# City of Bell Gardens

# Land Use Element Amendment, Focused Zoning Code Amendment, Zone Change, and Objective Design Standards

## Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

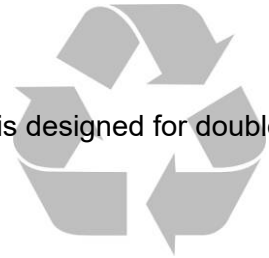
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# 1 Introduction

The purpose of this Initial Study is to identify and assess the significance of the physical effects on the environment due to potential future development guided by a General Plan Land Use Element Amendment; a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment; a Focused Zoning Code Amendment; Zone Change; and Objective Design Standards (together referred to as the "Project"). Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), the General Plan Land Use Element Amendment, General Plan Land Use Map Amendment, Focused Zoning Code Amendment, Zone Change, and Objective Design Standards together are considered a "project" and, thus, requires analysis and determination of environmental effects prior to approval.

This Initial Study has been prepared in accordance with the CEQA Statutes and Guidelines and the City of Bell Gardens ("City") local rules and regulations and requires discretionary approval by the City of Bell Gardens. As the project initiator, and because of the legislative approvals involved, the City of Bell Gardens is the Lead Agency with respect to this Initial Study pursuant to Section 15367 of the CEQA Guidelines. Specifically, the proposed Project requires the City of Bell Gardens to adopt the following: General Plan Land Use Element Amendment; General Plan Land Use Map Amendment; Objective Design Standards for multifamily and mixed-use development; Focused Zoning Code Amendment; and Zone Change. No other governmental agencies have discretionary permitting authority with respect to approval of the proposed Project, and no Trustee Agencies, as defined in Section 21070 of CEQA, has jurisdiction over resources such that Trustee agency approval is required for entitlement approval.

Pursuant to Section 15074 of the CEQA Guidelines, and prior to approving the Project, the City of Bell Gardens is obligated to consider the findings of this Initial Study and to either adopt a Negative Declaration ("ND"), a Mitigated Negative Declaration ("MND"), or determine that an Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") is required due to potentially significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. The findings of this Initial Study support adoption of an MND, as discussed in Section 4. This determination indicates that the environmental impacts of the Project components would be less than significant with the identified mitigation measures and would not require preparation of an EIR.

## *1.1 – Contents*

This document has been prepared to comply with Section 15063 of the State CEQA Guidelines that sets forth the required contents of an Initial Study. These include:

- A description of the Project, including the location of the Project (see Section 2)
- Identification of the environmental setting (see Section 2.9)
- Identification of environmental effects by use of a checklist, matrix, or other methods, provided that entries on the checklist or other form are briefly explained to indicate that there is some evidence to support the entries (see Sections 3 and 4)
- A discussion of the ways to mitigate significant effects (see Section 4)
- Examination of whether the Project is compatible with existing zoning, plans, and other applicable land use controls (see Sections 2.6 and 2.7)
- The name(s) of the person(s) who prepared or participated in the preparation of the Initial Study (see Section 5.1)

## 1.2 – Approach

The environmental analysis contained in this Initial Study is based on the following assumptions:

**Categorical Exemptions:** Smaller-scale ministerial projects that require issuance of building permits without need for discretionary action are generally exempt from CEQA environmental review in the absence of compelling evidence that the project is unique in that it may result in significant individual and/or cumulative impacts. Smaller-scale projects may be exempt from CEQA and require no further analysis. Exempt projects are considered to have no significant impact on the environment, as defined in Section 15300 of the CEQA Guidelines.

**Project Specific Environmental Review:** Future development proposals not exempt from CEQA will be subject to the environmental review process to identify potential impacts and impose appropriate mitigation measures, if needed, to avoid significant impacts.

**Purpose of Environmental Review:** The Project does not authorize any plan for construction projects or the redevelopment of any properties within the local jurisdiction. No direct environmental impacts, therefore, will occur as a result of adoption of the Project. This Initial Study assesses the potential programmatic level environmental impacts resulting from potential development facilitated by the proposed Project.

The Project would result in no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category. With the exception of a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment that changes the Land Use designation and type of development that could occur on a 1.41-acre parcel (which currently includes urban development), the Project would not result in a change in the amount or intensity of development that could be developed within the City.

Because this is a program-level analysis and does not include approval of any site-specific development projects, the program-level analysis of the potential impacts is inherently broad and typically qualitative due to the lack of specific project-level information.

# 2 Project Description

## *2.1 – Project Title*

Land Use Element Amendment, Focused Zoning Code Amendment, Zone Change, and Objective Design Standards

## *2.2 – Lead Agency Name and Address*

City of Bell Gardens
Community Development Department
7100 Garfield Avenue
Bell Gardens, CA 90201

## *2.3 – Contact Person and Phone Number*

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## *2.4 – Project Location*

The Project would apply to the entire geographic area located within the boundaries of the City of Bell Gardens (City), located in the southern portion of Los Angeles County approximately 13 miles southeast of the Los Angeles Civic Center. Figure 1, Regional Location Map, shows the boundaries of the City and its location within the region.

## *2.5 – Project Sponsor's Name and Address*

City of Bell Gardens
Community Development Department
7100 Garfield Avenue
Bell Gardens, CA 90201

## *2.6 – General Plan Land Use Designations*

The Bell Gardens General Plan provides for a range of land use designations in the City that can accommodate development. General Plan Land Use designations include the following: Low Density Residential (LDR); Medium Density Residential (MDR); High Density Residential (HDR); Very High Density Residential (HDR); Mixed Use (Commercial/Residential) (MU); General Commercial (GC); Regional Commercial (RC); Industrial (I);Open Space/Parks (O-S); and Public/Institutional (P).

## 2.7 – Zoning Districts

The Bell Gardens zoning code includes a range of zoning districts and overlay districts. Zoning districts includes the following: R-1 (Low Density Residential); R-2 (Medium Density Residential); R-3 (High Density Residential); R-4 (Very High Density Residential); M-U (Mixed Use Commercial/Residential); C-S (Commercial Service and Professional); C-4 (Heavy Commercial); C-M (Commercial/Manufacturing); M-1 (Light Industrial); MPD (Manufacturing Planned Development); O-S (Open Space/Parks); and P-I (Public/Institutional). The zoning code includes the following Overlay Districts: CCOD (Civic Center District); Electronic Billboard Overlay District; HPD (Historical Preservation District); PBD (Parking and Buffer District); and RPDD (Residential Planned Development District).

## 2.8 – Project Description

The Project consists of targeted updates to several interrelated plans and land use regulations including: a General Plan Land Use Element Amendment; a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment; a focused Zoning Code Amendment; Zone Change; and new Objective Design Standards. Within this Initial Study, all components of the Project are referred to as the "General Plan Land Use Element and Zoning Code Amendment," "Amendment," or the "Project." This Project effort builds on the City's recent updates to the General Plan Housing Element, Circulation Element, Environmental Justice Element, and Climate Action Plan. The proposed Project would align with the sixth cycle Housing Element (adopted in February 2022) and position the City to better support its housing and economic development needs and goals.

Components of the Project include the following, which are further described below:

- General Plan Amendment – Land Use Element
- General Plan Land Use Map Amendment
- Zoning Code Amendments (Focused)
- Zone Change
- Objective Design Standards for multifamily and mixed-use development

**General Plan Amendment – Land Use Element**
The Land Use Element is a chapter of the General Plan. The overall role of the Land Use Element is to:

- Express policy direction regarding the physical, social, and economic character of Bell Gardens
- Serve as a comprehensive guide for making decisions about land use
- Provide the legal foundation for zoning and subdivision ordinances, other adopted Citywide plans, and compliance with the CEQA decisions and projects, all of which must be consistent with the General Plan

The current Land Use Element was adopted in 1995 and has not been comprehensively updated in approximately 30 years. In the intervening decades, California housing law, regional planning requirements, and the City's own policies have advanced considerably, creating gaps between adopted policies and implementing regulations that the amendment will resolve. The amendment would align the Sixth Cycle Housing Element, new Environmental Justice Element, updated Circulation Element, the Climate Action Plan, and applicable California laws within a new Land Use Element. In addition, the

proposed Land Use Element would add a new economic focus with related policies to guide land use and fiscal decision-making.

The proposed Land Use Element contains goals, policies, and programs that will provide City staff and discretionary bodies with a foundation for decisions on development projects and long-range planning related to physical development and public services. Focus areas identify where additional emphasis is placed on policy implementation. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category, other than clarifications.

***Guiding Principles***

The guiding principles express Bell Gardens' values and set the direction for the General Plan Land Use Element goals, policies, and implementation programs.

- Community Support: We value stable residential neighborhoods and established legacy businesses for the benefits they bring to our community.
- Strong, Flexible Economy: We proactively work toward a diverse economic base that fosters business growth and long-term prosperity.
- Diverse and Welcoming Spaces: Our city is inclusive and our spaces foster a sense of belonging, connectedness and where everyone can feel included and safe.
- Context-Sensitive Design: We embrace progress through thoughtful growth that respects the City's identity.
- Housing for All: We support housing options that meet the needs of all residents, balancing affordability, neighborhood character, and community desires.

***Focus Areas***

Focus Areas describe the vision for implementing land use policy in key areas of Bell Gardens. For each of these areas, a decision-making framework to protect, modernize, or support transition of existing uses is identified. A map of the focus areas is shown in Figure 2.

**Focus Area 1: Eastern and Gage Gateway and Downtown.** The Downtown Focus Area builds on the strong foundation in place, supporting local businesses and residents while transforming Downtown Bell Gardens into a vibrant destination.

**Focus Area 2: Casino District (Casino and Surrounding Area).** The Casino District Focus Area envisions an integrated district surrounding the Bicycle Casino, supporting the Casino with complementary hospitality and entertainment activation that provide synergy with desired established uses.

**Focus Area 3: Commercial Core.** The Commercial Core Focus Area supports the modernization of commercial shopping centers with retail, dining, and entertainment uses combined in a welcoming and lively environment.

**Focus Area 4: Civic Center.** The Civic Center Focus Area is reactivated, with vacant and underutilized sites along Garfield Avenue providing venues for markets, public events, and local celebrations.

**Focus Area 5: Industrial Nodes.** The Industrial Focus Area evolves as a modern, production-oriented flex-industrial hub anchored by higher-paying, innovation-driven jobs in the manufacturing, logistics, and craft sectors.

**Focus Area 6: Garfield and Florence Transit Node.** The Garfield and Florence Focus Area is envisioned as a walkable, higher-intensity destination with active ground floors, human-scale design, and convenient transit access for the magnitudes of daily commuters who pass through.

**Focus Area 7: Florence and Jaboneria Commercial Hub.** The Florence and Jaboneria Commercial Hub offers a high-quality shopping experience at the heart of Bell Gardens, blending established and new businesses of varied sizes within a cohesive and lively streetscape.

***Goals and Policies***
Goals and policies put the General Plan Land Use Element guiding principles to action by establishing desired outcomes and providing guidance for achieving them. Goals and policies identified in the General Plan Land Use Element Amendment are listed below.

**Vibrant Neighborhoods Goal:** Thriving stable, and well-designed residential neighborhoods that meet the diverse needs of the community.

**Related Policies:**

- **LU-1.1** Preserve and enhance established neighborhoods by maintaining character, supporting sensitive land use transitions, and ensuring compatible adjacent development.
- **LU-1.2** Guard against displacement and gentrification through anti-displacement tools, the preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing, and attention to affordability in areas that are changing.
- **LU-1.3** Support complete neighborhoods in which daily needs, parks, and shade are within reach.
- **LU-1.4** Prioritize complete neighborhoods in the densest areas and those near the I-710.
- **LU-1.5** Direct new housing to mixed-use and higher density residential areas, expanding housing capacity where appropriate, while protecting commercial and industrial land.
- **LU-1.6** Maintain and improve residential neighborhoods by supporting a range of housing options for all residents, consistent with the housing preservation and production strategies detailed in the Housing Element.
- **LU-1.7** Allow legally established nonconforming uses and buildings to be maintained, have minor expansions where appropriate, and be reconstructed if destroyed by fire or natural disaster. Encourage reconstruction and/or minor expansions to have a design that is visually compatible with surrounding development and complies with the City's development standards.
- **LU-1.8** Provide a wide range of land uses, including housing, parks, open space, recreation, retail, commercial services, office, and industrial to adequately meet the full spectrum of needs in the community.
- **LU-1.9** Promote ownership-based housing, such as condominiums and townhouses.
- **LU-1.10** Promote safe, attractive, and walkable residential neighborhoods with diverse types and sizes of homes for individuals, families, and households of all income levels.

**Community Design, Identity, and Walkability Goal:** An identifiable pleasant aesthetic character, distinct community identity, and enhanced pedestrian connectivity.

**Related Policies:**

- **LU-2.1** Promote high-quality architectural design and visually engaging, varied building façades.
- **LU-2.2** Prioritize walkability along the corridors and in mixed-use areas through street trees, shade, lighting, seating, and pedestrian crossings.
- **LU-2.3** Design streets and buildings that incorporate active frontages, visible ground-floor uses, and clear sight lines.
- **LU-2.4** Reflect and celebrate the community identity of Bell Gardens in gateway features, public spaces, corridors, and design.
- **LU-2.5** Encourage flexible public gathering nodes, pedestrian-focused infrastructure, and spaces accommodating local micro-commerce.
- **LU-2.6** Encourage plazas, courtyards, and outdoor gathering spaces in commercial, mixed-use, and civic areas.

**Corridor Modernization and Adaptive Reuse Goal:** Revitalization and modernization of commercial corridors prioritizing business retention, reinvestment, and compatible redevelopment.

**Related Policies:**

- **LU-3.1** Direct resources and attention toward reinvestment along the commercial corridors, prioritizing revitalization.
- **LU-3.2** Encourage densification and commercial-led mixed use in the Mixed Use land use designation.
- **LU-3.3** Pair corridor reinvestment with tools that preserve affordability and keep existing businesses and residents in place.
- **LU-3.4** Build genuine downtown character at the Eastern/Gage gateway by concentrating activity, requiring active ground-floor uses where they support pedestrian life, and strengthening the sense of arrival into the district.
- **LU-3.5** Modernize aging but viable large-format retail, service, and office uses in place, adding density and variety.
- **LU-3.6** Encourage vibrant public gathering spaces and activities along commercial corridors to draw people in and strengthen community life.

**Mixed-Use and Transit Oriented Development Goal:** Walkable, mixed-use districts that support infill housing while protecting key revenue and jobs sources.

**Related Policies:**

- **LU-4.1** Concentrate mixed-use with ground-floor commercial uses in the Eastern/Gage Gateway and Downtown Focus Area and allow standalone residential in the other mixed-use areas.
- **LU-4.2** Give priority along the major corridors to ground-floor or adjoining commercial space in mixed-use developments so that housing arrives with uses that generate revenue and jobs.
- **LU-4.3** Support walkability, connectivity, and transit access along major commercial and mixed-use corridors to support a more vibrant, accessible, and less car-dependent community.

- **LU-4.4** Support zoning standards and procedural efforts that make higher-density and mixed-use housing feasible and predictable.

**Economic Competitiveness and Job Quality Goal:** A diversified, resilient, and competitive local economy that expands employment opportunities, preserves local business assets, and strengthens the city's economic position within the region.

**Related Policies:**

- **LU-5.1** Establish a competitive local economy that supports better-paying jobs and legacy businesses on commercial and industrial land.
- **LU-5.2** Prioritize the retention and expansion of existing businesses and attract new businesses that strengthen and diversify the City's economic base.
- **LU-5.3** Protect and modernize industrial land for higher-wage, lower-emissions employment.
- **LU-5.4** Limit low-job, low-revenue uses such as self-storage, and avoid land-intensive uses such as data centers that offer little public benefit relative to the scarce land and resources they consume.
- **LU-5.5** Strengthen the connections between the Parkwest Bicycle Casino and major commercial areas and its surrounding businesses.
- **LU-5.6** Ensure improvements to the Parkwest Bicycle Casino and major commercial areas focus on drawing visitors that also patronize the rest of Bell Gardens.
- **LU-5.7** Provide streamlined development processes with clear standards, predictable procedures, and responsiveness to applicants.
- **LU-5.8** Connect residents and businesses with workforce, technical-assistance, and economic-development resources, helping residents access good jobs and employers find the workers they need to grow.
- **LU-5.9** Achieve a balance of commercial uses that provides for the retail, business, professional, and service needs of City residents, and that will attract customers from the surrounding region.
- **LU-5.10** Encourage a diverse mix of uses that provide opportunities for employment of residents of all skill and education levels.
- **LU-5.11** Encourage developers and contractors doing work in the city to evaluate hiring local labor and providing living wages.
- **LU-5.12** Assist small businesses stay and grow by offering tools and support, such as, but not limited to, multilingual outreach, assistance accessing free educational services and financing opportunities, and assistance understanding City requirements and preparing for code compliance.

**Fiscal Sustainability and Revenue Protection Goal:** Long-term municipal fiscal sustainability through the strategic management of land resources, protection of core revenue generators, and diversification of the city's economic base.

**Related Policies:**

- **LU-6.1** Sustain a diverse revenue base that can withstand the decline of any single source.

- **LU-6.2** Determine and support the highest long-term value of the limited land available within the City.
- **LU-6.3** Protect the City's major revenue generators, including the Parkwest Bicycle Casino, large-format regional commercial centers, and productive light-industrial uses, and limit their conversion to other uses to only where such conversion clearly benefits the City.
- **LU-6.4** Weigh the long-term fiscal impact of land use decisions using a consistent screening method based on the Protect, Modernize, and Transition framework.
- **LU-6.5** Diversify the City's revenue base by encouraging revenue-producing uses across a broader range of locations.
- **LU-6.6** Prepare contingency plans for alternate uses of the Casino district and the City-owned parking lot in particular, including new uses and/or development programs that maintain site revenue generation in the event of sustained downturn in casino performance.
- **LU-6.7** Grow revenue from existing assets, such as property values, retail sales, and commercial activity, through modernization, active leasing, and partnerships rather than displacement.
- **LU-6.8** Prioritize development that generates net municipal revenue, pairing new housing with revenue- or job-generating uses so growth helps cover the cost of City services.
- **LU-6.9** Plan strategically for the few remaining vacant, underutilized, or publicly owned parcels, directing them toward uses that strengthen City finances or provide other lasting community benefits over the long term.
- **LU-6.10** Maintain and update schedule of fees consistent with industry standards, and considerate of the needs of the community.

**Community Facilities and Infrastructure Goal**: Civic uses and public infrastructure located, distributed, and maintained to anchor community life and serve every neighborhood, with the Civic Center revitalized as an active civic hub.

**Related Policies:**

- **LU-7.1** Revitalize the Civic Center as an active civic hub that catalyzes vitality to the surrounding area over time by encouraging supportive land uses.
- **LU-7.2** Hold public infrastructure, including sidewalks, streets, lighting, and utilities, to a consistent design standard of safety and accessibility across all neighborhoods so that quality of service does not vary by area of the city.
- **LU-7.3** Address parking pressures at a citywide, policy-level scale by prioritizing resident access in the densest neighborhoods and supporting alternative parking solutions where intensification occurs.
- **LU-7.4** Ensure equitable access to community-serving facilities by locating them so that residents in every neighborhood can reach them without needing a car, whether on foot, by transit, or by bicycle.
- **LU-7.5** Keep public spaces and civic life inclusive and welcoming so that residents feel a sense of belonging and connection.
- **LU-7.6** Ensure public land uses and utilities are visually and functionally compatible with surrounding development.

- **LU-7.7** Establish development standards requiring underground utilities for all new development.
- **LU-7.8** Require all utilities to be designed and installed in a manner that minimizes visual and environmental impacts.

**Sustainable Development, Environmental Quality, and Industrial Compatibility Goal**: A cooler, cleaner, greener Bell Gardens.

**Related Policies:**

- **LU-8.1** Encourage sustainable building practices, such as green building, electrification, rooftop solar, and reflective or cool materials, especially in industrial and higher-intensity areas.
- **LU-8.2** Protect and expand the urban forest and green infrastructure to reduce the heat island effect and improve walkability.
- **LU-8.3** Protect homes, schools, and other sensitive uses from the noise, truck traffic, and air quality impacts of nearby industrial and warehousing uses consistent with the City's environmental justice and warehouse-siting obligations under state law.
- **LU-8.4** Advance the Southern California Edison right-of-way as green, recreational, and community space in the near term, and monitor it for possible redevelopment over the longer term.
- **LU-8.5** Use native and climate-appropriate landscaping to create biodiverse, low-water green spaces in parks, rights-of-way, and other public areas, reducing long-term water and maintenance costs while supporting local ecosystems and climate resilience.
- **LU-8.6** Monitor and implement evolving state environmental justice requirements and continue to advance the goals of the Environmental Justice Element.
- **LU-8.7** Utilize the Bell Gardens Climate Action Plan as a strategic roadmap to guide the City’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to climate change, and promote sustainability throughout the community.

**Equitable Outreach Goal:** Maximized effort promoting community outreach, input, and participation.

**Related Policies:**

- **LU-9.1** Provide support for increased community participation in the planning and development processes.
- **LU-9.2** Encourage development applicants to initiate early, frequent, and meaningful communication with affected community members and stakeholders.
- **LU-9.3** Ensure outreach materials are readily accessible and easily understood by all members of the community.
- **LU-9.4** Implement long-range planning efforts that engage the community in creative and multifaceted ways and continue engagement at all stages of the project.

**General Plan Land Use Map Amendment**

The proposed Project includes a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment that changes the General Plan land use designation of one 1.41-acre parcel within the City. The Project proposes to change the

parcel located at 6814 Suva Street (APN 6358-019-026) from an Industrial General Plan land use designation to High Density Residential General Plan land use designation. This parcel was identified as a housing opportunity site (requiring rezoning and General Plan Amendment) within the adopted 2021-2029 Housing Element and identified as a rezone site within the Initial Study/Negative Declaration prepared for the Housing Element; the site was inadvertently omitted from the City's 2023 effort to update their General Plan Land Use Map and Zoning Map. The Housing Element identified the site as being able to accommodate 31 affordable housing units. The 61,420 square foot parcel currently includes an active industrial operation with two industrial buildings; no applications have been submitted to redevelop or alter the current use of the site. No other changes are proposed to the General Plan Land Use Map. The proposed General Plan Land Use Map is shown in Figure 3.

**Zoning Code Amendments**

The Project proposes Zoning Code amendments to implement Housing Element policy and proposed General Plan Land Use policy. The proposed amendments span five divisions of the Zoning Code and address residential, commercial, mixed-use, industrial, open space, and institutional zoning districts, as well as citywide administrative and procedural provisions. Substantively, the amendments: (1) establish development and use standards for the R-4 (Very High Density Residential) zone and revise development and use standards in the R-2 and R-3 zones to reduce constraints on housing production and align allowable densities with the General Plan; (2) establish a complete set of development standards for the Mixed-Use zone, which previously relied on Residential zone standards by default, and revise Commercial zone use and development standards for consistency across zones; (3) bring the Zoning Code into compliance with California housing law by updating the Density Bonus Ordinance, and by adding or revising definitions, use tables, parking standards, and permitting procedures applicable to Low Barrier Navigation Centers, emergency shelters, supportive housing, employee housing, residential care facilities, and large family day care; (4) reduce governmental constraints on housing production by removing obsolete and duplicative use classifications, streamlining Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Review procedures, establishing a new administrative Design Review Modification process, and removing the Parking and Buffer District Overlay; and (5) revise citywide parking standards, including bicycle parking, accessible parking, and parking requirements for changes of use in small tenant spaces.

A detailed, section-by-section list of the proposed amendments is provided below.

1. **Density Bonus Ordinance:** Updated Chapter 9.59 (Affordable Housing Density Bonus and Incentives) to comply with California density bonus law, including revised purpose/intent, definitions, eligibility, general provisions, procedures, affordable housing covenant, and enforcement sections.

2. **Low Barrier Navigation Centers (LBNC):** Added a definition aligning with California Government Code Section 65660, cross-referenced from the "L" definitions to the Emergency Shelter definition, and added LBNC as a permitted use in Commercial and Mixed-Use zones, consistent with state law requiring LBNC to be permitted in mixed-use zones and nonresidential zones allowing multifamily residential.

3. **Emergency Shelters:** Updated the definition to align with state law (temporary accommodations not to exceed six months per calendar year, first-come first-served, no denial for inability to pay) and modified the parking standard to require only staff parking (not to exceed parking required for similar uses in the same zone), removing the client parking requirement, consistent with California Government Code Section 65583. Revised to allow emergency shelters in the C-M zone, to align with Government Code Section 65583 that

requires emergency shelters to be allowed by right in a zone where residential uses are allowed.

4. **Supportive Housing:** Updated the definition to align with state law, added a footnote to the residential zones permitted use table clarifying that supportive housing developments seeking by-right approval comply with Government Code Sections 65650–65656, updated the Commercial zones permitted use table, and updated the parking standard to comply with the prohibition on minimum parking requirements for supportive housing within 0.5 mile of a public transit stop.

5. **Employee Housing:** Added a definition aligning with California Employee Housing Act and added employee housing to the residential zones permitted use table.

6. **Residential Care Facilities:** Updated the definition (Health and Safety Code Section 1500 et seq.) to differentiate small (up to 6 beds/persons, treated as a single-family residential use) from large (7+ beds/persons) facilities; deleted obsolete related definitions (“Home for aged persons, foster family,” “Institution for aged persons, private,” “Rest home”); added consistent uses to the residential and commercial zones permitted use tables; updated the special standards and Conditional Use Permit (CUP) findings sections; and updated the parking standard cross-reference and heading to reference the Residential Care, Large definition.

7. **Large Family Day Care:** Updated the definition to align with California Health and Safety Code Sections 1596.78, 1597.44/.465 and removed the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) requirement for facilities serving up to 14 children, requiring only a Site Plan Review, consistent with California State law.

8. **CUP and Variance Findings:** Revised Conditional Use Permit findings (including for cemeteries under Section 9.50.040) to be based on objective evidence in the record, including General Plan consistency and other objective criteria, in place of more subjective prior standards.

9. **Multifamily Parking:** Removed the requirement to provide an additional parking space per rented room and reduced the guest parking ratio to a more typical standard, consistent with Housing Element policy.

10. **Multifamily Storage:** Removed the requirement to provide storage in multifamily units.

11. **Streamlined Housing Process:** Added new Chapter (Streamlined and Ministerial Housing Development Review), implementing California law and Housing Element policy.

12. **R-4 Zone – Rezone/Reuse Site Density Correction:** Corrected Table 9.10B (Development Standards) to require a minimum density of 20 dwelling units per acre on Housing Element rezone or reuse sites (consistent with California State law), correcting a typographical error that had stated a maximum of 24 units per acre. Added a parallel by-right provision for the same sites (20%+ low-income units) to the R-4 permitted use table and, in Division 5, to the Type 3 Site Plan Review threshold.

13. **Obsolete Residential Use/Definition Cleanup:** Deleted obsolete uses and definitions now subsumed under other use categories, including “Dwelling, multifamily apartment house,” “Dwelling, multifamily condominiums,” “Apartment house,” “Housing for the Elderly” (Mixed-Use and Commercial zones), “Homes for aged persons, foster family,” “Homes for aged persons, small group care,” “Homes for children, foster family,” “Homes for children, special boarding,” “Children's home,” and “Residential condominium projects.”

14. **Condominiums:** Removed the CUP requirement for condominiums in the R-3 zone; added a definition clarifying that a condominium (Civil Code Section 783) is an ownership structure, not a land use, with the applicable use classification determined by physical form under “Dwelling, attached” or “Dwelling, multiple”; updated dwelling unit definitions so rental and ownership (condominium) structures are not differentiated.

15. **Residential Zones (R-1–R-4) Purpose and Development Standards:** Implementing Housing Element policy to remove housing constraints, updated purpose statements for R-1 through R-4 to reflect neighborhood character and, for R-4, a new purpose statement supporting compact urban form near transit; changed the development standards table to regulate density by units per acre rather than units per lot; removed the lot coverage requirement; lowered minimum unit sizes; renamed “second-story setback” to “upper-story setback” and applied to side setbacks only; updated open space to a tiered standard based on project size; updated definitions so rental and ownership housing types are not differentiated and correlate consistently across land use tables; and added R-4 use and development standards.

16. **Commercial Zone Standards (C-S, C-3, C-4, C-M):** Updated the Chapter 9.12 purpose statement and individual zone purpose statements; removed “Apartment houses” as a conditionally permitted use in the C-4 and C-M zones and “Housing for the elderly” and “Institutions: aged persons, children” from the commercial use table (replacing with consistent language for multi-family residential uses); recalibrated minimum lot area and lot width standards for each zone based on actual parcel size data (e.g., 10,000 sf minimum for C-4/C-M, revised width-scaling formulas), replacing the prior uniform/less-intuitive approach; updated setbacks; and added open space requirements for conditionally permitted developments with five or more multifamily residential units.

17. **Mixed-Use (M-U) Zone Standards:** Updated the Chapter 9.12 purpose statements and split the Mixed-Use zone into two districts, MU-1 and MU-2, both reflecting a vibrant, walkable mixed-use character; the two districts differ in that MU-1 allows standalone residential development, while MU-2 requires a commercial component and does not permit standalone residential. Added a full set of M-U-specific development standards where none previously existed (the zone had relied on R-3 standards by default), including recalibrated lot area and width (7,500 sf minimum, revised width-scaling formula), front/side/street-side/rear setbacks (including a ground-floor-commercial-based front setback standard), density (20–30 du/ac, consistent with the General Plan and Housing Element), FAR, lot coverage, height, and a new tiered open space standard (including rooftop/podium/deck credit and minimum dimensional standards for common and private open space); and added provisions for front setback encroachment.

18. **Temporary Uses:** Added Temporary Uses and Structures as a defined use and to the residential zones permitted use table; removed seasonal sales from the same table.

19. **Site Plan Review Modification – Director:** Added a new administrative process allowing the Director to approve minor modifications to development standards (lot standards, setbacks, lot coverage, parking, and other listed standards) where a project's design, arrangement, or site conditions justify a deviation.

20. **Site Plan Review Modification – Planning Commission:** Added a new administrative process with an alternative review pathway to if a project is not compliant with objective design standards.

21. **Parking – ADA/Accessibility:** Clarified that accessible parking spaces required under the California Building Code count toward the off-street parking requirement, and added a Director-level discretionary reduction where required parking would otherwise fall short solely due to an ADA/Title 24 accessibility upgrade to existing parking facilities.

22. **Parking – Driveway/On-Street Offset and Reduction Authority:** Added a provision allowing the off-street parking requirement to be reduced or eliminated, subject to a Design Review Modification – Director finding, where a new driveway would eliminate on-street parking spaces equal to or greater than the off-street spaces the project would otherwise be required to provide (and the driveway is not independently required for other purposes); reorganized the existing parking reduction/encroachment provision into separate subsections for reductions requiring Planning Commission approval versus Director approval.

23. **Parking – Change of Use in Small Tenant Spaces:** Added a provision allowing occupancy of tenant spaces under 2,500 square feet to be interchanged among a defined list of use types without triggering additional parking.

24. **Bicycle Parking:** Removed the City's bicycle parking quantity matrix and detailed rack/locker design standards in favor of a cross-reference to the California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen), Title 24, Part 11. Retained locally-specific provisions not addressed by CalGreen, including automobile-to-bicycle parking space substitution ratios, pedestrian circulation and access standards, the residential bicycle parking visibility restriction, and signage requirements.

25. **Parking and Buffer District (PBD) Overlay Removed:** Removed the PBD Overlay in its entirety, including its listing among the City's overlay districts, its designation and boundary interpretation provisions, its intent and purpose statement, and its development standards (including the 25% additional parking requirement).

26. **Open Space (O-S) Zone:** Updated the purpose statement to reference the zone's role in the citywide public open space network (from small pocket parks to larger regional parks), removing prior language regarding agricultural use areas.

27. **Industrial (M-1) Zone:** Updated the purpose statement to address compatibility with surrounding uses in scale, massing, and design, and to address screening of freight routes and truck parking; recalibrated minimum lot area and lot width standards based on actual parcel size data.

28. **Institutional (P-I) Zone:** Updated the purpose statement to address compatibility with the form and character of the surrounding neighborhood while prioritizing public access and function.

29. **Mechanical/Utility Equipment Screening:** Added a restriction prohibiting AC units, tankless water heaters, electrical panels, and similar equipment on front-facing building façades or visible from the public right-of-way, applicable across all residential, commercial, and mixed-use zones.

30. **Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance:** Removed outdated language excluding junior accessory dwelling units from density calculations, updated to reflect current laws (Health and Safety Code Section 17958.1; Government Code Section 65852.22).

31. **Commercial and Industrial Uses:** Consolidated numerous individually-listed retail, service, and manufacturing use types (e.g., paint and wallpaper stores, shoe repair shops, pottery

stores, sporting goods stores, tailor shops, and similar) into broader, more flexible use categories, Retail Sales and Services, Retail Sales (Large Format), Personal Services, and Manufacturing, Craft/Artisan/Light/Heavy, and deleted the corresponding individually-listed uses from the permitted use tables as now obsolete or subsumed under these new categories. Revised self-storage facilities from a permitted use in the I and C-M zones to require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Added new definitions for data centers and electricity generation and storage facilities, and listed these uses as prohibited in commercial and industrial zones.

32. **Logistics Use Standards (AB 98/SB 415):** Added a new provision to the Industrial (M-1) zone cross-referencing Government Code Sections 65098–65099.5, as amended governing siting, design, buffer, setback, and operational standards for new or expanded logistics use developments.

33. **Environmental Review Section:** Added a new environmental review section that outlines the how the CEQA process relates to the development review process. Requires Native American Tribal consultation consistent with AB 52 for projects subject to CEQA for which a categorical or statutory exemption does not apply. Requires Native American Tribal Consultation for specific plan and general plan amendments, consistent with SB 18.

**Zone Change**
The Project includes a Zone Change/Zoning Map Amendment, consisting of three parts:

- Remove Parking and Buffer District Overlay.
- Revise the Historic Preservation District Overlay to reduce the geographic area to which it applies.
- Change the Zoning designation of one parcel located at 6814 Suva Street (APN 6358-019-026) from M-1 (Light Industrial) to R-3 (High Density Residential).

The Parking and Buffer District is applied to properties throughout the City and requires additional parking and landscaping within those areas. The Parking and Buffer District would be removed to remove housing development constraints, consistent with Housing Element policy. The Historic Preservation District Overlay applies to two areas; one area would remain the same (6820 Foster Bridge Boulevard/Woodworth House). The second area, including the Gage Mansion at 7000 East Gage Avenue and the surrounding block, approximately 0.5 miles in length, is proposed to be reduced to areas from which the Gage Mansion is visible, encompassing the Casa Mobile Home Park.

The Project proposes a zoning map change of a single parcel located at 6814 Suva Street (APN 6358-019-026) from M-1 (Light Industrial) to R-3 (High Density Residential). This parcel was identified as a housing opportunity site (requiring rezoning and General Plan Amendment) within the 2021-2029 Housing Element and identified as a rezone site within the Initial Study/Negative Declaration prepared for the Housing Element; it was inadvertently omitted from the City's 2023 effort to update their General Plan Land Use Map and Zoning Map. The Housing Element identified the site as being able to accommodate 31 affordable housing units. The 61,420 square foot parcel currently includes an active industrial operation with two industrial buildings; no applications have been submitted to redevelop or alter the current use of the site.

These zoning map amendments are intended to remove housing constraints and provide clarity in the development process. This Project (adoption of policy documents and zoning amendments) does not specifically authorize the construction of any development nor indicate where or when specific development would occur. Future development proposed under the amended standards would remain

subject to applicable City permitting and environmental review requirements. The proposed Zoning Map is shown in Figure 4.

**Objective Design Standards**
The Project proposes the adoption of objective design standards for multifamily residential and mixed-use development to fulfill the requirements of SB 35 and other California laws relating to the streamlined review of qualifying residential and mixed-use development projects. “Objective design standards” are defined in California Government Code Sections 65913.4 and 66300(a)(7) as standards that “involve no personal or subjective judgment by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant or proponent and the public official before submittal.”

Objective design standards would be applicable to zones where mixed-use or multifamily housing is allowed. These standards are divided into multiple sections addressing various elements of project design including:

- Site design: The site design objective design standards specify building orientation, entries, project access and circulation, pedestrian crosswalks and walkways, parking and loading access, and electric vehicle charging.
- Building design: The building design objective design standards detail acceptable building heights, project entrance standards, windows, façade articulation, roof form, materials and colors.
- Landscape and open space design: The landscape and open space design objective design standards detail specifications for general landscape design, surface parking lot landscaping, usable open space, and private open space, including elements such as lighting, size, and acceptable plant palettes.
- Utilitarian features: The objective design standards related to utilitarian features include elements like signage, lighting, and trash and loading screening, detail guidelines and approved placement and materials.

The objective design standards provide clean and measurable design standards for qualifying developments, streamlining the review process and ensuring that important elements, like pedestrian safety and maintaining the physical character of Bell Gardens, are considered in the design and development process.

The objective design standards also includes an updated recommended landscape planting list. The planting list removes landscaping no longer recommended due to invasiveness, water use, pest or disease susceptibility, or maintenance concerns. The proposed list increases the number of native Southern California species, expands the list of climate-adapted and drought-tolerant plants, aligns with current water conservation standards, and enhances usability of the list by categorizing plants by function.

## *2.9 – Environmental Setting*

The provisions included in the proposed Project would apply to the entire City of Bell Gardens. The City of Bell Gardens is 1,592.6 acres and bordered by the City of Commerce to the north, the cities of Bell and Cudahy along its western edge, South Gate at its southern boundary, and the City of Downey to the east and southeast. Physical boundaries are further defined by the Southern Pacific Railroad corridor near the northern portion of the city, the Rio Hondo River flood control channel along the eastern

side, and the Los Angeles River flood control channel and Interstate 710 corridor near the western edge.

*Residential Uses:* Residential land uses account for 1,005.5 acres or 63.1 percent of the City, reflecting the predominantly residential character. Multi-family residential alone occupies 753.7 acres (47.3 percent). The intermixed pattern of housing types within the same blocks reflects the City's historic development.

*Commercial Uses:* Commercial uses cover 168.0 acres (10.5 percent) of the City. Commercial development is concentrated along Florence Avenue, Eastern Avenue, Garfield Avenue, and Gage Avenue.

*Industrial Uses:* Industrial uses occupy 108.6 acres (6.8 percent), clustered primarily in the western and southern portions of Bell Gardens.

*Public and Institutional Uses:* Public and institutional uses occupy 126.4 acres (7.9 percent), including schools, City Hall, the Library, the Police Department, and community service facilities.

*Open Space and Recreation Uses:* Open space and recreation uses cover 69.4 acres (4.4 percent). The largest resources are John Anson Ford Park (approximately 39 acres) and Veterans Park (approximately 15 acres).

## *2.10 – Required Approvals*

The City Council must approve and adopt the following:

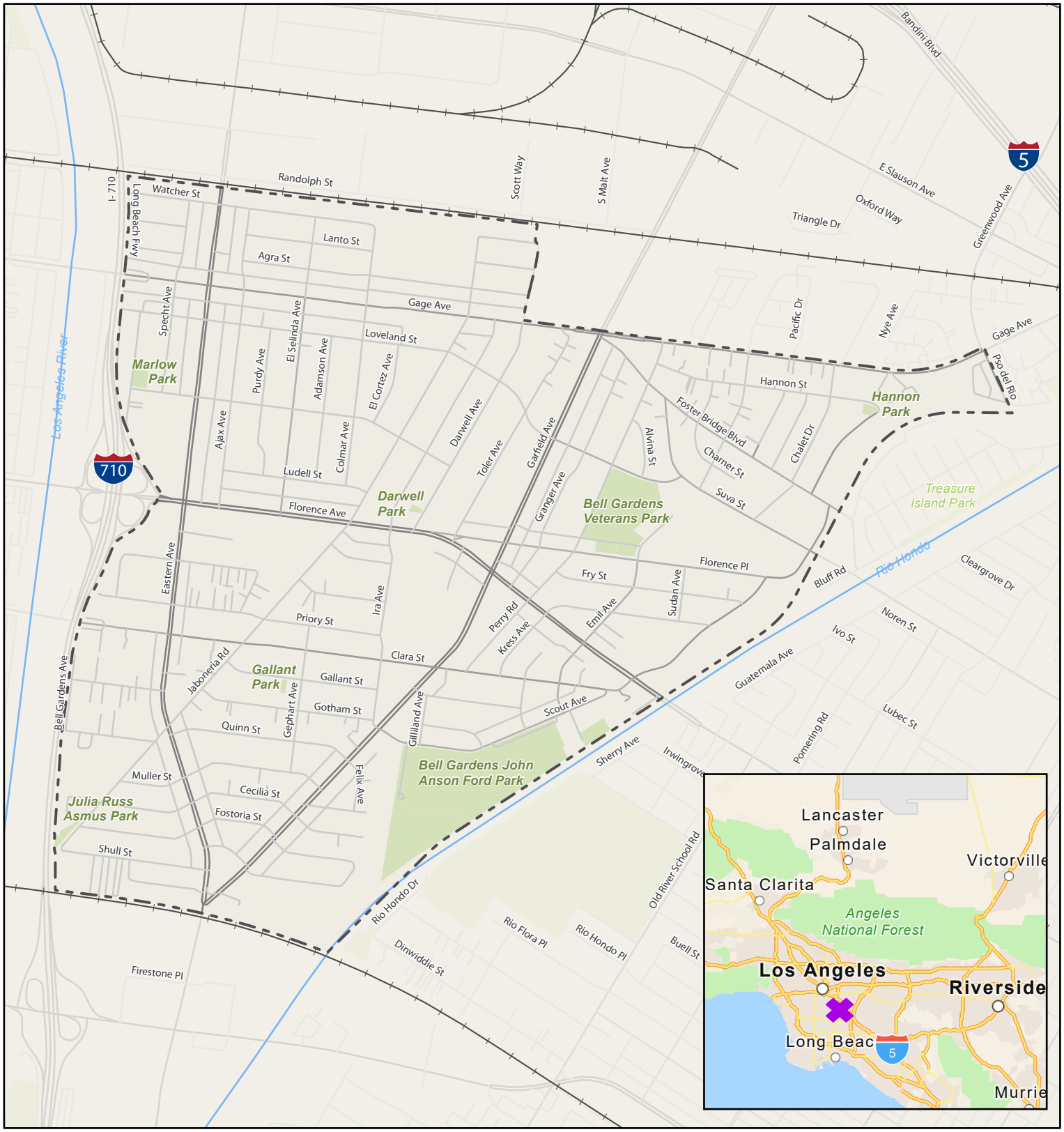
- General Plan Amendment - Land Use Element
- General Plan Land Use Map Amendment
- Zoning Code Amendment (Focused)
- Zone Change
- Objective Design Standards
- Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

## *2.11 – Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required*

No other agency approval is required.

## *2.12 – Tribal Consultation*

California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project area are required to be consulted pursuant to PRC Section 21080.3.1. On June 16, 2026, the City contacted a list of tribes, provided by the California Native American Heritage Commission, by mail and email to offer the tribes an opportunity for tribal consultation on the Project. The City has received a response from one tribe requesting consultation. A consultation meeting was held on September 1, 2026. In response to the consultation, the City drafted a new section to add to the Project's Focused Zoning Code Amendment to emphasize compliance with applicable state law. The tribe reviewed the proposed language and found it satisfactory. The government-to-government consultation on the Project formally concluded on September 11, 2026.




## Figure 1. Regional Location

*Bell Gardens IS/MND*




Figure 2. Proposed General Plan Focus Areas

*Bell Gardens IS/MND*

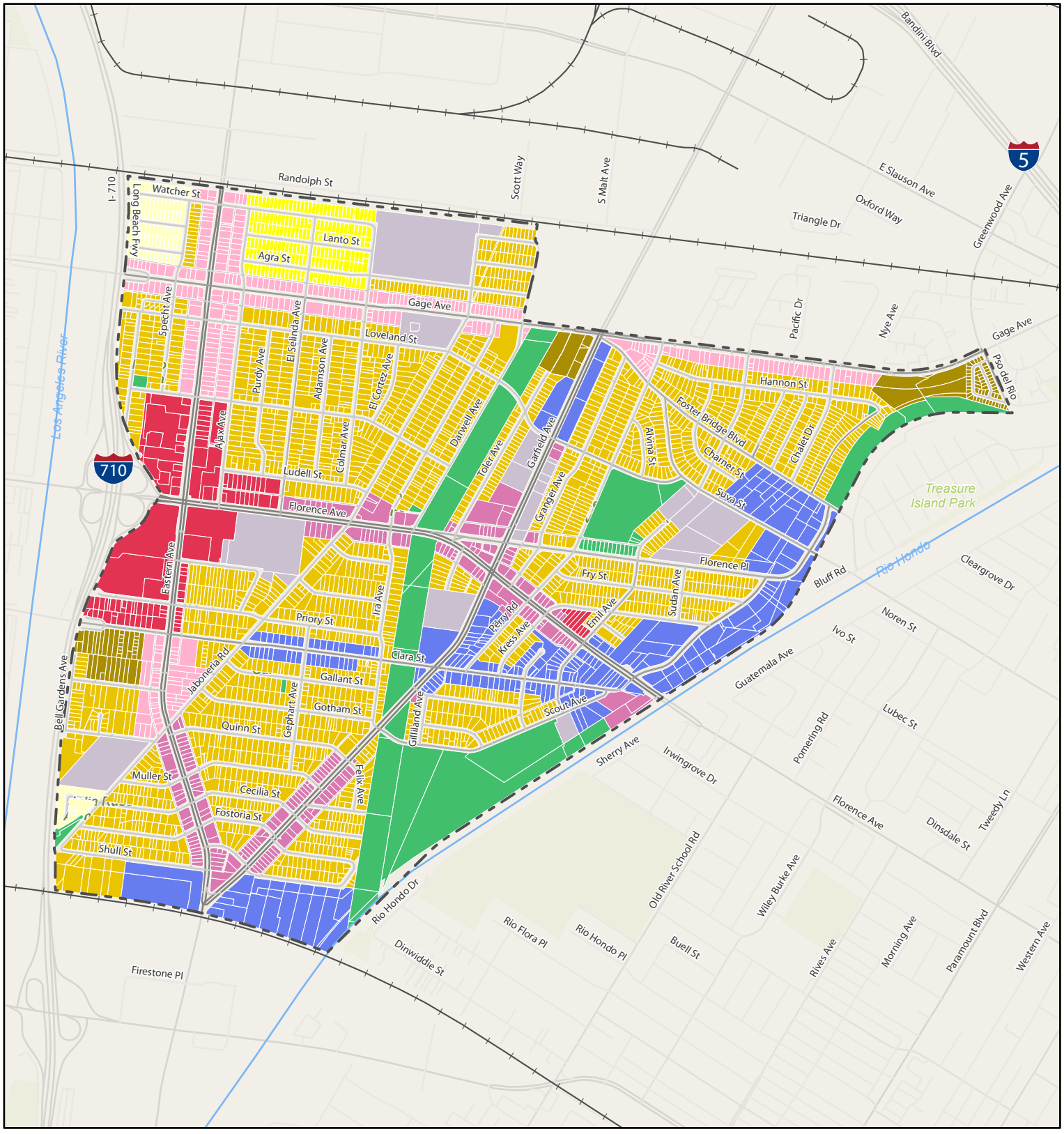
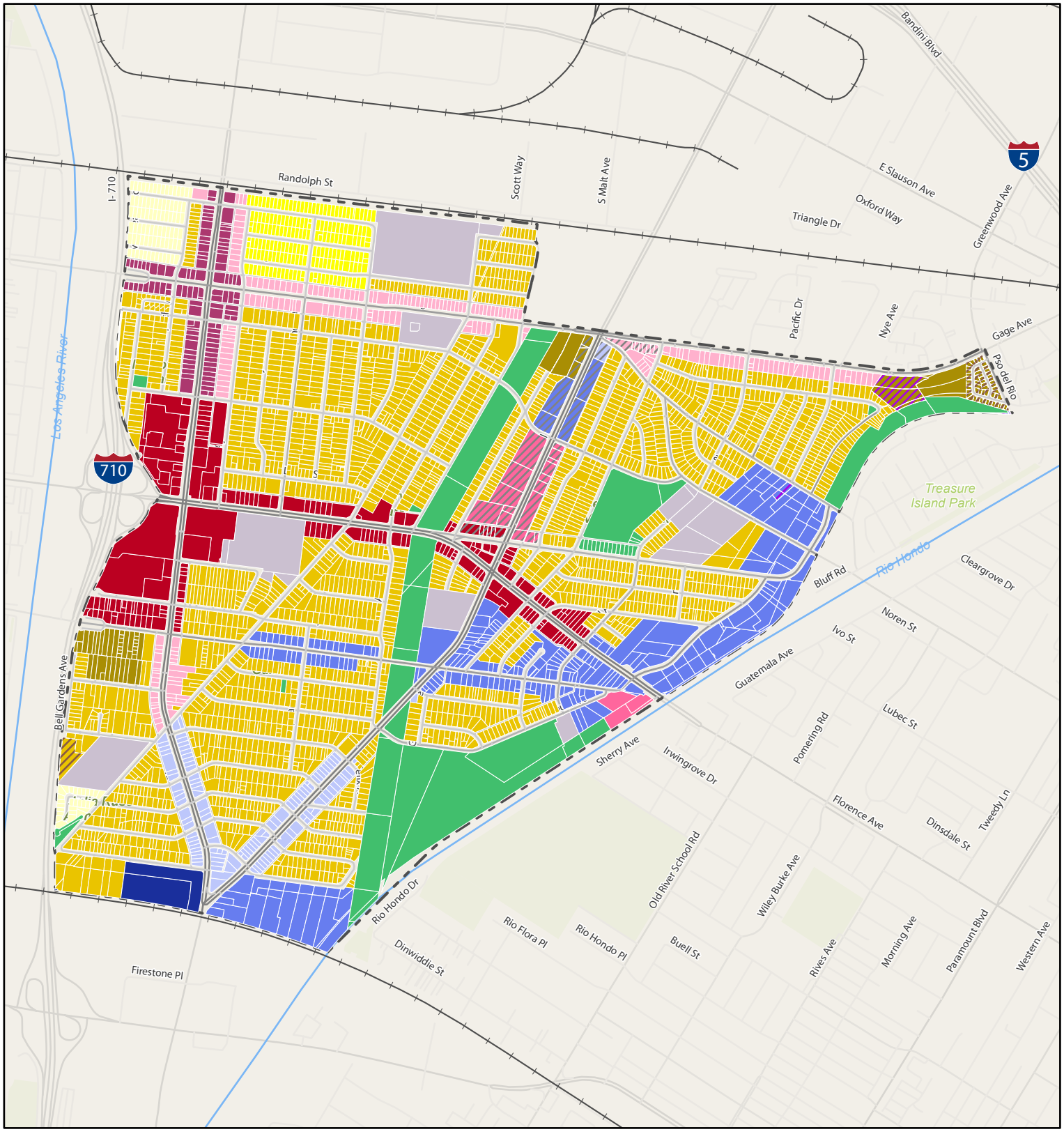



Figure 3. Proposed General Plan Land Use Map

*Bell Gardens IS/MND*




# Figure 4. Proposed Zoning Map

*Bell Gardens IS/MND*

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## 3.1 – Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

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

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

## 3.2 – Determination

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ | I find that the proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared. |
| ☑ | I find that although the proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the Project have been made by or agreed to by the Project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared. |
| ☐ | I find that the proposed Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required. |
| ☐ | I find that the proposed Project MAY have a 'potentially significant impact' or 'potentially significant unless mitigated' impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed. |
| ☐ | I find that although the proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially 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. |

Mayra Hernandez for AH — 9-21-26

Name: Alfonso Hernandez, Acting Community Development Director — Date

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## *4.1 – Aesthetics*

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 view from 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 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 which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |

**a) Less than Significant Impact.** General Plan Land Use Element, Exhibit 1-5 (CBD Urban Design Plan) identifies views/vistas within the City. These identified views include views of the mountains, looking north from the Garfield Avenue/Loveland Street intersection area, and views of the City, looking southwest near the Florence Avenue/I-710 interchange area.[1]

Bell Gardens is a dense urban community with very limited vacant land. Any future development would be required to comply with the goals and policies provided as part of the proposed General Plan Land Use Element to ensure that future development projects are designed to complement existing visual character of the neighborhood. General Plan Land Use Element policies addressing visual character, including Policy LU 2.1 (Promote high-quality architectural design and visually engaging varied building façades) and Policy LU-2.2 (Reinforce local identity through the integration of

gateway features, cohesive streetscapes, and context-sensitive building design) would be applicable to future projects within the City. Any future projects involving multi-family housing or mixed-use development would be required to comply with the proposed objective design standards.

While development allowed under the proposed Project could result in structures which could block or impede existing distant views of mountains or the city, these views are currently only available intermittently within the City and are blocked by existing development, utilities, and vegetation. Implementation of the proposed Project would not result in substantial adverse effects on a scenic vista; this impact would be considered less than significant.

**b) No Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is not located adjacent to a designated state scenic highway or eligible state scenic highway, as identified on the California Scenic Highway Mapping System.[2] The closest officially designated National Scenic Byway is State Route 110 (Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway), which is located approximately 7.6 miles northwest of the City and not visible from the City. The proposed Project would have no impact to scenic resources visible from a state scenic highway.

**c) Less than Significant Impact.** Visual character is generally characterized as the collection of structures, in context of the built and/or natural environment, that include architectural treatment, landscaping, location, and the intangible qualities such as historical context or uniqueness that establish a thematic visual display for the onlooker when viewing the location. Compared to other environmental topics, defining visual character is generally subjective, relying on the opinion of the onlooker coupled with the expertise and institutional knowledge of the local jurisdiction to define the visual character of an area or property. The visual character of the City varies by location as there are distinct neighborhoods that exhibit their own nature and character.

Future development projects associated with implementation of the proposed Project would have the effect of incrementally changing the visual character of individual parcels. There is no widely recognized threshold for determining when the effects of a project 'degrade' visual character or quality to the point that potentially significant environmental impacts could occur. However, the current CEQA threshold is whether or not a project (in an urbanized area) would conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. All future development within the City would be subject to applicable General Plan Policies and zoning regulations related to height, mass and scale, architectural style, materials, landscaping, and a variety of other standards that would ensure future development is consistent with the visual character intended for the area. Additionally, future development would be subject to preliminary environmental review pursuant to CEQA and, if found not to be exempt, subject to full environmental analysis. The proposed Project does not include any site-specific development or conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality; this impact would be less than significant.

**d) Less than Significant Impact.** Sources of lighting or glare are typical in highly developed, urban environments such as Bell Gardens. Excessive or inappropriately directed lighting can adversely impact night-time views by reducing the ability to see the night sky and stars. Glare can be caused from unshielded or misdirected lighting sources. Reflective surfaces (i.e., polished metal) can also cause glare. Impacts associated with glare range from simple nuisance to potentially dangerous situations (i.e., if glare is directed into the eyes of motorists).

Any future development within the city would be required to comply with the City's Zoning Code standards and any future projects involving multi-family housing or mixed-use development would be required to comply with the proposed objective design standards for lighting, which require lighting to be downward directed and shielded.

Given the existing level of urban development within the City and surrounding area, future development associated with implementation of the Project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area; this impact would be considered less than significant.

## 4.2 – Agriculture and Forest Resources

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project, and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| 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 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) Less than Significant Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is an urbanized environment with no agricultural land under commercial cultivation. Farmland mapping prepared by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) identifies most of the City as Urban and Built-Up Land. However, according to the DOC, approximately 54 acres of land located in the center of the City (within the Southern California Edison easement) is designated as "Unique Farmland." This farmland type is defined as "Lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date." [3,]

The General Plan Land Use Map identifies the area designated as "Unique Farmland" as Open Space/Parks; the General Plan Land Use Map does not identify agricultural land uses within the city. The proposed Project include a series of updates to city policy documents and does not include approval of site-specific projects; the proposed Project would not result in the approval of any physical improvements or development that would result in the conversion of Farmland as shown on the maps associated with the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Although there are areas identified as Unique Farmland within the city, the Project does not include any site-specific development approval and would not convert farmland to non-agricultural use. Any future discretionary project that proposes to convert the land identified as Unique Farmland would be analyzed pursuant to CEQA, which would identify project-specific impacts and apply any required mitigation measure. This impact would be considered less than significant.

**b) No Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens zoning map does not include any agricultural use zoning districts and there are no active Williamson Act contracts within the city[4]; no impact would occur.

**c) No Impact.** The City is located within a developed urbanized area and does not include existing zoning for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production; no impact would occur.

**d) No Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is located within a developed urban area and does not include forestlands; no impact would occur.

**e) Less than Significant Impact.** There is no forestland located within the City. As described in Section 4.2.a, above, approximately 54 acres of land located in the center of the City (within the Southern California Edison easement) is designated as "Unique Farmland." The General Plan Land Use Map identifies the area designated as "Unique Farmland" as Open Space/Parks; the General Plan Land Use Map does not identify agricultural land uses within the City. The proposed Project includes a series of updates to City policy documents and does not include approval of any site-specific development projects. The proposed Project would not result in the approval of any physical improvements or development that would result in the conversion of Farmland as shown on the maps associated with the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program; the Project would not convert farmland to non-agricultural use. Any future discretionary project that proposes to convert the land identified as Unique Farmland would be analyzed pursuant to CEQA, which would identify project-specific impacts and apply any required mitigation measure. This impact would be considered less than significant.

## 4.3 – Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |

**a) Less than Significant Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is located within the South Coast Air Basin (Basin) under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). SCAQMD and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) are responsible for formulating and implementing the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) for the Basin. The AQMP is a series of plans for the purpose of reaching short- and long-term goals for those pollutants for which the Basin is designated as a “nonattainment” area because it does not meet federal and/or state Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS).

To determine consistency between a project and the AQMP, the project must comply with all applicable SCAQMD rules and regulations, comply with all proposed or adopted control measures, and be consistent with the growth forecasts utilized in preparation of the AQMP. A significant impact could occur if the proposed Project conflicts with or obstructs implementation of the South Coast Air Basin 2022 AQMP. Conflicts and obstructions that hinder implementation of the AQMP can delay efforts to meet attainment deadlines for criteria pollutants and maintaining existing compliance with applicable air quality standards. Pursuant to the methodology provided in Chapter 12 of the 1993 SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook, consistency with the South Coast Air Basin 2022 AQMP is affirmed when a project meets the following two criteria:

1. Does not increase the frequency or severity of an air quality standards violation or cause a new violation; and,
2. Is consistent with the growth assumptions in the AQMP.

The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents, as well as creation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use development. The proposed General Plan Land Use Element contains goals, policies, and programs that will provide City staff and discretionary bodies with a foundation for decisions on development projects and long-range planning related to physical development and public services. The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects and does not include any physical alterations within the City. With the exception of one 1.41-acre parcel that currently includes urban development and which the adopted Bell Gardens Housing Element identifies as a housing inventory site, the Project proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no changes to the densities or intensities of any Land Use category or zone. Additionally, all future development within the city would be subject to project-specific environmental review pursuant to CEQA, as applicable, and would be required to comply with the City's Zoning Code development standards and objective design standards, as well as implement General Plan policies that address air quality. Therefore, based on Criteria 1 and 2, programmatic impacts from implementation of the proposed Project related to AQMP consistency would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

**b) Less Than Significant Impact.** A project may have a significant impact if project-related emissions will exceed federal, state, or regional standards or thresholds, or if project-related emissions will substantially contribute to existing or project air quality violations. The City of Bell Gardens is located within the South Coast Air Basin. Efforts to attain state or federal air quality standards are governed by the SCAQMD. Both the state and federal governments have established health-based ambient air quality standards (AAQS). The SCAQMD has prepared the AQMP to set forth a comprehensive and integrated program to address air quality. The Basin is currently in non-attainment for state and federal criteria pollutants ozone and fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$ and $PM_{10}$).[5]

**Construction Emissions**

The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects and does not include any physical alterations within the city. Therefore, the Project would not result in any construction-related criteria pollutant emissions and would not exceed any daily thresholds established by SCAQMD. As specific projects are proposed within the city, construction emissions would be evaluated as part of the environmental analysis for site-specific proposed projects.

**Operational Emissions**

The effects of future development on regional air quality could result in potentially significant impacts if it is determined that a project's individual contribution to cumulative air pollution levels is considerable by exceeding the annual emissions thresholds established by the SCAQMD in its *CEQA Air Quality Analysis Handbook* (SCAQMD 1993) and, furthermore, would be determined to potentially conflict with implementation of the AQMP. The existing Bell Gardens General Plan Environmental Justice Element contains the following goals and policies related to air quality:

**Goal 1:** Minimize the Community's Exposure and Impacts from Environmental Pollution.

**Goal 2:** Improve Citywide Health by Focusing on Prevention and Intervention.

**Policy 1.** Minimize resident's exposure to air pollution near high-volume roadways (ex, freeways) through site planning, building design, and other measures, focusing on the needs of vulnerable populations (i.e., families with children, people with disabilities, and seniors).

**Policy 2.** Minimize siting sensitive receptors (i.e., residential and institutional uses) near pollution sources, such as freight handling and manufacturing facilities.

**Policy 3.** Promote the use of indoor air filtration systems on individual properties through education and exploration of grants or other funding incentives.

**Policy 4.** Preserve and enhance natural landscapes and tree canopies within public open spaces to reduce air pollution impacts and heat exposure.

**Policy 8.** Coordinate with the applicable public and non-profit agencies (i.e., Los Angeles County Department of Public Health) to create/expand educational programs and campaigns regarding health risks related to poor air quality, water and soil contamination, and other contaminants such as lead paint, asbestos, mercury, etc.

**Policy 9.** Discourage the siting of commercial uses and industrial facilities that might significantly impact the overall air quality, especially near impacted communities that are vulnerable to the effects of asthma. This includes communities in neighboring jurisdictions.

The proposed General Plan Land Use Element includes the following policy related to air quality:

**Policy LU-8.3** Protect homes, schools, and other sensitive uses from the noise, truck traffic, and air quality impacts of nearby industrial and warehousing uses consistent with the City's environmental justice and warehouse-siting obligations under state law.

The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects and does not include any physical alterations within the city. Future development associated with implementation of the proposed Project could have the effect of contributing incrementally to the mobile, energy, and area sources that cumulatively contribute to criteria pollutant levels and associated air pollution in the Basin. The SCAQMD is responsible for preparing the AQMP for the Basin. The AQMP includes strategies and control measures to reduce and/or maintain the effects that construction and operation of various uses within the Basin have on regional air quality.

Additionally, the effects of future development on regional air quality could result in potentially significant impacts on the health of residents if it is determined that a project’s individual contribution to cumulative air pollution levels is considerable by exceeding the annual emissions thresholds and would be determined to potentially conflict with implementation of the AQMP. Criteria pollutants can directly damage the environment, both natural and man-made. Impacts to human health include a variety of acute and chronic respiratory illnesses. Future site-specific development would be subject to environmental evaluation for exemption and potential analysis pursuant to CEQA upon application for entitlement permits. Development projects found to be exempt from CEQA would not have a significant impact on the environment as declared by state legislation; other projects would be subject to standard analysis and site-specific mitigation if required.

The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents, as well as creation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use development. The proposed General Plan Land Use Element contains goals, policies, and programs that will provide City staff and discretionary bodies with a foundation for decisions on development projects and long-range planning related to physical development and public services. With the exception of one parcel, the General Plan Land Use Element Amendment proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone.

While it is possible that future development could involve pollutant emissions, all individual development projects would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA and the City's local procedures to determine if any long-term air quality impacts would occur from the operation of a specific new development. Therefore, impacts related to implementation of the proposed Project would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

**c) Less Than Significant Impact.** Sensitive receptors include uses occupied by children or the elderly such as hospitals, parks, schools, and residential homes. As previously stated, the Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects. The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents, as well as creation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use development. With the exception of one parcel, the General Plan Land Use Element Amendment proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone.

While it is possible that future site-specific development projects could involve pollutant emissions, all individual development projects would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA and the City's local procedures to determine if any air quality impacts would occur from the operation of a site-specific new development. Therefore, this potential impact would be less than significant.

**d) Less Than Significant Impact.** Land uses associated with odor complaints generally include specific land uses, such as agricultural operations, wastewater treatment plants, landfills, and certain industrial operations such as manufacturing uses that produce chemicals and paper.

As previously stated, the Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects. However, it is possible that future development that would occur under the proposed Project could involve uses that create odors. All individual development projects would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA and the City's local procedures to determine if any odor impacts would occur from the operation of that site-specific new development. This potential impact would be considered less than significant.

## 4.4 – Biological Resources

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 Game 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, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ |

**a and b) Less than Significant Impact.** The City has been fully developed since its incorporation in 1961. Bell Gardens is a dense and urban community with very limited vacant land; undeveloped land is generally limited to vacant lots scattered throughout the city. The General Plan includes an Open Space/Parks designation applied to areas that are public parks or private land reserved for open spaces. However, all these lands are either developed with park uses or utility infrastructure and surrounded by urbanized areas. Additionally, the County General Plan has not designated any Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) within the City limits.[6] The following information from the City of Bell Gardens' General Plan Conservation Element describes vegetation and wildlife within Bell Gardens:[7]

> *Trees and lush vegetation used to be found along the rivers surrounding the City of Bell Gardens. Urbanization and the channelization of the Rio Hondo and Los Angeles Rivers have destroyed native vegetation and brought in non-native lawn grass, hedges and trees. The Los Angeles River is lined and concrete dikes have been built on both sides of the channel. This resulted in the loss of natural riparian habitats.*
>
> *Without the natural environment, native plants and animal communities are not expected to be present. Only small birds and an occasional migratory flock are spotted in the area. There are many endangered, rare and threatened animals and plants in the region but studies and surveys have not identified the presence of such plants or animals in Bell Gardens. A records search at the Natural Diversity Data Base of the Department of Fish and Game showed that the nearest recorded occurrence of a special animal is approximately 4 miles from the City. The San Diego Horned Lizard (Phrynosoma Coronatum Blainvillii) was found in the City of Compton at Rosecrans Avenue and the Southern Pacific Railroad, and in Long Beach one mile west of the Los Angeles River near 68th Street. The San Diego Horned Lizard is listed as Category 2 on the federal List (information may warrant listing, but substantial data is lacking) and S2S3 on the California List (Species of Special Concern). It is considered rare and endangered by the Department of Fish and Game.*

The City is bound by urban development to the north and south and by the Rio Hondo River, a concrete lined channel, to the east. The western edge of the City is bounded by I-710, with the concrete-lined Los Angeles River. One area of the City is shown as Freshwater Emergent Wetland and Freshwater Pond on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory.[8] This area is located in the eastern part of the City and includes an arm of the Rio Hondo Coastal Spreading Grounds. Other than this area, there are no identified riparian habitats or wetlands in the city. The City does not have an adopted tree preservation policy or ordinance.

It is possible that migratory birds and nesting birds could utilize areas within the city. The U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act provides protection for migratory birds, and nesting birds are protected under California Fish and Game Code section 3503.

The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects. While unlikely given the developed urban nature of Bell Gardens, it is possible that future site-specific development associated with implementation of the Project could affect candidate, sensitive, or special status species. Any future development project would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA review which would identify mitigation measures if biological resources are present on the project site. Additionally, existing applicable federal, state, and/or local policies would regulate development in areas that support sensitive or special status species, federally protected wetlands, or migration corridors. This potential impact would be considered less than significant.

**c) Less than Significant Impact.** The City is bound by urban development to the north and south and by the Rio Hondo River, a concrete lined channel, to the east. The western edge of the City is bounded by I-710, with the concrete-lined Los Angeles River located beyond the freeway to the west. As a highly urbanized area, the City's General Plan does not identify any existing riparian habitats or protected natural communities. One area of the City is shown as Freshwater Emergent Wetland and Freshwater Pond on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory. This area is located in the eastern area of the City and includes an arm of the Rio Hondo Coastal Spreading Grounds.

The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects or proposed changes to waterways or wetland areas. Any individual development project would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA and the City's local procedures to determine if any wetland impacts would occur from the construction or operation of new site-specific development. This potential impact would be considered less than significant.

**d) Less than Significant Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is a dense and urban community with very limited vacant land. The City has been fully developed since its incorporation in 1961. Very little undeveloped land remains and is limited to scattered vacant lots. The General Plan includes an Open Space/Parks designation applied to areas that are public parks or private land reserved for open spaces. However, all these lands are either developed with park uses or utility infrastructure and surrounded by urbanized areas. Additionally, the County General Plan has not designated any Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) within the City limits.

The City is bound by urban development to the north and south and by the Rio Hondo River, a concrete lined channel, to the east. The western edge of the City is bounded by I-710, adjacent to the concrete-lined Los Angeles River located beyond the freeway to the west. As a highly urbanized city, the City's General Plan does not identify any existing riparian habitats, wildlife corridors or protected natural communities. One area of the City is shown as Freshwater Emergent Wetland and Freshwater Pond on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory.[9] This area is located in the northeastern area of the City and includes an arm of the Rio Hondo Coastal Spreading Grounds.

The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects or proposed changes to waterways or wetland areas. The proposed Project would not change the existing environment in a manner that would result in impacts to any sensitive habitat areas or interference with the movement of any native resident or migratory wildlife species. Furthermore, no native wildlife nurseries are identified within the city.

Native avian species may occupy urban sites; however, the proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development that would remove or disturb any trees or landscaping. The Project includes several policies supporting the installation of landscaping and trees, including Policy LU-2.3 (Prioritize walkability on the corridors and in mixed-use areas through street trees, shade,

lighting, seating, and safe crossings), Policy LU-8.2 (Protect and expand the urban forest and green infrastructure to reduce the heat island effect and improve walkability) and Policy LU-8.5 (Use native and climate-appropriate landscaping to create biodiverse, low-water green spaces in parks, rights-of-way, and other public areas, reducing long-term water and maintenance costs while supporting local ecosystems and climate resilience). The proposed recommended planting list, included as part of the objective design standards, broadens recommended landscape materials with additional native and climate adapted species.

For the reasons stated above, the implementation of the proposed Project would not interfere 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. Furthermore, any future development project would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA and the City's local procedures to determine if any impacts to wildlife movement or wildlife corridors occur from the construction or operation of new site-specific development. This potential impact would be considered less than significant.

**e) No Impact.** The City does not have an adopted tree preservation ordinance for trees on public or private property. The proposed Project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources; no impact would occur.

**f) No Impact.** Bell Gardens is an urban developed city and is not located in an area that would be subject to any Habitat Conservation Plans or Natural Community Conservation Plan. The proposed Project would not conflict with the provisions of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. No impact would occur.

## 4.5 – Cultural Resources

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| C) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |

**a) Less Than Significant Impact.** A significant impact would occur if the proposed Project would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. According to the General Plan Conservation Element,[10] Bell Gardens contains several known points of local historical and cultural interest. These include the following:

- Old Specht Home - 6410 El. Selinda Avenue. This home was built in 1894 and was moved to its present site from Gage Avenue, in the 1930s when it was replaced by a large house. The newer house has given way to school property and now sits at 5815 Loveland Street. Both are private residences.
- Site of the Laguna School - North Side of Gage Avenue. The Laguna School was the first public school facility available to Bell Gardens' residents and was located in the City of Bell Gardens on Gage Avenue. Although it was demolished in 1957, the historic significance of the site remains.
- Casa de Rancho San Antonio, also known as the Governor Gage Mansion - 7000 East Gage Avenue. This home was built in 1810 by Antonio Lugo with adobe walls covered with redwood siding. It was also the family home of Henry Tifft Gage, the 20th Governor of California. The Gage Mansion is set back from Gage Avenue, located at the site of the Casa Mobile Home Park. The Gage Mansion was officially designated as California Historical Landmark No. 984 in 1989.
- Woodworth House - 6820 Foster Bridge Boulevard. This structure was built in 1924 in an earlier style to accommodate fixtures from an earlier structure which was being demolished. The house is owned by the City.
- Other important structures and sites in the City include the Barberino House (1913) at the northeast corner of Priory and Jaboneria and the Clara Street Water Company (1920) at Priory Street.

The Zoning Code does include an Historic Overlay Preservation District that is applicable to certain parcels within the city. The purpose of this district is to protect those existing elements in the environment which complement or are essential to the physical setting of a declared historical or cultural monument or site, and to ensure that adjacent public and private development is harmonious and

consistent with the character, style, and spirit of the monument or site. As part of the Project, the provisions within the overlay district would remain, but the zoning map would be amended to reduce the number of parcels within this overlay district.

The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents and does not include approval of any site-specific development. Future development projects within the City would require site-specific project review to determine if the proposed development would impact historical resources under CEQA, and/or to identify any additional historical resources not previously identified; this impact would be considered less than significant.

**b) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** The Conservation Element of the General Plan included the following discussion regarding archeological resources:

> *A record search at the UCLA Archaeology Center showed that no prehistoric or historic sites were identified within the City. No archaeological surveys were done in the City, thus, no sensitive sites have been found. A low potential for archaeological resource discovery is expected in the area. However, the Nehamiah West multifamily development (located on the old Lugo Mansion site at 6360 East Gage Avenue) revealed over thirty artifacts buried there. These artifacts are currently being cleaned for display and will be returned to the City. The site was once the headquarters house for the El Rancho San Antonio, constructed by Antonio Lugo.*

The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents and does not include approval of any site-specific development. While much of the City has already been developed, it is possible that construction activities associated with future development could uncover previously unrecorded archaeological resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 and CUL-2 would ensure that impacts related to archaeological resources would be reduced to less than significant.

> **Mitigation Measure CUL-1 Archaeological Resources Assessment.** For projects that are proposed in areas that have not been previously graded or disturbed by development, or would extend below the area previously disturbed, an Archaeological Resources Assessment shall be prepared, during environmental review and prior to project approval, by an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professionally Qualified Standards (PQS) in archaeology. The Assessment shall include a records search for the project area to determine if any archaeological resources have been previously recorded, evaluated, and/or listed, or recommended eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR), and/or any local registers. Following the records search, the qualified archaeologist or their designee shall conduct a reconnaissance-level and/or intensive-level survey in accordance with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) guidelines to identify and record any previously unrecorded archaeological resources that may be potentially affected by the proposed project. Following recordation, the archaeologist shall evaluate any identified resources for eligibility for listing in the CRHR, as well as its potential as a historical resource and/or unique archaeological resource under CEQA. Final documentation shall be submitted to the City and the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC).
>
> **Mitigation Measure CUL-2 Treatment of Archaeological Resources.** Should archeological resources be encountered during construction of a proposed development, construction activities shall be temporarily halted within 50 feet of the find so that the resource can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist. If archaeological resources that are eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) are identified within or adjacent to a proposed development, a qualified archaeologist shall consider the feasibility of avoidance, or

preservation in place, of the resource. For resources that would be avoided and preserved in place, the site of the archaeological resource, plus a 50-foot buffer around the archaeological resource, shall be clearly flagged to identify the construction avoidance area and assure impacts to these resources are avoided during construction activities. Flagging may be completed using construction tape, caution tape, or installing fencing around the area, and off-limits signs may be placed near the area. Once areas are delineated, and prior to any ground disturbance, a qualified archaeologist shall verify that the flagging clearly delineates the avoidance area and construction limits. Since the location of some archaeological resources is confidential, these resources shall be flagged as environmentally sensitive areas. The qualified archaeologist or their designee shall be present to monitor any ground disturbing activity for any projects that have eligible archaeological resources. For any archaeological resources that cannot be avoided or preserved in place, the qualified archaeologist shall prepare a data recovery (i.e., excavation) plan that shall be submitted to the City for review and approval. The plan shall include methods for treatment of recovered resources, such as reburial or curation, that are appropriate for the specific project. Additionally, all treatment measures should be identified in consultation with Tribes that elect to consult on the project under AB 52/CEQA.

With implementation of the identified mitigation measures, this potential impact would be less than significant.

**c) Less than Significant Impact.** The Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects. However, future discretionary projects involving excavation activities may result in accidental discovery of human remains. In the event that human remains are accidentally discovered during the construction of any associated projects, those remains would be properly treated in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5. As required by California law, the requirements and procedures set forth in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 would also be implemented. Adherence to existing state laws would reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

## 4.6 – Energy

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Result in 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 of local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |

**a) Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects and does not include any physical alterations within the city. With the exception of one 1.41-acre parcel that currently includes urban development and which the adopted Bell Gardens Housing Element identifies as a housing inventory site, the Project proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone. Future development projects would be required to undergo environmental review under CEQA on a project-by-project basis and identify site-specific impacts and implement necessary mitigation measures.

Future site-specific development within the City would happen in accordance with the goals, policies, and programs of the proposed Project, and would have the effect of contributing to increased energy consumption within the city. This increase in energy use would be part of regional growth in energy use as the surrounding communities continue to grow as well. Future growth in the City would be required to be consistent with the state's energy conservation regulations as codified in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations and the California Green Building Code. In addition, future development must comply with existing General Plan policies intended to reduce energy consumption, including the following:

- Housing Element Policy 3.5: Promote mixed-use development and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to facilitate smart growth and reduction in automobile trips, vehicle miles traveled, and associated energy consumption.
- Conservation Element Policy 2: The City of Bell Gardens shall, to the extent possible, protect remaining ecological resources and enhance those resources through programs in the Open Space and Recreation Element and the Circulation and Transportation Element.
    - Energy Conservation Guidelines: The City shall enforce the energy conservation standards in Title 24 of the California Administrative Code, the Uniform Building Code, and other state laws on energy conservation design, insulation and appliances. Energy needs shall be evaluated, and conservation measures incorporated into new development in accordance with Appendix F of the State CEQA Guidelines and Appendix J of the City CEQA Guidelines. Also, the City shall promote the use of new

technologies on energy conservation in new development, as may be appropriate. Other measures that would reduce energy consumption during construction and operation of the structures shall be encouraged.

Future development must also adhere to the provisions of the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP).[11] The Plan focuses on five core areas: Buildings and Energy, Transportation and Mobility, Resource Conservation, Green Community, and Resilience and Adaptation. Strategies within these areas include expanding solar energy and battery storage at City facilities, improving building efficiency, transitioning to zero-emission vehicles, enhancing active transportation networks, increasing urban tree canopy, and supporting local workforce development tied to sustainability. Many of these efforts are designed to provide multiple benefits, such as cleaner air, lower utility costs, and improved public health, especially for communities most vulnerable to climate impacts.

Future development would also need to comply with goals and policies included in the proposed General Plan Land Use Element Amendment, including the following:

- Policy LU-8.1 Encourage sustainable building practices, such as green building, electrification, rooftop solar, and reflective or cool materials, especially in industrial and higher-intensity areas.
- Policy LU-8.2 Protect and expand the urban forest and green infrastructure to reduce the heat island effect and improve walkability.
- Policy LU-8.4 Advance the Southern California Edison right-of-way as green, recreational, and community space in the near term, and monitor it for possible redevelopment over the longer term.
- Policy LU-8.5 Use native and climate-appropriate landscaping to create biodiverse, low-water green spaces in parks, rights-of-way, and other public areas, reducing long-term water and maintenance costs while supporting local ecosystems and climate resilience.
- Policy LU-8.7 Actively maintain and update the City's Climate Action Plan Implementation and Reporting program as recommend in the plan.

As older existing development is replaced by newer development, compliance with Title 24 Green Building standards would result in greater energy efficiency. With implementation of existing regulations and policies, as well as policies included in the proposed General Plan Land Use Element Amendment, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy use. Therefore, this impact would be considered less than significant.

**b) Less than Significant Impact.** As discussed above in Section 4.6 (a), future development that would occur under the General Plan Land Use Element and Zoning Code Amendment would be subject to the California Title 24 Building Code energy efficiency standards as well as General Plan policies intended to reduce energy consumption overall within the city. The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects; all individual development projects would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA and the City's local procedures. The proposed Project would not conflict with nor obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, and impacts would be less than significant.

## *4.7 – Geology and Soils*

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | | | | |
| i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ |
| ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| iv) Landslides? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, 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 (1997), 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 waste water? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |

**a.i) No Impact.** As described in the General Plan Safety Element,[12] Los Angeles County has approximately 50 active and potentially active faults, 21 of which are major active faults (an active fault is defined as a fault that has exhibited movement during the past 10,000 years). Bell Gardens is located in a seismically active region of Southern California. However, no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones are located within the City as identified by the California Department of Conservation.[13] There would be no potential impacts related to rupture of a known earthquake fault.

**a.ii) Less Than Significant Impact.** Bell Gardens is located in a seismically active region that experiences earthquake activity. Any future projects developed within the City would likely experience seismic ground shaking during earthquakes.

Compliance with existing local City building standards and other applicable seismic related design requirements is intended to reduce the potential for damage to occur as the result of seismic activity in the region. Future projects would be required to prepare a site-specific geotechnical investigation in accordance with the requirements of California Building Code, which is adopted by the City of Bell Gardens and included as Title 6, Buildings and Construction, within the Bell Gardens Municipal Code. With adherence to standard design and construction measures, and implementation of any site-specific measures identified within the geotechnical investigation, impacts related to strong seismic shaking would be considered less than significant.

**a.iii) Less Than Significant Impact.** Liquefaction is a phenomenon that occurs when soil undergoes transformation from a solid state to a liquefied condition due to the effects of increased pore-water pressure. This typically occurs where susceptible soils (particularly soils in the medium sand to silt range) are located over a high groundwater table.

As shown on the Department of Conservation's Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation mapping application, the majority of the City is located within a liquefaction zone.[14] Any proposed development within the City would be required to undergo separate environmental reviews pursuant to CEQA to evaluate project-specific impacts and implement any required mitigation measures. Additionally, future projects would be required to prepare a site-specific geotechnical investigation in accordance with the requirements of California Building Code, which is adopted by the City of Bell Gardens and included as Title 6, Buildings and Construction, within the Bell Gardens Municipal Code. With adherence to standard design and construction measure, and implementation of any site-specific measures identified within the geotechnical investigation, impacts related to liquefaction would be considered less than significant.

**a.iv) Less than Significant Impact.** As noted in the Bell Gardens' General Plan Safety Element, *"The City of Bell Gardens is relatively flat, thus, no landslide and soil erosion hazards can be expected.*" The City of Bell Gardens is a flat and urbanized setting that does not include steep slopes. The City is not mapped as including landslide zones as defined on the Department of Conservation Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation Mapping Application.[15] The potential landslide impact would be considered less than significant.

**b) Less than Significant Impact.** Erosion poses environmental hazards through the effect of removing soils that can undermine roads and buildings and destabilize slopes. Erosion can also result in environmental damage by depositing soils in downstream reservoirs, lakes, and drainage structures.

All future development within the City would be subject to federal and state regulations limiting erosion pursuant to National Pollutant Elimination Discharge System (NPDES) requirements and SCAQMD rules. Any potential future construction activities would be required to comply with the requirements outlined in the NPDES Program. In compliance with the NPDES program, projects involving one or more acres of site disturbance would be required to prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and associated Best Management Practices (BMPs) in compliance with the Construction General Permit during grading and construction. The potential erosion impact would be considered less than significant.

**c) Less than Significant Impact.** Please see Sections 4.7.a.iii and 4.7.a.iv, above, for a discussion of liquefaction and landslide hazards.

Lateral spreading of the ground surface during a seismic activity usually occurs along the weak shear zones within a liquefiable soil layer moves towards a free face (i.e., retaining wall, slope, or channel) and to lesser extent on ground surfaces with a very gentle slope. Liquefaction occurs when seismic waves pass through saturated granular soil, distorting its granular structure, and causing some of the empty spaces between granules to collapse. Both liquefaction and lateral spreading could occur within the city, given much of the City is located within a liquefaction zone. Additionally, the General Plan Safety Element notes that subsidence is significant in the area. Because the City is a highly developed urban area which includes structures, landscaping, asphalt parking, and roadway features, it can be assumed the project area is not located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of future development.

The proposed Project would not include approval of any site-specific development plans. Any proposed development within the City would be required to undergo separate environmental reviews pursuant to CEQA to evaluate project-specific impacts and implement any required mitigation measures. Additionally, future projects would be required to prepare a site-specific geotechnical investigation in accordance with the requirements of California Building Code, which is adopted by the City of Bell Gardens and included as Title 6, Buildings and Construction, within the Bell Gardens Municipal Code, as well as comply with the City's COAs. With adherence to standard design and construction measures, and implementation of any site-specific measures identified within the geotechnical investigation, impacts related to landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, and liquefaction would be considered less than significant.

**d) Less than Significant Impact.** Expansive soils are characterized by their ability to undergo significant volume changes (shrink or swell) due to variations in moisture content. Changes in soil moisture content can result from precipitation, landscape irrigation, utility leakage, roof drainage, perched groundwater, drought, or other factors and may result in unacceptable settlement or heave of structures or concrete slabs supported on grade.

The proposed Project would not include approval of any site-specific development plans. Any proposed development within the City would be required to undergo separate environmental reviews pursuant to CEQA to evaluate project-specific impacts and implement any required mitigation measures. Additionally, future projects would be required to prepare a site-specific geotechnical investigation in accordance with the requirements of California Building Code, which is adopted by the City of Bell Gardens and included as Title 6, Buildings and Construction, within the Bell Gardens Municipal Code. This potential impact would be less than significant.

**e) No Impact.** Bell Gardens has a fully developed sewer system which is maintained by the County and is included in Los Angeles County Sanitation District 2; future development would not require installation of septic tanks. Therefore, no impact would occur.

**f) Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** As described in the General Plan Conservation Element, *"With the City nearly built out, the discovery of paleontological resources is unlikely. Records of known sites do not indicate the presence of resources in the City or the surrounding area. The Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History has indicated that the entire City of Bell Gardens has a low potential and sensitivity for paleontological resources."* While unlikely, discovery of paleontological resources could be discovered due to construction activities; Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

> **Mitigation Measures GEO-1 Inadvertent Discovery of Paleontological Resources.** Should paleontological resources be encountered during construction of a proposed development, construction activities shall be temporarily halted within 50 feet of the find so that the resource can be evaluated by a qualified professional paleontologist meeting the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP) professional qualifications (Project Paleontologist). The Project Paleontologist shall temporarily divert or redirect grading and excavation activities in the area of the exposed material to facilitate evaluation and, if necessary, salvage. The Project Paleontologist shall then assess the discovered material(s) and prepare a memorandum evaluating the impact. The project proponent shall then comply with the recommendations of the Project Paleontologist, and a copy of the report shall be submitted to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Ground disturbing activities may resume once the Project Paleontologist's recommendations have been implemented.

The proposed Project would not include approval of any site-specific development plans. Any proposed development within the City would be required to undergo separate environmental reviews pursuant to CEQA to evaluate project-specific impacts and implement any required mitigation measures; potential paleontological impacts would be considered less than significant with implementation of the identified mitigation measure.

## 4.8 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |

**a) Less than Significant Impact.** Climate change is the distinct change in measures of climate for a long time period. Climate change is the result of numerous, cumulative sources of greenhouse gas emissions all over the world. Natural changes in climate can be caused by indirect processes such as changes in the Earth's orbit around the sun or direct changes within the climate system itself (i.e., changes in ocean circulation). Human activities can affect the atmosphere through emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) and changes to the planet's surface. Human activities that produce GHGs are the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas for heating and electricity, gasoline and diesel for transportation); methane from landfill wastes, raising livestock, and deforestation activities; and some agricultural practices.[16]

Greenhouse gases differ from other emissions in that they contribute to the "greenhouse effect." The greenhouse effect 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. Greenhouse gases occur naturally and from human activities. Greenhouse gases produced by human activities include carbon dioxide ($CO_2$), methane ($CH_4$), nitrous oxide ($N_2O$), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride ($SF_6$).

The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects and does not include any physical alterations within the city. With the exception of one 1.41-acre parcel that currently includes urban development and which the adopted Bell Gardens Housing Element identifies as a housing inventory site, the Project proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no changes to the densities or intensities of any Land Use category or zone. Additionally, all future development within the City would be subject to project-specific environmental review pursuant to CEQA, as applicable, and would be required to comply with the City's Zoning Code

development standards and objective design standards, as well as implement applicable General Plan policies.

This Initial Study examines the potential environmental impacts of the Project at a program level; the Project does not specifically authorize the construction of any site-specific development. All future site-specific development proposals subject to CEQA review would be required to analyze potential GHG emissions and, if necessary, implement project-specific mitigation measures to reduce emissions to below SCAQMD significance thresholds. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant at this program level and no programmatic mitigation is needed.

**b) Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents, as well as creation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use development. The proposed General Plan Land Use Element contains goals, policies, and programs that will provide City staff and discretionary bodies with a foundation for decisions on development projects and long-range planning related to physical development and public services. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zones.

All future development within the City would be subject to project-specific environmental review pursuant to CEQA, as applicable. As development projects are proposed, GHG emissions would be evaluated during the City's standard environmental review process as required by CEQA. Future projects would be required to comply with existing regulations requiring energy efficiency in building design and construction, ensuring GHG emissions would not be considered cumulatively considerable in the context of global climate change and resulting impacts. Future development may also be required to implement project-specific mitigation to reduce estimated GHG emissions. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant at this program level and no programmatic mitigation is needed.

## 4.9 – Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard 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) Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development. During construction of future development projects, there could be the transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes that are typical of construction projects. This would include, but is not limited to, fuels and lubricants for construction machinery, coating materials, and other building materials. Federal, state, and local regulations associated with construction sites and use of associated hazardous materials include routine construction control measures and best management practices for hazardous materials storage, application, waste disposal, accident prevention, and clean-up. These uniformly applicable standards would be sufficient to reduce potential impacts from future housing development to a less than significant level.

Hazardous materials associated with new residential uses could include, for example, liquid chemical products (e.g., household cleaners), used motor oil, building maintenance supplies, paints and solvents, pesticides, or other similar materials. The limited quantity of such products would generally not generate significant hazardous emissions or involve the use of acutely hazardous materials that could pose a significant threat to the environment.

Future business development within the City could involve the storage, use, and disposal of potentially hazardous materials, including building maintenance supplies, paints and solvents, pesticides and herbicides for landscaping and pest control, vehicle maintenance products, and similar substances. The City would require all new development to follow applicable state and local regulations and guidelines regarding the storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous waste. All hazardous materials are required to be stored and handled according to manufacturer's directions and local, state, and federal regulations. Additionally, the General Plan Safety Element includes the following hazardous materials policy:

- Policy 3: The City of Bell Gardens, through the County Fire Department, shall protect the community from hazardous materials and waste spills by identifying hazardous materials stored, utilized, or transported in the city and the City shall pursue local and state legislation for greater control of hazardous materials.

Given the existing federal, state, and local hazardous materials regulations already in place, the proposed Project's potential threat to public health and safety and the environment from hazardous materials transport, storage, use, and disposal would be less than significant.

**b) Less Than Significant Impact.** As described above in Section 4.9.a, hazardous substances may be generated, stored, transported, used, or disposed of related to future development and activities allowed by the Project. Demolition of existing structures would involve removal and disposal of existing building materials; some buildings may contain hazardous materials, such as asbestos containing materials or lead based paint. The SCAQMD regulates the demolition and renovation of buildings and structures that may contain asbestos, and the manufacture of materials known to contain asbestos. Development allowed by the Project may involve the transport, storage, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. With existing federal, state, and local regulation and oversight of hazardous materials, the risk to the public or the environment from upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials would be less than significant.

**c) Less Than Significant Impact.** Multiple schools are located within the city. As stated in Section 4.9.a above, construction activities resulting from future development could involve the transport, use, and disposal of hazardous waste materials. However, construction activities are subject to uniformly applicable standards set forth by federal, state, and local agencies.

Hazardous materials associated with new residential, commercial, and offices uses could include, for example, liquid chemical products (e.g., household cleaners), used motor oil, building maintenance supplies, paints and solvents, and pesticides. The limited quantity of such products would not generate significant hazardous air emissions or involve the use of acutely hazardous materials that could pose a significant threat to the environment or human health.

As has been described previously, the proposed Project would not result in new, more intense, types of development that can currently occur within the city. The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects and does not include any physical alterations within the city. Furthermore, individual development projects would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA when they are proposed.

Therefore, potential impacts from emitting hazardous emissions, handling hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of existing or proposed schools would be less than significant.

**d) Less Than Significant Impact.** The City does have properties included in the hazardous materials sites list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. According to the EnviroStor website of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, facilities included on the list are located throughout the city.[17] Additionally, there are sites regulated by the Regional Water Quality Board.[18]

The General Plan Safety Element includes the following policy related to hazardous materials:

- Policy 3: The City of Bell Gardens, through the County Fire Department, shall protect the community from hazardous materials and waste spills by identifying hazardous materials stored, utilized, or transported in the city and the City shall pursue local and state legislation for greater control of hazardous materials.

The General Plan Safety Element also notes the following addressing hazardous materials:

> ***Hazardous Materials Regulation.*** The City shall encourage the implementation of the County's Hazardous Waste Management Plan. It shall maintain a current inventory of hazardous material users and generators and incorporate their emergency response programs into the City's Emergency Plan. It shall work with the County Fire Department in requiring hazardous materials users and generators to prepare safety procedures for responding to accidental spills and emergencies. The County Fire Department shall also work with local law enforcement officials regulating the transport of hazardous materials through the City. Hazardous waste facilities shall be regulated by the state and county in compliance with the siting criteria contained in the County Hazardous Waste Management Plan. The County Fire Department shall coordinate the disposal of small quantities of hazardous wastes from residences and businesses in the City.

Additionally, the General Plan Environmental Justice Element includes the following implementation measure related to hazardous materials:

- Program 2 Implementation Measures, Measure 2.1: Conduct a sites inventory to identify potential sites containing heavy industrial designations and other environmental pollution generating facilities adjacent to sites containing sensitive land uses and implement strategies to reduce environmental impacts to the sensitive land uses.

The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development. Furthermore, CEQA requires the assessment of risk involving the transportation, disposal, manufacture, storage, and handling of any hazardous materials for new development; future site-specific development projects would be required to assess impacts due to the accidental release of hazardous materials as part of standard environmental review procedures pursuant to CEQA and City policy. Therefore, the proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

**e) No Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. The closest airport to the City is the Compton/Woodley Airport, located approximately six miles to the southwest in the City of Compton. Therefore, no impact would occur.

**f) No Impact.** The proposed Project does not include any site-specific development approval and does not include any physical alterations to any land use, circulation, or safety changes that could conflict with the operations of emergency response plans. In addition, no changes to the existing transportation circulation system or an existing emergency response plan or evacuation plan would occur as a result of the proposed Project. Therefore, no impact would occur.

**g) No Impact.** As noted by CALFIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps, the City of Bell Gardens is not located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones.[19] Furthermore, the City is completely urbanized and lacks any wildland features. Therefore, the Project would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

## 4.10 – Hydrology and Water Quality

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 that would:<br>(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;<br>(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;<br>(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<br>(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) Less than Significant Impact.** State and federal government agencies are responsible for standards for stormwater discharge under the authority of the Clean Water Act. The City of Bell Gardens is subject to Los Angeles Regional Water Board (Water Board) water quality regulations. The Water Board is authorized to implement a regional municipal stormwater permitting program as part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) authority granted under the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). The municipal stormwater permit is referred to as the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. In California, the State Water Resources Control Board implements the statewide Construction Stormwater General Permit (CGP), which requires that development projects that disturb one acre or more of land must prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that would minimize the incidence of construction-related pollutants entering the stormwater system. Project applicants must file a Notice of Intent and prepare the SWPPP to obtain coverage under the CGP prior to the initiation of construction activities. Among the items required to be included in a SWPPP are pollution prevention Best Management Practices (BMP) that must be implemented during the construction phases of the development project.

The proposed Project does not include approval of any specific development project. As projects are proposed within the city, they would be required to comply with the City's MS4 permit requirements and local policies and ordinances regarding urban runoff and water quality, as well as conform to the CGP requirements as applicable. Furthermore, any future development projects would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA. Impacts related to violation of water quality standards and waste discharge requirements would be less than significant with implementation of existing regulations.

**b) Less than Significant Impact.** Future development would require potable water for drinking, food preparation, cleaning, and bathing as well as water for landscape irrigation. The proposed Project does not include any site-specific development approval. While future projects would increase water demand, the Project proposes no changes to the densities or intensities of any Land Use category or zone.

As the City is largely built out, future development would potentially increase population in the city, but not to the extent that it would substantially increase water demand and decrease groundwater supplies. Additionally, development would occur on sites previously developed with impervious surfaces. Therefore, development resulting from the Project would not significantly increase impervious surface area overall so that substantial changes to groundwater infiltration would not occur. Any future site plans would be reviewed by the City to include site-specific design measures that would allow for infiltration as part of erosion and runoff prevention.

According to California State law, local water agencies must regularly update their Urban Water Master Plan and large development projects must prepare a separate Water Supply Assessment (WSA) to identify how to avoid or reduce impacts on surface or groundwater supplies. Future development would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA; if project-specific impacts are identified, appropriate site-specific mitigation measures would be to applied. This potential impact would be considered less than significant.

**c) Less than Significant Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is situated between the Los Angeles and Rio Hondo Rivers both of which are fully improved flood control channels. Given the urban developed nature of the city, much of the future development would occur on currently or previously developed sites and would not significantly alter existing drainage channels or patterns. Development on currently developed sites is unlikely to substantially change the hydrological conditions of the city. Development on previously undeveloped sites may result in more substantial changes to the site topography and drainage conditions as cut and fill activity occurs to balance the site for building construction; potential site-specific impacts would be evaluated and addressed at the time that such development is proposed.

The City is urbanized and built out and drainage is accommodated by existing storm drain improvements and drainage channels. As projects are proposed within the City, they would be required to comply with all applicable National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), and City stormwater requirements. All future projects would be required to undergo separate environmental reviews pursuant to CEQA to evaluate project-specific impacts and implement any required mitigation measures. Impacts due to the effects of changes in drainage patterns or potential erosion relative to the proposed Project would be less than significant with implementation of existing regulations and local policies.

**d) Less than Significant Impact.** The City is adjacent to the Rio Hondo and Los Angeles Rivers which are channelized rivers. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood mapping shows that most of the City is not within a special flood hazard area. A portion of the City located immediately east of the Los Angeles River is identified as an area with reduced flood risk due to levee. A small portion of the city, along the eastern jurisdiction boundary, is located within a 500-year flood hazard area.[20] Additionally, the City's General Plan Safety Element notes that the City is located within an inundation area for the Hansen and Sepulveda Dams; the inundation area is mapped by the US Army Corps of Engineers.[21]

The City is located inland and is not located near the Pacific Ocean or near any large bodies of water that could create tsunami or seiche.

The proposed Project does not include approval of any development; potential flooding hazards would be evaluated as part of the CEQA process when site-specific development is proposed. CEQA also requires projects to identify specific criteria and conditions that must be met to avoid potential impacts from flood hazards, such as application of flood hazard regulations, evaluation of development sites for flood hazard potential, and application of flood-proofing strategies. The potential impacts of flooding, tsunami, or seiche and any related release of pollutants would be less than significant.

**e) Less than Significant Impact.** This assessment is for both surface water management planning and sustainable groundwater management plans.

**Water Quality Control Plan.** The Water Quality Control Plan Los Angeles Region, Basin Plan for the Coastal Watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties (Basin Plan) is the water quality control plan for the greater Los Angeles Basin, including the City of Bell Gardens.[22] The Basin Plan designates beneficial uses, establishes water quality objectives, and contains implementation programs and policies to achieve those objectives for all waters addressed through the Basin Plan. The Basin Plan is continually being updated to include amendments related to implementation of the total maximum daily load (TMDL) of specific potential pollutants or water quality stressors, revisions of programs and policies within the Los Angeles RWQCB region, and changes to beneficial use designations and associated water quality objectives.[1] As individual projects are proposed, each project's compliance with water quality control plan would be evaluated as part of the CEQA process. The proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan.

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[1] TMDL is a regulatory term in the U.S. Clean Water Act, describing a plan for restoring impaired waters that identifies the maximum amount of a pollutant that a body of water can receive while still meeting water quality standards.

**Groundwater Management Plan.** In 2014, Governor Brown signed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) into law which requires governments and water agencies of high and medium priority basins to halt overdraft and bring groundwater basins into balanced levels of pumping and recharge. SGMA empowers local agencies to form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to manage basins sustainably and requires those GSAs to adopt Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) for crucial groundwater basins in California.

There are two water service providers for Bell Gardens: Golden State Water Company (Bell-Bell Gardens System) and the City of Bell Gardens. The major source of water within the city is groundwater. The City overlies the Central (groundwater) Basin which was adjudicated in 1965 and the Central Basin Watermaster manages groundwater supplies and replenishment.

With the exception of one 1.41-acre parcel that currently includes urban development and which the adopted Bell Gardens Housing Element identifies as a housing inventory site, the Project proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone. The proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a sustainable groundwater management plan and impacts would be less than significant.

## 4.11 – Land Use and Planning

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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) No Impact.** The physical division of an established community typically refers to the construction of a physical feature (such as an highway or railroad track) or removal of a means of access (such as a bridge) that would prevent or impair mobility within a community, or between a community and outlying area.

The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents, as well as creation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use development. With the exception of one 1.41-acre parcel that currently includes urban development and which the adopted Bell Gardens Housing Element identifies as a housing inventory site, the Project proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone. Additionally, the proposed Project includes no changes to circulation within the city. Implementation of the Project would not physically divide an established community; there would be no impact.

**b) No Impact.** The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents, as well as creation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use development. With the exception of one 1.41-acre parcel that currently includes urban development and which the adopted Bell Gardens Housing Element identifies as a housing inventory site, the Project proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone. No changes in General Plan land use or development intensities are proposed. The proposed Project would not conflict with adopted General Plan goals and policies or other City regulations to mitigate environmental impacts generated by development within the city; no impact would occur, and no mitigation is required.

## *4.12 – Mineral Resources*

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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-b) No Impact.** Minerals refer to aggregate resources, or rock, sand, and gravel, energy-producing fields, including oil, gas, and geothermal substances, and related mining operations. As noted in the General Plan Conservation Element, *"The City of Bell Gardens does not contain significant sand and gravel resources as identified by the Department of Mines and Geology. The aggregate resource classification map shows that Bell Gardens is in an area where adequate information indicates no significant mineral deposits are present. While the City is located beside the Los Angeles River, which is considered a fair to good source of sand, concrete channels now line the river bed. This precludes mining activity from occurring in the City. Land under the City does not contain the amount of rock required to make mining profitable. Also, there are no open areas remaining for mining. Large pockets of natural gas and oil have been found in surrounding communities, but they are not believed to extend into Bell Gardens."*

The Department of Conservation Geologic Energy Management Division's (CalGEM) online mapping application Well Finder does not identify any active wells within Bell Gardens.[23] Additionally the City's General Plan has not designated locally important mineral resource recovery areas within the city. Therefore there would be no impact to mineral resources resulting from the Project.

## *4.13 – Noise*

Would the project result in:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ |

**a) Less Than Significant Impact.** The Bell Gardens General Plan Noise Element[24] includes the following description of noise sources within the city:

*The major source of ambient noise in the City comes from freeway, roadway and railroad traffic. The noise generated by traffic on the Long Beach Freeway is significant. Where the freeway is closest to the City, its lanes are at a lower elevation which helps reduce noise impacts in the City. Another major source of mobile noise in Bell Gardens consists of auto and truck traffic on major roadways in the area. Based on traffic volumes and potential noise impact on residential areas, the following streets generate the greatest noise impacts: Eastern Avenue, Garfield Avenue, Florence Avenue, Gage Avenue, and parts of Clara Street.*

*Railroad traffic noise is intermittent throughout the day. The Southern Pacific Railroad lines run along the northern and southern boundaries of the City and are used 7 times per day on average. Trains runs at approximately 25 miles per hour. Trains create individual noise impacts of several minutes during each pass. Noise from passing trains is dependent on the number of trains, speed, type of tracks, grade crossings, track curves, crossings bells and train horns, and type of trains. Tracks for the Southern Pacific Railroad are welded. Bolted tracks create more noise than welded ones.*

*While there are no airport facilities in the immediate vicinity of Bell Gardens, aircraft destined for the Los Angeles International Airport do fly over the City within the La Habra-Downey-LAX final approach pattern. Aircraft flying over Bell Gardens in their final approach are at an altitude of 3,500 feet and descending. Noise from these planes are not at levels that could disturb or disrupt local activities.*

The General Plan Noise Element includes policies, standards, criteria, programs, diagrams, and maps related to protecting public health and welfare from excessive noise exposure. General Plan goals and policies, together with Municipal Code standards for noise control, are incorporated into the land use planning process to reduce noise and land use incompatibilities. General Plan Noise Element policies include the following:

- Policy 1: The City of Bell Gardens shall discourage the incompatible use of property along major transportation lines, and encourage noise reduction measures for existing uses.
- Policy 2: The City of Bell Gardens shall ensure that the noise caused by sources other than traffic (construction, etc.) are at acceptable levels.

Additionally, as described in the Noise Element, the City will require that new single-family and multiple-family residential units located within a CNEL contour of 60 dB or greater prepare an acoustical analysis as part of the project design. This analysis and noise control measures must indicate that the interior living space of the units will not exceed a CNEL of 45 dB.

Noise regulations for the city are included in Chapter 16.24 of the Bell Gardens Municipal Code. Section 16.24.120 generally limits the hours of construction within a residential zone, or within 500 feet of a residential zone, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Section 16.24.110 includes provisions addressing mechanical devices and potential affects to ambient noise levels.

Future development subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA would include project-specific analysis of construction and operational noise impacts. The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents, as well as creation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use development. With the exception of one 1.41-acre parcel that currently includes urban development and which the adopted Bell Gardens Housing Element identifies as a housing inventory site, the Project proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone. As site-specific development projects are proposed, potential noise impacts would be evaluated pursuant to CEQA, and mitigation measures would be identified if future projects did not meet noise standards identified by the City. Therefore, this potential impact would be considered less than significant.

**b Less Than Significant Impact.** Vibration is sound radiated through the ground. The rumbling sound caused by the vibration of room surfaces is called groundborne noise. The ground motion caused by vibration is measured as particle velocity in inches per second, and in the U.S. is referenced as vibration decibels (VdB). The background vibration velocity level in residential and educational areas is usually around 50 VdB while the vibration velocity level threshold of perception for humans is approximately 65 VdB. A vibration velocity level of 75 VdB is the approximate dividing line between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible levels for many people. Sources within buildings such as operation of mechanical equipment, movement of people, or the slamming of doors cause most perceptible indoor vibration. Typical outdoor sources of perceptible groundborne vibration are construction equipment, steel-wheeled trains, and traffic on rough roads. If a roadway is smooth, the groundborne vibration from traffic is rarely perceptible.

The proposed Project includes no site-specific development approvals. It is possible that future development could occur near sources of vibration (e.g., active rail lines) and could experience vibrations impacts. Any potential noise and vibration impacts would be evaluated on a project-by-project basis pursuant to CEQA and the City's local implementation procedures, and project specific mitigation measures would be identified if necessary.

Typical construction vibration mitigation includes routing and placement of equipment to maximize distance to receptors, and use of alternative equipment such as drilled pile drivers as opposed to impact drivers. Subsurface dampeners can also be utilized to reduce groundborne vibration. Short-term impacts related to groundborne vibration during construction would be expected to be less than significant with implementation of local environmental review procedures. Typical mitigation for long-term vibration impacts related to occupied buildings include setbacks from vibration sources or building construction to minimize transmission of vibration.

No short- or long-term impacts would be associated with vibration at a programmatic level for the proposed Project as no developments, or infrastructure improvements, are proposed as part of the Project; the potential impact would be less than significant.

**c) No Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. The closest airport to the City is the Compton/Woodley Airport, located approximately 6 miles to the southwest in the City of Compton. Therefore, no impact would occur.

## 4.14 – Population and Housing

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) 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)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |

**a and b) Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents, as well as creation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use development. The Project includes no site-specific development approvals. With the exception of one 1.41-acre parcel that currently includes urban development and which the adopted Bell Gardens Housing Element identifies as a housing inventory site, the Project proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone. As such, the proposed Project would not induce substantial unplanned growth within an area or displace substantial numbers of existing housing or people necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; these impacts would be considered less than significant.

## 4.15 – Public Services

Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, 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:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Fire protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| b) Police protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| c) Schools? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| d) Parks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| e) Other public facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |

**a) Less Than Significant Impact.** Fire protection for Bell Gardens is provided by the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD). The LACFD operates more than 30 fire stations throughout Los Angeles County, with Fire Station 39 located within the City at 7000 Garfield Avenue. As described in the Bell Gardens Safety Element "*The Los Angeles County Fire Department provides fire prevention and protective services to Bell Gardens and the surrounding cities of Bell, Maywood, South Gate, Commerce, Cudahy, and Huntington Park. Fire Station 39 (located in Bell Gardens) provides initial response to the City. The station has an approximately 3-minute response time for fire emergencies. As part of the Consolidated Fire Protection District, the services of other county fire stations are available to Bell Gardens, as needed*."

Future development within the City could impact fire protection services by placing an additional demand on existing LACFD facilities and personnel should its resources not be augmented. Future development would be required to comply with state and local fire codes, which could include installation of fire sprinklers, a fire hydrant system, paved access, and secondary access routes. Furthermore, any new development would be required to comply with the provisions of the City's Development Impact Fee Ordinance, which requires a fee payment to assist the City in providing government facilities. Additionally, as described in the Bell Gardens General Plan Safety Element, "*The City shall regularly review the adequacy of law enforcement services and fire protection and emergency services in the City. This shall be part of the annual budget review of contracts with the County Fire Department and the local law enforcement officials. The City shall work with local law enforcement officials and the County Fire Department to correct any identified deficiencies. It shall also request that local law enforcement officials and the Fire Department to review proposed development plans. In this way, they can recommend measures that will decrease fire potential and crime and facilitate quicker response*."

The proposed Project would not include approval of any site-specific development projects and, as noted above, the City annually reviews emergency service contracts and works with the LACFD to address any deficiencies.

Furthermore, projects would need to comply with applicable requirements of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. As site-specific development is proposed within the city, project-specific CEQA environmental analysis would confirm that the new development would not impact fire department response times.

If new fire protection facilities were required in the future, the effects of constructing and operating a new fire station are typical of any development project, such as pollutant emissions from use of construction equipment and staff vehicle trips, changes in the visual character of the station site in the context of the neighborhood, and increased vehicle trips on local roadways. The City collects Development Impact Fees to offset the impact of new development, as it occurs. Construction and operation of any new facility be subject to preliminary environmental review pursuant to CEQA at which time all environmental issues would be vetted and appropriate mitigation incorporated, if needed. The proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact to fire protection services.

**b) Less Than Significant Impact.** Police services are provided by the Bell Gardens Police Department. The Police Department is located at 7110 S. Garfield Avenue and consists of 43 Sworn Officers, 26 Professional Staff, and 10 Part-time Staff. The Police Department is comprised of the following units: Patrol, K-9, General Investigations, Special Investigations, Special Operations Team, Dispatch, Neighborhood Watch, Records, Community Service Officers, Jail, and Support Personnel.[25]

Future development within the City could impact police services by placing an additional demand on existing resources should its resources not be augmented. Any new development would be required to comply with the provisions of the City's Development Impact Fee Ordinance, which requires a fee payment to assist the City in providing law enforcement facilities. Additionally, as described in the Bell Gardens General Plan Safety Element, *"The City shall regularly review the adequacy of law enforcement services and fire protection and emergency services in the City. This shall be part of the annual budget review of contracts with the County Fire Department and the local law enforcement officials. The City shall work with local law enforcement officials and the County Fire Department to correct any identified deficiencies. It shall also request that local law enforcement officials and the Fire Department to review proposed development plans. In this way, they can recommend measures that will decrease fire potential and crime and facilitate quicker response."*

The proposed Project would not include approval of any site-specific development projects. While new development would likely increase the demand on fire protection services as the city's population grows, the City annually reviews emergency service contracts and works with the police department to address any deficiencies. Additionally, as site-specific development is proposed within the city, project-specific CEQA environmental analysis would confirm that the new development would not impact police department response times.

If police department facilities were required in the future, the effects of constructing and operating a new police station are typical of any development project, such as pollutant emissions from use of construction equipment and staff vehicle trips, changes in the visual character of the station site in the context of the neighborhood, and increased vehicle trips on local roadways. The City collects Development Impact Fees to offset the impact of new development, as it occurs. Construction and operation of any new facility be subject to preliminary environmental review pursuant to CEQA at which time all environmental issues would be vetted and appropriate mitigation incorporated, if needed. The proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact to police services.

**c) Less Than Significant Impact.** The majority of Bell Gardens is served by Montebello Unified School District; however small portions of the City are also served by Los Angeles Unified School District and Downey Unified School District.

Future development projects associated with implementation of the proposed Project could generate additional students. Payment of school impact fees, as allowed by Government Code 65996, are meant to offset increased student enrollment, which has been deemed by the California legislature (per Government Code Section 65995(h)) to constitute full and complete mitigation of impacts of a development project on the provision of adequate school facilities.

The proposed Project would not include approval of any site-specific development projects. Any specific school facility development project would be subject to environmental review on a project-by-project basis by the corresponding lead agency. Through the payment of associated development fees and compliance with applicable state and local regulations, the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on school facilities, and no mitigation is required.

**d) Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project would not include approval of any site-specific development projects. Implementation of the Project would not result in a change in the amount or intensity of future development that could occur within the city.

Demand for park and recreational facilities are generally the direct result of residential development. Future development associated with implementation of the Project could have the potential to increase use of local park facilities. However, all new development would be subject to payment of development impact fees to cover its fair share of the cost for facility expansion and maintenance. Additionally, construction and operation of new or expanded parks and recreation facilities would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA at which time all environmental issues would be vetted and appropriate mitigation incorporated, if needed. Therefore, potential impacts resulting from the effects of constructing and operating future parks and recreation facilities would be less than significant with payment of fees and implementation of existing regulations.

**e) Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project would not include approval of any site-specific development projects.

New or relocated residents or visitors to the city, created by future development, would generate the incremental need for a variety of public and quasi-public services including libraries, medical clinics, urgent care facilities, hospitals, social service centers, and other facilities. Construction and operation of new or expanded facilities would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA at which time all environmental issues would be vetted and appropriate mitigation incorporated, if needed. Therefore, potential project impacts resulting from the effects of constructing and operating such facilities would be less than significant.

## 4.16 – Recreation

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation | 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 and b) Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project would not include approval of any site-specific development projects. With the exception of one 1.41-acre parcel that currently includes urban development and which the adopted Bell Gardens Housing Element identifies as a housing inventory site, the Project proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone

Demand for park and recreational facilities are generally the direct result of residential development. Future housing developed associated within implementation of the proposed Project would have the potential to increase use of local park facilities; however, any increase in use is not expected to result in substantial physical deterioration of the facility. Additionally, any new development project would be subject to payment of development impact fees to cover its fair share of the cost for facility expansion and maintenance. Finally, construction and operation of new or expanded parks and recreation facilities would be subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA at which time all environmental issues would be vetted and appropriate mitigation incorporated, if needed. Therefore, potential impacts resulting from the effects of constructing and operating future parks and recreation facilities would be less than significant.

## 4.17 – Transportation

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| b) Would the project 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 uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ |
| d) Result in inadequate emergency access? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |

**a) Less than Significant Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is served by local transportation facilities including roadways and freeways, passenger and freight railways, and bus routes in addition to non-motorized transportation facilities such as sidewalks, trails, and bikeways. These facilities provide options for travel modes that include passenger vehicles, trains, buses, bikes, and walking. These facilities and modes of travel comprise the circulation system for the city.

Although the proposed Project does not include any changes to any roads or transit access, the proposed General Plan Land Use Element Amendment includes policies that address the transportation network. Applicable transportation policies included in the General Plan Land Use Element Amendment include:

- Policy LU-2.3 Prioritize walkability on the corridors and in mixed-use areas through street trees, shade, lighting, seating, and safe crossings.
- Policy LU-2.4 Design streets and buildings for safety through active frontages, visible ground-floor uses, and clear sight lines.
- Policy LU-4.3 Support walkability, connectivity, and transit access along the city's major commercial and mixed-use corridors to support a more vibrant, accessible, and less car-dependent community.
- Policy LU-7.2 Hold public infrastructure, including sidewalks, streets, lighting, and utilities, to a consistent standard of safety and accessibility across all neighborhoods, so that quality of service does not vary by area of the city.
- Policy LU-7.4 Ensure equitable access to community-serving facilities by locating them so that residents in every neighborhood can reach them without needing a car, whether on foot, by transit, or by bicycle.

Two planning efforts guide the long-term improvement of the circulation system at the regional and local levels. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) is administered by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to meet the needs of travel and goods movement through the year 2050. While the RTP/SCS addresses the broader goals of the transportation network, the City's General Plan Circulation Element[26] identifies long-term transportation policies and improvements for local facilities. The General Plan includes policies and programs aimed to provide an efficient multi-modal circulation system in the City and encourage the development of an efficient and safe bikeway and public transportation system. These policies include:

- Policy M 2.3 Regional Coordination. Local project plans will coordinate with Caltrans, SCAG, and Metro to integrate local and regional improvements and further local and regional mobility goals
- Policy M 2.4 Complete Streets. Apply a Complete Streets approach to roadway network improvements, which utilize innovative design solutions for mobility. The 2020 Bell Gardens Complete Streets Plan will be used to guide upcoming improvements.
- Policy M 2.7 Active Transportation. Promote active transportation infrastructure such as bicycle lanes, increased sidewalk lighting, and improved pedestrian crossings on classified streets.
- Policy M 3.4 Land Use. Integrate land use and transportation planning in order to prioritize density and transit-oriented design. Locate key destinations such as commercial districts, employment centers, and public resources near transit routes.
- Policy M 4.2 New Development. Require that new developments contribute to active transportation goals and are cohesive with the existing network. Requirements may include adequately-sized sidewalks, outdoor seating.
- Policy M 4.4 Land Use. Prioritize density in land use planning in order to make walking and bicycling more convenient modes of transit.

These local planning efforts are designed to reduce the direct and indirect effects of travel so as to minimize or avoid resulting impacts on human health and the environment.

With the exception of one 1.41-acre parcel that currently includes urban development and which the adopted Bell Gardens Housing Element identifies as a housing inventory site, the Project proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone. The proposed Project would not conflict with the goals of transportation planning efforts of the City or SCAG.

Although implementation of the proposed Project would result in future development, the proposed Project includes no changes to the existing intensity or density at which development could occur. Future development under the proposed Project would eventually generate increased use of the circulation system. However, the proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development. Future development would be subject to preliminary environmental review pursuant to CEQA and, if found not to be exempt, subject to full environmental analysis. At that time, should potentially significant transportation impacts be identified, all environmental issues would be vetted and appropriate mitigation incorporated, as needed. The proposed Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities; therefore, this potential impact would be less than significant.

**b) Less Than Significant Impact.** In response to Senate Bill (SB) 743, the California Natural Resource Agency certified and adopted new CEQA Guidelines in December 2018, which now identify Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project's transportation impact under

CEQA (Section 15064.3). Effective July 1, 2020, the previous CEQA metric of level of service (LOS), typically measured in terms of automobile delay, roadway capacity and congestion, no longer constitutes a significant environmental impact.

Although VMT is now the accepted methodology for evaluating potential transportation impacts of a project, the Bell Gardens Circulation Element[27] identifies standards for maintaining an adequate level of service (LOS) for city streets and intersections. As described in Circulation Element Policy M2.1 "*Performance standards used to evaluate roadways will utilize both LOS and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The desired LOS for roadways will be LOS D or less, although exceptions will be made where this is infeasible due to other mobility policy priorities. VMT will be considered to prioritize reductions in emissions and improvements to roadway safety. Amendments to Bell Gardens roadway plans will pursue reductions in VMT…*" To be consistent with the 2020 California CEQA Guidelines, an LOS analysis is no longer required for purposes of this Initial Study impact analysis and determination of significant impacts under CEQA.

The Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects. The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents, as well as creation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use development. With the exception of one parcel which is identified by the adopted Housing Element as an affordable housing site and currently includes urban development, the General Plan Land Use Element Amendment proposes no other changes to the General Plan Land Use Map. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone. All future projects would be subject to environmental analysis under CEQA, and would be required to perform project-specific VMT screening analyses and, if necessary, implement measures to reduce VMT impacts to below the regional threshold. New development could occur within the city; however, the associated VMT would not be cumulatively considerable as this level of development associated with the Project is generally the same that could already occur under the existing General Plan. Therefore, the programmatic VMT impact would be less than significant.

**c) No Impact.** The proposed Project does not authorize the construction of any roadway and would result in no effects on the design of existing or future streets. Therefore, it would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment), and no impact would occur.

**d) Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project does not include any site-specific project approvals and does not involve any road construction or any development activity and thus would not obstruct or restrict emergency access to or through the city.

Future development would be subject to site plan review and approval during entitlement review and/or application for building permits. The Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) reviews all plans to ensure compliance with all applicable emergency access and safety requirements. Therefore, impacts involving emergency access would be less than significant.

## 4.18 – Tribal Cultural Resources

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, 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 Cultural Native American tribe, and that is:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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), or | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 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 Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |

**a and b) Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** Two changes to California State law (SB 18 and AB 52) require cities to consult directly with local Native American tribes to determine if any tribal cultural resources would be impacted by private development or public works projects proposed in the city. This is considered regulatory compliance and not specific mitigation under CEQA.

In 2023, as part of the preparation of the Bell Gardens Environmental Justice Element Initial Study and Negative Declaration, Impact Sciences, on behalf of the City, submitted a Sacred Lands File records search request to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) for the project requesting to determine if there are any tribal cultural resources within the city. On December 4, 2023, the NAHC responded the Sacred Lands File (SLF) check conducted through the NAHC was negative.[28]

On June 16 2026, the City contacted the list of tribes (provided by the NAHC and dated February 19, 2026; confirmed by NAHC on June 10, 2026 to include all applicable tribes for both SB 18 and AB 52 consultation) by U.S. mail and email to offer the tribes an opportunity for tribal consultation on the Project. As of September 18, 2026, the City has received a response from one tribe (Morongo Band of Mission Indians) noting that the project is located within the ancestral territory and traditional use area of the Cahuilla and Serrano people of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians. The letter requested initiation of government-to-government consultation, and the following:

- Currently proposed Project design and Mass Grading Maps
- A records search conducted at the appropriate California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) center with at least a 1.0-mile search radius from the project boundary.
- Tribal participation (a.k.a. tribal monitors) during the pedestrian survey and testing if this fieldwork has not already taken place.
- Shapefiles of the Projects area of effect (APE)
- Geotechnical Report

The letter also included a list of Morongo Band of Mission Indians Cultural Resource Mitigation Measures.

The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects and does not include any physical alterations within the city. The Project consists of targeted updates to several interrelated plans and land use regulations. All future site-specific development within the City would be subject to project-specific environmental review pursuant to CEQA, and would include tribal consultation pursuant to AB 52 and SB 18, as applicable.

The proposed Project does include a Zoning Code amendment related to tribal consultation which codifies state law requirements.

Due to the possible presence of unknown buried tribal cultural resources within the City, construction-related impacts on tribal cultural resources could be potentially significant. With implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 and CUL-2, described above in Section 4.5 (Cultural Resources), impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant. Additionally, future discretionary projects involving excavation activities may result in accidental discovery of human remains. In the event that human remains are accidentally discovered during the construction of any associated projects, those remains would be properly treated in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5. As required by California law, the requirements and procedures set forth in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 would also be implemented. Adherence to the identified mitigation measures and existing state laws would reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

## 4.19 – Utilities and Service Systems

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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) Less than Significant Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is served by two water providers: the Golden State Water Company and the City of Bell Gardens. Wastewater generated within the City is conveyed through local gravity sewers and lift stations maintained by Bell Gardens as well as by Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (LACSD).[29] The storm drain system is generally owned and maintained through a dual responsibility between the City of Bell Gardens and the County of Los Angeles (Los Angeles County Flood Control District). The city's electrical power is provided by Southern California Edison (SCE), and natural gas is provided by Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas). The city's telecommunications are provided by various companies, including Spectrum, AT&T, T-Mobile, and Verizon.

The proposed Project is a series of updates to existing policy documents, as well as creation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use development. The proposed General Plan Land Use Element contains goals, policies, and programs that will provide City staff and discretionary bodies with a foundation for decisions on development projects and long-range planning related to physical development and public services. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zone.

The various involved utility agencies and companies develop master service plans based on anticipated land uses outlined in the General Plans of the various jurisdictions they serve. Development associated with the proposed Project would eventually consume additional water, electricity, and natural gas while producing additional wastewater for conveyance and treatment. As site-specific projects are proposed, it is possible that extension, relocation, or expansion of utilities services may be required. Future development is required to ensure adequate utility service during the development review and CEQA process. Utility impacts would be less than significant at this programmatic level.

**b) Less Than Significant Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is served by two water providers: the Golden State Water Company and the City of Bell Gardens. The City overlies the Central (groundwater) Basin which was adjudicated in 1965 and the Central Basin Watermaster manages groundwater supplies and replenishment.

The proposed Project does not include approval of site-specific development projects. According to the 2025 Urban Water Management Plan (prepared for the part of the City served by the Golden State Water Company), water supplies are estimated to meet demands in normal, single dry years, and five consecutive dry year conditions through the year 2050.

Provisions included in the Bell Gardens Municipal Code Chapter 11.03, Water Conservation Plan, would be applicable to development within the city. This chapter includes provisions regarding water conservation and the Model Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (MWELO) requirements.

In addition, future site-specific development projects would be required to ensure adequate utility service during the development review and CEQA process; this potential impact would be less than significant at the programmatic level.

**c) Less Than Significant Impact.** Wastewater generated within Bell Gardens is conveyed through local gravity sewers and lift stations maintained by Bell Gardens as well as by LACSD. These flows are transported via trunk sewers to LACSD's A.K. Warren Water Resource Facility in Carson, which provides primary and secondary treatment but does not produce water that meets recycled water standards. As a result, wastewater from the service area is ultimately discharged to the Pacific Ocean through LACSD's outfall system.[30]

Future development associated with implementation of the proposed Project would eventually generate increased demand for wastewater treatment. However, the proposed Project does not include approvals for any site-specific development. Future development would be subject to preliminary environmental review pursuant to CEQA and, if found not to be exempt, subject to full environmental analysis. At that time, should potentially significant wastewater treatment impacts be identified, all environmental issues would be vetted and appropriate mitigation incorporated, as needed. Future development projects would generate additional wastewater for conveyance and treatment and would be required to ensure adequate wastewater service during the development review and CEQA process and as a COA. Therefore, wastewater treatment impacts would be less than significant at this programmatic level.

**d) Less than Significant Impact.** The City contracts with Athens Services for disposal of solid waste, recyclables, and green waste. Future development under the proposed Project would be required to comply with established solid waste regulations and procedures. Therefore, the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact at this programmatic level.

**e) Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development. All new development projects in the City would be required to comply with state mandates and City regulations regarding reduction/recycling of household waste. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

## 4.20 – Wildfire

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildlife 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 of that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ |
| d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ |

**a) Less than Significant Impact.** As noted by CALFIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps, the City of Bell Gardens is not located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones.[31] The proposed Project does not involve any road construction or any development activity and thus would not obstruct or restrict emergency access to or through the city. The Los Angeles County Fire Department reviews all plans to ensure compliance with all applicable emergency access and safety requirements. Therefore, impacts involving emergency access would be less than significant.

**b) No Impact.** The City is relatively flat and is completely urban so a wildfire event affecting the City is unlikely. The Project proposes no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category or zones. No specific development approval is authorized. The eventual construction of new development within the City may be subject to urban fires. However, there are no conditions in the City that would exacerbate wildfire risks and expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors. Therefore, there would be no impacts.

**c) No Impact.** The City of Bell Gardens is in a fully urbanized setting and does not have a moderate or high risk of wildfires. The City already has full infrastructure (roads, water lines with fire hydrants, etc.) to support fire protection services. Therefore, the proposed Project would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water resources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

**d) No Impact.** The City is relatively flat and bordered by the Los Angeles River to the west and the Rio Hondo River to the east. Both of these channels are fully improved adjacent to the city. Sections 4.10.c and 4.10.d of this Initial Study concluded that future development associated with implementation of the proposed Project would not experience significant impacts from flooding. The proposed Project would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

## 4.21 – Mandatory Findings of Significance

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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? | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |

**a) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** As discussed in the previous sections of this Initial Study, the proposed Project would not degrade the quality of the environment with adherence to existing regulations and implementation of the identified mitigation measures. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 would address previously unknown archaeological and tribal cultural resources. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would be applicable if paleontological resources were discovered. The results of the preceding analysis indicate that the proposed Project would have less-than-significant impact to sensitive biological resources and historical resources. In addition, programmatic impacts of the proposed Project to scenic vistas and visual character and resources would be less than significant.

The proposed Project does not include approval of any site-specific development projects and does not include any physical alterations within the city. The Project consists of targeted updates to several interrelated plans and land use regulations including: a General Plan Amendment – Land Use Element; a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment; a focused Zoning Code Amendment; Zone Change; and new Objective Design Standards. All future site-specific development within the City would be subject to project-specific environmental review pursuant to CEQA, as applicable. Therefore, the City finds that

the Project's programmatic impacts related to degradation of the environment would be less than significant.

**b) Less Than Significant Impact.** Under Section 15065(a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, a lead agency shall find that a project may have a significant effect on the environment where there is substantial evidence that the project has potential environmental effects "that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable." As defined in Section 15065(a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, cumulatively considerable means "that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects." Using this definition, a project that has no impact in a given impact category cannot have a cumulatively considerable contribution because its contribution is zero.

The proposed Project does not authorize any plan for construction projects or the redevelopment of any properties within the local jurisdiction. The Project would result in no new General Plan Land Use categories nor any changes to densities or intensities of any existing Land Use category. With the exception of a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment that changes the Land Use designation and type of development that could occur on a 1.41-acre parcel (which currently includes urban development), the Project would not result in a change in the amount or intensity of development that could be developed within the City. The Project does not propose any specific development or redevelopment project that could contribute to short-term or long-term cumulative impacts Therefore, the City finds the proposed Project's individual contribution to potentially significant cumulative impacts to be not considerable.

**c) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** As discussed in the respective sections, the Project would have no potentially significant impacts that would not be reduced to less than significant following compliance with the established regulatory framework and/or recommended mitigation measures. The Project would not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings directly or indirectly. Therefore, impacts concerning adverse effects on human beings would be less than significant.

# 5 References

## *5.1 – List of Preparers*

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## *5.2 – Persons and Organizations Consulted*

- N/A

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