

## NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

**DATE:** May 8, 2023

**TO:** State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Organizations and Interested Parties

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report in Compliance with Title 14, section 15082(a) of the California Code of Regulations

The County of Los Angeles (“County”) is the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) for the proposed project identified below. The County has prepared this Notice of Preparation (“NOP”) to provide Responsible Agencies and other interested parties with information describing the project and to identify its potential environmental effects pursuant to State requirements.

**AGENCIES:** The County requests your agency’s views on the scope and content of the environmental information relevant to your agency’s statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project, in accordance with Title 14 (“State CEQA Guidelines”), section 15082(b) of the California Code of Regulations. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by the County when considering any permits that your agency must issue, or other approval for the project.

Pursuant to CEQA Section 21080.4(a), the following list of agencies, among others, have been sent the NOP:

- Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- South Coast Air Quality Management District
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Office of Planning and Research

**ORGANIZATIONS AND INTERESTED PARTIES:** The County requests your comments and concerns regarding the environmental issues associated with construction and operation of the proposed project.

**PROJECT & REQUIRED PERMIT(S):**

Project Name: 3577 Canyon Crest Road Single-Family Residence

Project Number: R2014-02411-(5)

Minor Conditional Use Permit: RMCP-201400014

Oak Tree Permit: ROAK-201400035

Environmental Review: RENV-201400194

**PROJECT APPLICANT:** Stephen Kuhn

**PROJECT LOCATION:** APN: 5830-003-016, 3577 Canyon Crest Road, Altadena, CA 91001

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The proposed project is the construction and occupancy of a 1,555 square-foot, single-family home with a 397 square-foot attached garage on a vacant residential parcel of 1.02 acres (“project”) in Altadena, a census-designated place and urbanized area in the unincorporated area of the County of Los Angeles (“County”). The project parcel is located approximately 1,000 feet south of the Angeles National Forest and approximately 14 miles northeast of the County civic center, in the West San Gabriel Valley Planning Area. The project would be sited on the eastern portion of the project parcel in an existing residential neighborhood adjacent to other residences in and adjacent to Millard Canyon.

The proposed development footprint would be located more than 150 feet from the nearest waters, as determined by a United States Army Corps of Engineers wetlands delineation – an intermittent, seasonal feature tributary to the Arroyo Seco in the bottom of Millard Canyon. In association with this feature, a portion of the project parcel outside the development footprint is designated by the County as part of the Altadena Foothills and Arroyos Significant Ecological Area (“SEA”), as of December 2019. The project would continue pre-existing exempt fuel modification activities within the SEA, relative to adjacent existing single-family residences, which would be subject to compliance with the requirements of the SEA ordinance. The project parcel contains the California sagebrush scrub and coast live oak woodland plant communities.

The proposed design is terraced to complement the natural topography, consistent with the County’s Hillside Management Area Sensitive Design Guidelines, and is one or two stories above grade in each building segment. The proposed design places most of its volume below the level of Canyon Crest Road, from which the home would be accessed with a driveway comprised of an open-celled tree root protection system. The total development footprint, comprised of the driveway and building footprint at grade, is approximately 2,000 square feet. The project would incorporate no other hardscape.

A single-family residence is permitted with a Site Plan Review in the County’s R-1-10,000 (Single-Family Residence - 10,000 Square Feet Minimum Required Lot Area) Zone. However, a Minor Conditional Use Permit (“MCUP”) is required in the Altadena Community Standards District to construct on a slope greater than 25 percent. In addition, an Oak Tree Permit (“OTP”) is required for the removal of one non-heritage coast live oak (*Q. agrifolia*) tree and encroachment into the protected zones of 10 non-heritage coast live oak trees on and adjacent to the project parcel, which form a part of a degraded oak

## Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

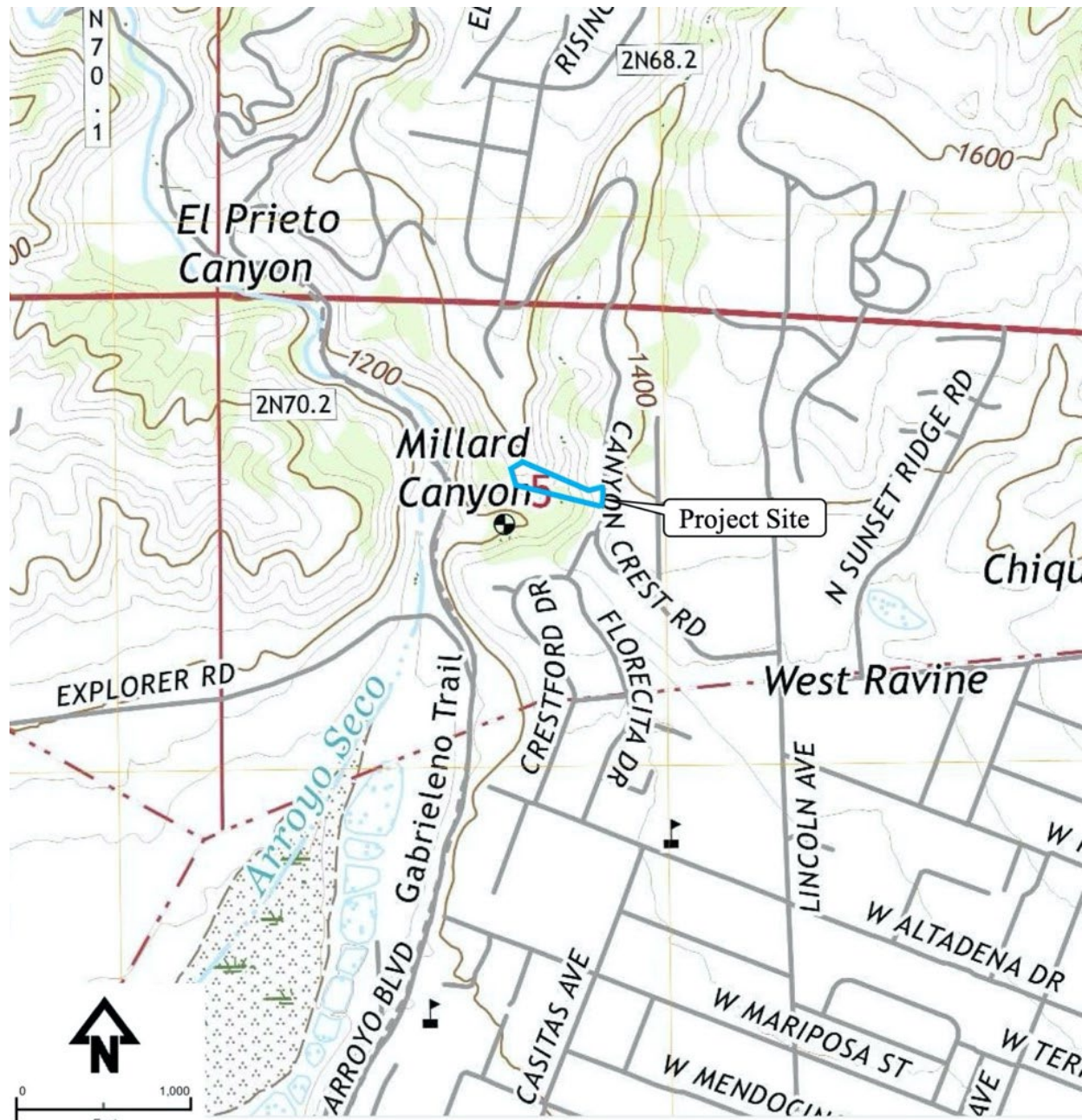
May 8, 2023

Page 3 of 12

woodland that extends through the developed residential area in all directions for hundreds or thousands of feet. Consistent with the standard requirements of the County Oak Tree Ordinance, the project would incorporate replacement plantings for the removed oak tree, at a size and ratio to be determined through the permit process; oak-compatible landscaping comprising a native understory; and Best Management Practices and design features before, during, and after construction to promote the health of the oak trees on the project parcel. The project would also rehabilitate some of the existing impacts from the surrounding residential development that have degraded the oak trees affected by the project.

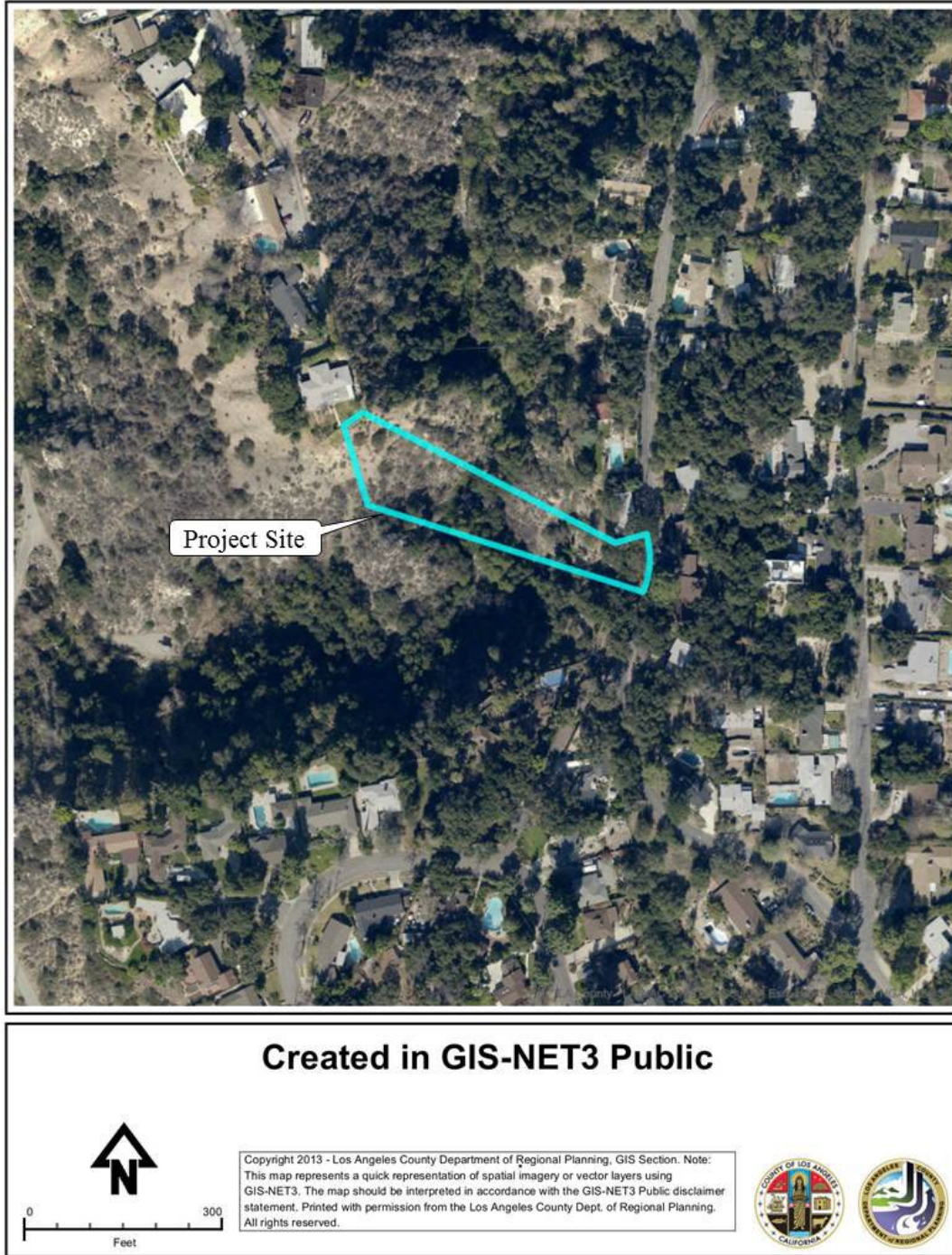
The following discretionary approvals are required by the County to implement the project:

1. Minor Conditional Use Permit
2. Oak Tree Permit



**Project Vicinity Topographic Map<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Source: United States Geological Survey, Pasadena Quadrangle. Available at: <https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/topoview/viewer/#14/34.1938/-118.1363>.



**Figure 0-1: Project Vicinity Aerial Photograph<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> Source: County Department of Regional Planning: Geographic Information System-NET Public. Available at: [https://rpgis.isd.lacounty.gov/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=GISNET\\_Public.GIS-NET\\_Public](https://rpgis.isd.lacounty.gov/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=GISNET_Public.GIS-NET_Public).

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

An earlier, substantively equivalent form of the proposed project was previously analyzed with an Initial Study, resulting in a Negative Declaration (SCH#2015121100). No responsible or trustee agency and no member of the public commented during the period of public review. The project's entitlements were subsequently approved by the County Board of Supervisors in 2017.

This EIR is being prepared at the request of the Applicant, a private individual, following litigation challenging that Negative Declaration under Los Angeles Superior Court Case # BS167311 and California Appellate Court Case # B290379 (*Canyon Crest Conservancy v. County of Los Angeles* (2020) 46 Cal.App.5th 398). As a result of the litigation, the Applicant requested the County set aside the earlier entitlement approvals, citing the unsustainable cost of that litigation, which the County did in 2018. In doing so, the County indicated that the application would remain on file should the Applicant wish to resume processing. The County is preparing this EIR in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15084(d)(3).

As Lead Agency, the County maintains its discretion to consider approval of these entitlements under any other sufficient track(s) of CEQA compliance it may find to be valid, in addition to, or instead of, the project-specific EIR, including:

1. Class 3 and/or 4 Categorical Exemption from CEQA;
2. Subsequent Activity or Continuation of the 2035 County General Plan Already Analyzed in Its Program EIR, Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168;
3. Exemption from Further Analysis of Project Effects Conforming with Provisions of State CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 and CEQA Section 21083.3;
4. "Complete Exemption" Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.3 Streamlining for Infill Projects.

## POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(a)(1), a NOP shall include "[p]robable environmental effects of the project" in addition to the project description and location.

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a), "an Initial Study is not required" by CEQA and no Initial Study has been prepared to inform the scope of this EIR. The EIR will address each impact area of analysis in State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, as set forth below.

As a result of work and analysis on the project to date, the County provides the following list of potential environmental effects across the impact areas of analysis. The County will attribute the expected impact level of significance according to the governing impact significance criteria documented or derived in the EIR, considering the constraints of pre-existing regulation and standard conditions applied to single-family residential development.

<b>Aesthetics</b>
The project would not be visible from any designated scenic viewpoint, roadway or public resource dedicated to the provision of scenic value, such as a public park, trail, garden, or waterway.
The project would alter the visual environment from certain public vantages on Canyon Crest Road by placing a structure and fencing where none existed, by removing one oak tree, and by pruning approximately 25% of the canopy of one other oak tree. Potential impacts related to aesthetics will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Agriculture and Forestry Resources</b>
There is no designated agricultural land on or near the project parcel, and the project parcel is not zoned to permit the harvest of forestry resources. Potential impacts related to agriculture and forestry resources will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Air Quality</b>
During the period of occupancy, the project would generate emissions affecting air quality. These long-term emission sources would be expected to include vehicular exhaust from daily transportation associated with occupant usage; emissions associated with the generation of energy used by the project, site and landscape maintenance; and incidental emissions from typical residential products and equipment.
During construction, the project would generate emissions affecting air quality. These short-term emission sources would be expected to include exhaust from combustion equipment and vehicles used for material and personnel transport, dust generation from soil disturbance areas, and the application of architectural coatings. Potential impacts related to air quality will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Biological Resources</b>
Grading and vegetation disturbance or removal during construction of the project would convert a small amount of common habitat in which designated species may be present, as throughout the neighborhood and residential community of Altadena. However, no sensitive, candidate or special status plant or animal species or sensitive natural communities, as designated by the California or United States Departments of Fish and Wildlife, were observed during qualified surveys of the project footprint of development or surroundings.
The project would remove one coast live oak tree adjacent to the development footprint; establish replacement plantings for the removal; encroach upon portions of the protected zones of 10 additional oak trees on or adjacent to the project parcel, comprising a portion of a stand of degraded oak woodlands; and rehabilitate some of the existing impacts of surrounding development on the protected zones of oak trees on the project parcel.
The project would continue to control plant species and remove dead vegetation consistently with the pre-existing condition, in implementing a standard fuel

modification plan establishing defensible space consistent with fuel modification requirements for structures located in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (“VHFHSZ”).

A portion of the project parcel outside the development footprint is designated by the County as part of the Altadena Foothills and Arroyos Significant Ecological Area (“SEA”), as of December 2019. The project would continue pre-existing exempt fuel modification activities within the SEA, relative to adjacent existing single-family residences, which would be subject to compliance with the requirements of the SEA ordinance. Potential impacts related to biological resources will be evaluated further in the EIR.

**Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources**

No historic resources, as described in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, are identified on the project parcel, and the project would not be expected to impact any resource that may conform to criteria for historic value.

During construction, excavation in preserved volumes could disturb artifacts of archaeological or paleontological value, as throughout the Los Angeles region. Potential impacts related to cultural and tribal cultural resources will be evaluated further in the EIR.

**Geology/Soils**

During construction, pile augering would interact with the geological formations underlying the footprint of the structure. Potential impacts related to geology/soils will be evaluated further in the EIR.

During construction, grading would result in temporary soil disturbance areas adjacent to a slope with the potential for erosion and siltation. Potential impacts related to geology/soils will be evaluated further in the EIR.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy**

During construction and the period of occupancy, the project would generate greenhouse gas emissions and use energy. Potential impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions and energy will be evaluated further in the EIR.

**Hazard and Hazardous Materials**

The constituent databases of the Cortese List indicate that no known contamination exists on the project parcel that might adversely affect the project.

During construction and the period of occupancy, the project would place a structure and constituent building materials, some of which would be combustible, in a VHFHSZ.

During construction and the period of occupancy, the project would make limited use of substances that could be hazardous if misused. Potential impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials will be evaluated further in the EIR.



<b>Hydrology and Water Quality</b>
During construction and the period of occupancy, the project would alter the flow of stormwater within the footprint of development. Substances that can exist in solute or suspension with water could, if exposed to stormwater, degrade to some extent the quality of that stormwater. Potential impacts related to hydrology and water quality will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Land Use and Planning</b>
The project would comply with all applicable development standards and would be consistent with the Land Use Element of the County General Plan and with the Altadena Community Plan. Potential impacts related to land use and planning will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Mineral Resources</b>
There are no designated mineral resources of statewide or regional significance on or adjacent to the project parcel, and the project parcel is not zoned to permit extraction of mineral resources. Potential impacts related to mineral resources will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Noise</b>
During the period of occupancy, noise levels at nearby sensitive receptors would increase from the addition of a residence where none previously existed, including typical residential activities, equipment, and associated vehicular traffic.
During construction, noise levels would increase at nearby sensitive receptors from construction activities and the use of construction equipment. Potential impacts related to noise will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Population and Housing</b>
The project would add one single-family residence to the housing supply in the County. Potential impacts related to population and housing will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Public Services</b>
Development of the project parcel with one single-family home would not require an expansion to local fire protection resources or result in any environmental impacts involving construction of new fire protection facilities.
Development of the project parcel with one single-family home would not require an expansion to local law enforcement resources or result in any environmental impacts involving construction of new law enforcement facilities.
The project would not generate a substantial number of new students in the school district. New or expanded school facilities would not be required to provide classroom and support space for these low numbers of additional school age children. Potential impacts related to public services will be evaluated further in the EIR.

<b>Recreation</b>
During the period of occupancy, residents of the project would be expected to visit local and regional parks. Potential impacts related to recreation will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Transportation</b>
During the period of occupancy, vehicles carrying future occupants would add to existing usage of the transportation system. 10 or fewer additional trips per day are typically associated with the operation of one new single-family home.
During construction, vehicles carrying workers to and from the project parcel and delivering construction materials would add to existing usage of the transportation system. Seven (7) or fewer additional trips per day are associated with the construction of one new single-family home.
The project's connection to the public sewer main would require the temporary closure of a portion of one lane of traffic on Canyon Crest Road during limited hours of several days.
The project would provide housing in the Pasadena Regional Statistical Area, which has had and is projected to continue to have a high ratio of jobs to housing, thereby contributing to reduced per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled in the County. Potential impacts related to transportation will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Utilities and Service Systems</b>
During construction and the period of occupancy, the project would increase local water demand.
During construction and the period of occupancy, the project would generate wastewater.
During construction and the period of occupancy, the project would consume electricity and limited quantities of transportation fuel.
During construction and the period of occupancy, the project would generate solid waste. Potential impacts related to utilities and service systems will be evaluated further in the EIR.
<b>Wildfire</b>
During construction and the period of occupancy, the project would introduce typical residential uses and activities, including electricity connections and equipment, like cooking grills, with some potential for flame initiation. Potential impacts related to wildfire will be evaluated further in the EIR.

## SCOPING MEETING

As to the circumstances for which CEQA requires a scoping meeting, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(c)(1) and 15206(a)(2)(b)(2), the project does not meet any of the criteria for “statewide, regional or areawide significance.” Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(c)(3), the project does not “affect highways or other facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation.” Pursuant to CEQA Sections 21104(a) and 21153, the Applicant did not request any scoping meeting for this project. Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(c), should any responsible agency, trustee agency, or the Office of Planning and Research request a scoping meeting in response to this NOP, a scoping meeting would be scheduled and noticed in accordance with CEQA Section 21083.9.

Given the nature of the project, its potential environmental effects, and because the proposed EIR will include all impact areas of analysis, no scoping meeting is planned at this time.

**PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD:** The County has determined to make this NOP available for public review and comment pursuant to Title 14, section 15082(b) of the California Code of Regulations. The comment period for the NOP begins on May 8, 2023 to June 7, 2023.

Any comments provided should identify specific topics of environmental concern and your reason for suggesting the study of these topics in the EIR.

Please direct all written comments to the following address:

Michele Bush  
LA County Planning  
Foothills Development Services Section  
320 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Tel: (213) 893-7008  
Fax: (213) 626-0434  
mbush@planning.lacounty.gov

All written responses will be included as Appendices in the Draft EIR and their contents considered in accordance with State and County environmental guidelines.

如果您有任何疑問請致電 (213) 974-6411.

Si necesita más información por favor llame al (213) 974-6411.

**DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:** The NOP is available for public review during regular business hours at the following locations:

- Altadena Library, 600 E. Mariposa Street, Altadena, CA 91001

Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

May 8, 2023

Page 12 of 12

- San Gabriel Valley Field Office, 125 S. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia, CA 91007

Thank you for your participation in the environmental review of this project.