

## SECTION 5 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

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### 5.1 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

#### 5.1.1 Definition and Approach

This section discusses the cumulative effects of the Proposed Project. Section 15130(e) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of cumulative impacts of a project “when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.” The CEQA Guidelines, Section 15355, defines a cumulative impact as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” Cumulatively considerable impacts are defined in Section 15065(c) of the CEQA Guidelines as the “incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.”

Section 15130(b) of the CEQA Guidelines states, “[t]he discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided of the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness.”

To analyze the cumulative impacts of the project in combination with other expected future growth, the amount and location of growth expected to occur must be predicted. Section 15130(b) of the CEQA Guidelines allows two methods of prediction:

(1) *Either:*

- (a) *A list of relevant past, present and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the Agency, or*
- (b) *A summary of projections contained in adopted general plan or related planning document or in a prior adopted or certified environmental document that described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.*

For the purpose of this PEIR, the plans and projections (b) approach was utilized. The cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project are discussed at the program level. As individual projects are implemented in the future, project specific cumulative impacts (if any) would be disclosed in subsequent-tier CEQA documentation.

#### 5.1.2 San Gabriel Valley Growth Projections

The Proposed Project includes multi-use trails for bicyclists, hikers, and equestrians, bridges over the San Gabriel River and San Jose Creek, access ramps, and a 5-acre park built over several years. The Proposed Project includes 15 individual projects located in various cities and unincorporated areas of the San Gabriel Valley. Cities include Arcadia, El Monte, Industry, Irwindale, Rosemead, and South El Monte. The project site is located in the San Gabriel Valley surrounded by the several cities and unincorporated communities (e.g. Avocado Heights and Bassett). Unincorporated areas are under the jurisdiction of Los Angeles County. The cumulative impacts analysis area is the San Gabriel Valley, unless otherwise noted for a specific

resource. The San Gabriel Valley is a geographical valley on the easternmost portion of Los Angeles County bordered by the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, the San Jose and Chino Hills to the east, the San Rafael and Puente Hills to the south, and the San Rafael Hills to the west. The General Plans for these jurisdictions were reviewed as part of the plan approach for this cumulative impacts analysis (CEQA Guidelines §15130(b)(1)(b)).

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) forecasts that from 2008 to 2035, the San Gabriel Valley will add 319,000 more people. To accommodate this population increase, the San Gabriel Valley will need to add 85,000 new households (SCAG 2012b). This growth will occur in a geographical area that is largely built out. With a growing population, there will be an increase demand to preserve existing open spaces and to develop more recreational opportunities. General Plans from the region address open space, alternative transportation, and recreational issues (e.g., the Puente Hills Landfill Park Master Plan) and generally encourage the preservation of open spaces and the increased development of recreational facilities (please refer to the recreation section of this PEIR [Section 3.13]). The Proposed Project would help meet the increased demand for recreational opportunities and trail connectivity that would result from projected population growth in the San Gabriel Valley.

### **5.1.3 Cumulative Impacts Analysis**

#### **5.1.3.1 Aesthetics**

The San Gabriel Valley is largely built out with single- and multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Few remaining vacant and open spaces remain in the valley. Growth and development in the San Gabriel Valley will continue to occur as the few remaining vacant parcels are developed and as underutilized parcels are redeveloped. This continued urbanization of the San Gabriel Valley will result in changes that can potentially affect visual resources and the visual character of the Valley.

Cities in the San Gabriel Valley and the County of Los Angeles have development and design standards that projects must comply with to avoid or mitigate visual impacts. Development and design review of individual projects by individual cities or the County would prevent the potential for adverse visual impacts so that aesthetic impacts do not become cumulatively significant.

#### **5.1.3.2 Air Quality**

Cumulative projects include local development, as well as general growth within the project area. As with most development, the greatest source of emissions associated with the Proposed Project is from mobile sources, which travel well out of the local area. The project area is in non-attainment for both O<sub>3</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>. Construction and operation of cumulative projects would further degrade the local air quality, as well as the air quality of the Basin. The greatest cumulative impact on the quality of regional air quality would be the incremental addition of pollutants mainly from increased traffic from residential, commercial, and industrial development and the use of heavy equipment and trucks associated with the construction of these projects. The Proposed Project would provide a means of alternative transportation, potentially resulting in fewer vehicles trips and a beneficial impact.

Air quality would be temporarily degraded during construction activities that occur separately or simultaneously. However, in accordance with the SCAQMD methodology, projects that do not

exceed the SCAQMD criteria or can be mitigated to less than criteria levels are not significant and do not add to the overall cumulative impact. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not have a considerable contribution to the significant cumulative impact to air quality.

### **5.1.3.3 Biological Resources**

The cumulative setting for biological resources includes the bioregions within the San Gabriel Valley. Development associated with implementation of the Proposed Project would primarily be focused along the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo. These two rivers have undergone significant transformation from their natural state and are managed with levees and dams. Many of the proposed improvements would occur on or adjacent to existing flood control and transportation infrastructure. A wide range of mitigation measures that must be implemented in order to reduce impacts to special-status species and sensitive natural habitat are described in Section 3.4, Biological Resources of this PEIR. As such, the Proposed Project is not anticipated to cumulatively contribute to impacts to sensitive biological resources in the project area.

### **5.1.3.4 Cultural and Paleontological Resources**

The Proposed Project was assessed for potential impacts to cultural and paleontological resources. The records search results indicate that there are previously recorded prehistoric and historic sites in the western part of the Whittier Narrows area. The site of the first San Gabriel Mission is located in this area along with other late 19<sup>th</sup> century settlements. The Gabrielino also consider this area to be sensitive (ECORP 2016b). With the implementation of mitigation measures listed in Section 3.5.5, potential impacts to cultural and paleontological resources would be reduced to a less than significant level. Cumulative impacts would also be less than significant with these mitigation measures. It is anticipated that similar mitigation measures would be implemented for projects in surrounding jurisdictions that may affect cultural or paleontological resources.

### **5.1.3.5 Geology and Soils**

Geology and soils impacts are considered site specific, and therefore the development of a project would not alter geologic events or soil types at another project site. Seismic events are regional in nature and affect large areas as opposed to individual project sites. Strong ground shaking hazards, caused by earthquakes, could lead to the damage of buildings and infrastructure within the Proposed Project, as well as the surrounding areas. The impacts from strong ground shaking are not unlike the impacts in other areas of the region, and additional projects would not increase these impacts.

Site specific geologic hazards such as liquefaction and landslides, and site specific soil hazards such as erosion and expansive soils, would be addressed by the geotechnical investigations required at each individual project site. These investigations would identify the geologic and seismic characteristics on a site and provide recommendations to ensure structural integrity for any proposed buildings or infrastructure. Compliance with these recommendations would assure impacts from geology and soils on the Proposed Project would not be cumulatively significant. The Proposed Project would not increase substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, to people or structures due to geologic or soil hazards. With compliance of the County Building Code and incorporation of Mitigation Measures G-1 and H-1, cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

### **5.1.3.6 Greenhouse Gas**

The vast majority of GHG emissions from the Proposed Project would be related to construction and mobile sources (visitor traffic). Although construction activities would be temporary in nature, traffic related to the Proposed Project would continue throughout operation of the trails system. With continued growth in the region, the number of vehicle trips would also likely increase with population growth. It is noted, however, that federal regulations require the car manufacturers reduce GHG emissions from vehicles. Nonetheless, the increase in the total number of vehicles, as well as construction emissions, in the project area is anticipated to result in a significant cumulative impact associated with GHG emissions.

As stated in Section 3.7 of this PEIR, the County adopted the Unincorporated Los Angeles County Community Climate Action Plan 2020 (CCAP) in August 2015. The CCAP includes a GHG reduction target of at least 11 percent below 2010 levels by 2020, consistent with AB 32. As shown in Table 3.7-2 of the Greenhouse Gas section of this PEIR, the Proposed Project's GHG emissions would be substantially less than the SCAQMD significance threshold. The CCAP also identifies 26 local community actions as part of a comprehensive GHG emissions reduction program for both existing and new development within the County. The Proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHG emissions. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not have a considerable contribution to significant cumulative impacts associated with GHG emissions.

The proposed bicycle paths of the Emerald Necklace would help meet the goals of the County of Los Angeles Bicycle Master Plan. Appendix B (Ridership & Air Quality Benefits) of the Bicycle Master Plan states that replacing vehicular trips with bicycle trips has a measurable impact on reducing human generated GHGs in the atmosphere that contribute to climate change. Fewer vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) would translate into fewer mobile source pollutants released into the air, such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and hydrocarbons (County of Los Angeles 2012). As such, the Proposed Project has the potential to result in beneficial impacts by providing trails and access to bicyclists as an alternative means of transportation in the region.

### **5.1.3.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

Hazards and hazardous materials impacts related to the Proposed Project are generally related to construction and maintenance activities. These impacts can include the exposure of construction workers and the public to hazardous materials that may be encountered or used during construction and maintenance activities. All Projects included in the Emerald Necklace Implementation Plan – Phase I must comply with federal, state, and local hazardous material statutes and regulations, as enforced by the appropriate regulatory agencies. Therefore, cumulative impacts resulting from the use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials, or risk of upset from a release of hazardous materials would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **5.1.3.8 Hydrology and Water Quality**

Overall hydrology and water quality impacts associated with project implementation are related to earthmoving (grading) associated with construction. Earthmoving activities would increase the potential for erosion and sedimentation down gradient from the site. In addition, new development on project sites would increase impervious surface coverage and would increase

surface runoff above existing conditions. Of these, earthmoving activities pose the greatest risk for adverse impacts to local hydrology and water quality.

The Proposed Project, along with cumulative development in the regional area, would increase the amount of impervious surfaces in the area. The increase in impervious surfaces would reduce groundwater recharge and increase the potential for flooding. Drainage patterns would not be significantly altered with the Proposed Project, but may be with cumulative development. With implementation of regional drainage plans, cumulative impacts on drainage and flood control would be less than significant.

The cumulative impacts on water quality can be reduced through proper landscaping design and maintenance methods, adherence to waste disposal requirements, and implementation of NPDES BMPs.

#### **5.1.3.9 Land Use and Planning**

The Proposed Project is composed of 15 individual projects that would be located in the County of Los Angeles and in the cities of Arcadia, El Monte, Industry, Irwindale, Rosemead, and South El Monte.

The Proposed Project, in conjunction with other future developments, would not increase the intensity of land uses in the area, as the area is already developed. When considered with existing, proposed, approved, and reasonably foreseeable development in the region, implementation of the Proposed Project has the potential to contribute to cumulative but not considerable impacts due to increased recreational use. The projects would be consistent with the areas general plan and zoning designations, and the current uses would continue.

#### **5.1.3.10 Noise**

The Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts related to noise after implementation of mitigation. The Proposed Project would be noisiest during construction. Operational noise associated with the Proposed Project would be limited as the Proposed Project would not result in a substantial increase to vehicles in the project area. Because noise-related impacts during the construction phase of the Proposed Project would be in compliance with the County's construction noise regulations, as well as would be temporary and short-term in nature, the Proposed Project would not have a considerable contribution to cumulative noise impacts.

#### **5.1.3.11 Public Services**

The cumulative impacts analysis area for public services encompasses the various cities and county areas where the Proposed Project would be located. This analysis area includes the cities of Arcadia, El Monte, Industry, Irwindale, Rosemead, South El Monte, and unincorporated Los Angeles County areas near the Proposed Project.

The implementation of the Proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts to public services; therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts. The Proposed Project would construct new recreational facilities and access infrastructure. Recreational users that would use the proposed facilities would come from the existing regional population, which are already served by local and regional fire and police

departments, schools, and parks. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not increase the demand for fire and police protection, schools, parks, or other facilities. As other projects in the cumulative impact analysis area are implemented they would be required to mitigate any potential project specific impacts to public services to a less than significant level; therefore, these projects would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts. Cumulative impacts to parks and recreational facilities are further discussed in Section 5.1.2.12.

#### **5.1.3.12 Recreation**

Growth and development in the San Gabriel Valley and Los Angeles County would lead to increases in the resident population and would generate an increase in demand for recreational open space and park facilities. This demand would be met by the existing and proposed facilities such as those included in this Proposed Project and other expanded parks and recreational facilities in the County. The Proposed Project would contribute to regional and local open space connectivity and would help meet the General Plan goals of the County and local cities, resulting in a beneficial impact.

#### **5.1.3.13 Transportation/Traffic**

The San Gabriel Valley is largely built out with single- and multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Few remaining vacant and open spaces remain in the valley. Growth and development in the San Gabriel Valley will continue to occur as the few remaining vacant parcels are developed and as underutilized parcels are redeveloped. This continued urbanization of the San Gabriel Valley would result in changes that can potentially affect the transportation network. The Proposed Project is anticipated to generate a total of 487 trips per day with approximately 19 AM peak hour trips and 39 PM peak hour trips. The estimated peak hour vehicular Project trips on study area roadways and intersections are nominal. The addition of Project trips is not expected to have significant cumulative impacts on study area roadways and intersections. The Proposed Project would have a beneficial impact on the alternative transportation network.

#### **5.1.3.14 Utilities and Service Systems**

The Proposed Project would not have significant adverse impacts on utilities such as wastewater services, water services, or solid waste disposal services. The Proposed Project could cause potentially significant impacts from the construction of new stormwater infrastructure; however, impacts would be reduced to less than significant with incorporation of mitigation measures.

The Proposed Project, along with cumulative development in the region, would be required to comply with utility regulations, as discusses in Section 3.15 Utilities of this PEIR. Furthermore, other cumulative projects would need to address site specific utility issues to the standards of the local agency with jurisdiction, such as the Proposed Project. Therefore, the Proposed Project in combination with other cumulative projects would have a less than significant impact of utility systems.

### **5.2 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS**

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) require that an EIR “discuss the ways in which the Proposed Project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional

housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.” Growth-inducing impacts can occur in a variety of ways, including the construction of new homes and businesses, and the extension of urban services, such as utilities and improved roads, to previously undeveloped areas.

The Emerald Necklace Implementation Plan – Phase I is not expected to generate growth. The construction of the individual projects would result in an increase in short-term construction jobs; however, it is anticipated that this minor temporary increase in local jobs would be accommodated from the local labor force. Implementation of the Proposed Project would create a small amount of new jobs related to the maintenance of the proposed facilities. It is anticipated that these jobs can be filled from the local labor force, and that new workers would not move to the area to support the expansion of recreational facilities. The Proposed Project would connect residents from the cities of Arcadia, Baldwin Park, El Monte, Irwindale, Monrovia, Rosemead, and South El Monte and portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County, such as the communities of Basset and Avocado Heights, with Peck Road Water Conservation Park, Whittier Narrows Recreation Area, and the amenities developed as part of the Emerald Necklace. Significant populations exist east of the San Gabriel River and west of the Rio Hondo that are not currently able to access the resources of the Emerald Necklace. With the Proposed Project these underserved communities would have improved access to the Emerald Necklace.

### **5.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE EFFECTS**

The CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR identify and focus on significant environmental effects, including significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the project should the project be implemented.

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2 (c) state that “uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the Proposed Project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts, and particularly secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area), generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitment of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.”

Implementation of the Proposed Project would result in an irretrievable commitment of renewable and nonrenewable resources including land, water, energy resources, and construction materials. As land is developed and redeveloped in the region, the commitment of these resources to this project removes these resources from other uses. However, the amount of resources to be committed is not considered to be significant given the size of the projects and the availability of the resources in the project area.

### **5.4 UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECTS**

The CEQA Guidelines section 151262(b) require that the EIR “describe any significant impacts, including those which can be mitigated but reduced to a level of insignificance. Where there are impacts that cannot be alleviated without proposing an alternative design, their implications and the reason why the project is being proposed, notwithstanding their effect, should be described.”

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Based on the analysis in Section 3.0 of this PEIR, implementation of the Proposed Project would have significant effects which would be mitigated to a less than significant level with the implementation of the mitigation measures prescribed in this PEIR.