



**Recirculated Notice of Preparation of a Program
Environmental Impact Report and
Notice of Scoping Meeting**

DATE: April 20, 2021

TO: All Interested Parties

FROM: City of South Pasadena
1414 Mission Street
South Pasadena, CA 91030

SUBJECT: Recirculated Notice of Preparation of a Program
Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Scoping Meeting
for the South Pasadena General Plan and Downtown Specific
Plan Update, and 2021–2029 Housing Element

NOP REVIEW PERIOD: Friday, April 23, 2021 through Monday, May 24, 2021

VIRTUAL SCOPING MEETING: Monday, May 3, 2021, 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM via Zoom
(See below for further information)

The City of South Pasadena (City) is the Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is preparing a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the City of South Pasadena General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan Update and the 2021–2029 Housing Element (Project). The planning area for the Project includes the approximately 3.5 square miles, or 2,221 acres, within the incorporated City limits. The Project applies to all properties within the planning area.

This Recirculated Notice of Preparation (RNOP) has been prepared and distributed by the City to solicit written comments from responsible and trustee agencies and from the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR). A prior NOP, dated January 23, 2018, was distributed for the proposed updates to the General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan for a 30-day review period from January 25, 2018 through February 23, 2018. This RNOP is necessitated because of the addition of the 2021–2029 Housing Element Update to the PEIR that is being prepared. The location, description, and potential environmental effects of the Project are summarized in this RNOP.

The City is requesting input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be addressed in the Draft PEIR. The City requests that any potential responsible or trustee agencies responding to this RNOP reply in a manner consistent with Section 15082(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines, which allows for the submittal of any comments and/or inputs that are germane to your agency’s statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project. Your agency may need to use the PEIR when considering issuance of any permits or other approvals. The City has determined that the Project may have a significant effect on the environment and preparation of a PEIR is required; as such, an Initial Study has not been prepared.

Project Location

The City is located on the western edge of the San Gabriel Valley area of Los Angeles County, approximately five miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles. The City is surrounded by several municipalities, including the City of Pasadena to the north; the City of San Marino to the east; the City of Alhambra to the south; the City of Los Angeles to the southwest; and unincorporated County of Los Angeles communities, including Garvanza and Highland Park, to the west. Regional access to the City is provided predominantly by State Route 110 (SR 110, Arroyo Seco Parkway), which transects the

City. Interstate 210 (I 210) and SR 134 also provide regional access, with the nearest ramps for both freeways located approximately one mile north of the northern City boundary. The Metro Gold Line also provides light rail access from the City's Mission Station to downtown Los Angeles, the City of Pasadena, and the northern San Gabriel Valley. The City's location and regional setting and primary transportation corridors are shown on Exhibit 1, Regional and Local Vicinity.

Project Background

All California jurisdictions are required by State law (Section 65300 of Government Code) to prepare and maintain a planning document called a General Plan. The City of South Pasadena last comprehensively updated the General Plan in 1988, and the Mission Street Specific Plan (now referred to as the Downtown Specific Plan [DTSP]) was adopted in 1996. Since the adoption of the 1988 General Plan, several minor amendments have been adopted.

The Housing Element is one of the State-mandated elements of a General Plan. It identifies the City's housing conditions, needs, and opportunities; and establishes the goals, policies, and actions (programs) that are the foundation of the City's housing strategy. However, unlike all other General Plan elements, State law requires each municipality to update its Housing Element on a prescribed schedule (most commonly every eight years). The City's 2013–2021 Housing Element is in effect through 2021. Housing needs are determined by the California Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), which allocates numerical housing targets to the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), including the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), which includes the City of South Pasadena. SCAG finalized its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (or RHNA), on March 9, 2021, and has allocated 2,067 units to the City of South Pasadena, including 578 market-rate units and 1,489 below market-rate units at a range of affordability levels. Cities and counties are not responsible for building this number of units, but rather are required to plan for them, by demonstrating the sufficiency of current land use and development standards and identifying specific Housing Element programs to provide capacity to accommodate the RHNA with implementation dates within three years. The Housing Element will not be certified by HCD if it does not demonstrate standards and programs for housing production capacity to accommodate the RHNA including rezoning if necessary. Penalties, including fines and loss of local discretion, can be levied against cities and counties that fail to implement the Housing Element programs that are included to reach the required housing production capacity.

City of South Pasadena decision-makers will use the General Plan Land Use Element and DTSP Update to provide direction when making land use and infrastructure decisions over the documents' approximate 20-year horizon (through 2040) and will implement the 2021–2029 Housing Element policies and programs to facilitate housing development for all segments of the community over the document's 8-year horizon.

Project Description

The General Plan and DTSP Update serve as a long-term policy guide for decision-making regarding the physical development, resource conservation, and character of the City and establishes a non-residential development capacity for the City. The Housing Element serves as the policy guide for decision-making regarding residential development and demonstrates how the City intends to comply with State housing legislation and regional (SCAG) requirements.

The General Plan and DTSP Update and 2021–2029 Housing Element would not authorize any specific development project or other form of land use approval, including public facilities or capital facilities expenditures or improvements. Public review drafts of the General Plan and DTSP Update are posted at the following two sites:

- General Plan and DTSP Update: <https://www.southpasadenaca.gov/government/departments/planning-and-building/general-plan-downtown-specific-plan-update>; and

- 2021–2029 Housing Element: <https://www.southpasadenaca.gov/government/departments/planning-and-building/housing-element-update-2021-2029>.

It is noted that the General Plan and DTSP Update are draft versions and, at the time this RNOP is distributed, have not yet been updated to reflect and be consistent with the 2021–2029 Housing Element. The draft documents will continue to be refined during the preparation of the PEIR and public outreach efforts.

Through the public visioning process, the community has identified the character, intensity, and scale of infill development desired for vacant and underutilized tracts in selected areas. Specifically, the community wants new development to be respectful of the place and its historic resources; contribute to the vibrancy of the human experience; and have positive impacts on place-making, health, economy, and the environment. This community feedback as well as legislative requirements have been considered in the development of the General Plan and DTSP Update and 2021–2029 Housing Element.

The General Plan and DTSP Update each include nine chapters, and each of the chapters features an overriding goal, policies, and actions based on the goal.

- **Goals** are long-range, broad, comprehensive targets. Goals are not necessarily measurable or achievable; rather, they describe a desired end-state condition for South Pasadena.
- **Policies** describe context and rationale of desired outcomes and are focused and specific.
- **Actions** are specific proactive steps to achieve the goals. They are the critical link between long-range planning and current decision-making.

The chapters and their content reflect the public visioning process. The overarching principle of each of the chapters is provided below.

- **Our Natural Community.** Live in balance with our natural environment; preserve natural areas and increase the quantity of and access to open space.
- **Our Prosperous Community.** Attract and retain high value, high-wage jobs within the creative sector; diversify the local economy; promote and support local businesses; and build the City’s local tax base to create and sustain public amenities and services, while maintaining South Pasadena’s small-town character and quality of life.
- **Our Well Planned Community.** Direct the most intensive growth to identified areas while preserving and enhancing the distinctive and stable residential neighborhoods. Encourage pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development while providing and enhancing new and existing public spaces and gathering places.
- **Our Accessible Community.** Provide safe access for all street users – pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users, and motorists – of all ages and abilities and support an integrated multimodal network and efficiently manage parking to support wider community goals.
- **Our Resilient Community.** Increase individual, institutional, and business capacity to survive and adapt to any chronic stress or acute shocks and be able to recover and thrive.
- **Our Healthy Community.** Create environments that encourage healthy and safe lifestyles where all feel able to be active in family, community, and neighborhood life; contribute to the vitality of the City; create a sense of belonging among residents; and have access to nutritious food.
- **Our Safe Community.** Increase awareness of and be prepared for emergencies, minimize threat to life and damage to structures from natural and human-caused hazards, and protect from exposure to excessive noise.

- **Our Active Community.** Add to and enhance our parks and open spaces to provide enriching recreational opportunities.
- **Our Creative Community.** Become a vibrant cultural center by weaving creative expressions into everyday life.

The focus of the General Plan is to preserve the stable and established neighborhoods and direct carefully calibrated growth to five specified areas. Table 1 summarizes the focus areas and maximum non-residential growth projections being considered in the Draft PEIR.

**Table 1
General Plan Update Non-Residential Development Pattern**

	Non-Residential	
	Retail (sf)	Office (sf)
Corridors (Downtown Specific Plan)		
Mission Street and Fair Oaks Avenue	100,000	125,000
Districts		
Ostrich Farm	5,000	100,000
Neighborhood Centers		
Huntington Drive & Garfield Avenue	10,000	50,000
Huntington Drive & Fremont Avenue	10,000	25,000
Huntington Drive & Fletcher Avenue	5,000	0
Totals	130,000	300,000
du: dwelling units; sf: square feet Source: Placeworks 2019		

The DTSP Update is a companion document to the General Plan Update, with the intention of building on the success of the earlier (1996) plan and expanding the area included in the DTSP to include Fair Oaks Avenue. Fair Oaks Avenue is a highly visible corridor with some historic assets and many opportunities that complement the historic assets along the Mission Street Corridor. Exhibit 5 illustrates the existing land use plan for the DTSP area, and Exhibit 6 depicts an illustrative plan of the DTSP area upon buildout of projected growth, as shown in Table 1.

Additionally, the General Plan’s 2021–2029 Housing Element is being analyzed in the PEIR. For the proposed 2021–2029 Housing Element, SCAG has determined that the City’s RHNA allocation is 2,067 units, almost 33 times than the last cycle. The significant increase in the City’s RHNA housing number is indicative of the severity of the current housing crisis. As part of the proposed 2021-2029 Housing Element, the City must demonstrate to the State that there is available capacity within its jurisdictional boundaries to meet its targeted RHNA number. Per State requirements, the City’s proposed Housing Element Update will include the following components:

- A detailed analysis of the City’s demographic, economic, and housing characteristics.
- An analysis of the barriers to producing and preserving housing.
- A review of the City’s progress in implementing current housing policies and programs.
- An identification of goals, policies, and actions in addition to a full list of programs that will implement the vision of the Housing Element.
- A list of sites (Suitable Sites Inventory) that could accommodate new housing, demonstrating the City’s ability to meet the quantified housing number established in the RHNA.

State law requires City Council adoption of the 2021–2029 Housing Element Update by October 15, 2021, with a 120-day grace period after which cities and counties face statutory penalties.

Probable Environmental Effects

The City has determined that the proposed Project may have a potentially significant impact on the environment and that preparation of a PEIR is the appropriate level of environmental documentation pursuant to CEQA. Implementation of the proposed Project has the potential to impact the following environmental topics: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire. No impacts to the following environmental topics are anticipated: Agriculture and Forestry Resources and Mineral Resources.

RNOP Review and Comment Period

The RNOP review and comment period is from **Friday, April 23, 2021 through Monday, May 24, 2021**. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, please send your written response at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this RNOP. In your response, please include the name of a contact person in your agency. Please direct your written comments to:

Mail: Ms. Margaret Lin
Manager of Long Range Planning and Economic Development
1414 Mission Street
South Pasadena, California 91030

Email: GeneralPlan@SouthPasadenaCA.gov

Fax: (626) 403-7221

The City will consider all written comments regarding the potential environmental impacts of the Project in its preparation of the PEIR. **Written comments must be submitted by email or to this office by 4:00 PM, Monday, May 24, 2021.** Written comments will also be accepted if entered into the Zoom "Chat" box at the Scoping Meeting, described further below.

Scoping Meeting

A Scoping Meeting will be held to provide the public, trustee and responsible agencies, and other interested parties with information regarding the proposed Project and the environmental review process. The date, time, and location of the Scoping Meeting are as follows:

Date: Monday, May 3, 2021
Time: 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM
Location: Zoom Webinar – Please click the following link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82167789941?pwd=b3E3RWR4V0M1TEpVY3hSb1BXRkzUT09>

The Zoom passcode (if needed) is 883420. The Scoping Meeting link will also be posted on the City's PEIR web page. City staff and consultants will be in attendance. The meeting format will allow questions and comments to be provided. Additionally, written comments or questions may be submitted in advance to GeneralPlan@SouthPasadenaCA.gov. Verbal comments or questions may be submitted by calling (626) 403-7720 and leaving one 3-minute voicemail message per person to be played during the Scoping Meeting. The comments/questions must be received by 12:00 PM on the day of the Scoping Meeting (May 3, 2021) to ensure adequate time to compile and post. Please provide both your 1) name and address and 2) comments/questions. All public input received by the deadline will be posted on the City's website prior to the Scoping Meeting. No decisions about the Project will be made at the Scoping Meeting. Separate public hearings will be scheduled after the completion of the PEIR.



Project Site (City of South Pasadena)
 Metro Gold Line

Regional and Local Vicinity

South Pasadena General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan Update Project

Exhibit 1

