduce the risk of expansive soils to a less-than-significant level.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

*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?*

The project would be served by the city's existing sewer system and no septic tanks are proposed for the project. Therefore, there is no potential for adverse effects due to soil incompatibility with septic tanks. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*f. Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?*

Paleontological resources, or fossils, are the evidence of once-living organisms preserved in the rock record. They include both the fossilized remains of ancient plants and animals and the traces thereof (e.g., trackways, imprints, burrows, etc.). Paleontological resources are not found in "soil" but are contained within the geologic deposits or bedrock that underlies the soil layer. Typically, fossils are greater than 5,000 years old (i.e., older than middle Holocene in age) and are typically preserved in sedimentary rocks. Although rare, fossils can also be preserved in volcanic rocks and low-grade metamorphic rocks under certain conditions (Society of Vertebrate Paleontology [SVP] 2010). Fossils occur in a non-continuous and often unpredictable distribution within some sedimentary units, and the potential for fossils to occur within sedimentary units depends on several factors. It is possible to evaluate the potential for geologic units to contain scientifically important paleontological resources, and therefore evaluate the potential for impacts to those resources and provide mitigation for paleontological resources if they are discovered during construction of a development project.

According to the City's General Plan EIR, the entire city consists primarily of recent, unconsolidated alluvial materials which have a low probability of containing paleontological resources (El Monte 2011a). Since the proposed project is a redevelopment project and the project site has undergone significant disturbance related to the existing development on site, it is unlikely that paleontological resources would be encountered during the construction of the proposed project. Although it is unlikely the project site contains paleontological resources, implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-3 would address potential impacts to paleontological resources in the case of unanticipated fossil discoveries. This measure would apply to all phases of project construction and would reduce the potential for impacts to unanticipated fossils present on-site by providing for the recovery, identification, and curation of paleontological resources. With implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-3, potential impacts would be less than significant.

## Mitigation Measure

### *GEO-3 Unanticipated Discovery of Paleontological Resources*

- **Paleontological Worker Environmental Awareness Program.** Prior to the start of construction, a Qualified Professional Paleontologist as defined by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP) (2010) or their designee shall conduct a paleontological Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for construction personnel regarding the appearance of fossils and the procedures for notifying paleontological staff should fossils be discovered by construction staff. The applicant will provide written confirmation to City staff that the WEAP training has been conducted.
- **Unanticipated Discovery of Paleontological Resources.** In the event a fossil is discovered during construction of the project, excavations within 50 feet of the find shall be temporarily halted or delayed until the discovery is examined by a Qualified Professional Paleontologist. The project applicant shall include a standard inadvertent discovery clause in every construction contract to inform contractors of this requirement. If the find is determined to be significant, the applicant shall retain a Qualified Professional Paleontologist to direct all mitigation measures related to paleontological resources. The Qualified Professional Paleontologist shall design and carry out a data recovery plan consistent with the SVP (2010) standards.

## Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-3 would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level by requiring that any unanticipated discoveries of paleontological resources are evaluated and treated according to the applicable standards.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

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# 8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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

## Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases

Climate change is the observed increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans along with other substantial changes in climate (such as wind patterns, precipitation, and storms) over an extended period of time. Climate change is the result of numerous, cumulative sources of GHGs. GHGs contribute to the "greenhouse effect," which is a natural occurrence that helps regulate the temperature of the planet. The majority of radiation from the Sun hits the Earth's surface and warms it. The surface in turn radiates heat back towards the atmosphere, known as infrared radiation. Gases and clouds in the atmosphere trap and prevent some of this heat from escaping back into space and re-radiate it in all directions. This process is essential to supporting life on Earth because it warms the planet by approximately 60° Fahrenheit. Emissions from human activities since the beginning of the industrial revolution (approximately 250 years ago) are adding to the natural greenhouse effect by increasing the gases in the atmosphere that trap heat, thereby contributing to an average increase in the Earth's temperature.

GHGs occur naturally and from human activities. Human activities that produce GHGs include 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. GHGs produced by human activities include carbon dioxide ($CO_2$), methane ($CH_4$), nitrous oxide ($N_2O$), hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), and sulfur hexafluoride ($SF_6$). Emissions of GHGs affect the atmosphere directly by changing its chemical composition while changes to the land surface indirectly affect the atmosphere by changing the way in which the Earth absorbs gases from the atmosphere. Potential impacts of climate change in California may include loss in snowpack, sea level rise, more extreme heat days per year, more high ozone days, more large forest fires, and more drought years (State of California 2018).

## Regulatory Setting

*State and Regional Regulations*

### California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill 32, Senate Bill 32, and Assembly Bill 1279)

The "California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006," (AB 32), outlines California's major legislative initiative for reducing GHG emissions. AB 32 codifies the statewide goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and requires CARB to prepare a Scoping Plan that outlines the main state strategies for reducing GHG emissions to meet the 2020 deadline. In addition, AB 32 requires CARB to adopt regulations to require reporting and verification of statewide GHG emissions. Based on this guidance, CARB approved a 1990 statewide GHG level and 2020 target of 431 MMT of $CO_2e$, which was achieved in 2016. CARB approved the Scoping Plan on December 11, 2008, which included GHG emission reduction strategies related to energy efficiency, water use, and recycling and solid waste, among others.

On September 8, 2016, the governor signed Senate Bill (SB) 32 into law, extending the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 by requiring the State to further reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 (the other provisions of AB 32 remain unchanged). On December 14, 2017, CARB adopted the 2017 Scoping Plan, which provides a framework for achieving the 2030 target. The 2017 Scoping Plan relies on the continuation and expansion of existing policies and regulations, such as the Cap-and-Trade Program, and implementation of recently adopted policies and legislation, such as SB 1383 and SB 100 (discussed below). The 2017 Scoping Plan also puts an increased emphasis on innovation, adoption of existing technology, and strategic investment to support its strategies (CARB 2017).

AB 1279, "The California Climate Crisis Act," was passed on September 16, 2022, and declares the State would achieve net zero GHG emissions as soon as possible, but no later than 2045, and to achieve and maintain net negative GHG emissions thereafter. In addition, the bill states that the State would reduce GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045. In response, CARB published a 2022 update to the Scoping Plan. The 2022 Scoping Plan lays out a path to achieve AB 1279 targets (CARB 2022b). The actions and outcomes in the 2022 Scoping Plan would achieve significant reductions in fossil fuel combustion by deploying clean technologies and fuels, further reductions in short-lived climate pollutants, support for sustainable development, increased action on natural and working lands to reduce emissions and sequester carbon, and the capture and storage of carbon.

### Senate Bill 100 (100 Percent Clean Energy Act)

Adopted on September 10, 2018, SB 100 supports the reduction of GHG emissions from the electricity sector by accelerating the State's Renewables Portfolio Standard Program, which was last updated by SB 350 in 2015. SB 100 requires electricity providers to increase procurement from eligible renewable energy resources to 33 percent of total retail sales by 2020, 60 percent by 2030, and 100 percent by 2045.

### Senate Bill 375 (Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act)

SB 375, signed in August 2008, enhances the State's ability to reach AB 32 goals by directing CARB to develop regional GHG emission reduction targets to be achieved from passenger vehicles by 2020 and 2035. In addition, SB 375 directs each of the State's 18 major Metropolitan Planning

Organizations to prepare a "sustainable communities strategy" (SCS) that contains a growth strategy to meet these emission targets for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). On March 22, 2018, CARB adopted updated regional targets for reducing GHG emissions from 2005 levels by 2020 and 2035. SCAG was assigned targets of an 8 percent reduction in GHGs from transportation sources by 2020 and a 19 percent reduction in GHGs from transportation sources by 2035 (CARB 2022c). In the SCAG region, SB 375 also provides the option for the coordinated development of subregional plans by the subregional councils of governments and the county transportation commissions to meet SB 375 requirements.

#### CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 24 (CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODE)

Updated every three years through a rigorous stakeholder process, Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations requires California homes and businesses to meet strong energy efficiency and sustainability measures, thereby lowering their GHG emissions. Title 24 contains numerous subparts, including Part 1 (Administrative Code), Part 2 (Building Code), Part 3 (Electrical Code), Part 4 (Mechanical Code), Part 5 (Plumbing Code), Part 6 (Energy Code), Part 8 (Historical Building Code), Part 9 (Fire Code), Part 10 (Existing Building Code), Part 11 (Green Building Standards Code), Part 12 (Referenced Standards Code). The CBC is applicable to all development in California (Health and Safety Code Sections 17950 and 18938[b]. Part 6 and Part 11 set forth energy and other conservation standards which establish, among other requirements, rules for installation of solar photovoltaic and battery storage standards, solid waste diversion standards, water conservation requirements, and electric vehicle accommodation requirements. The most recent iteration of the CBC, the 2022 Title 24 standards, is applicable to all buildings for which an application for a building permit is submitted on or after January 1, 2023.

The regulations receive input from members of industry, as well as the public, with the goal of "[r]educing of wasteful, uneconomic, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy" (Public Resources Code Section 25402). These regulations are scrutinized and analyzed for technological and economic feasibility (Public Resources Code Section 25402[d]) and cost effectiveness (Public Resources Code Sections 25402[b][2] and [b][3]).

### *Regional and Local Regulations*

#### SCAG 2024-2050 RTP/SCS

On April 4, 2024, SCAG's Regional Council formally adopted the 2024-2050 RTP/SCS, (also known as Connect SoCal 2024). The 2024-2050 RTP/SCS builds upon the progress made through implementation of the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS and includes plan elements organized within the pillars of Mobility, Communities, Environment and Economy. The SCS implementation strategies include advancing the transition to clean transportation technologies, efficient, multimodal, and accessible transit networks, compact and mixed-use development patterns prioritizing walkability, urban greening, and transit-oriented development (SCAG 2024).

#### CITY OF EL MONTE 2011 GENERAL PLAN

The City of El Monte has established a series of goals and policies in the 2011 General Plan to provide a blueprint for the improvement of the community. Several Elements of the 2011 General Plan contain several goals and policies directed at reducing GHG emissions and increasing sustainability (El Monte 2011b). The following goals and policies from the City's 2011 General Plan would be applicable to the project:

**Community Design Element**

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

**Public Services and Facilities Element**

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

**Health and Wellness Element**

- **Policy HW-2.3 Walkable Retail.** Encourage nodes of neighborhood-serving retail uses within walking distance (one-quarter mile) of all residences.
- **Policy HW-2.4 Commute to Work.** Encourage development patterns that create new employment and housing opportunities to be within reasonable distance to high-frequency transit service. Promote and support high-density, mixed-use development near existing and proposed high-frequency transit service and in proposed and existing commercial areas.
- **Policy HW-12.1 Walking, Cycling, and Transit Use.** Promote land use patterns that reduce driving rates and promote walking, cycling and transit use.

## Significance Thresholds

The vast majority of individual projects do not generate sufficient GHG emissions to directly influence climate change. However, physical changes caused by a project can contribute incrementally to significant cumulative effects, even if individual changes resulting from a project are limited. As a result, the issue of climate change typically involves an analysis of whether a project's contribution towards an impact would be cumulatively considerable. "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064[h][1]).

To determine a project-specific threshold, guidance on significance thresholds for GHG emissions in the region from SCAQMD was used. The SCAQMD's GHG CEQA Significance Threshold Working Group considered a tiered approach to determine the significance of residential and commercial projects. The draft tiered approach is outlined in meeting minutes dated September 28, 2010 (SCAQMD 2010):

- **Tier 1.** If the project is exempt from further environmental analysis under existing statutory or categorical exemptions, there is a presumption of less than significant impacts with respect to climate change. If not, then the Tier 2 threshold should be considered.
- **Tier 2.** Consists of determining whether the project is consistent with a GHG reduction plan that may be part of a local general plan, for example. The concept embodied in this tier is equivalent to the existing concept of consistency in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3), 15125(d) or 15152(a). Under this Tier, if the proposed project is consistent with the qualifying local GHG reduction plan, it is not significant for GHG emissions. If there is not an adopted plan, then a Tier 3 approach would be appropriate.

- **Tier 3.** Establishes a screening significance threshold level to determine significance. The Working Group has provided a recommendation of 3,000 MT $CO_2e$ per year for nonindustrial projects.
- **Tier 4.** Establishes a service population threshold to determine significance. The Working Group has provided a recommendation of 4.8 MT $CO_2e$ per year for land use projects.

Tier 1 would not apply to the project as it is not exempt from environmental analysis. For Tier 2, The City of El Monte does not have a qualified GHG reduction plan or Climate Action Plan. Since the City of El Monte does not have applicable GHG plans or project specific thresholds, the project is evaluated based on the SCAQMD's Tier 3 recommended/preferred option threshold for all land use types of 3,000 metric tons of $CO_2e$ per year (SCAQMD 2010). The SCAQMD's 3,000 MT $CO_2e$ per year threshold is frequently used by jurisdictions across Southern California to determine GHG emissions impacts from nonindustrial projects.

## Methodology

Calculations of $CO_2$, $CH_4$, and $N_2O$ emissions are provided to identify the magnitude of potential project effects. The analysis focuses on $CO_2$, $CH_4$, and $N_2O$ because these make up 98 percent of all GHG emissions by volume and are the GHG emissions the project would emit in the largest quantities (IPCC 2014). Emissions of all GHGs are converted into their equivalent Global Warming Potential (GWP) in terms of $CO_2$ (i.e., $CO_2e$). Minimal amounts of other GHGs (such as chlorofluorocarbons [CFCs]) would be emitted; however, these other GHG emissions would not substantially add to the total GHG emissions. GHG emissions associated with project construction and operation were estimated using CalEEMod, version 2022.1, with the assumptions described in Section 3, *Air Quality,* in addition to the following:

- The project's CalEEMod model uses CalEEMod default assumptions for energy, solid waste, water, refrigerant, and area sources for the three proposed buildings.
- In accordance with SCAQMD's recommendation, GHG emissions from construction of the proposed project were amortized over a 30-year period and added to annual operational emissions to determine the project's total annual GHG emissions (SCAQMD 2008).

*a. Would the project generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*

## Construction Emissions

Construction facilitated by the project would generate temporary GHG emissions primarily from the operation of construction equipment on-site, as well as from vehicles transporting construction workers to and from the project site, and heavy trucks to transport building, concrete, and asphalt materials. As shown in Table 8, construction associated with the project would generate 439 MT of $CO_2e$. Amortized over a 30-year period pursuant to SCAQMD guidance, construction associated with the project would generate 15 MT of $CO_2e$ per year.

### Table 8 Construction GHG Emissions

| Year | Emissions (MT of $CO_2e$) |
|---|---|
| 2025 | 291 |
| 2026 | 148 |
| **Total** | **439** |
| **Amortized over 30 years** | **15** |

MT = metric tons; $CO_2e$ = carbon dioxide equivalents

See CalEEMod worksheets in Appendix A

## Operational and Total Project Emissions

Operation of the project would generate GHG emissions associated with area sources (e.g., landscape maintenance), energy and water usage, and wastewater and solid waste generation. Annual operational emissions resulting from the project are summarized in Table 9. The annual operational GHG emissions are combined with the amortized construction emissions.

### Table 9 Combined Annual Emissions

| Emission Source | Annual Emissions (MT $CO_2e$) |
|---|---|
| **Construction** | **15** |
| **Operational** | **161** |
| Area | <1 |
| Energy | 115 |
| Water | 8 |
| Waste | 36 |
| Refrigerants | 3 |
| **Total** | **176** |
| **SCAQMD Threshold** | **3,000** |
| **Exceeds Threshold?** | **No** |

MT $CO_2e$ = metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent

See CalEEMod worksheets in Appendix A

Note: As discussed in Section 3, *Air Quality*, the project would not result in mobile vehicle trips beyond existing conditions. Therefore, mobile source emissions are excluded from this analysis.

Area emissions include consumer product use, the reapplication of architectural coatings, and landscape maintenance equipment. As shown in Table 9, area emissions would be less than one MT $CO_2e$ per year.

Operation of the proposed project would consume both electricity and natural gas. Project operation would consume an estimated 342,771 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity and 1,139,573 thousand British thermal units (kBTU) of natural gas per year (refer to Appendix A). Electricity would be supplied to the project site by SCE. The generation of electricity used by the project would occur at off-site power plants, some of which would be generated by the combustion of fossil fuels that yields $CO_2$, and to a smaller extent $N_2O$ and $CH_4$.

The CalEEMod output for GHG emissions from solid waste relies on current waste disposal rates provided by CalRecycle. Solid waste generation associated with the project would generate 36 MT $CO_2e$ per year.

Based on the amount of electricity generated in order to supply and convey water for the proposed project, the project would generate 8 MT $CO_2e$ per year.

The proposed project's total operational emissions combined with amortized construction emissions would result in emissions of approximately 176 MT of $CO_2e$ per year, which would not exceed the SCAQMD threshold of 3,000 MT of $CO_2e$ per year. Therefore, GHG emissions impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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

## 2022 Scoping Plan

The principal State plans and policies for reducing GHG emissions are AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279. The quantitative goal of AB 32 is to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020; the goal of SB 32 is to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030; and the goal of AB 1279 is to achieve net zero GHG emissions no later than 2045, and reduce GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045. The 2022 Scoping Plan expands upon earlier plans to include the AB 1279 targets. The 2022 Scoping Plan's strategies that are applicable to the proposed project include reducing fossil fuel use and vehicle miles traveled (VMT); decarbonizing the electricity sector, maximizing recycling and diversion from landfills; and increasing water conservation. The project would be consistent with these goals through project design, which includes complying with the latest Title 24 Green Building Code and Building Efficiency Energy Standards and the AB 341 waste diversion goal of 75 percent. The project site contains 20 existing EV charging stations, and the project would be located within a half mile of public transit options including LA Metro bus routes 190, 270, 488, and the El Monte Trolley Blue and Orange routes. In addition, the project would receive electricity from SCE, which is required to reduce GHG emissions by increasing procurement from eligible renewable energy by set target years as required by SB 100. Therefore, the project would not conflict with the 2022 Scoping Plan.

## SCAG's 2024-2050 RTP/SCS

SCAG's 2024-2050 RTP/SCS was developed to provide a blueprint to achieve goals within four core categories: mobility, communities, environment and economy. In addition to meeting the GHG reduction targets established by SB 375 and other regional goals, the 2024-2050 RTP/SCS was designed to deliver significant benefits to the region with respect to mobility, safety, health outcomes, travel-time reliability, air quality, economic productivity, environmental justice, and transportation asset condition. The SCS implementation strategies include focusing growth near destinations and mobility options, promoting diverse housing choices, leveraging technology innovations, and supporting implementation of sustainability policies. This plan projects that 66 percent of new households and 54 percent of new jobs between 2019 and 2050 will be in Priority Development Areas, either near transit or in walkable communities. The SCS is expected to result in an improved jobs-housing balance and more opportunity for transit-oriented development.

As discussed in Section 3, *Air Quality*, the project-specific trip generation analysis found that the proposed project would result in 61 fewer daily vehicle trips than the existing uses. The traffic consultant determined that the complementary nature of the surrounding land uses results in an internal trip capture where a trip can be made by walking or biking using internal roadways and pedestrian pathways within the multi-use development setting and would therefore reduce vehicle trip generation on the surrounding street system (LLG 2024).

Additionally, because of the retail and restaurant components of the project and existing uses, "passby" reductions were applied. This is typically done to account for conditions when the total number of trips generated by a retail or fast-food-oriented development is not entirely new to the external street system. These trips do not add new traffic to the surrounding street system (LLG 2024).

The proposed project would be located adjacent to LA Metro bus routes 190, 270, 488, and the El Monte Trolley Blue and Orange routes. Additionally, the El Monte Metrolink Station is located 0.7 mile west of the project site. The project site's proximity to public transit would encourage the use of the El Monte Metrolink, Trolley Stations and LA Metro buses, for traveling to and from the site. In addition, the project would include internal walking paths that connect to existing sidewalks along Peck Road as well as dedicated bicycle racks to enable multi-modal accessibility to the site. Therefore, the proposed project would focus growth near destinations and public transit would be available within a short walk of the project site. Thus, the project would be consistent with applicable goals of the SCAG 2024-2050 RTP/SCS.

## City of El Monte General Plan

The City's Community Design, Public Services and Facilities, Public Health and Safety, and Health and Wellness Elements of the General Plan contain the following policies that would reduce citywide levels of GHG emissions at a project level. Table 10 shows the project's consistency with relevant policies of the City's General Plan.

### Table 10 Project Consistency with the Applicable GHG Policies from the El Monte General Plan

| Policy | Project Consistency |
|---|---|
| **Chapter 2: Community Design Element** | |
| **Policy CD-4.5 Sustainability.** Encourage "green building" and environmentally sustainable design concepts with respect to energy conservation, water conservation, storm drainage, etc. | **Consistent.** The project would incorporate all applicable measures of the 2022 CALGreen Building Standards, including the installation of energy-efficient lighting, heating/cooling systems, and appliances. The proposed project would also be required to incorporate the most updated rooftop solar requirements at the time of construction. In addition, the project would include water-efficient indoor fixtures such as showerheads, sinks, and toilets in accordance with CALGreen Section 4.303. Furthermore, the existing parking lot at the project site is equipped with 20 EV charging stations and would encourage the adoption of electric vehicles. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Policy CD-4.5. |
| **Chapter 8: Public Services and Facilities Element** | |
| **Policy PSF-3.7 Water Conservation.** Require the incorporation of best management practices, where feasible, to conserve water in public landscaping, private development projects, and public agencies. | **Consistent.** The project would include water-efficient indoor fixtures such as sinks and toilets in accordance with CALGreen Section 4.303. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Policy PSF-3.7. |

| Policy | Project Consistency |
|---|---|
| **Chapter 10: Public Health and Safety Element** | |
| **Policy PHS-3.4 Transportation.** Encourage alternative modes of travel to work and school by maximizing transit service, purchasing alternative fuel vehicles, completing all sidewalks, and creating a network of multiuse trails and bicycle paths. | **Consistent.** The proposed project would be located adjacent to LA Metro bus routes 190, 270, 488, and the El Monte Trolley Blue and Orange routes. Additionally, the El Monte Metrolink Station is located approximately 0.7 mile west of the project site. The project site's proximity to public transit would encourage the use of the El Monte Metrolink, Trolley Stations and LA Metro buses, for traveling to and from the site. In addition, the project would include internal walking paths that connect to existing sidewalks along Peck Road as well as dedicated bicycle racks to enable multi-modal accessibility to the site. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Policy PHS-3.4. |
| **Chapter 11: Health and Wellness Element** | |
| **Policy HW-2.3 Walkable Retail.** Encourage nodes of neighborhood-serving retail uses within walking distance (one-quarter mile) of all residences.<br>**Policy HW-2.4 Commute to Work.** Encourage development patterns that create new employment and housing opportunities to be within reasonable distance to high-frequency transit service. Promote and support high-density, mixed-use development near existing and proposed high-frequency transit service and in proposed and existing commercial areas.<br>**Policy HW-12.1 Walking, Cycling, and Transit Use.** Promote land use patterns that reduce driving rates and promote walking, cycling and transit use. | **Consistent.** The proposed project would establish neighborhood-serving retail uses within walking distance of residential uses. The project site is located in close proximity to residential communities and other existing commercial destinations, and would promote development near existing high-frequency transit service including LA Metro bus routes and the El Monte Trolley.<br>The project would capture internal vehicle trips from existing uses at the project site, and would reduce driving rates and promote walking. The project would enable multi-modal accessibility to the site by providing dedicated bicycle racks and internal walking paths that connect to existing sidewalks and surrounding uses. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Policies HW-2.3, HW-2.4, and HW-12.1. |

Source: El Monte 2011b

As discussed under threshold (a) of this section, GHG emissions generated by project construction and operation would be well below SCAQMD-recommended thresholds. GHG emissions are regionally cumulative in nature, and it is highly unlikely construction of any individual project would generate GHG emissions of sufficient quantity to conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Standard construction procedures would be undertaken in accordance with SCAQMD and California Air Resources Control Board regulations applicable to heavy duty construction equipment and diesel haul trucks. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, and impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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# 9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| 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 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| d. Be located on a site that 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 in an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |
| f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |

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

## Construction

Project construction would involve the use of potentially hazardous materials such as vehicle fuels and fluids that could be released should an accidental leak or spill occur. However, standard construction BMPs for the use and handling of such materials, such as the use of secondary containment, would be implemented to avoid or reduce the potential for such conditions to occur. Furthermore, any use of potentially hazardous materials utilized during construction of the proposed project would be subject to all local, State, and federal regulations regarding the handling of potentially hazardous materials. The transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials during construction of the project would be subject to all applicable State and federal laws, such as the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the California Hazardous Material Management Act, and the CCR Title 22. Therefore, project construction would not create a significant hazard to the public and environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

## Operation

Operation of the proposed project would likely involve the use of common materials in the regular maintenance of drive-thru restaurant buildings and landscaping, such as cleaning and degreasing solvents, fertilizers, and pesticides. However, these maintenance activities would require minor quantities of such products and would not involve the use of extremely hazardous substances. Use of these materials would be subject to compliance with existing regulations, standards, and guidelines established by the federal, State, and local agencies related to storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. The transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials during operation of the project would be subject to all applicable State and federal laws, such as the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the California Hazardous Material Management Act, and the CCR Title 22. Other than small quantities of materials used in the maintenance of the commercial buildings, operation of the proposed project would not involve the use or storage of substantial quantities of hazardous materials, nor would the project generate large quantities of hazardous waste. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials and impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*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?*

The proposed project would involve the construction of three restaurant buildings, which typically do not use or store large quantities of hazardous materials. Potentially hazardous materials such as fuels, lubricants, and solvents would be used during construction of the project. However, the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials during the construction of the project would be conducted in accordance with all applicable State and federal laws, such as the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the California Hazardous Material Management Act, and the California Code of Regulations, Title 22. The proposed project would involve the minimal use, storage, transportation, or disposal of hazardous materials as they are used

for routine restaurant operations, such as cleaning and landscaping on site. Improper handling of cleaning products or chemicals on-site may result in spills. However, the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials would be required to comply with all applicable State and federal regulations, such as requirements that spills be cleaned up immediately and all wastes and spills control materials be properly disposed of at approved disposal facilities. Thus, the proposed project would not result in upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials or 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. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*c. Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school?*

The nearest schools to the project site include the New Life Christian School located 1,100 feet (0.21-mile) west of the project site at 3523 Meeker Avenue; Columbia School located 0.38-mile west of the project site at 3400 California Avenue; and El Monte High School located 0.49-mile southwest of the project site at 3048 Tyler Avenue. Thus, the project site is located within 0.25-mile of one school, the New Life Christian School.

During construction of the proposed project, hazardous and potentially hazardous materials would be utilized for the transport and operation of vehicles and machinery. As discussed above, the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials during the construction of the proposed project would be conducted in accordance with all applicable State and federal laws, such as the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the California Hazardous Material Management Act, and the California Code of Regulations, Title 22. Additionally, operation of the proposed project would not involve the use or routine transport of large quantities of hazardous materials. Thus, the proposed project would not result in the emission or handling of hazardous materials within 0.25-mile of an existing or proposed school and impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*d. Would the project be located on a site that 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?*

Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency to develop and update the "Cortese List." California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is responsible for a portion of the information contained in the Cortese List. In addition to reviewing the Cortese List, this analysis included a review of the following resources to provide potential hazardous material release information:

- SWRCB GeoTracker database
- DTSC EnviroStor database

According to GeoTracker and EnviroStor, there are 12 cleanup cases on and within a 0.15 mile radius of the project site (DTSC 2024; SWRCB 2024). The nearby hazardous waste sites are displayed in Figure 7, below. The cleanup program and Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) cleanup sites

are detailed below. The remaining sites surrounding the project site are either closed or open – inactive and are not further analyzed.

1. USA Gasoline Corp #260 (T10000016028)
   - Located less than 100 feet from the project site at 3538 Peck Road this site has been inactive as of January 1994. A review of available documents shows the site was formerly a gasoline service station, there are no incident reports for the site and the site is now occupied by the Wendy's fast food restaurant indicating the former use of the site as a gasoline service station did not result in the release of hazards or hazardous materials.
2. Haageni and Monte Partnership (T0603705216)
   - Located less than 100 feet from the project site at 3544 Peck Road. This case involved a LUST site with contaminates of concern labeled as solvent or non-petroleum hydrocarbon. A leak was detected in February 1988 and reported in May 1996. No other case summaries or history is available; however as of May 1996 the site has a status of "Completed – Case Closed," which indicates that required hazard remediation activities have been completed and a closure letter or other formal closure decision has been issued for the site.
3. Thrifty Oil Co #074 (T10000016048)
   - Located less than 100 feet from the project site at 3533 Peck Road, immediately adjacent to the project site. This site has been inactive since January 1985, with no history regarding contaminants of concern or a case history requiring action and cleanup. The site is now occupied by a Wendy's fast food restaurant.
4. USE Petroleum Service #260 (T0603704235)
   - This site is located less than 100 feet from the project site on the same property as site 2 (T10000016028) at 3538 Peck Road. This case involved a LUST site holding approximately 12,000 gallons of gasoline, in 1993 groundwater monitoring well samples indicated total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPHg or gasoline), benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene (BTEX), and methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE) were detected. Soil vapor extraction was conducted and terminated in November 2001 a total of 9,292 pounds of petroleum hydrocarbons were recovered. Vapor extraction was terminated due to the reduction of vapor concentrations to below detection concentrations. The last rounds of groundwater sampling in March 2003 did not detect any TPHg, BTEX, and MTBE. The site has a closure status of "Completed – Case Closed," which indicates required hazard remediation activities have been completed and a closure letter or other formal closure decision has been issued for the site.
5. Longo Toyota (T0603732390)
   - This site is located less than 100 feet from the project site at 3534 North Peck Road. A review of available materials shows this case involved a LUST cleanup site with contaminants of concern labeled as alcohols, gasoline, waste oil, motor, hydraulic, lubricating materials. A leak was discovered in November of 1998 with remediation activities commencing in November 2000. No other case summaries or history is available; however as of April 2005 the site has a status of "Completed – Case Closed," which indicates that required hazard remediation activities have been completed and a closure letter or other formal closure decision has been issued for the site.
6. Standard Brands Paint #16 (SL603798732)
   - Located approximately 150 feet from the project site at 3606 Peck Road this case as no case summaries or history available other than potential contaminates of concern listed as

volatile organic compounds with a leak detection reported in January 1965. As of January 2015, the site has a status of "Completed – Case Closed," which indicates that required hazard remediation activities have been completed and a closure letter or other formal closure decision has been issued for the site.

7. EZ Car Wash (T10000015970)
   - This site is located approximately 200 feet from the project site at 3557 North Peck Road. No case summaries or history is available; however as of September 1993 the site has a status of "Completed – Case Closed," which indicates that required hazard remediation activities have been completed and a closure letter or other formal closure decision has been issued for the site.
8. Cali Motors (T10000016092)
   - This site is located approximately 200 feet from the project site at 3647 Peck Road. This case has no history regarding the contaminates of concern or a cleanup action report; however as of May 1987 the site has a status of "Completed – Case Closed," which indicates that required hazard remediation activities have been completed and a closure letter or other formal closure decision has been issued for the site.
9. E & R Coach Work (T10000016114)
   - This site is located approximately 200 feet from the project site at 3703 Peck Road. This case has no history regarding the contaminates of concern or a cleanup action report; however as of May 1987 the site has a status of "Completed – Case Closed," which indicates that required hazard remediation activities have been completed and a closure letter or other formal closure decision has been issued for the site.
10. Mobil 18-H3J (T0603705027)
    - This site is located less than 200 feet from the project site at 3717 Peck Road. This case involves a LUST cleanup site at a former Mobil service station. The site formerly had three UST's that were demolished in August 1986. During the demolition soil samples indicated the presents of petroleum hydrocarbons. In 1995 a subsurface investigation was conducted and found the presence of 28,600 mg/kg of TPHg and 24 mg/kg of BTEX. In February 1996 additional samples showed no detection of TPHg or BTEX. Groundwater monitoring wells were installed and detected no presence of contaminants of concern after the first sampling. The monitoring well samples were reviewed quarterly for one year. As of October 2002, the site has a status of "Completed – Case Closed," which indicates that required hazard remediation activities have been completed and a closure letter or other formal closure decision has been issued for the site.
11. Homebase #09 (T10 000016027)
    - Located approximately 500 feet southeast of the project site at 3544 North Peck Road. This site has been completed – case closed as of January 1985 with no history regarding contaminants of concern of a case history indicating action or cleanup of hazards and hazardous material. A status of "Completed – Case Closed," indicates no incident or that required hazard remediation activities have been completed and a closure letter or other formal closure decision has been issued for the site.
12. Conn Service (T10000016029)
    - Located approximately 510 feet from the project site at 11456 Ramona Boulevard. The site has been inactive since January 1985, with no history regarding the contaminates of concern or a cleanup action report.

**Figure 7 Nearby Hazardous Materials Sites**


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24-16590 EPS
Fig X Cleanup Sites

Due to the project site having a history of former automobile uses, multiple cleanup program sites and LUST cleanup sites, there is a potential risk to encounter contaminated soil during ground disturbing activities. To mitigate this risk, Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would be implemented. Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would require a Soil Management Plan (SMP) to ensure the proposed project would not disrupt any hazardous materials associated with the nearby cleanup program sites or LUST cleanup sites, as recommended in the geotechnical report prepared by SALEM (Appendix D). With implementation of the SMP, impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

## Mitigation Measure

### *HAZ-1 Soil Management Plan*

If unexpected odorous or visually stained soils, other indication of hydrocarbon piping or equipment, or debris are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, the construction contractor shall halt work in the immediate area and a qualified environmental consultant (Professional Geologist or Professional Engineer) shall be contacted immediately to evaluate the situation. The qualified environmental consultant shall evaluate the material and recommend the appropriate testing, removal, and disposal methods. The project applicant shall retain a qualified environmental consultant (Professional Geologist or Professional Engineer) to prepare a Soil Management Plan (SMP) prior to construction. The SMP, or equivalent document, shall be prepared to address handling and management of contaminated soils or other contaminated wastes on the project site, if any are encountered, and reduce construction worker exposure to impacted soil as well as off-site receptor exposure to impacted material during construction. The SMP shall be submitted to the City of El Monte Planning Division for review and approval prior to issuance of a grading permit.

The SMP shall establish remedial measures and/or soil management practices to protect construction worker safety, the health of future workers and visitors, and the off-site migration of impacts from the project site. These measures and practices may include, but are not limited to:

- Stockpile management including stormwater pollution prevention and the installation of best management practices (BMPs)
- Proper transportation and disposal procedures of impacted materials
- Monitoring and reporting
- A health and safety plan for contractors working at the site that addresses the safety and health hazards of each phase of site construction activities with the requirements and procedures for employee protection
- The health and safety plan shall also outline proper soil handling procedures and health and safety requirements to minimize worker and public exposure to hazardous materials during construction
- Proper handling for unexpected contamination, such as halt-work and avoidance protocols, and notification of the City of El Monte Planning Division

The SMP shall also specify the procedures to be implemented in the event unexpected hazardous materials are encountered during construction.

The project applicant shall require its construction contractor to implement the provisions of the SMP. The construction contractor shall ensure hazardous materials are removed or remediated in

accordance with the requirements of the qualified environmental consultant and the SMP. Construction work may continue on other parts of the project site while soil investigation and/or remediation takes place. The construction contractor shall not resume work until approved by the qualified environmental consultant and the City..

## Significance After Mitigation

By ensuring an immediate response to any findings during ground-disturbing activities, providing expert evaluations, and preparing and enforcing a comprehensive soil management plan, Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would implement any hazardous materials encountered during construction would be managed safely and effectively. These steps reduce the potential impacts to a less than significant level.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

*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 or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?*

The San Gabriel Valley Airport, formerly the El Monte Airport, is located 0.91-mile northwest of the project site. However, the project site is located outside of the airport's influence area or noise contour (Los Angeles County 2004). Furthermore, there are no private airstrips in the vicinity of the project site. Although the redevelopment project site would potentially be subject to occasional aircraft overflight noise, such occurrences would be intermittent, temporary, and would not present a safety hazard for individuals at the projects. Therefore, no impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*f. Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

## Construction

Peck Road is an emergency evacuation route designated by the City's General Plan (El Monte 2011b). During construction, temporary and occasional lane closures may be required on Peck Road, Sitka Street, Alloway Street, and Stewart Street. The proposed project does not propose permanent street or lane closures. Thus, project construction would not result in inadequate emergency access to the project site or surroundings.

## Operation

During project operation, emergency response vehicles would be able to access the project site via one full access, unsignalized driveway on Sitka Street, one full access, signalized driveway at the intersection of Peck Road and Alloway Street, one right-turn only driveway on Peck Road, and two full access, unsignalized driveways on Stewart Street. The Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) prepared for the proposed project by LLG in August 2024 determined that project site access during project operation is considered adequate and motorists would be able to enter and exit the project site without undue congestion (Appendix G). The TIA also determined that there would be adequate vehicle queue storage provided in each drive-thru component of the proposed commercial developments and that the vehicle queue impacts would not be considered significant. Further, a Traffic Management Plan would be implemented for each proposed drive-thru facility during peak

periods of activity, which would require an employee to immediately be dispatched and stationed at the drive-thru lane to help facilitate drive-thru orders and prevent customers from spilling into drive aisles. Thus, the forecasted vehicle queues associated with the drive-thru component of the proposed project would not have a significant impact on any emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans. The proposed project would not modify existing roadways in the vicinity, including the designated evacuation route, Peck Road, and would therefore not affect emergency vehicle use of area roadways. Therefore, the proposed project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan and impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*g. Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?*

A fire hazard severity zone (FHSZ) is a mapped area that designates zones (based on factors such as fuel, slope, and fire weather) with varying degrees of fire hazard (i.e., moderate, high, and very high). While FHSZs do not predict when or where a wildfire will occur, they do identify areas where wildfire hazards could be more severe and therefore are of greater concern. FHSZs are meant to help limit wildfire damage to structures through planning, prevention, and mitigation activities/requirements that reduce risk.

The project site is in an urban area of El Monte surrounded by roads and structures, including residential and commercial buildings. Undeveloped wildland areas are not located near the project site. As discussed in Section 20, *Wildfire*, the project site is not located in a FHSZ or Very High Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) for wildland fires.(CALFIRE 2024). The nearest VHFHSZ is located approximately three miles southeast of the project site on the opposite sides of I-605 and SR-60. Furthermore, all buildings would be constructed to meet the current building code fire safety requirements. Therefore, the project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss injury or death involving wildland fires. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

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# 10 Hydrology and Water Quality

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: | | | | |
| (i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| (ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| (iii) 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; or | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| (iv) Impede or redirect flood flows? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

A Preliminary Low Impact Development (LID) Report was prepared for the proposed project by NA Civil, Inc. in September 2024 and is included as Appendix H to this IS-MND.

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

The project site is currently developed with six commercial buildings, paved parking lots, and ornamental landscaping. The project site is surrounded by commercial and residential land uses. Compared to the existing conditions, the project would increase pervious site surfaces by introducing more landscaped areas and planters, which would increase infiltration and groundwater recharge, reducing the amount of surface runoff. Construction of the proposed project could result in soil erosion during earth-moving activities such as excavation, grading, and soil stockpiling, and the generation of water pollutants, including trash, construction materials, and equipment fluids. However, prior to initiation of construction, the project would be required to obtain coverage under a Construction General Permit to comply with Clean Water Act National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements, administered by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB). In addition, the project would be required to comply with the LARWQCB's Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan). Under the NPDES permit and Basin Plan, the project applicant would be required to eliminate or reduce non-stormwater discharges to waters of the nation, develop and implement a SWPPP for project construction activities, and perform inspections of the stormwater pollution prevention measures and control practices to ensure conformance with the SWPPP. Further, the applicant would be required to implement all applicable source control BMPs to reduce water-quality impacts as listed under the NPDES permit and the project's LID Report. Non-structural source control BMPs for the project would include education for employees and occupants, activity restrictions, landscape irrigation practices, common area litter control, street sweeping, and drainage facility inspection and maintenance. Structural source control BMPs would include storm drain signage, roof runoff controls, and an infiltration system.

The project would also be required to comply with various sections of the EMMC that regulate water quality, including Chapter 13.6 (Stormwater Management and Discharge Control) and Chapter 13.20 (Stormwater and Urban Runoff Pollution Control).

Because the proposed project includes additional permeable surface area that would improve infiltration and stormwater quality and would comply with all applicable local and federal stormwater drainage requirements, impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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

The project site receives its water service from the San Gabriel Valley Water Company (SGVWC). SGVWC primarily sources its water supply from the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin and Central Groundwater Basin. SGVWC operates a total of 35 wells, 31 of which are in the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin and four in the Central Groundwater Basin (SGVWC 2024).

As discussed in Section 19, *Utilities and Service Systems,* the proposed project's water demand would not substantially affect SGVWC's supplies. According to the 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), SGVWC would be able to provide reliable water supplies for an average year, single dry year, and multiple dry years for its existing and planned supplies through 2045 (SGVWC 2021). In

addition, the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin is an adjudicated basin, which limits the allowable extraction of groundwater annually and provides oversight and protection of groundwater quantity and quality within the basins. Therefore, operational water use associated with the proposed project would not significantly deplete groundwater supplies or impede sustainable groundwater management of the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basins.

The project site lies above the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin. The project site is currently developed with six commercial buildings, paved parking lots, ornamental trees and landscaping. The proposed project would not substantially increase or decrease pervious and impervious surfaces compared to existing conditions, which would not impact infiltration and groundwater recharge, the amount of surface runoff would be similar to existing conditions. Therefore, the project would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge in the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin and impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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

The project site is generally flat, with minimal elevation change across the site, and does not contain any streams, rivers, or other drainage features. The site is currently developed with six commercial buildings, paved parking lots, and ornamental landscaping. As required by the EMMC and NPDES permit, construction activities on the project site would use a series of BMPs to reduce erosion and sedimentation and the construction contractor would be required to operate and maintain these controls throughout the duration of construction. Therefore, the project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*c.(ii) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?*

The proposed project would not substantially increase or decrease pervious and impervious surfaces compared to existing conditions, because the project consists of a redevelopment. The amount of surface runoff would be similar to existing conditions and upon completion of construction drainage of the site would generally return to existing conditions. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*c.(iii) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that would 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?*

The project site is located in an urban area and would not involve the altering course of streams or rivers, nor would it substantially modify the existing drainage patterns to the extent that it could cause flooding or redirection of floodwaters. The project consists of a redevelopment that would generally maintain the site's existing drainage patterns.

During the construction phase of the project, earth-moving activities could temporarily affect on-site drainage patterns by exposing the underlying soils, which could increase site permeability and alter the site's terrain. Moreover, construction activities could contribute to erosion and sediment in stormwater runoff. However, as listed under Impact *10.a*, the proposed project would comply with the City's urban runoff requirements as stated in the EMMC and the NPDES permit, which would reduce the quantity and level of pollutants from runoff leaving the project site. The construction activities associated with the project would not significantly disrupt drainage patterns, or cause substantial erosion, siltation, flooding or redirection of floodwaters, nor pollute runoff either on- or off-site.

During operation of the project, any runoff from the site would be channeled into the existing drainage system, and the project would not introduce substantial changes to the site's drainage patterns or alter the course of streams, rivers, or other drainage routes in a way that could result in flooding or redirect floodwaters. The project site would be entirely occupied by the proposed development, paved areas, and landscaping upon completion, there would be no exposed bare soil vulnerable to erosion. The drainage of the site would generally return to existing conditions with stormwater flows traveling from higher areas of the site to lower areas and would be collected in on-site infiltration features or directed towards the city's existing stormwater infrastructure. Therefore, the operation of the project would not lead to significant erosion or siltation on or off-site. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*c.(iv) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would impede or redirect flood flows?*

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) number 06037C1675F, the project site is located within Zone X, which are areas of minimal flood hazard and not considered a special flood hazard area (FEMA 2024). As the project consists of a redevelopment and the drainage pattern would be similar to the existing conditions, it would not substantially alter the drainage pattern or add to flooding risks. Therefore, the project site is not expected to be inundated by flood flows and the project would not impede flood flows. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, would the project risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?*

The project site is not located near any major bodies of enclosed water and is located approximately 30 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, the site is not at risk of seiche or tsunami and is not located in a seiche or tsunami zone. As described in Impact *10.c.iv,* the site is within an area of minimal flood hazard (FEMA 2024).

The nearest inland water body subject to flooding or seiche impacts is the Santa Fe Dam and Reservoir, operated by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), located approximately 2.3 miles northeast of project site. The entirety of the city, including the project site, is within the Santa Fe Dam inundation zone (El Monte 2011a). However, the project does not involve storage or processing of pollutants other than minor quantities of typical household hazardous wastes such as cleaning agents and landscaping maintenance materials, that could be released due to inundation should such an event occur. Additionally, Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 requires safe and effective management of hazardous materials during construction through immediate response, expert evaluations, and a comprehensive soil management plan, thus reducing potential impacts related to mobilizing potentially contaminated soil. Therefore, potential impacts related to the release of pollutants due to project inundation would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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

As discussed under Impact *10.a.,* project-related construction and operational activities would be required to comply with LARWQCB's Basin Plan by preparing and adhering to a SWPPP and the LID Plan (the Preliminary LID Plan is included as Appendix H). Upon implementation of these plans, the project would not conflict with or obstruct the Basin Plan and impacts would be less than significant. In addition, as discussed under Impact *10.b.,* the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies nor interfere substantially with groundwater recharge and therefore is not expected to conflict with or obstruct a sustainable groundwater management plan. Furthermore, SGVWC produces potable groundwater from the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin, which is an adjudicated basin. Adjudicated basins are exempt from the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requirement to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan because such basins already operate under a court-ordered water management plan to ensure their long-term sustainability. No component of the project would obstruct with or prevent implementation of the management plan for the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin. Therefore, the project's construction and operation would not conflict with any sustainable management plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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# 11 Land Use and Planning

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Physically divide an established community? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |
| b. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

*a. Would the project physically divide an established community?*

The project site is in an urbanized commercial area with existing commercial use. The surrounding land uses features a mix of medium- and low-density residential, as well as general commercial activities. The proposed project would involve the redevelopment of three of the six existing commercial buildings on the project site totaling 52,268 sf, which would be compatible with the existing and surrounding uses of the site. The project would reduce the total size of the commercial center from 52,268 sf to 37,319 sf. The project would not result in the removal of any existing roadways or the construction of barriers that could prevent access within an established community, and would not change access to the project site or modify the existing roadway network. Therefore, the project would not physically divide an established community and no impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*b. Would the project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?*

The project site is designated as Regional Commercial and is zoned General Commercial by the City of El Monte (El Monte 2023a, El Monte 2023b). Because the project would have no conflict with the General Plan and/or zoning regulations, no significant environmental impact would occur from such a conflict. As a redevelopment project with existing commercial land use, the project would not cause a significant environmental impact due to conflict with any goals, objectives, and policies of applicable land use plans., including SCAG's 2020-2045 RTP/SCS. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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# 12 Mineral Resources

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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?*

*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?*

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) was enacted to promote conservation and protection of significant mineral deposits. According to the California Department of Conservation Mineral Land Classification Maps, the project site is within an area classified as Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ)-2, which indicates that the project site contains identified mineral resources (DOC 1994). However, the project site has not historically been used for mineral resource recovery and is surrounded by urbanized areas primarily developed with residential and commercial land uses. Therefore, the project site and surrounding area are not used for or compatible with mineral deposit recovery. In addition, according to the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM), there are no active oil extraction-sites in the vicinity of the project site (CalGEM 2024). Given the existing conditions of the project site and surrounding area, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource, and no impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

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# 13 Noise

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project result in: | | | | |
| a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |

## Overview of Noise and Vibration

Sound is a vibratory disturbance created by a moving or vibrating source, which is capable of being detected by the hearing organs. Noise is defined as sound that is loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired and may therefore be classified as a more specific group of sounds. The effects of noise on people can include general annoyance, interference with speech communication, sleep disturbance, and, in the extreme, hearing impairment (Caltrans 2013).

## Human Perception of Sound

Noise levels are commonly measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). The A-weighting scale is an adjustment to the actual sound pressure levels so that they are consistent with the human hearing response. Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale that quantifies sound intensity in a manner similar to the Richter scale used to measure earthquake magnitudes. A doubling of the energy of a noise source, such as doubling of traffic volume, would increase the noise level by 3 dB; dividing the energy in half would result in a 3 dB decrease (Caltrans 2013).

Human perception of noise has no simple correlation with sound energy: the perception of sound is not linear in terms of dBA or in terms of sound energy. Two sources do not “sound twice as loud” as one source. It is widely accepted that the average healthy ear can barely perceive changes of 3 dBA, increase or decrease (i.e., twice the sound energy); that a change of 5 dBA is readily perceptible

(8 times the sound energy); and that an increase (or decrease) of 10 dBA sounds twice (half) as loud (10.5 times the sound energy) (Caltrans 2013).

## Sound Propagation and Shielding

Sound changes in both level and frequency spectrum as it travels from the source to the receiver. The most obvious change is the decrease in the noise level as the distance from the source increases. The manner by which noise reduces with distance depends on factors such as the type of sources (e.g., point or line), the path the sound will travel, site conditions, and obstructions.

Sound levels are described as either a "sound power level" or a "sound pressure level," which are two distinct characteristics of sound. Both share the same unit of measurement, dB. However, sound power (expressed as $L_{pw}$) is the energy converted into sound by the source. As sound energy travels through the air, it creates a sound wave that exerts pressure on receivers, such as an eardrum or microphone, which is the sound pressure level. Sound measurement instruments only measure sound pressure, and noise level limits are typically expressed as sound pressure levels.

Noise levels from a point source (e.g., construction, industrial machinery, air conditioning units) typically attenuate, or drop off, at a rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance. Noise from a line source (e.g., roadway, pipeline, railroad) typically attenuates at about 3 dBA per doubling of distance (Caltrans 2013). Noise levels may also be reduced by intervening structures; the amount of attenuation provided by this "shielding" depends on the size of the object and the frequencies of the noise levels. Natural terrain features, such as hills and dense woods, and man-made features, such as buildings and walls, can significantly alter noise levels. Generally, any large structure blocking the line of sight will provide at least a 5-dBA reduction in source noise levels at the receiver (Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] 2011). Structures can substantially reduce exposure to noise as well. The FHWA's guidance indicates that modern building construction generally provides an exterior-to-interior noise level reduction of 10 dBA with open windows and an exterior-to-interior noise level reduction of 20 to 35 dBA with closed windows (FHWA 2011).

## Descriptors

The impact of noise is not a function of loudness alone. The time of day and the duration of the noise are also important factors of project noise impact. Most noise that lasts for more than a few seconds is variable in its intensity. Consequently, a variety of noise descriptors have been developed. The noise descriptors used for this study are the equivalent noise level ($L_{eq}$).

$L_{eq}$ is one of the most frequently used noise metrics; it considers both duration and sound power level. The $L_{eq}$ is defined as the single steady-state A-weighted sound level equal to the average sound energy over a time period. When no time period is specified, a one-hour period is assumed. The $L_{max}$ is the highest noise level within the sampling period, and the $L_{min}$ is the lowest noise level within the measuring period. Normal conversational levels are in the 60 to 65-dBA $L_{eq}$ range; ambient noise levels greater than 65 dBA $L_{eq}$ can interrupt conversations (Federal Transit Administration [FTA] 2018).

Noise levels may also be reduced by intervening structures. The amount of reduction provided by the "shielding" of these features depends on the size of the structure/s, the location of the structure/s relative to the noise source and receivers, and the frequency content of the noise levels. Natural terrain features, such as hills and dense woods, and man-made features, such as buildings and walls, can significantly alter noise levels. Generally, any large structure blocking the line of sight

between a noise source and receiver will provide at least a 5-dBA reduction in source noise levels at the receiver (FHWA 2011).

## Groundborne Vibration

Groundborne vibration of concern in environmental analysis consists of the oscillatory waves that move from a source through the ground to adjacent structures. The number of cycles per second of oscillation makes up the vibration frequency, described in terms of Hz. The frequency of a vibrating object describes how rapidly it oscillates. Vibration levels are usually expressed as a single-number measure of vibration magnitude in terms of velocity or acceleration, which describes the severity of the vibration without the frequency variable. The peak particle velocity (PPV) is defined as the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of the vibration signal, usually measured in inches per second. Since it is related to the stresses experienced by buildings, PPV is often used in monitoring and controlling construction vibration to prevent damage to nearby structures.

## Project Noise Setting

### *Sensitive Receptors*

Noise exposure goals for various types of land uses reflect the varying noise sensitivities associated with those uses. Sensitive land uses are generally defined as locations where people reside or where the presence of noise could adversely affect the use of the land. According to the City of El Monte General Plan, noise sensitive uses in the city includes residential uses, health care facilities, and schools (El Monte 2011b).

Vibration sensitive receptors, which are similar to noise sensitive receptors, include residences and institutional uses (e.g., schools, libraries, and religious facilities). However, vibration-sensitive receptors also include buildings where vibrations may interfere with vibration-sensitive equipment that is affected by vibration levels that may be well below those associated with human annoyance (e.g., recording studios or medical facilities with sensitive equipment).

The nearest sensitive receptors in the project area include the residential area to the northeast of the project area, across Sitka Street at a distance of approximately 75 feet from the project boundary, which includes multi-family and single-family residences. Residences are also located approximately 300 feet to the west from the project boundary.

### *Noise Measurements*

The most common source of noise in the project site vicinity is vehicular traffic from Peck Road. To characterize ambient sound levels at and near the project site, four 15-minute sound level measurements were conducted on December 3, 2024. Noise Measurement (NM) 1 and NM2 were taken at the nearest residential areas to the northeast of the project site; NM3 was taken near Big 5 Sporting Goods on the project site; and NM4 was taken at the residences on Lee Lane that are closest to Peck Road. Table 11 summarizes the results of the noise measurement, and Figure 8 shows the noise measurement locations.

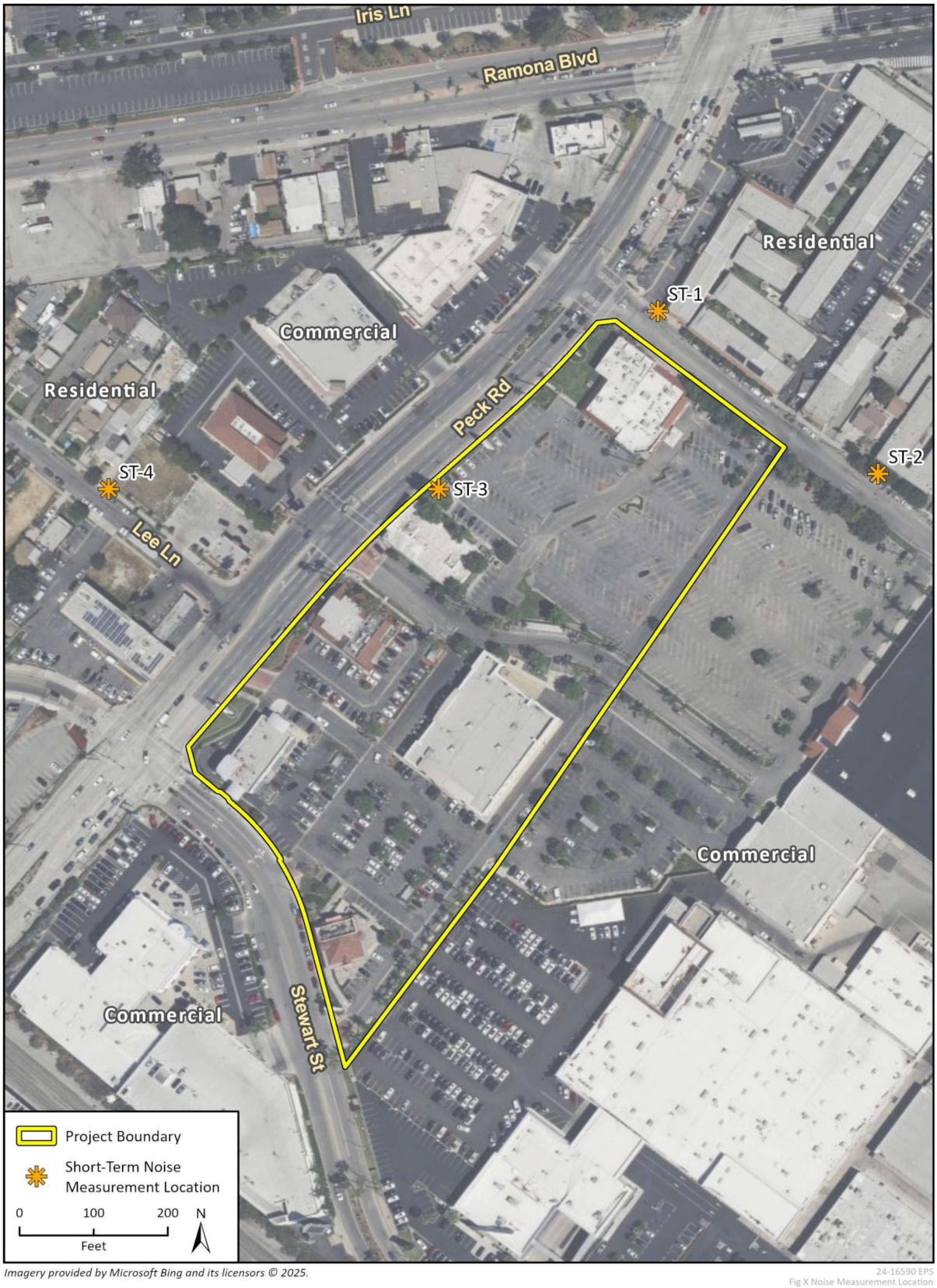
## Table 11 Project Site Vicinity Sound Level Monitoring Results

| Measurement | Measurement Location | Sample Times[1] | Approximate Distance to Primary Noise Source | $L_{eq}$ (dBA) | $L_{max}$ (dBA) | $L_{min}$ (dBA) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Adjacent to the apartments located on the north side of Sitka Street, close to Peck Road | 9:00 – 9:15 a.m. | Approximately 35 feet to centerline of Sitka Street and 70 feet from Peck Road intersection | 63.4 | 75.8 | 54.9 |
| 2 | Adjacent to the apartments located on the north side of Sitka Street, further from Peck Road | 9:18 – 9:33 a.m. | Approximately 35 feet to centerline of Sitka Street | 56.4 | 70.6 | 51.1 |
| 3 | On existing project site adjacent to Peck Road, near Big 5 | 9:37 – 9:52 a.m. | Approximately 50 feet to centerline of Peck Road | 69.3 | 87.2 | 52.5 |
| 4 | Adjacent to the residences located on Lee Lane that are closest to Peck Road | 10:00 – 10:15 a.m. | Approximately 20 feet to centerline of Lee Lane and 235 feet from Peck Road intersection | 68.6 | 87.8 | 50.5 |

[1] Measurements occurred on December 3, 2024

dBA = A-weighted decibel; Leq = equivalent noise level; $L_{min}$ = minimum noise level; $L_{max}$ = maximum noise level

**Figure 8 Noise Measurement Locations**




*Imagery provided by Microsoft Bing and its licensors © 2025.*

24-16590 EPS
Fig X Noise Measurement Location

## Regulatory Setting

### *City of El Monte General Plan Public Health and Safety Element*

The City maintains the health and welfare of its residents with respect to noise through abatement ordinances and land use planning. The City's General Plan Public Health and Safety Element includes several policies with the intent to reduce excessive noise impacts that are applicable to the proposed project:

- **Policy PHS-8.1 Residential Neighborhoods.** Continue to enforce noise abatement and control measures in El Monte, particularly within residential neighborhoods and around noise sensitive land uses.
- **Policy PHS-8.2 Land Use Compatibility.** Require the inclusion of noise-reducing design features in development consistent with standards in Title 24 of the CCR and the El Monte Municipal Code.
- **Policy PHS-8.3 Site Planning.** Incorporate noise considerations into the site plan review process, particularly with regard to parking and loading areas, ingress/egress points and refuse collection areas.

### *City of El Monte Municipal Code*

Chapter 8.36 (Noise Control) and Section 17.50.110 (Noise) of the EMMC regulate unnecessary, excessive, and annoying noise and vibration.

EMMC Sections 8.36.040 and 17.50.110 provide ambient noise standards for stationary sources at different zoning districts. The City applies these noise standards to non-transportation noise sources. These standards do not gauge the compatibility of development in the noise environment but provide restrictions on the amount and duration of noise generated at a property, as measured at the property line of the noise receiver. These sections of the EMMC provide the following ambient noise standards to single-family, multi-family, commercial, and industrial zoning districts, as shown in Table 12.

**Table 12 Ambient Noise Standards per Zoning District[1, 2, 3]**

| Zone | Day - 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. | Night - 10:00 p.m. to7:00 a.m. |
|---|---|---|
| Single-family (R-1) | 50 dBA | 45 dBA |
| Multi-family (R-2, R-3, R-4) | 55 dBA | 50 dBA |
| Commercial (C-1, C-2, C-3) | 65 dBA | 60 dBA |
| Industrial (M-1, M-2) | 70 dBA | 70 dBA |

dBA=A-weighted decibels

Source: EMMC Section 8.36.040

[1] It is unlawful for any person to create any noise which would cause the noise level at the property line of any property to exceed the ambient noise level by more than five (5) decibels for a cumulation period of fifteen (15) minutes in any hour.

[2] At the boundary line between a residential zone and a commercial and/or manufacturing zone, the noise level of the residential zone shall be used.

[3] If a residential use is located within a commercial or industrial zone, the ambient noise level shall not exceed fifty (50) dBA between the hours of ten p.m. and seven a.m.

EMMC Sections 8.36.040 and 17.50.110 also provide corrections to noise limits in Table 12, which prohibit the generation of noise that causes the ambient noise standards to exceed by the following between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.:

- 5 dBA for a cumulative period of more than five minutes but less than 15 minutes in any hour
- 10 dBA for a cumulative period of more than one minute but less than five minutes in any hour
- 15 dBA for any period of time (less than one minute in an hour).

EMMC Sections 8.36.050(A) through (E) regulate special noise sources in the city, consisting of radios, television sets, other mechanical devices, construction, amplified sound, loading/unloading activities, and interior multi-family residential noise. According to Sections 8.36.050(A), 8.36.050(B), and 8.36.050(D), any noise level from the use or operation of any radio receiving set, musical instruments, loudspeakers phonograph, television set, machinery, equipment, pump, fan, air conditioning apparatus, refrigerating equipment, motor vehicle, or other machine or device is prohibiting from exceeding the noise limit at the property line identified by the provisions of Section 8.36.040(A). EMMC Section 8.36.050(C) limits construction activities to the hours between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday or between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Furthermore, EEMC Section 8.36.050(E) prohibits the opening, closing or other handling of boxes, crates, containers, and building materials in such a manner that causes a noise disturbance between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. in residential zones.

*a. Would the project result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?*

## Construction

EMMC Section 8.36.050(C) limits construction noise to specific hours during the day but does not include a quantitative standard for construction noise. However, the FTA provides reasonable criteria for assessing construction noise impacts based on the potential for adverse community reaction in their *Transit and Noise Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*. For residential uses, the daytime noise threshold is 80 dBA $L_{eq}$ for an eight-hour period (FTA 2018).

The nearest sensitive receptors to project construction would be the residential area to the northeast of the project area, across Sitka Street. Over the course of a typical construction day, construction equipment would be located as close as 75 feet to the residential receptors, but would typically be located at an average distance farther away due to the nature of construction and the lot size of the project. Therefore, it is assumed that over the course of a typical construction day the construction equipment would operate at an average distance of 150 feet from the residential receptors.

Construction noise was estimated using reference noise levels from the FHWA Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM) (FHWA 2006). A conservative construction scenario was based upon the applicant-provided construction equipment all operating simultaneously during the building construction phase, which includes a cement mixer, compressor, crane, two forklifts (substituted as front end loaders in RCNM), and a pressure washer (substituted as pneumatic tools in RCNM). Project construction would generate a noise level of 75 dBA Leq at a distance of 150 feet. This would not exceed the FTA's residential daytime noise threshold of 80 dBA $L_{eq}$ for an eight-hour period. In addition, construction activities would occur during the permitted hours identified by EMMC Section 8.36.050(C) (i.e., between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and

8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekends). Therefore, noise impacts from construction equipment would be less than significant.

## On-site Operation Noise

Operational noise sources would include the drive-thru speakers, restaurant mechanical equipment (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [HVAC] units), and car idling within the drive-thru lanes.

Based on reference noise measurements of passenger cars, car idling produces an average noise level of approximately 57 dBA at a distance of 13 feet away (Przydatek et al. 2023). A standard drive-thru speaker box such as the 3M Wireless Communication System Model XT-1 (technical data included as Appendix I) produces a noise level of 65 dBA at four feet away. These sources of noise were assumed to operate as point sources. This analysis assumes a typical commercial rooftop unit such as a six-ton Carrier 50HCQA06, which generates a sound power level of 79 dBA (technical data included as Appendix I). HVAC equipment was assumed to operate as a point source emitted from the center of each building.

Noise levels resulting from project operation were calculated at the three nearby sensitive receptor locations that were included as measurements in Figure 8: the multi-family residential area located near the Peck Road and Sitka Street intersection (R1); the single- and multi-family residential area approximately 350 feet further down Sitka Street from R1 (R2); and the single-family residential area to the west on Lee Lane (R3). As shown in Table 13, the project's operational noise levels would reach up to 45 dBA at the nearest residential area near the Peck Road and Sitka Street intersection, which would not exceed the City's applicable thresholds of 50 dBA from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 45 dBA from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. for single-family residences and 55 dBA from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 50 dBA from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. for multi-family residences. Therefore, operational noise impacts would be less than significant.

**Table 13 Operational Noise Levels at Nearby Sensitive Receptors**

| | Noise Level (dBA Leq)[1, 2] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Noise Source** | **R1** | **R2** | **R3** | **Exceed Thresholds?[3]** |
| **Drive-thru Pad 1** | | | | |
| Speaker | 21 | 20 | 26 | No |
| Car Idling | 24 | 22 | 29 | No |
| HVAC Unit | 25 | 24 | 30 | No |
| **Drive-thru Pad 2** | | | | |
| Speaker | 28 | 23 | 22 | No |
| Car Idling | 31 | 25 | 25 | No |
| HVAC Unit | 30 | 26 | 28 | No |
| **Drive-thru Pad 3** | | | | |
| Speaker | 38 | 31 | 18 | No |
| Car Idling | 41 | 34 | 21 | No |
| HVAC Unit | 38 | 30 | 24 | No |
| **Cumulative[4]** | **45** | **38** | **36** | **No** |

| Noise Source | Noise Level (dBA Leq)[1, 2] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | R1 | R2 | R3 | Exceed Thresholds?[3] |

**Notes:**

[1] dBA = A-weighted decibel; Leq = equivalent noise level

[2] Noise levels calculated at the multi-family residential area located near the Peck Road and Sitka Street intersection (R1); the single- and multi-family residential area approximately 350 feet further down Sitka Street from R1 (R2); and the single-family residential area to the west on Lee Lane (R3).

[3] The City's thresholds applicable to the receptors are 50 dBA from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 45 dBA from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. for single-family residences and 55 dBA from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 50 dBA from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. for multi-family residences.

[4] The cumulative noise level at each receptor was calculated based on all sources of operational noise occurring simultaneously.

## Offsite Roadway Noise

Mobile emissions are estimated by multiplying the project trip rate, average trip length, and the vehicle emission factors. The traffic consultant, LLG, provided project-specific trip generations based on the ITE rates for the proposed land uses, as well as existing and surrounding uses. LLG determined that the complementary nature of these land uses results in an internal trip capture where a trip can be made by walking or biking using internal roadways and pedestrian pathways within the multi-use development setting and would therefore reduce vehicle trip generation on the surrounding street system (LLG 2024). Additionally, because of the retail and restaurant components of the project and existing uses, "passby" reductions were applied. This is typically done to account for conditions when the total number of trips generated by a retail or fast-food-oriented development is not entirely new to the external street system. These trips would not add new traffic to the surrounding street system (LLG 2024). The trip rate was estimated to be a reduction of 61 daily trips compared to the existing conditions. Therefore, the project would not increase traffic noise levels above existing conditions, and no traffic noise impacts would occur.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*b. Would the project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?*

## Construction

Construction activities known to generate excessive groundborne vibration, such as pile driving and blasting, would not be conducted during construction of this project. Therefore, the greatest known sources of vibration during project construction activities would be from a roller, which may include a vibratory roller. Based on the paved areas shown on the provided site plan, a vibratory roller may be used as close as approximately 75 feet to the nearest residential structure to the northeast. A vibratory roller generates a vibration level of approximately 0.210 in/sec PPV at a reference distance of 25 feet (FTA 2018), which would attenuate to approximately 0.062 in/sec PPV[2] at 75 feet away. Vibration levels generated by use of a vibratory roller would not exceed the significance threshold of 0.2 in/sec PPV at the nearest residential structure and would continue to decrease with distance at nearby receptors located farther away; therefore, temporary vibration impacts associated with construction of the project would be less than significant.

[2] PPV Equipment = PPVRef $(25/D)^n$ (in/sec), PPVRef = reference PPV at 25 feet, D = distance ,and n = 1.1

## Operation

Operation of the commercial uses under the proposed project would not include any substantial sources of vibration such as industrial or railroad operations. Therefore, no vibration impacts during operation of the project would occur.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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?*

The San Gabriel Valley Airport is the nearest public airport, located approximately one mile to the northwest of the project site. The project is not located within the airport's noise contours (County of Los Angeles 1995). Therefore, no substantial noise exposure from airport noise would occur to construction workers, users, or employees of the project, and no impacts would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

# 14 Population and Housing

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |

*a. Would the project induce substantial unplanned 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)?*

The project would result in approximately 130 employment opportunities. According to SCAG, the City's employment count is anticipated to increase from 30,600 in 2016 to 37,100 by 2045, a 6,500-employee increase (SCAG 2020). Therefore, employment growth associated with the project would account for approximately 2 percent of SCAG's projected employment growth of 6,500 employees in El Monte between 2016 and 2045. Therefore, the employment growth associated with the project is within SCAG's long-term employment forecasts and would not exceed regional employment projections.

According to the California DOF, the City of El Monte has an estimated population of 106,786 with an average household size of 3.6 persons (DOF 2024). SCAG's 2020 RTP/SCS estimates that the city's population will increase to 137,500 by 2045, which is an increase of approximately 27 percent or 29,794 persons (SCAG 2020). Without a residential component, the project would not generate a direct increase in the City's population, but the generation of approximately 130 jobs could result in an indirect population increase. Given that the proposed project aligns with SCAG's future projections and would not exceed SCAG's 2045 population or housing forecast, the project would not cause a substantial increase in population or induce unplanned population growth. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*b. Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

No existing housing is located on the project site; therefore, the project would not displace existing housing or people and would not necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

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# 15 Public Services

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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: | | | | |
| | 1 Fire protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| | 2 Police protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| | 3 Schools? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |
| | 4 Parks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |
| | 5 Other public facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

*a.1. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities, or the need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives?*

The Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) provides fire protection and paramedic emergency services to residents and businesses within the city. The LACFD has four fire facilities in El Monte. The nearest fires station to the project site is LACFD Station 167, which is located approximately half a mile northeast of the site at 11567 Bryant Road. Other stations would respond to emergencies at the project site as needed.

With implementation of the proposed project, demand for fire protection would remain similar to existing conditions since the site has been operating with commercial uses that have relied on the availability of fire protection services. Furthermore, LACFD would review site plans, site construction, and the actual structures prior to occupancy to ensure that required fire protection safety features, including building sprinklers and emergency access, and implemented. In addition, the proposed project would comply with applicable policies and ordinances for fire prevention, protection, and safety as required by the EMMC, which include development with modern materials and in accordance with current standards, and provision of fire alarms and detection systems, and automatic fire sprinklers. With these provisions and because the project site is in an area already

served by the LACFD, the proposed project would not require the construction of new or expanded firefighting facilities. Therefore, the project's potential impacts to fire services and facilities would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*a.2. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities, or the need for new or physically altered police protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives?*

The El Monte Police Department (EMPD) provides police protection services to residents and businesses within the city. The EMPD headquarters is located 0.7 mile southwest of the project site at 11333 Valley Boulevard. The EMPD has 122 sworn officers and 44 civilian employees within various divisions (EMPD 2023). The average response time for emergency calls within the city is 4.39 minutes (EMPD 2015). The City strives to maintain a minimum of seven officers assigned to the EMPD area of responsibility. The DOF estimates that there are currently 106,786 residents in El Monte (DOF 2023c). Therefore, EMPD currently operates with approximately one officer per 1,000 residents.

The project would not incrementally increase demand for police protection services, but this increase would not result in a change in the ratio of police officers to residents. With implementation of the proposed project, demand for police protection services would remain similar to existing conditions since the site has been operating with commercial uses that have relied on the availability of police protection services. As such, the project would not result in substantial adverse impacts that would require the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities. Potential impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*a.3. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered schools, or the need for new or physically altered schools, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or other performance objectives?*

The project site is served by the El Monte City School District (EMCSD) and the El Monte Union High School District (EMUHSD). EMCSD provides education for Kindergarten through Grade 8, and had an enrollment of 7,045 students in the 2023-2024 academic year (Ed-Data 2022a). EMUHSD provides education for Grades 9 through 12 and had an enrollment of 7,577 students in the 2023-2024 academic year (Ed-Data 2022). The project site would be served by Columbia School (Kindergarten Grade 8), and El Monte High School (Grades 9-12) (EMCSD 2023, EMUHSD 2023).

The need for new school facilities is typically associated with population increase that generates an increase in enrollment large enough to cause new schools to be constructed. The project does not involve the development of residential units and would not increase the number of student enrollment in the city.

Furthermore, the project applicant would be required to pay the state-mandated school impact fees that would contribute to the funds available for development of new school facilities. Pursuant to Section 65995 (3)(h) of the California Government Code (Senate Bill 50, chaptered August 27, 1998), the payment of statutory fees "...is deemed to be full and complete mitigation of the impacts of any

legislative or adjudicative act, or both, involving, but not limited to, the planning, use, or development of real property, or any change in governmental organization or reorganization." Therefore, the project would not substantially increase the number of students at local public school or lead to the need for new or physically altered school facilities. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*a.4. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered parks, or the need for new or physically altered parks, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or other performance objectives?*

The City of El Monte currently owns and operates 12 public parks totaling approximately 51 acres of land (El Monte 2011b). These areas are all part of the city parks and recreation system. The closest public park to the project site is Zamora Park, located 0.8 mile east of the project site. The park is approximately 4.5 acres and contains basketball courts, picnic tables, children's play areas, community centers, and bathrooms.

The City's current estimated population is 106,786(DOF 2024). Using the San Gabriel regional average of 3.0 acres per 1,000 residents, as given in the Recreation and Parks Element of the General Plan, the City's parkland goal is approximately 349 acres. Consequently, the existing 51 acres of parkland in the city, which equates to approximately 2.09 acres per 1,000 residents do not achieve the Recreational and Parks Element goal (El Monte 2011b).

However, no residential units would be constructed as part of the proposed project and the population is not expected to increase as a result of the proposed project. Anticipated use of park facilities due to project implementation would not increase beyond its usage under existing conditions. Therefore, the proposed project would also not create a need for new or physically altered park facilities, the proposed project would not result in adverse physical impacts associated with the construction of such a facility. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*a.5. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of other new or physically altered public facilities, or the need for other new or physically altered public facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives?*

The project site is located in an urban area already served by public facilities, such as public libraries. The City of El Monte is served by three public libraries; the El Monte Library is the closest to the project site located approximately 0.7 mile south at 3224 Tyler Avenue. As discussed in Section 14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not increase the city's population, and therefore would not incrementally increase demand on local public libraries in the vicinity. Furthermore, as discussed under Section 14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not induce substantial growth and would therefore not adversely affect governmental facilities or require the need for new or altered governmental facilities and would generally follow the same use patterns of similar existing facilities in within the vicinity of the project site. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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# 16 Recreation

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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?*

As discussed in section 14.a, the project would not directly or substantially indirectly generate population growth, and therefore would not 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. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*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?*

The proposed project would involve the redevelopment of three of the six existing commercial buildings on the project site. The proposed project would not include recreational facilities, nor would it require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment, therefore there will be no impact.

**NO IMPACT**

*This page intentionally left blank.*

# 17 Transportation

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible use (e.g., farm equipment)? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| d. Result in inadequate emergency access? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

LLG prepared the *Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines for Vehicle Miles Traveled and Level of Service Assessment* (TIA), which identifies potential impacts to the circulation system, and recommended improvements. The following analysis is based on the findings of the transportation assessment, which is included in Appendix G.

*a. Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?*

Regional access to the project site is provided by I-10 which is approximately 0.5-mile south of the project site, and I-605 which is 1.4 miles east of the project site. Local access to the project site is provided by Peck Road and Ramona Boulevard. In addition, regional mass transit service is provided by Metrolink, with the closest stop being the El Monte Metrolink Station on Railroad Street, which is approximately 0.7-mile northwest of the project site. Foothill Transit operates seven transit routes in the immediate vicinity of the project site. With the addition of bus transit routes operated by El Monte Transit and Norwalk Transit, multiple routes -are provided on most major corridors near the proposed project such as Peck Road or Ramona Boulevard. Furthermore, the proposed project involves multiple access points from Peck Road and Sitka Street. Alloway Street would also be an access road within the project site. The proposed project would continue to be served by and would not interfere with existing and planned roadway, pedestrian, and public transit facilities. The proposed project would not alter the alignment of Peck Road, nor would the project alter the operation of the existing Metrolink train stops in the site vicinity. Therefore, the project would not conflict with the transportation and circulation goals, objectives, and policies contained in and is not anticipated to conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy from the El Monte General Plan and the EMMC that address the circulation system.

## Construction

Construction of the proposed project would generate traffic for deliveries of equipment and materials to the project site and construction worker traffic. Construction-related vehicles would travel to, and access, the project site via Peck Road. Construction worker trips were estimated based on default values provided by the CalEEMod (see Appendix A). The project would generate a maximum of 30 construction worker trips per day and would require approximately 30 hauling trips per day during the redevelopment phase. Construction worker and hauling traffic may result in increased traffic in the vicinity of the project site, however these impacts would be temporary and minimal.

Construction of the proposed project would not involve any vehicle or equipment staging on Peck Road. In addition, temporary lane closures on Peck Road would not be required during construction, and construction would not require any temporary closures or alterations to the bus stops located near the project site.

To further lessen the potential impact of construction traffic, the project would be required to comply with all local and State standard conditions pertaining to construction, including work hours, traffic control plans, haul routes, access, oversized-vehicle transportation permits, site security, noise, vehicle emissions, and dust control. Whenever possible, construction-related trips would be restricted to off-peak hours. Transportation of heavy construction equipment or materials requiring the use of oversized vehicles would require the appropriate transportation permit. In addition, pursuant to City regulations, if construction work would impact the public right-of-way, the construction contractor would be required to submit a construction work site traffic control plan to the City for review and approval prior to the start of any construction work that would impact the public right-of-way. The plan would be required to demonstrate the location of any roadway, sidewalk, bike route, bus stop or driveway closures, traffic detours, haul routes, hours of operation, protective devices, warning signs and access to abutting properties. Temporary traffic controls used around the construction area would be required to adhere to the standards set forth in the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and construction activities would be required to adhere to applicable City ordinances. Therefore, construction would not conflict with any programs, plans, or ordinances addressing the circulation system.

## Operation

Operation of the project would generate vehicle trips from residents accessing the site. According to the TIA, the proposed project (i.e. proposed redevelopments) would generate approximately 4,787 daily trips, 540 AM peak hour trips, and 341 PM peak hour trips. However, the TIA concluded there would be approximately 61 fewer daily trips, 113 more AM peak hour trips, and 15 fewer PM peak hour trips, associated with the proposed project compared to the existing uses of the project site. As further described under Impact *17b*, in accordance with the City's VMT thresholds, VMT impacts associated with the project would be less than significant. In addition, the proposed project would not alter the alignment of Peck Road, nor would the project alter operation of the existing Metrolink train stops within the site vicinity. Therefore, project operation would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system. Potential impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?*

In December 2018, the California Natural Resources Agency certified and adopted the updated CEQA Guidelines. The amended CEQA Guidelines, specifically Section 15064.3, generally require the use of VMT as the primary metric for the evaluation of transportation impacts associated with land use and transportation projects. In general terms, VMT quantifies the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project or region.

The updated CEQA Guidelines allow for the lead agency's discretion in establishing methodologies and thresholds provided there is substantial evidence to demonstrate that the established procedures promote the intended goals of the legislation. Where quantitative models or methods are unavailable, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 allows agencies to assess VMT qualitatively using factors such as availability of transit and proximity to other destinations. The Office of Planning and Research (OPR's; now titled the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation) *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* provides considerations regarding methodologies and thresholds with a focus on office, residential, and retail developments as these projects tend to have the greatest influence on VMT.

According to the City of El Monte's *Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) Guidelines for Vehicle Miles Traveled and Level of Service Assessment* from October 2020, certain types of projects, because of their size nature, or location are exempt from the requirement of preparing a LOS traffic analysis. There are three types of screening methods to effectively screen projects from project-level assessment: (1) Transit Priority Area (TPA) Screening; (2) Low VMT Area Screening; (3) Project Type Screening. Based on the TIA, the proposed project meets the screening criteria for (3) Project Type Screening as a Locally Serving Retail use . Because locally serving retail projects typically redistribute existing trips instead of creating new trips, they tend to improve commercial destination proximity, shorten trips, and reduce VMT by diverting existing trips from established commercial uses located farther away to more accessible/nearby commercial uses, they may be presumed to have less than significant impacts.

The proposed project meets the definitions and criteria set forth in the City's VMT Guidelines for a locally serving retail project, and is therefore screened out from further VMT project-level assessment because it can be presumed to have less than significant impact on VMT. As such, impacts would be considered less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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

Vehicle access to the project site would be available via Peck Road, Stewart Street, Alloway Street, and Sitka Street. The project would not alter Peck Road (e.g., no roadway widening required). Local access to the project site would be provided by Peck Road and Ramona Boulevard. In addition, regional mass transit is provided by Metrolink, with the closest stop being the El Monte Metrolink Station on Railroad Street, which is approximately 0.7-mile northwest of the project site. The project would continue to be served by and would not interfere with existing and planned roadway, pedestrian, and public transit facilities. Furthermore, the proposed project would not result in uses that would be incompatible with the existing land uses surrounding the project site. Therefore, implementation of the project would not result in substantial hazards due to geometric design

features or incompatible uses. No significant adverse impacts would occur, and impacts would be considered less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*d. Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?*

Access to the project site is provided via existing driveways: one full access unsignalized driveway on Sitka Street, one full access signalized driveway at Alloway Street/Peck Road, one right-turn only driveway on Peck road, and two full access unsignalized driveways on Stewart Street. During construction, temporary lane closures are not anticipated on Peck Road, Stewart Street, Alloway Street or Sitka Street. During project operation, emergency response vehicles would be able to access the project site via the existing driveways on Peck Road, Stewart Street, and Sitka Street. The proposed project would not modify existing roadways in the vicinity, and would therefore not affect emergency vehicle use of area roadways. Furthermore, site circulation plans would be reviewed by the El Monte Police Department, the project would also be subject to LAFD review of site plans prior to occupancy to ensure that required fire protection safety features, including building sprinklers and emergency access are implemented. Therefore, the project would result in no impacts to emergency access.

**NO IMPACT**

# 18 Tribal Cultural Resources

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in a Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: | | | | |
| a. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k)? | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ |

As of July 1, 2015, California Assembly Bill 52 of 2014 (AB 52) was enacted and expands CEQA by defining a new resource category, "tribal cultural resources." AB 52 establishes that "A project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment" (Public Resources Code Section 21084.2). It further states that the lead agency shall establish measures to avoid impacts that would alter the significant characteristics of a tribal cultural resource, when feasible (Public Resources Code Section 21084.3).

Public Resources Code Section 21074(a) defines tribal cultural resources as "sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe" that are:

1. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or

2. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying these criteria, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

AB 52 also establishes a formal consultation process for California tribes regarding those resources. The consultation process must be completed before a CEQA document can be certified. Under AB 52, lead agencies are required to "begin consultation with a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project." Native American tribes to be included in the process are those that have requested notice of projects proposed within the jurisdiction of the lead agency.

The City of El Monte sent AB 52 consultation letters for the project on January 10, 2025. Consultation letters were submitted to the following eight (8) tribes:

- Cahuilla Band of Indians
- Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation
- Gabrieleño/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrielino/Tongva Nation
- Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe
- Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians

The City received responses from two (2) tribes:

- Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation responded on January 16, 2025 to initiate consultation
- Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council responded on January 29, 2025 to initiate consultation

In an email dated January 16, 2025, Brandy Salas, Tribal representative for the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, provided an attached letter from Chairperson Andrew Salas requesting consultation. A consultation meeting was set up but canceled by Ms. Salas via an email dated February 12, 2025 due to staffing shortages resulting from recent wildfires. A letter from Chairperson Andrew Salas was attached to the email stating that the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation were prepared to provide substantial evidence to support the implementation of mitigation measures to be provided by the tribe. Via an email exchange between the City and Tribe, two suggested mitigation measures were discussed and agreed to by the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation and City staff. These measures included monitoring of ground disturbance by a tribal monitor representing the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation and procedures to follow for evaluation and treatment of any inadvertent discovery of potential tribal cultural resources. The Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation did not identify any tribal cultural resources as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21074(a) within the project site.

In an email dated January 29, 2025, Christina Conley, Tribal Cultural Resource Administrator for the Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council, expressed concerns that the project site was located between two recorded "tribal cultural findings" and requested that the tribe monitor all

ground disturbance. Via an email exchange, one suggested mitigation measure was discussed and agreed to by the Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council. This measure included monitoring of ground disturbance by a tribal monitor representing the Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council. In an email dated February 24, 2025, Ms. Conley indicated that the project site is within the location of *Houtngna* village and clarified that the "tribal cultural findings" fall on the Interstate 10 Freeway, which is located about 800 feet to the south of the project site. Based on a review of ethnographic literature and published sources, *Houtngna* (also *Houtg-na* or *Huutnga*), which means "in the willows," was located near a major river system or near the foothill transition zone in the vicinity of modern-day El Monte, Los Nietos, and Bell (Johnston 1962: 171-172, McCawley 1996: 58). The Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council did not identify any tribal cultural resources as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21074(a) within the project site.

a. *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 that is listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k)?*

b. *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code 21074 that is a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1?*

As discussed above, no tribal cultural resources, including those listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or local register, or that have been determined by the lead agency to meet the criteria in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, were identified in the project site as a result of consultation. However, tribal respondents expressed concerns about the potential to encounter unknown tribal cultural resources during project-related ground disturbing activities.

As described in Section 5, *Cultural Resources*, a desktop geoarchaeological review indicates that although geological mapping, historical maps, and aerial imagery suggest a potential for buried prehistoric archaeological resources, aerial imagery and geotechnical reports indicate that there has been substantial past ground disturbance in the project site, with artificial fill soils located between 3 and 7 feet below ground surface, and the project site is considered to have a low potential to contain intact subsurface archaeological resources to the project's proposed maximum depths of disturbance, which is estimated to be 3 to 8 feet below ground surface. Nonetheless, there remains a potential that subsurface archaeological deposits could be encountered within undisturbed native alluvial soils to the maximum depths of the project's proposed disturbance. If discovered, such resources could also qualify as tribal cultural resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074(a). Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant.

As such, the following mitigation measures require a Workers Environmental Awareness Program Training (CUL-1), retention of a Qualified Archaeologist (CUL-2), and evaluation and treatment of inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources, including those that may qualify as tribal cultural resources (CUL-3). In addition, a measure for tribal monitoring of ground disturbance (TCR-1) is required that addresses the interests of both the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation and Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council.

Mitigation Measure TCR-1, below, and measures identified in Section 5, *Cultural Resources*, would address potentially significant impacts relating to the unanticipated discovery of tribal cultural resources during project construction.

### *TCR-1 Native American Monitoring*

Prior to the issuance of any grading permit for the proposed project, the City of El Monte shall ensure that the project applicant retains the services of tribal monitors from the Gabrieleño Band of Mission lndians-Kizh Nation and Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council to provide Native American monitoring during ground-disturbing activities. This provision shall be included on project plans and specifications. The tribes shall be provided with 48 hours' notice prior to the commencement of any ground-disturbing activity that requires monitoring. Ground disturbing activities are defined as activities that may include, but are not limited to, pot-holing or augering, grubbing, tree removals, boring, grading, excavation, drilling, and trenching, within the project site. Monitoring shall be limited to the disturbance of sediments from their native place of deposition and does not include any secondary movement of sediment that might be required for the project (e.g., backfilling). The monitor(s) will observe all mechanical and hand labor excavations that disturb native soils, including paddle scrappers, blade machines, front-end loaders, backhoes, boring and drill operations, and hydraulic and electric chisels. Monitoring also includes associated work using hand tools such as picks and other non-electric or gasoline tools not considered mechanical.

If evidence of any tribal cultural resources is found during ground-disturbing activities, the monitor(s) shall have the capacity to halt construction in the immediate vicinity of the find and the process outlined in Mitigation Measure CUL-3 shall be implemented to determine the appropriate evaluation and treatment, if needed, for recovery for the resource (refer to Section 5, *Cultural Resources*).

Construction activity shall not be contingent on the presence or availability of a tribal monitor, and construction may proceed regardless of whether or not a monitor is present on site. The monitor(s) shall complete daily monitoring logs that will provide descriptions of the day's activities, including construction activities, locations, soil, and any cultural materials identified, and will provide copies of these logs to the City at the conclusion of monitoring. The on-site monitoring shall end when the project site grading and excavation activities are completed or when the monitor(s) has indicated that the site has a low potential for tribal cultural resources. The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with this mitigation measure.

## Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure TCR-1 and CUL-1 through CUL-3 would reduce impacts to a less than significant level by ensuring that an unanticipated find of tribal cultural resources are evaluated and treated accordingly.

# 19 Utilities and Service Systems

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| c. 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

*a. Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?*

*c. 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?*

## Water

The project site is in an urbanized area that is well-served by existing utilities structures. The project site lies within the boundaries of the SGVWC, from which it would receive water service. Furthermore, the project consists of the redevelopment of existing commercial uses, and the project site is already served by existing water connections that would continue to be utilized. As discussed further below, under Impact *19.b*, SGVWC would have adequate water supplies available for the proposed project and no new or expanded water facilities would be required to serve the project. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts related to water facilities would occur.

## Wastewater Treatment

The City owns a sanitary sewer system of over 125 miles of sewer lines, eight sewage lift stations, and 2,687 manholes (El Monte 2022). While the City owns the local sewer infrastructure, wastewater treatment services are provided by Los Angeles County Sanitation District (LACSD) at three treatment plants: the Whittier Narrows Water Reclamation Plant, the Los Coyotes Water Reclamation Plant, and the San Jose Creek Reclamation Plant (El Monte 2016). The Whittier Narrows Water Reclamation Plant serves approximately 150,000 people and has the capacity to treat approximately 15 million gallons of wastewater per day (gpd). The Los Coyotes Water Reclamation Plant serves approximately 370,000 people and has a capacity of approximately 37.5 million gpd. The San Jose Creek Reclamation Plant serves approximately 1,000,000 people and has a capacity of approximately 100 million gpd (LACSD 2022).

According to the CalEEMod outputs (Appendix A), the project is anticipated to require approximately 3,600,296 gallons of water per year. Assuming that total water demand required by the project would end up as wastewater, the project would generate approximately 3,600,296 gallons of wastewater per year. , which would account for approximately 0.07 percent, 0.02 percent, and 0.01 percent of the remaining capacities of the Whittier Narrows Water Reclamation Plant, the Los Coyotes Water Reclamation Plant, and San Jose Creek Reclamation Plant, respectively. Therefore, the Whittier Narrows Water Reclamation Plant, Los Coyotes Water Reclamation Plant, and San Jose Creek Reclamation Plant would have adequate capacity to provide wastewater treatment for the proposed project and the proposed project would not require the construction of new or expanded wastewater conveyance or treatment facilities. Potential impacts would be less than significant.

## Stormwater

The project site would continue to connect to the existing storm drain system operated and maintained by the City. As discussed in Section 10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, compared to the existing conditions, the project would increase pervious site surfaces by introducing more landscaped areas and planters, which would increase infiltration and groundwater recharge, reducing the amount of surface runoff. However, the project would be required to comply with the EMMC and MS4 Permit, which require on-site BMPs to capture and treat flows. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts related to new or expanded stormwater facilities would occur.

## Electric Power, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications

The project would not cause substantial unplanned population growth (see Section 14, *Population and Housing*), and would not result in wasteful or inefficient use or energy (see Section 6, *Energy*). Project operation would result in similar amounts of electricity consumption on the project site,

totaling approximately 342,771 kWh per year. The project's electricity demand would be served by SCE, which supplied 81,129 GWh of electricity to its service area in 2021 (CEC 2021c). The project's electricity demand would represent a negligible percentage of electricity provided by SCE. There are existing distribution lines along Peck Road. Therefore, the project would connect to existing electrical utility lines and would not require the extension or expansion of electrical facilities.

According to CalEEMod outputs (Appendix A), estimated natural gas consumption for the project would be 1,139,573 kilo-British thermal units (kBTU) per year. The project's natural gas demand would be served by SoCalGas, which provided approximately 5,101 million of therms (MMthm) per year in 2021 (CEC 2021d). The project's natural gas consumption would represent a negligible percentage of natural gas provided by SoCalGas, indicating that there are adequate facilities and supplies in the area to serve the project. Therefore, the project would not require additional natural gas storage/transmission facilities.

Likewise, the project site is an infill project served by existing telecommunications facilities within the city and would not require the expansion or construction of new telecommunications infrastructure.

As described in the above analysis, the project would not result in significant environmental impacts due to the construction of new utility facilities and the project would be served by the existing water and wastewater infrastructure. Therefore, potential impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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

The project site would receive its water from the SGVWC. SGVWC primarily receives its water from the San Gabriel Groundwater Basin and the Central Groundwater Basin.

According to the City's 2020 UWMP, SGVWC would have an adequate water supply of water, with normal conservation efforts, to meet projected demand through 2045 in average year, single dry year, and multiple dry year scenarios.

Table 14 through Table 16 show projected water supply and demand under normal year, single dry year, and multiple dry year conditions in the SGVWC service area through 2045.

### Table 14 Normal Year Water Supply and Demand Comparison (acre-feet per year [AFY])

| Year | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2045 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Projected Normal Year Supply | 36,935 | 37,421 | 37,911 | 38,304 | 38,700 |
| Projected Normal Year Demand | 36,935 | 37,421 | 37,911 | 38,304 | 38,700 |
| Surplus | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

### Table 15 Single Dry Year Water Supply and Demand Comparison (AFY)

| Year | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2045 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Projected Normal Year Supply | 35,578 | 36,046 | 36,518 | 36,897 | 37,278 |
| Projected Normal Year Demand | 35,578 | 36,046 | 36,518 | 36,897 | 37,278 |
| Surplus | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Table 16 Multiple Dry Year Water Supply and Demand Comparison (AFY)**

| Year | | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2045 (Opt) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year 1 | Supply | 40,222 | 40,751 | 41,285 | 41,713 | 42,144 |
| | Demand | 40,222 | 40,751 | 42,285 | 41,713 | 42,144 |
| | Surplus | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Year 2 | Supply | 41,385 | 41,930 | 42,479 | 42,919 | 43,363 |
| | Demand | 41,385 | 41,930 | 42,479 | 42,919 | 43,363 |
| | Surplus | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Year 3 | Supply | 46,289 | 46,899 | 47,513 | 48,005 | 48,501 |
| | Demand | 46,289 | 46,899 | 47,513 | 48,005 | 48,501 |
| | Surplus | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Year 4 | Supply | 45,157 | 45,751 | 46,350 | 46,831 | 47,315 |
| | Demand | 45,157 | 45,751 | 46,350 | 46,831 | 47,315 |
| | Surplus | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Year 5 | Supply | 36,072 | 35,547 | 37,025 | 37,409 | 37,796 |
| | Demand | 36,072 | 35,547 | 37,025 | 37,409 | 37,796 |
| | Surplus | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The project would be constructed in accordance with all applicable CBC standards, including those that mandate water-efficient fixtures and features. According to CalEEMod results (see Appendix A), the project would demand approximately 3,600,296 gallons of water per year or approximately 11.1 acre-feet per year (AFY). In addition, SGVWC anticipates water demand to increase by 1,765 AFY by 2045 (SGVWC 2020). The project's water demand would account for approximately 0.63 percent of SGVWC anticipated water demand, and therefore, would be accommodated by the water supply available for the city during normal, single dry year, and multiple dry year conditions through the year 2045. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*d. Would the project generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?*

*e. Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?*

AB 341 set a statewide goal for a 75 percent reduction in waste disposal by the year 2020 and established mandatory recycling for commercial businesses. The City is required to comply with this law and report their progress towards achieving the 75 percent reduction goal to the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle). The City contracts with Valley Vista Services (VVS) to provide trash, recycling, and special pickup services. After collection, VVS delivers the waste to either the El Sobrante Landfill located in the City of Corona, or the Mid-Valley Landfill in the City of Rialto (VVS 2022). The El Sobrante Landfill has a maximum permitted throughput of 16,054 tons of

solid waste per day. The anticipated life for the landfill at its currently permitted capacity is January 2051. The last reported remaining capacity at the landfill was approximately 209 million cubic yards (CalRecycle 2022a). The Mid-Valley Landfill has a maximum permitted throughput of 7,500 tons of solid waste per day. The anticipated life for the landfill at its currently permitted capacity is April 2045. The last reported remaining capacity at the landfill was approximately 61.2 million cubic yards (CalRecycle 2022b). Development of the proposed project would generate solid waste, including construction debris. This construction debris would include materials such as scrap wood, concrete, and plaster materials. Construction debris would be removed and disposed of in a timely manner and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

The handling of all debris and waste generated during construction of the project would be subject to CALGreen requirements and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939) requirements for salvaging, recycling, and reuse of materials from construction activity on the project site. In accordance with CALGreen requirements, the project would be required to achieve a minimum of 65 percent diversion rate for construction waste. The removal of construction debris would only occur during the construction period and would be hauled to a facility that allows the inert debris (gravel, rocks, soil, etc.) that is currently on the project site. Therefore, construction of the proposed project would not contribute to an exceedance of the permitted capacity of any local landfill.

According to the CalEEMod results (see Appendix A), operation of the proposed project would generate approximately 114 tons of solid waste per year or 0.3 tons per day. The project's anticipated daily solid waste generation would account for approximately 0.001 percent of El Sobrante Landfill's permitted throughput, and 0.003 percent of the Mid-Valley Landfill's permitted throughput. Because the project would generate a relatively small amount of solid waste per day as compared to the permitted throughput at the receiving landfills, impacts to the El Sobrante Landfill and Mid-Valley Landfill facilities during the project's long-term operational activities would be less than significant. In addition, the proposed project would comply with federal, State, and local statues and regulations related to solid waste, such as AB 939 and the City's recycling programs for residences. Impacts related to solid waste would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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# 20 Wildfire

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project: | | | | |
| a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |
| c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |
| d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslopes or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes? | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

*a. If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

A FHSZ is a mapped area that designates zones (based on factors such as fuel, slope, and fire weather) with varying degrees of fire hazard (i.e., moderate, high, and very high). While FHSZs do not predict when or where a wildfire will occur, they do identify areas where wildfire hazards could be more severe and therefore are of greater concern. FHSZs are meant to help limit wildfire damage to structures through planning, prevention, and mitigation activities/requirements that reduce risk. The FHSZs serve several purposes: they are used to designate areas where California's wildland urban interface building codes apply to new buildings, they can be a factor in real estate disclosure, and they can help local governments consider fire hazard severity in the safety elements of their general plans.

The project site is located in an urban area of El Monte, surrounded by roads and structures, including commercial buildings. Undeveloped wildland areas are not located near the project site.

According to the California FHSZ Viewer, the project site is not located in a FHSZ or VHFSZ for wildland fires (CALFIRE 2023). The nearest VHFHSZ is located 3.4 miles southwest of the project site on the opposite side of I-10 and SR-60. Therefore, the project site is not located near a state responsibility area (SRA) or classified as having a high fire hazard.

The project involves the redevelopment of three of the six existing commercial buildings on the project site, this could incrementally increase demand for fire protection services. As discussed in Section 15, *Public Services*, the project site is in an urbanized area already served by the LACFD and would not have a significant impact on fire response times nor create a substantially greater need for additional fire protection services above current capacity. The nearest fires station to the project site is LACFD Station 167, which is approximately half a mile northeast of the site located at 11567 Bryant Road. Other stations would respond to emergencies at the project site as needed. Furthermore, all buildings would be constructed to meet the current building code fire safety requirements. Construction of the proposed project would maintain emergency access to the site and on area roadways and would not include any components, such as road closures, that would interfere with an emergency response plan or evacuation route. Impacts would be considered less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*b. If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project, due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?*

*d. If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslopes or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?*

As stated above under impact analysis *a,* the project site is not located in a FHSZ or VHFSZ for wildland fires. There are no streams or rivers located on or adjacent to the project site, and the project site and surrounding areas are relatively flat, and not at high risk of downslope or downstream flooding or landslides. The project does not propose uses that could exacerbate wildfire risks. Risks to project occupants would be addressed through conformance with the 2022 California Fire Code, 2022 CBC, and California Health and Safety Code, which establishes provisions for fire safety related to construction, maintenance and design of building, and land uses. Therefore, the project would not exacerbate wildfire risks or expose people or structures to risk due to runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. If wildfires occur nearby, there is potential for smoke to drift into the city and increase pollutant concentration for future project employees. However, due to the location of the project site in a heavily urbanized area outside of a VHFHSZ, the exposure of future employees on the site to uncontrolled spread of wildfire is low. Therefore, smoky conditions and exposure to pollutants would most likely be temporary as fires that produce the smoke are typically controlled and extinguished as part of an emergency response from the LACFD. Potential impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*c. If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?*

The project site is not within or near a VHFHSZ or SRA. The project site is located 3.4 miles from the nearest VHFHSZ (CALFIRE 2023). The project site is developed within an urbanized area served by existing infrastructure, including roads and utilities. The project would be served by Peck Road as the primary access road and the existing utilities in the project area and would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure within FHSZs that may exacerbate fire risk. Further prior to the issuance of the final building permits for the expansion, the City would review final site plans for the proposed project to ensure that design features would not exacerbate fire risk. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in temporary or ongoing impacts related to the installation or maintenance or infrastructure that would exacerbate fire risk. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

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# 21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less-than - Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Does the project: | | | | |
| a. Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially 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. 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. 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 degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially 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?*

As discussed under Section 4, *Biological Resources*, the project site does not include any mapped essential habitat connectivity areas in the immediate vicinity of the project site. Regional wildlife movement is restricted due to the urbanized nature of the project site. As such, no native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or native wildlife nursery sites exist on the project site. Furthermore, there is no suitable habitat for special-status species on the site. As noted under Section 4, *Biological Resources,* the project may affect nesting birds. However, implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level by requiring nesting bird surveys. As noted under Section 5, *Cultural*

*Resources*, no archaeological resources were identified, additionally, none of the properties are eligible for listing under NRHP and/or CRHR significance criteria. Therefore, there would be no impact related to the elimination of important examples of California history. Nonetheless, with implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2, and CUL-3 would mitigate potential impacts to cultural and archaeological resources to a less-than-significant level. Additionally, development activities on the project site are not anticipated impact any known tribal cultural resources. However, application of Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-3, and TCR-1 would mitigate potential impacts to tribal cultural resources impacts to a less-than-significant level.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

*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)?*

Cumulative impacts are defined as two or more individual (and potentially less than significant) project effects which, when considered together or in concert with other projects, combine to result in a significant impact within an identified geographic area. Cumulatively considerable impacts could occur if the construction of other projects occurs at the same time as the proposed project and in the same vicinity, such that the effects of similar impacts of multiple projects combine to expose adjacent sensitive receptors to greater levels of impact than would occur under the proposed project. For example, if the construction of other projects in the area occurs at the same time as construction of the proposed project, potential impacts associated with biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, and hazards and hazardous materials in the project area may be more substantial.

As discussed under environmental checklist Sections 1 through 20, the project would have no impact, a less than significant impact, or a less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated, with respect to all environmental issues.

## Aesthetics

The project would not cause any substantial changes from the views at and around the project site and therefore would not cause a substantial adverse effect on existing scenic vista, viewshed, state-scenic highway, or designated scenic resource. Accordingly, the project's aesthetic impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

## Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The project would have no impact on agricultural resources. Therefore, there is no potential for the project to contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact under this topic.

## Air Quality

Based on SCAQMD guidance, any direct exceedance of a regional or localized threshold also is considered to be a cumulatively considerable effect, while air pollutant emissions below applicable regional and/or localized thresholds are not considered cumulatively considerable. As discussed in Section 3, *Air Quality*, the project would not exceed SCAQMD's regional threshold for criteria pollutants during construction or operation of the project. Therefore, project-related construction and operation emissions would not be cumulatively considerable.

## Biological Resources

If the proposed project and other planned commercial projects in nearby neighborhoods are constructed during the bird nesting season, these projects could result in cumulative impacts to special status bird species and nesting birds within the vicinity of project site. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would require nesting bird avoidance and protective measures to ensure the proposed project would not impact nesting birds. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, potential cumulative impacts to special status bird species and nesting birds would be reduced to less-than-significant levels. In addition, all projects would be required to comply with the biological resources policies and standards of the EMMC which would minimize the potential for these projects to result in cumulative impacts to special status species, wetlands, wildlife movement, and biological resources protected by local policies and ordinances. Furthermore, the proposed project would have less than significant impacts related to sensitive natural communities, riparian habitat, and adopted Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3. Therefore, the proposed project would not combine with other projects to result in cumulative impacts to biological resources.

## Cultural Resources

Cumulative development in the region would continue to disturb areas with the potential to contain cultural resources. Cumulative development projects have undergone or would be required to undergo CEQA review, which would determine the extent of potential cultural resources impacts and mitigate those impacts appropriately. If cumulative projects would result in impacts to known or unknown cultural resources, impacts to such resources would be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Implementation of the project has the potential to impact unknown archaeological resources on the project site and, therefore, would result in a significant cumulative impact in the event any of such resources were found on-site during construction. Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would require the project applicant to implement a workers environmental awareness program to reduce potential disturbances to cultural resources. Mitigation Measure CUL-2 would require the presence of an on-call archaeologist during ground disturbing activities. Mitigation Measure CUL-3 would require implementation of protocol to ensure that unanticipated cultural resources are properly evaluated and treated. With implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2, and CUL-3, potential cumulative impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

## Energy

Cumulative development in the region would use energy resources during both construction and operation. Similar to the proposed project, construction of cumulative development projects would be subject to existing regulations that would minimize inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary fuel consumption. Furthermore, in the interest of cost-efficiency, contractors for construction of cumulative development projects would not be anticipated to utilize fuel in a manner that is wasteful or unnecessary. Operation of cumulative projects would generally consist of a continuation of existing uses and would not substantially increase energy usage.

The project's construction and operation energy consumption would not be considered inefficient, wasteful, or otherwise unnecessary and would not obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. In addition, all cumulative projects would be required to comply with Title 24, which establishes standards for energy efficiency and "green" construction. Therefore, implementation of the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact on energy.

## Geology and Soils

Potential effects related to geology and soils are inherently site-specific; therefore, there is no potential for the project to contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact under this topic. In addition, the project would be designed to reduce the risk for seismic-related ground failure. Furthermore, all development proposals would be required to comply with applicable federal, State, and local regulations that are in place to preclude adverse geology and soils effects, including effects related to strong seismic ground shaking, fault rupture, soil erosion, and hazardous soil conditions (e.g., liquefaction, expansive soils, landslides).

There is remote potential that paleontological resources are buried beneath the surface of the project site and could be impacted during construction. Other projects within the region would similarly have the potential to impact unknown, subsurface paleontological resources during ground-disturbing activities. However, geologic units underlain the project site have low paleontological sensitivity and potential effects related to paleontological resources are inherently site-specific; therefore, there the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact under this topic.

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Global climate change (GCC) occurs as the result of global emissions of GHGs. An individual development project does not have the potential to result in direct and significant GCC-related effects in the absence of cumulative sources of GHGs. The CEQA Guidelines also emphasize that the effects of GHG emissions are cumulative and should be analyzed in the context of CEQA's requirements for cumulative impacts analysis (see *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130[f]). Accordingly, the analysis in Section 8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, reflects a cumulative impact analysis of the GHG emissions related to the project. As concluded under Impact 8.a and 8b, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact related to GHG emissions..

## Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Potential effects related to hazards and hazardous materials are inherently site-specific; therefore, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact under this topic. It is anticipated that future growth in the cumulative project area would result in an incremental increase in the quantity of hazardous materials used, treated, transported, and disposed area wide. Cumulative projects would be required to comply with safety procedures mandated by applicable federal, State, and local laws and regulations related the transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. Future development in the cumulative area could potentially expose residents and construction workers to contaminated soil or groundwater, including on or near sites included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Cumulative projects would be required to comply with handling procedures mandated by applicable federal, State, and local laws and regulations related the exposure of contaminated soil or groundwater related to hazardous materials sites. Therefore, a cumulatively considerable impact would not occur.

## Hydrology and Water Quality

Construction and operation of the project and other projects in the SGVWC would have the potential to result in a cumulative water quality impact, including erosion and sedimentation. However, in accordance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations, all development

projects would be required to implement plans during construction and operation (e.g., SWPPP and NPDES) to minimize adverse effects to water quality, which would avoid a cumulatively considerable impact.

The project and other projects in the SGVWC would be required to comply with federal, State, and local regulations in order to preclude flood hazards both on- and off-site. Compliance with regulations would require on-site areas to be protected, at a minimum, from flooding during peak storm events (i.e., 100-year storm) and that proposed development would not expose downstream properties to increased flooding risks during peak storm events. Accordingly, a cumulatively considerable effect related to flooding would not occur.

## Land Use and Planning

The project would not physically divide an established community, or conflict with applicable land use or planning documents; therefore, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact related to land use and planning.

## Mineral Resources

The project would have no impact on mineral resources. Therefore, there is no potential for the project to contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact under this topic.

## Noise

As detailed in Section 13, *Noise*, the proposed project would not generate substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels beyond local, State, or federal thresholds nor would the project generate excessive groundborne vibration or noise. Therefore, the project would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable noise or vibration impacts.

## Population and Housing

The project would not involve residential components which would generate population increase. Therefore, the project would not implement a land use that would generate unplanned new residents and would not require the construction of replacement housing. Accordingly, the project would not contribute to an adverse, cumulatively considerable environmental effect related to population and housing.

## Public Services

All development projects in El Monte, including the proposed project, would require compliance with applicable policies and ordinances for fire prevention, protection, and safety. The project would also incrementally increase demand for police protections services and would be required to pay the state-mandated school impact fees to offset the incremental increase in demand for new school facilities. Based on the foregoing, the project would not contribute to cumulatively considerable impacts to resident-serving public facilities such as schools, parks, libraries, and other public facilities or services.

## Recreation

The project would not increase the usage of or demand for neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact.

## Transportation

As detailed in Section 17, *Transportation*, the proposed project would not conflict with a plan, policy, or ordinance addressing circulation nor would the project conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b). Therefore, the project would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable adverse transportation effects.

## Tribal Cultural Resources

Development activities on the project site would not impact any known tribal cultural resources. However, there is the remote potential that such resources are buried beneath the surface of the project site and could be impacted during construction. Other projects within the region would similarly have the potential to impact unknown, subsurface tribal cultural resources during ground-disturbing activities. Therefore, the potential for development on the project site to impact subsurface tribal cultural resources deposits is a cumulatively considerable impact. However, application of Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-3, and TCR-1 would reduce the project's cumulative impacts to a less-than-significant level.

## Utilities and Service Systems

Cumulative development and redevelopment in the city would incrementally contribute to increased demand on water supplies and would increase throughput at local landfills. Development of public utility infrastructure is part of an extensive planning process involving utility providers and jurisdictions with discretionary review authority. The coordination process associated with the preparation of infrastructure plans is intended to ensure that adequate public utility services and resources are available to serve both individual development projects and cumulative growth in the region. Each individual development project is subject to review for utility capacity to avoid unanticipated interruptions in service or inadequate supplies. Coordination with the utility providers would allow for the provision of utility services to the project and other developments. The project and other planned projects are subject to connection and service fees to offset increased demand and assist in facility expansion and service improvements (at the time of need). Because of the utility planning and coordination activities described above, the project would not contribute to cumulatively considerable impacts to utilities and service systems.

## Wildfire

The project site is not within an SRA or VHFHSZ according to CALFIRE. In accordance with applicable State and local regulations, all development projects would be required to be constructed to meet the current building code fire safety requirements, including the 2022 CBC and the California Fire Code to minimize adverse effects to wildfire risk, which would avoid a cumulatively considerable impact. Therefore, the project would not contribute to an adverse cumulative impact associated with wildfire.

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

In general, impacts to human beings are associated with air quality, hazards and hazardous materials, and noise impacts. As detailed in Section 3, *Air Quality*, the project would not result, either directly or indirectly, in adverse hazards related to air quality. As discussed in Section 9,

*Hazards and Hazardous Materials,* Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would be required to ensure the proposed project would not expose the public or the environment to hazardous materials. As discussed in Section 13, *Noise,* the proposed project would have less than significant impacts related to project construction and operational activities. Compliance with applicable rules and regulations and recommended mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts on human beings to a less-than-significant level.

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