

## 7. Alternatives to the Proposed Project

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### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

#### 7.1.1 Purpose and Scope

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR ) include a discussion of reasonable project alternatives that would “feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6). This chapter identifies potential alternatives to the proposed project and evaluates them, as required by CEQA.

Key provisions of the CEQA Guidelines on alternatives (Section 15126.6[a] through [f]) are summarized below to explain the foundation and legal requirements for the alternatives analysis in the EIR.

- “The discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly” (15126.6[b]).
- “The specific alternative of ‘no project’ shall also be evaluated along with its impact” (15126.6[e][1]).
- “The no project analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published, and at the time the environmental analysis is commenced, as well as what would reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services. If the environmentally superior alternative is the ‘no project’ alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives” (15126.6[e][2]).
- “The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a ‘rule of reason’ that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project” (15126.6[f]).
- “Among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site (or the site is already owned by the proponent)” (15126.6[f][1]).

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- “For alternative locations, “only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR” (15126.6[f][2][A]).
- “An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effect cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative” (15126.6[f][3]).

For each development alternative, this analysis:

- Describes the alternative,
- Analyzes the impact of the alternative as compared to the proposed project,
- Identifies the impacts of the project that would be avoided or lessened by the alternative,
- Assesses whether the alternative would meet most of the basic project objectives, and
- Evaluates the comparative merits of the alternative and the project.

Per the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d), additional significant effects of the alternatives are discussed in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.

### 7.1.2 Project Objectives

As described in Section 3.2, *Statement of Objectives*, the following objectives have been established for the General Plan Update and will aid decision makers in their review of the project, the project alternatives, and associated environmental impacts:

- Preserve and sustain Sierra Madre’s distinctive character as a historic small town nestled in the foothills, but within a major metropolitan area.
- Ensure that Sierra Madre is a safe, vibrant place to live, work and visit by providing city services that match the needs of the community and promote community engagement.
- Protect and be responsible stewards of the neighboring San Gabriel Mountain foothill’s wildlife, forest, open space, watershed and all other natural resources.
- Promote and develop a strong, diversified local economy and a thriving town center, consistent with the needs of the community.
- Ensure development is done in harmony with its neighborhood, while maintaining the character of the town and without unduly burdening existing city services and infrastructure or impacting the environment.

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### 7.1.3 Significant Impacts of the Proposed Project

The following significant and unavoidable impacts are identified in Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*, of this DEIR:

#### Air Quality

- **Impact 5.2-2:** Construction activities associated with the proposed General Plan Update would generate short-term emissions in exceedance of SCAQMD'S threshold criteria and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations of the SoCAB. Mitigation Measure 2-1 would reduce criteria air pollutants generated from project-related construction activities. Buildout under the General Plan Update would occur over a period of approximately 20 years or longer. Construction time frames and equipment for individual site-specific projects are not available and there is a potential for multiple developments to be constructed at any one time, resulting in significant construction-related emissions. Therefore, despite adherence to Mitigation Measures 2-1 in addition to the applicable policies and implementation measures of the General Plan Update and Implementation Program, respectively, Impact 5.2-2 would remain significant and unavoidable.
- **Impact 5.2-4:** Implementation of the General Plan Update could result in new sources of criteria air pollutant emissions and toxic air contaminants that could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Mitigation Measure 2-1 would reduce the project's regional construction emissions and therefore also reduce the project's localized construction-related criteria air pollutant emissions to the extent feasible. However, because existing sensitive receptors may be close to project-related construction activities, construction emissions generated by individual development projects accommodated by the General Plan Update have the potential to exceed SCAQMD's LSTs. Therefore, Impact 5.2-4 with respect to construction-related LST impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

#### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- **Impact 5.6-2:** Growth of the City under the General Plan Update would not meet the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) emissions reduction target of Executive Order S-03-05 without additional federal, state, and local GHG reduction measures and plans. Mitigation Measure 6-1 would ensure that the City continues to implement actions that reduce GHG emissions from buildout of the General Plan Update. However, additional federal and state measures would be necessary to reduce GHG emissions to meet the long-term GHG reduction goals under Executive Order S-03-05, which identified a goal to reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050. At this time, there is no plan past 2020 that achieves the long-term GHG reduction goal established under S-03-05. As identified by the California Council on Science and Technology, the state cannot meet the 2050 goal without major advancements in technology (CCST 2012). Since no additional federal or state measures are currently available that would ensure that the City of Sierra Madre could achieve an interim post-2020 target, Impact 5.6-2 would remain significant and unavoidable.

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### Noise

- **Impact 5.10-6:** Construction activities associated with buildout of the General Plan Update would substantially elevate noise levels in the vicinity of sensitive land uses. Mitigation Measure 10-1 would reduce noise impacts associated with construction activities to the extent feasible. However, due to the potential for proximity of construction activities to sensitive uses and potential longevity of construction activities, and despite the application of mitigation measures, Impact 5.10-6 would remain significant and unavoidable.
- **Impact 5.10-7:** Construction activities associated with buildout of the General Plan Update would expose sensitive uses to strong levels of groundborne vibration. Mitigation Measures 10-2 would reduce vibration impacts associated with construction activities to the extent feasible. However, due to the potential for proximity of construction activities to sensitive uses and potential longevity of construction activities, and despite the application of mitigation measures, Impact 5.10-7 would remain significant and unavoidable.

### Utilities and Service Systems

- **Impact 5.13-3:** Implementation of Mitigation Measures USS-1 through USS-12 would help reduce impacts on water supply as a result of future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update. However, considering the City's current water supply constraints—including the present serious drought conditions and the City's inability to access its adjudicated ground water in the Eastern Unit of the Raymond Basin due to low groundwater levels—impacts on water supply due to future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update are considered significant and unavoidable.

## 7.2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED DURING THE SCOPING/PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS

The following is a discussion of the land use alternatives considered during the scoping and planning process and the reasons why they were not selected for detailed analysis in this DEIR.

### 7.2.1 Alternative Development Areas

CEQA requires that the discussion of alternatives focus on alternatives to the project or its location that are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project. The key question and first step in the analysis is whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by putting the project in another location. Only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR (Guidelines Sec. 15126[5][B][1]). The proposed project is the General Plan Update for the City of Sierra Madre. The project is necessarily limited to the City of Sierra Madre, since the City does not have the authority to impose policies or regulate land uses outside its boundaries. Therefore, an alternative development area would be infeasible and was not considered.

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### 7.2.2 No Growth Alternative

The City of Sierra Madre is primarily built out and there are relatively few remaining vacant parcels. Consequently, the land use changes associated with the General Plan Update focus on select parcels that have the potential for redevelopment (identified in this DEIR as infill opportunity sites; see Figure 3-5, *Infill Opportunity Sites*).

CEQA requires that the discussion of alternatives focus on alternatives to the project or its location that are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project. The significant impact identified in Section 5.6, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, for GHG emissions under Impact 5.6-2 would continue to occur because the state has set a goal to reduce emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels, which requires substantial changes in the sources of energy and new technologies that are not yet available.

The No Growth Alternative is considered and rejected because growth is allowed under the current (1996) Sierra Madre General Plan, and there is no way to limit development within the City to its current extent. Additionally, the No Growth Alternative would not achieve the objectives established for the General Plan and would not be in compliance with the adopted Housing Element pursuant to State Law. Furthermore, the significant GHG impact identified above would not be eliminated under this alternative. Therefore, the No Growth Alternative is eliminated from further consideration.

## 7.3 ALTERNATIVES SELECTED FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

Based on the criteria listed above, the following alternatives have been determined to represent a reasonable range of alternatives which have the potential to feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but which may avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. These alternatives are analyzed in detail in the following sections.

- No Project/Current General Plan Alternative
- Reduced Development Alternative

An EIR must identify an “environmentally superior” alternative, and where the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative is identified as environmentally superior, the EIR is then required to identify as environmentally superior an alternative from among the others evaluated. Each alternative's environmental impacts are compared to the General Plan Update and determined to be environmentally superior, neutral, or inferior. However, only those impacts found significant and unavoidable are used in making the final determination of whether an alternative is environmentally superior or inferior to the proposed project. As outlined in Section 7.1.3, *Significant Impacts of the Proposed Project*, the impacts involving air quality, GHG, and noise were found to be significant and unavoidable. Section 7.6 identifies the Environmentally Superior Alternative.

The Preferred Land Use Alternative (proposed General Plan Update) is analyzed in detail in Chapter 5 of this DEIR.

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### 7.3.1 Alternatives Comparison

The following statistical analysis provides a summary of general socioeconomic build-out projections determined for the Preferred Land Use Alternative (proposed General Plan Update) and the two alternatives. It is important to note that these are not growth projections. That is, they do not anticipate what is likely to occur by a certain time horizon, but rather provide a build-out scenario that would only occur if all the areas of the City were to develop to the probable capacities yielded by the land use alternatives. The following statistics were developed as a tool to better understand the difference between the alternatives. Table 7-1 identifies City-wide information regarding dwelling units, population, non-residential square footage, and employment projections, and also provides the jobs-to-housing ratio for each of the land use alternatives.

**Table 7-1 Build-out Statistical Summary**

	Existing Conditions (2014) <sup>3</sup>	General Plan Update	No Project/Current General Plan Alternative <sup>5</sup>	Reduced Development Alternative
Dwelling Units	5,123	5,244	5,208	5,220
Population	11,094	11,371 <sup>4</sup>	11,978	11,316
Non-Residential Square Footage <sup>1</sup>	1,012,836	1,100,228	5,784,768	1,082,750
Employment <sup>2</sup>	1,606	1,730	3,747	1,700
Jobs-to-Housing Ratio	0.31	0.33	0.72	0.33

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Nonresidential square footage includes the building space of the three employment-generating nonresidential land use categories in the City, which include Commercial, Artisan Mixed Use, and Institutional. The other four nonresidential land use categories in the City (Municipal, Construction Open Space, and Natural Open Space) are not considered employment-generating land uses.

<sup>2</sup> Employment estimates for the Existing Conditions (2014), Proposed General Plan Update, and Reduced Development Alternative are based on the worker-per-thousand-square-foot of building square footage generation numbers developed by PlaceWorks and Fehr & Peers.

<sup>3</sup> Existing Conditions (2014): Existing number of residential units is based on 2014 projection numbers from the California Department of Finance (DOF 2014); existing population is based on 2014 projection numbers from the California Department of Finance (DOF 2014); existing nonresidential square footage is based on the Los Angeles County Assessor data; existing employment number is based on the worker-per-thousand-square-foot of building square footage generation numbers developed by PlaceWorks and Fehr & Peers. It should be noted that the number of employees shown under the Existing Conditions (2014) is in line with the number of employees (1,707) provided by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2011, which is the latest year that information is available from the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Buildout population of the 121 dwelling units that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update is calculated using a household size of 2.29 persons per household for Sierra Madre, based on 2014 projection numbers from the California Department of Finance (DOF 2014). The buildout population of 11,371 persons is the sum of adding the 11,094 persons under Existing Conditions (2014) plus the 277 residents that would be generated by the 121 dwelling units that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update.

<sup>5</sup> Buildout statistics for the current (1996) General Plan is based on statistics provided in the 1996 Sierra Madre General Plan Update EIR. The total nonresidential square footage called for in the 1996 Sierra Madre General Plan Update EIR was based on a presumed amount of 3,702,600 square feet of existing uses at the time the EIR was prepared, plus 2,082,168 square feet that would be accommodated under the 1996 General Plan. However, no clear source was provided in the 1996 Sierra Madre General Plan Update EIR as to how these numbers were derived.

## 7.4 NO PROJECT/CURRENT GENERAL PLAN ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative, the General Plan Update would not be implemented as proposed. The current (1996) Sierra Madre General Plan (1996 General Plan), including land use designations in the Land Use Map shown in Figure 3-4, *Current Land Use Plan*, would remain in effect and would not undergo any updates. The 1996 General Plan addresses the same overall geographic boundaries and applies similar land use designations as the proposed General Plan Update (see Figures 3-4 and 3-6, *Proposed Land Use Map*, for a comparison).

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Buildout statistics for the 1996 General Plan and General Plan Update are compared in Table 7-1, *Build-out Statistical Summary*. In general and as shown in this table, nearly all buildout factors of the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would be similar to the General Plan Update, with the exception of nonresidential building square footage and number of employees. As shown in the table, the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would allow for approximately 5.7 million square feet of nonresidential development, which is 4.6 million square feet more than what would occur under buildout of the General Plan Update. The large amount of nonresidential development under the 1996 General Plan would also equate to a larger employment number (2,017) than would occur under buildout of the General Plan Update.

### 7.4.1 Aesthetics

Buildout of the 1996 General Plan would result in 36 fewer residential units when compared to the General Plan Update, but would allow for substantially more nonresidential development than the General Plan Update, approximately 4.6 million square feet more. Nonresidential development includes commercial, light manufacturing, and institutional uses that would primarily occur within Sierra Madre's downtown area near existing commercial and civic facility uses along Sierra Madre Boulevard. The significant increase in nonresidential development would intensify and alter the aesthetic character of this commercial corridor and surrounding areas more so than the General Plan Update would. Therefore, aesthetic impacts would be greater under the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative.

### 7.4.2 Air Quality

The greater amount of non-residential development under the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative (4.6 million square feet more) would lead to a greater amount of construction activities, which in turn would generate short-term emissions in exceedance of SCAQMD's threshold criteria and would also cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations of the SoCAB, especially if multiple developments are being constructed at one time in the future. Further, new sources of criteria air pollutant emissions and toxic air contaminants associated with nonresidential development could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Therefore, impacts would be similar to the General Plan Update, significant and unavoidable, but to a greater extent.

### 7.4.3 Biological Resources

The No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would maintain the current land use designations and result in 36 fewer dwelling units and approximately 4.6 million square feet of additional nonresidential development when compared to development that could occur under the General Plan Update. While a significantly greater amount of nonresidential development would occur under this alternative, all of the development would occur mainly as infill development or redevelopment in the urban and built-out areas of Sierra Madre. As with the General Plan Update, residential development under this alternative (although slightly less than that which would occur under the General Plan Update) would also occur as infill development or redevelopment in the urban and built-out areas of Sierra Madre. New residential and nonresidential development under this alternative would not occur where most of the City's biological resources are located, in the northern portion near the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountain. Therefore,

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impacts to biological resources under this alternative would be similar (less than significant) to the General Plan Update.

### 7.4.4 Cultural Resources

Impacts to cultural resources under this alternative would be slightly greater than those that would occur under the General Plan Update. As with the General Plan Update, cultural resource impacts under this alternative would primarily be associated with potential ground disturbance and development of previously undisturbed areas, or impacts to potential historic structures (e.g., building additions, demolition). However, this alternative would lead to an increase in the intensity of nonresidential development, which could result in a greater impact on cultural resources due to development and redevelopment activities associated with the increased development potential. Additionally, the General Plan Update includes a historic preservation policy (Policy L46.1) that calls for a citywide historic survey, which could reduce the potential for the demolition of or impacts to existing and potential historic resources. Therefore, impacts to cultural resources under the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would be greater when compared to the General Plan Update.

### 7.4.5 Geology and Soils

As with the General Plan Update, individual development projects Under the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would be required to prepare site-specific geotechnical investigations to evaluate seismic, liquefaction, ground settlement, and/or soil expansion hazards. In addition, all development projects under this alternative would be required to comply with existing federal, state and local regulations, such as the California Building Code and statewide General Construction Permit. However, this alternative would allow for approximately 4.6 million square feet more of nonresidential development compared to the General Plan Update, which would subject more buildings and persons to geological hazards in the City, such as strong shaking from earthquakes. Therefore, impacts would be greater under this alternative.

### 7.4.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Similar to the General Plan Update, buildout of this alternative would likely not result in a substantial increase in GHG emissions because federal and state regulations identified in CARB's Scoping Plan, including the Pavley fuel efficiency standards, LCFS for fuel use (transportation and off-road), and state reductions for non-transportation measures would be implemented. However, as with the General Plan Update, GHG emissions reduction targets of Executive Order S-03-05 would not be met under this alternative because there are no plans past 2020 that achieves the long-term GHG reduction goal established under S-03-05. Therefore, impacts would be similar under this alternative, significant and unavoidable, but to a greater extent.

### 7.4.7 Land Use and Planning

California Government Code, Sections 65300 et seq., requires that cities and counties prepare and adopt general plans. This alternative would leave the 1996 General Plan in place rather than updating it. Neither this alternative nor the General Plan Update would divide an established community given the already built-out nature of Sierra Madre. However, the 1996 General Plan is not consistent with new or updated state and



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regional planning laws such as the California Complete Streets Act of 2008, or the 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2012–2035 RTP/SCS), which places a greater emphasis than ever on sustainability and integrated planning. Therefore, land use impacts would be greater under this alternative in comparison to the General Plan Update.

### 7.4.8 Noise

The No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would allow for substantially more nonresidential square footage (approximately 4.6 million square feet more) than the General Plan Update, and therefore, substantially increase employment numbers in the City, which in turn would likely introduce added noise from vehicular traffic. The additional nonresidential development would also lead to additional sources of operational noise. Furthermore, additional nonresidential development would lead to an increase in construction noise compared to the General Plan Update. Therefore, impacts would be greater under this alternative. However, as with the General Plan Update, construction-related noise and vibration impacts would be significant and unavoidable, but to a greater extent.

### 7.4.9 Population and Housing

As shown in Table 7-1, *Build-out Statistical Summary*, the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would increase the City's population by 671 people and nominally decrease dwelling units by 36 compared to the General Plan Update. Therefore, the population increase under this alternative would result in a greater population impact. However, this alternative would allow for substantially more nonresidential square footage (approximately 4.6 million square feet more) than the General Plan Update, which would increase available jobs in the City by 2,017 compared to the General Plan Update. The increase in employment also creates a healthier jobs-housing balance of 0.72, as compared to the 0.33 under the General Plan Update (see Table 7-1). Therefore, overall population and housing impacts would balance out and result in similar impacts (less than significant) to those of the General Plan Update.

### 7.4.10 Public Services

While this alternative would reduce the number of dwelling units compared to the General Plan Update, it would allow for substantially more nonresidential square footage (approximately 4.6 million square feet more) than the General Plan Update. This considerable increase in nonresidential development would likely result in more calls for police and fire services. Therefore, impacts to police and fire services would be greater under this alternative. The No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would also result in an increase in population by 671 people as compared to the General Plan Update (see Table 7-1), which would likely increase Sierra Madre's student population served by the Pasadena Unified School District. Further, the increase in population would increase demand on library services provided by the Sierra Madre Public Library. Therefore, overall impacts to public services would be greater under this alternative.

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### 7.4.11 Recreation

Buildout population under the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would result in 671 additional residents compared to the General Plan Update (see Table 7-1). The increase in population under this alternative would lead to an increased demand on park and recreational facilities available in Sierra Madre. Therefore, this alternative would result in a greater impact on recreation compared to the General Plan Update.

### 7.4.12 Transportation and Traffic

Compared to the General Plan Update, the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would substantially increase nonresidential development by approximately 4.6 million square feet, population by 671 residents, and employment by 2,017 jobs (See Table 7-1). The increase in nonresidential development would make the City a stronger employment and job center, which would likely increase vehicle trips in and out of the City compared to the General Plan Update. The increase in vehicle trips generated by the increase in nonresidential development would also likely impact the level of service at various intersections and potentially exceed roadway capacities. Therefore, impacts would be greater under this alternative.

### 7.4.13 Utilities and Service Systems

Compared to the General Plan Update, the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would reduce the number of dwelling units by 36 dwelling units, but would increase the City's population and employment by 671 residents and 2,017 jobs, respectively (see Table 7-1). In addition, it would allow for approximately 4.6 million more square feet of nonresidential development. Therefore, the increase in residents, workers, and nonresidential structures would outweigh the minor decrease of 36 dwelling units that would occur under this alternative, resulting in a significant increase in an increased demand for water supply and dry utilities (i.e., natural gas and electricity), as well as an increase in wastewater and solid waste generation. Overall impacts to utilities and service systems would be greater under this alternative. However, impacts to water supply would be similar to the General Plan Update, significant and unavoidable, but to a greater extent.

### 7.4.14 Conclusion

Under the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative, the level of impact under several environmental categories would be greater as compared to the General Plan Update, including Aesthetics, Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation and Traffic, and Utilities and Service Systems. Impacts under Biological Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Population and Housing would be similar. No significant and unavoidable impacts would be eliminated under this alternative.

The No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would achieve three of the General Plan Update objectives, including: ensuring Sierra Madre is a safe and vibrant place to live, work and visit with city services that meet the needs of the community; protecting its natural resources (i.e., foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, wildlife, forest, open space, and watershed); and developing a strong local economy and thriving

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town center. However, the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would not be as successful at achieving the other two objectives. Specifically, by allowing for an additional 4.6 million square feet of nonresidential development (i.e., commercial, light manufacturing, and institutional uses), this alternative would not be able to preserve Sierra Madre's character as a historic small town within a major metropolitan area, and it would allow for a significant amount of nonresidential development that may burden existing city services and infrastructure. Therefore, the No Project/Current General Plan Alternative would not be as effective in meeting the project objectives as would the General Plan Update.

### 7.5 REDUCED DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE

This alternative was evaluated for its potential to reduce impacts related to short-term, construction-related air quality and noise, as well as long term impacts to water supply, which would occur under the General Plan Update. The Reduced Development Alternative would be similar to the General Plan Update, wherein the proposed Land Use Map (see Figure 3-6, *Proposed Land Use Map*) associated with the General Plan Update would be implemented under this alternative. Therefore, the location and distribution of land use designations shown in Figure 3-6 would remain the same under this alternative. As shown in Table 7-1, *Build-out Statistical Summary*, the main difference would be a minor reduction in dwelling units by 24 (5,244 under the General Plan Update versus 5,220 under this alternative), which would decrease the buildout population by 55 residents. This alternative would also slightly reduce nonresidential development by 17,478 square feet (1,100,228 under the General Plan Update versus 1,082,750 under this alternative), which would lead to a reduction in jobs by 30. The reductions under this alternative equate to a 20 percent reduction over what the General Plan Update would accommodate.

#### 7.5.1 Aesthetics

Development of the Reduced Development Alternative would result in very similar aesthetic impacts as the General Plan Update. The minor reduction of 24 dwelling units and 17,478 square feet of nonresidential development would not drastically alter the visual character or scenic quality of Sierra Madre compared to the General Plan Update, in particular due to the built-out nature of the City. Most development, under both the General Plan Update and this alternative, would be involved redevelopment or infill development. Overall, impacts under this alternative would be similar (less than significant) to the General Plan Update.

#### 7.5.2 Air Quality

By reducing development intensity, air quality impacts would likely decrease under this alternative. Less construction activities would also occur under this alternative, which in turn would result in fewer new sources of criteria air pollutant emissions and/or toxic air contaminants that could adversely impact sensitive receptors. Overall, air quality impacts under this alternative would be reduced; however, as with the General Plan Update, impacts would be significant and unavoidable under this alternative.

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### 7.5.3 Biological Resources

This alternative would nominally decrease residential and nonresidential development in an already urbanized and built-out City. As with the General Plan Update, development under this alternative would occur mainly as infill development or redevelopment in the urban and built-out areas of Sierra Madre. New development would not occur where most of the City's biological resources are located, in the northern portion near the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountain. Therefore, overall impact to biological resources under this alternative would be similar (less than significant) to the General Plan Update.

### 7.5.4 Cultural Resources

Impacts to cultural resources under this alternative would be similar to impacts that would occur under the General Plan Update. Although this alternative would reduce intensity of development, the distribution of permitted land uses in this alternative would be across the entire City, similar to the General Plan Update. The reduction in dwelling units and nonresidential development under this alternative could potentially decrease the chance for ground disturbance of previously undisturbed areas; however, Sierra Madre is already built out and most development would be infill or redevelopment of already developed land. Therefore, the decrease in development potential under this alternative would be nominal and cultural impacts would be similar (less than significant) to the General Plan Update.

### 7.5.5 Geology and Soils

Under both the Reduced Development Alternative and the General Plan Update, individual development projects would require the preparation of site-specific geotechnical investigations to evaluate seismic, liquefaction, ground settlement, and/or soil expansion hazards. All development projects would also be required to comply with existing federal and state regulations, such as the California Building Code and Statewide General Construction Permit. However, this alternative would allow for less residential units and nonresidential development compared to the General Plan Update, which would subject less person and buildings to geological hazards in the City, such as strong shaking from earthquakes. Therefore, although no significant impacts were identified for the General Plan Update, impacts under this alternative would be slightly reduced compared to the General Plan Update.

### 7.5.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This alternative would reduce development intensity by a nominal amount, 24 dwelling units and 17,478 square feet of nonresidential development. Therefore, GHG emissions would be similar to the General Plan Update and likely be offset by federal and state required reduction measures. However, there are no plans past 2020 that would help achieve the long-term GHG reduction goal established under Executive Order S-03-05. Therefore, similar to the General Plan Update, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable under this alternative.

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### 7.5.7 Land Use and Planning

The Reduced Development Alternative would result in similar land use impacts as the General Plan Update. The reduction in residential and nonresidential development is nominal and would not reduce impacts by much. This alternative also would not divide any established communities in Sierra Madre since the City is already built out with very little land available for new development. Therefore, as with the General Plan Update, land use impacts under this alternative would be similar, less than significant.

### 7.5.8 Noise

In comparison to the General Plan Update, this alternative would result in a reduction of noise impacts due to the decrease in residential and nonresidential development. By reducing development, there would be less construction and operational noises and vibration sources, both stationary and mobile. Therefore, impacts would be less than those under the General Plan Update. However, as with the General Plan Update, construction-related noise and vibration impacts near sensitive land uses would remain significant and unavoidable under this alternative.

### 7.5.9 Population and Housing

This alternative would result in a reduction of dwelling units and population by 24 units and 55 people, respectively. In addition, nonresidential development would also decrease by 17,478 square feet, reducing employment by 55 jobs. The jobs housing balance under this alternative (0.33) would be the same as that of the General Plan Update (0.33). Overall impact to population and housing under this alternative would be similar (less than significant) to the General Plan Update.

### 7.5.10 Public Services

Buildout of this alternative would result in a reduction of dwelling units, population, nonresidential development, and employment compared to the General Plan Update. These reductions would correlate with less fire and police services demand, a lower school services demand (due to a reduced student population), and reduced library service demands. Therefore, although no significant impacts were identified for the General Plan Update, impacts would be reduced under the Reduced Development Alternative.

### 7.5.11 Recreation

In comparison to the General Plan Update, this alternative would result in a reduction in population buildout by 55 persons. This is a nominal decrease compared to the General Plan Update and would likely result in similar demands for the City's parks and recreational facilities. Therefore, impacts under this alternative would be similar (less than significant) to the General Plan Update.

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### 7.5.12 Transportation and Traffic

This alternative would slightly reduce development by 24 dwelling units and 17,478 square feet of nonresidential development. The reduction in development would result in a reduction of vehicle trips generated; however, even with the reduction in development, it is anticipated that roadway intersection impacts under this alternative (impacts to the Orange Grove Avenue/Baldwin Avenue intersection) would be similar to those of the General Plan Update (significant without mitigation). With the implementation of mitigation measures, both the General Plan Update and this alternative would result in less than significant impacts. Therefore, impacts under this alternative would be similar to the General Plan Update.

### 7.5.13 Utilities and Service Systems

Implementation of this alternative would result in a reduction of 24 dwelling units, 55 residents, and 17,478 square feet of nonresidential development. Compared to the General Plan Update, this alternative would result in a reduction of water and dry utilities demands and a generation of less wastewater and solid waste. Therefore, the Reduced Development Alternative would result in fewer impacts on utilities and service systems compared to the General Plan Update. However, as with the General Plan Update, water supply impacts under this alternative would remain significant and unavoidable.

### 7.5.14 Conclusion

Under the Reduced Development Alternative, all environmental impacts would have similar or reduced impacts compared to the General Plan Update. However, no significant and unavoidable impacts would be eliminated under this alternative.

The Reduced Development Alternative would be able to achieve all the project objectives: preserving and sustaining Sierra Madre's distinctive character as a historic small town nestled in the foothills; ensuring Sierra Madre is a safe and vibrant place to live, work and visit with city services that meet the needs of the community; protecting its natural resources (i.e., foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, wildlife, forest, open space, and watershed); developing a strong local economy and thriving town center; and ensuring development is done in harmony with its neighborhood, while maintaining the character of the town and without unduly burdening existing city services and infrastructure or impacting the environment. However, this alternative would not achieve the objective of developing a strong local economy to the same extent as the General Plan Update, at it would result in a reduction of nonresidential development by 17,478 square feet, thereby, leading to less growth in the local economy.

## 7.6 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

CEQA requires a lead agency to identify the "environmentally superior alternative," and in cases where the "No Project" Alternative is environmentally superior to the proposed project, the environmentally superior development alternative must be identified from the other alternatives (CEQA 15126.6(e)(2)). A summary of the impacts of the alternatives compared to the General Plan Update is provided in Table 7-2. A summary of the ability of the alternatives to achieve the objectives of the General Plan Update is provided in Table 7-3.

## 7. Alternatives to the Proposed Project

One alternative has been identified as “environmentally superior” to the General Plan Update, the Reduced Development Alternative. As shown in Table 7-2, this alternative would lessen impacts associated with air quality, geology and soils, noise, public services, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems. The remaining impacts, including aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, land use and planning, population and housing, and recreation are generally the same as the General Plan Update. Although this alternative would lessen some environmental impacts, it would not eliminate the significant environmental impacts to air quality, greenhouse gas emission, noise, and utilities and service systems.

**Table 7-2 Proposed Project vs. Alternatives: Impacts Comparison**

Resource	Proposed Project Impacts	Alternatives: Impact Relative to Proposed Project	
		No Project/ Current General Plan Alternative	Reduced Development Alternative
Aesthetics	LS	>	=
Air Quality	<b>S/U</b>	>	<
Biological Resources	LS	=	=
Cultural Resources	LS/M	>	=
Geology and Soils	LS	>	<
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<b>S/U</b>	>	=
Land Use and Planning	LS	>	=
Noise	<b>S/U</b>	>	<
Population and Housing	LS	=	=
Public Services	LS	>	<
Recreation	LS	>	=
Transportation and Traffic	LS/M	>	<
Utilities and Service Systems	<b>S/U</b>	>	<

**Symbols:**  
 < Impacts would be less than those of the proposed project  
 > Impacts would be greater than those of the proposed project  
 = Impacts would be similar to the proposed project  
 LS Less than Significant Impact  
 LS/M Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated  
**S/U** Significant and Unavoidable Impact

The Reduced Development Alternative would meet the objective of the General Plan Update. However, as shown in Table 7-3, this alternative would not achieve the objective of developing a strong local economy to the same extent as the General Plan Update, as it would result in a reduction of nonresidential development by 17,478 square feet, thereby, leading to less growth in the local economy.

## 7. Alternatives to the Proposed Project

**Table 7-3 Ability of Each Alternative to Meet the Project Objectives**

Resource	Land Use Alternatives		
	General Plan Update	No Project/ Current General Plan Alternative	Reduced Development Alternative
Preserve and sustain Sierra Madre's distinctive character as a historic small town nestled in the foothills, but within a major metropolitan area.	Yes	No	Yes
Ensure that Sierra Madre is a safe, vibrant place to live, work and visit by providing city services that match the needs of the community and promote community engagement.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Protect and be responsible stewards of the neighboring San Gabriel Mountain foothill's wildlife, forest, open space, watershed and all other natural resources.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Promote and develop a strong, diversified local economy and a thriving town center, consistent with the needs of the community.	Yes	Yes	Yes, but not to the same extent
Ensure development is done in harmony with its neighborhood, while maintaining the character of the town and without unduly burdening existing city services and infrastructure or impacting the environment.	Yes	No	Yes

## 7.7 REFERENCES

California Department of Finance (DOF). 2014, May. Table E-5: Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2011-2014, with 2010 Census Benchmark.

<http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/estimates/e-5/2011-20/view.php>.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2011. OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2011). <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>.