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2.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all state and local governmental agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority prior to taking action on those projects. This Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been prepared to satisfy CEQA, as set forth in the Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations, Section 15000, et seq. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the public document designed to provide decision makers and the public with an analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed project, to indicate possible ways to reduce or avoid environmental damage and to identify alternatives to the project. The EIR must also disclose significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided; growth inducing impacts; effects not found to be significant; and significant cumulative impacts of all past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Pursuant to CEQA Section 21067, the lead agency means “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project which may have a significant effect upon the environment.” The City of Sierra Madre has the principal responsibility for approval of the Sierra Madre General Plan Update. For this reason, the City of Sierra Madre is the CEQA lead agency for this project.

The intent of the DEIR is to provide sufficient information on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Sierra Madre General Plan Update to allow the City of Sierra Madre to make an informed decision regarding approval of the project. Specific discretionary actions to be reviewed by the City are described later in Section 3.8, *Intended Uses of the EIR*.

This DEIR has been prepared in accordance with requirements of the:

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.)
- State Guidelines for the Implementation of the CEQA of 1970 (herein referenced as CEQA Guidelines), as amended (California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et seq.)

The overall purpose of this DEIR is to inform the lead agency, responsible agencies, decision makers and the general public of the environmental effects of the development and operation of the proposed Sierra Madre General Plan Update. This DEIR addresses the potential environmental effects of the project, including effects that may be significant and adverse, evaluates a number of alternatives to the project, and identifies mitigation measures to reduce or avoid adverse effects.

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2.2 NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The City of Sierra Madre determined that an EIR would be required for this project and issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on September 23, 2013 (see Appendix A). The public review period extended from September 23 to October 23, 2013. No comments were received during the NOP review period.

The NOP process is used to help determine the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the DEIR. Based on this process and the NOP for the project, certain environmental categories were identified as having the potential to result in significant impacts. Issues considered Potentially Significant are addressed in this DEIR. Issues identified as No Impact or Less Than Significant are not addressed beyond the discussion in Chapter 8, *Impacts Found Not To Be Significant*. Refer to Chapter 8 for discussion of how these initial determinations were made.

2.3 SCOPE OF THIS DEIR

Based on the NOP, the City of Sierra Madre staff determined that a DEIR should be prepared for the proposed project. The scope of the DEIR was determined based on the NOP and comments received at the public scoping meeting conducted by the City. Pursuant to Sections 15126.2 and 15126.4 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the DEIR should identify any potentially significant adverse impacts and recommend mitigation that would reduce or eliminate these impacts to levels of insignificance.

The information contained in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, establishes the basis for analyzing future project-related environmental impacts. However, further environmental review by the City may be required as more detailed information and plans are submitted on a project by project basis following approval of the Sierra Madre General Plan Update.

This DEIR has been prepared to evaluate potentially significant impacts associated with implementation of the Sierra Madre General Plan Update. The General Plan Update's policies and programs, existing regulations, and mitigation measures have been identified to either reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts. The focus of the impact analysis is on areas that propose physical changes to the existing environment that may result in environmental impacts (e.g., areas where land use changes are proposed), and on ensuring that development and improvement activities are consistent with the General Plan Update. In addition, the DEIR describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project, while substantially avoiding or lessening any of the significant impacts of the proposed project, and evaluates the comparative merits of the alternatives and the proposed project.

2.3.1 Impacts Considered Less Than Significant

Four environmental impact categories are identified here as not being significantly affected by, or affecting the Sierra Madre General Plan Update and as such are not discussed in detail in Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*, of this DEIR. This determination was made by the City of Sierra Madre in its preparation of the NOP and the discussion provided in Chapter 8, *Impacts Found Not to be Significant*. The following topical issues are not addressed in Chapter 5:

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- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Mineral Resources

2.3.2 Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts

Thirteen environmental factors have been identified as potentially significant impacts if the proposed project is implemented. These factors are:

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

2.3.3 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Significant unavoidable adverse impacts may be considered significant on a project-specific basis, cumulatively significant, and/or potentially significant. If the City of Sierra Madre, as the Lead Agency, determines that significant unavoidable adverse impacts will result from the project, the City must prepare a “Statement of Overriding Considerations” before it can approve the project. A Statement of Overriding Considerations states that the decision-making body has balanced the benefits of the proposed project against its significant unavoidable environmental effects and has determined that the benefits of the project outweigh the adverse effects and, therefore, the adverse effects are considered to be acceptable.

Chapter 1, *Executive Summary*, contains Table 1-1, which summarizes the impacts, mitigation measures, and levels of significance before and after mitigation. As concluded in the individual topical sections of Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*, no significant unavoidable impacts were identified. All impacts considered potentially significant were reduced to a level of less than significant with adherence to existing regulations, implementation of the General Plan Update policies and Implementation Program measures, and/or implementation of mitigation measures.

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2.4 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The following documents are incorporated by reference in this DEIR, consistent with Sections 15148 and 15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines, and are available for review at the City of Sierra Madre:

- City of Sierra Madre General Plan, prepared by the City of Sierra Madre, 1996
- Environmental Impact Report for the City of Sierra Madre General Plan (SCH NO. 95101004), prepared by Impact Sciences, Inc., 1996
- City of Sierra Madre General Plan Update Technical Background Report, prepared by PlaceWorks, September 2014

This DEIR also relies on previously adopted regional and statewide plans and programs, agency standards, and background studies in its analysis, such as:

- City of Sierra Madre Municipal Code
- 2013 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategies (RTP/SCS), Southern California Association of Governments
- 2012 Air Quality Management Plan, South Coast Air Quality Management District
- 2008 Scoping Plan, California Air Resources Board

Whenever existing environmental documentation or previously prepared documents and studies are used in the preparation of this DEIR, the information is summarized for the convenience of the reader and incorporated by reference. In addition, each topical section of this DEIR that relies on previously adopted plans, programs, environmental documentation, and background studies notes how it specifically relates to the proposed project and that the information has been reconfirmed. These documents and other referenced source material in this DEIR will be made available to the public for inspection upon request at the City of Sierra Madre, Planning and Community Preservation Department, 232 W. Sierra Madre Boulevard, Sierra Madre, California 91024.

2.5 FINAL EIR CERTIFICATION

This DEIR is being circulated for public review for a period of 45 days. Interested agencies and members of the public are invited to provide written comments on the DEIR to the City address shown on the title page of this document. Upon completion of the 45-day review period, the City of Sierra Madre will review all written comments received and prepare written responses for each comment. A Final EIR (FEIR) will then be prepared incorporating all of the comments received, responses to the comments and any changes to the DEIR that result from the comments received. This FEIR will then be presented to the Sierra Madre City Council for potential certification as the environmental document for the project. All persons who com-

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mented on the DEIR will be notified of the availability of the FEIR and the date of the public hearing before the City.

The DEIR is available to the general public for review at the following locations:

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| ■ City of Sierra Madre | ■ Sierra Madre Public Library |
| Planning and Community Preservation Department | 440 W. Sierra Madre Boulevard |
| 232 W. Sierra Madre Boulevard | Sierra Madre, CA 91024 |
| Sierra Madre, CA 91024 | |

2.6 MITIGATION MONITORING

Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 requires that agencies adopt a monitoring or reporting program for any project for which it has made findings pursuant to Public Resources Code 21081 or adopted a Negative Declaration pursuant to 21080(c). Such a program is intended to ensure the implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration.

The Mitigation Monitoring Program for the Sierra Madre General Plan Update will be completed as part of the Final EIR and prior to consideration of the project by the Sierra Madre City Council.

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