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Planning Division  
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## Notice of Preparation

**DATE:** September 17, 2021  
**TO:** RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES AND INTERESTED PARTIES  
**SUBJECT:** NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the City of Claremont will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Housing Element Update of the General Plan, as described below. The City is also considering updates to the Safety Element concurrently with the Housing Element. This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been issued to provide an opportunity for responsible and trustee agencies and interested parties to submit comments on the scope of the EIR, relative to the attached project summary. Agencies should comment on such information as it relates to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the Housing Element Update. The City made the determination to prepare an EIR following preliminary review of the project. The City has also prepared an Initial Study for the Housing Element Update EIR. This NOP is being circulated pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21153(a) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15082 and the Initial Study is available for review along with the NOP on the City's website: <https://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/living/draft-housing-element>.

**Project Name:** City of Claremont Housing Element Update

**Project Location:** City of Claremont (citywide) in the County of Los Angeles (see Figure 1 attached).

**Public Comment Period:** The City of Claremont welcomes and will consider all written comments regarding potential environmental impacts of the project and issues to be addressed in the Draft EIR. The public review period begins on September 17, 2021, and ends on October 18, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Please direct your comments to:

**Mail:** Brad Johnson, Director of Community Development  
Community Development Department  
207 Harvard Avenue, Claremont, California 91711

**Email:** [bjohnson@ci.claremont.ca.us](mailto:bjohnson@ci.claremont.ca.us)

Please include your name, phone number and email or postal address.

**Scoping Meeting:** The City of Claremont will host a scoping meeting to solicit input on the content of the environmental analysis that will be included in the Draft EIR.

**Date and Time:** September 29, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

**Participants using a phone line:**

- Phone Numbers: (213) 338-8477 or (669) 900-6833
- Webinar ID: 976 5866 5890

**Participants using a computer, tablet or smartphone:**

- Access the webinar at this link:  
<https://zoom.us/j/97658665890>

The City of Claremont, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, requests individuals who require special accommodations to access, attend and/or participate in the City meeting due to disability, to please contact the City Clerk's Office, (909) 399-5463, at least one business day prior to the scheduled meeting to ensure that we may assist you.



**Consulting Firm Retained to Prepare Draft EIR**

**Firm Name:** Rincon Consultants, Inc.  
**Address:** 706 South Hill Street, Suite 1200, Los Angeles, California 90014  
**Contact:** Kari Zajac, MESM, Senior Environmental Planner

**Date:** September 17, 2021      **Signature:**   
**Title:** Director of Community Development, City of Claremont  
**Phone:** (909) 399-5342

**Project Summary**

**Project Description**

The project would amend the City of Claremont General Plan by replacing the current Housing Element with the proposed 2021-2029 Housing Element and updating the Safety Element of the General Plan to reflect recent changes in State law. The City’s General Plan was last updated in July 2012 and program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the General Plan was completed in October 2006. The Housing Element was last updated in July 2019.

**Housing Element Update**

The City of Claremont, along with all cities and counties in California, is mandated by California State law to prepare a Housing Element update for State certification every eight years. The Housing Element is a state-mandated part of the City’s General Plan and includes goals, policies, programs and objectives to further the development, improvement and preservation of housing in Claremont in a manner that is aligned with community desires, as well as regional growth objectives and State law. Local governments must adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. Specifically, State Government Code Section 65583 requires the Housing Element to identify and analyze existing and projected housing needs, and establish goals, policies, and actions to address these housing needs, including adequate provisioning of affordable and special-needs housing (e.g., agricultural workers, homeless people, seniors, single-parent households, large families, and persons with disabilities). State law requires local jurisdictions to identify available sites that have the appropriate land use and zoning to accommodate estimated housing growth projections.

In July 2019, the City of Claremont General Plan was updated to incorporate the 2018-2021 Housing Element (for the fifth cycle). It included the provision of sufficient land for the construction of the housing units that the City of Claremont must accommodate according to the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) by 2021. The 2018-2021 allocation equaled 373 new housing units. The RHNA quantifies the need for housing in every region throughout the state and is determined by the California Department of Housing and Community Development. The RHNA is mandated by state law and is meant to inform the local planning process by addressing existing and future housing need resulting from estimated growth in population, employment, and households. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is responsible for allocating the RHNA to each city and county in its region, which includes Claremont.

In March 2021, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) issued its final Regional Housing Need Determination to SCAG, stating that the minimum regional housing need for the SCAG region is 1.34 million new housing units. HCD then directed SCAG to develop a methodology to allocate all 1.34 million units throughout the region, based on statutory guidelines for housing needs and development.

SCAG developed a methodology and distributed a draft RHNA allocation to all the cities and counties in its region, including the City of Claremont, for the 2021-2029 Housing Element planning period (the sixth cycle).



The City’s total draft RHNA for the 2021-2029 planning period is 1,711 units, allocated to specific income groups as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 City of Claremont Regional Housing Needs Allocation (Draft)**

	Income Category (% of Los Angeles County Area Median Income)				Total RHNA
	Very Low (31-50%)	Low (51-80%)	Moderate (81-120%)	Above Moderate (120% or more)	
Housing units needed	556	310	297	548	1,711

In addition to the RHNA for Claremont HCD requires local jurisdictions to identify enough future housing sites in the inventory to not only cover the jurisdiction’s 6th Cycle RHNA, but to also provide for an additional buffer capacity above the RHNA. The buffer capacity is required to accommodate realistic production rates of affordable housing units; plus having the buffer can allow for instances when a smaller residential project may have to be considered for a given property. The 20 percent buffer would increase the RHNA to 2,236 units. In addition to the buffer units, the City has also included 559 residual units.

One of the important steps in the Housing Element update process is to identify sites that can accommodate the housing units assigned to Claremont per the above RHNA allocation table, at all income levels. Site selection is conducted based on an analysis of site-specific constraints, including zoning, access to utilities, location, development potential, density and whether or not the site is identified in a previous Housing Element. In order to count toward the RHNA allocation, sites must be in a zoning category that meets a minimum residential density standard, have a minimum lot size, and are either vacant or underutilized. Underutilized sites are sites that have not been developed to the maximum capacity allowed by the zoning category and thus provide the potential for more residential homes on a site. When a local jurisdiction cannot demonstrate that there are enough vacant or underutilized sites to adequately meet their RHNA allocation, a ‘rezoning program’ must be put into place. A rezoning program ensures that there are enough sites with sufficient densities to address the housing need identified through the RHNA.

The Housing Element Update will also address any changes that have occurred since adoption of the current Housing Element. These changes include updated demographic information, housing needs data, and analysis of any potential housing constraints. The Housing Element map of available housing sites will be updated to identify sites that could accommodate the City’s RHNA allocation for the 2021-2029 planning period.

For more information on the Housing Element update, please go to:  
<https://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/living/draft-housing-element>

**Safety Element**

The Safety Element is also part of the City of Claremont General Plan and will be updated to include new information about natural and human-related hazards. The Safety Element currently includes policies to address the following types of hazards: geology and seismicity, stormwater management and flooding, fire hazards, radon gas, hazardous materials, and disaster response. The Safety Element update will focus on ensuring alignment with other City plans and addressing new state requirements pertaining to climate change, wildfire risk, and evacuation routes for residential neighborhoods.

**Potential Environmental Effects**

An Initial Study was prepared for the Housing Element Update and is available for review and comment along with the NOP on the City’s website: <https://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/living/draft-housing-element>.

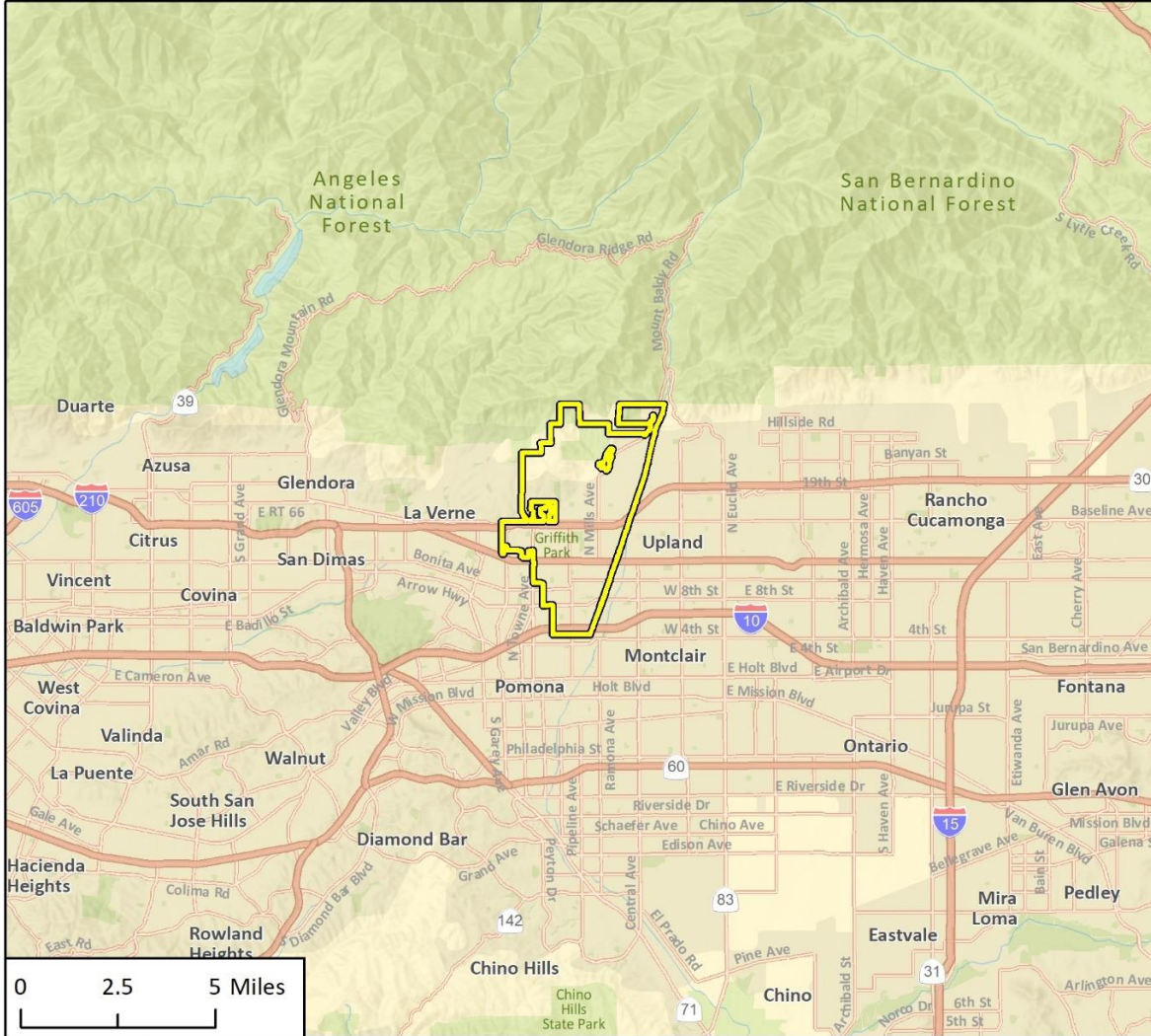
The Initial Study found that the project would have no impact, a less than significant impact, or a less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated for all environmental issue areas evaluated under CEQA except for Aesthetics, Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Population and Housing, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Utilities and Services Systems. The Draft EIR will further evaluate those impacts’ constraints of the project site and potential project impacts related to those hazards. The Draft EIR will propose mitigation



to avoid and/or reduce impacts deemed potentially significant, identify reasonable alternatives, and compare the environmental impacts of the alternatives to the impacts of the Housing Element Update. The Draft EIR will also discuss the cumulative impacts of the Housing Element Update in combination with other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects in the area (14 CCR 15130). Comments provided in response to the NOP and during the ensuing analyses may identify additional environmental topics to be evaluated.



Figure 1 City of Claremont Vicinity Map



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 Plan Area

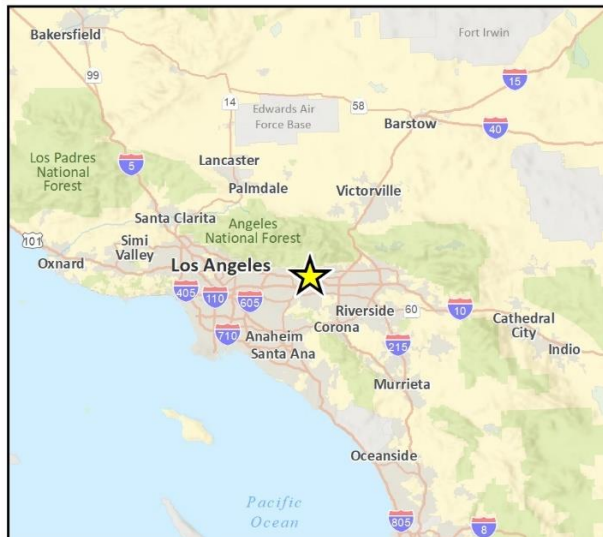


Fig 1 Regional Location