

## 8.17 San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities

### A. INTRODUCTION

- East Azusa
- Glendora Islands
- North Claremont
- Northeast La Verne
- Northeast San Dimas
- West Claremont

#### Northwestern Communities

The unincorporated communities of East Azusa, Glendora Islands, North Claremont, Northeast La Verne, Northeast San Dimas, and West Claremont—referred to here as the San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities—are all located in the foothills of the San Gabriel mountains in the northernmost part of the planning area bordering the Angeles National Forest. They share similar geographic features with topographic variation, and canyons containing natural drainage channels. The unincorporated communities consist of noncontiguous boundaries with land uses that are made up primarily of undeveloped land, designated open space, water resources, with some residential development along the wildland/urban interface in East Azusa and West Claremont. Further details on each of the communities is included below.

#### East Azusa

East Azusa consists of three separate geographic areas totaling approximately 275 acres in area, with a population of 234. The northernmost sections are primarily made up of designated open space, undeveloped land, and some agricultural uses. The southernmost section contains single-family residential uses in a developed subdivision. The unincorporated areas share boundaries in part with the cities of Azusa and Glendora, and the Angeles National Forest. The San Gabriel River runs through the north part of East Azusa. The northern section mostly falls within the San Gabriel Canyon SEA. The designation continues into Azusa and Glendora due to the presence of rare plant and animal species.

#### Glendora Islands

Glendora Islands totals 229.5 acres with a population of 7, and shares boundaries with the City of Glendora and the Angeles National Forest. The area largely consists of designated open space and recreational uses. One noncontiguous privately-owned property is developed with a residence. The Glendora Wilderness Park and Brodiaea Reserve owned by the City of Glendora and the Glendora Community

Conservancy makes up most of the area. The rare and endangered plant, threadleaf brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), found in this area is endemic to Southern California.

## North Claremont

North Claremont totals 541 acres in area with a population of 149. The area shares boundaries with the City of Claremont to the south, east, and west, and the Angeles National Forest to the north. It contains a residential community, in a noncontiguous area to the south, and open space to the north. The residential area is part of a historic arts colony named Padua Hills, built at the base of the Claremont Wilderness Park. The land has steep slopes with varied vegetation and waterways flowing south through the canyons. The San Dimas Canyon/San Antonio Wash SEA is designated on the northern parcel. The SEA continues into the City of Claremont.

## Northeast La Verne

Northeast La Verne is approximately 1.9 square miles with a population of 104. It shares boundaries with La Verne to the west, Angeles National Forest to the north, Claremont to the east, and unincorporated West Claremont to the south. Much of the land consists of undisturbed natural areas with designated open space and water resources. Marshall Creek and several smaller creeks run south eventually entering Puddingstone Reservoir. Most of Northeast La Verne is within the San Dimas Canyon/San Antonio Wash SEA. The SEA boundary continues into the Angeles National Forest and San Dimas, La Verne, and Claremont.

## Northeast San Dimas

Northeast San Dimas is a natural, unpopulated area consisting of two properties owned by the LA County Flood Control District and designated as a water resource area. It encompasses approximately 53 acres. The Angeles National Forest shares its north and west boundaries. The City of La Verne shares its eastern boundary. Northeast San Dimas is found downslope of the San Dimas Reservoir. The San Dimas Canyon/San Antonio Wash SEA is designated on the eastern parcel. This area contains some of the best examples of riparian habitat for birds. The lower slopes around San Dimas Canyon support one of the largest populations of coastal cactus wren

(*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*), a federally threatened species. Large mammals also move along the drainages through the area.

## West Claremont

West Claremont is an approximately 1.2 square mile community of 1,166 people consisting of two noncontiguous areas that partly share boundaries with the City of Claremont on all sides, La Verne to the west and south, and unincorporated Northeast La Verne to the north. The majority of land in West Claremont is used for single residences with some government and institutional uses, and a small area of agriculture. The residential areas also feature equestrian uses and are located near the Marshall Canyon Equestrian Center. Much of West Claremont lies in the San Dimas Canyon/San Antonio Wash SEA.

## B. COMMUNITY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following presents a summary of community challenges and opportunities learned from community feedback and an analysis of existing conditions in the community (see **Table SGMFC-1, San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities Challenges and Opportunities**). These challenges and opportunities serve to inform the preparation of community-specific land use, zoning, policies, and programs for the San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities.

**TABLE SGMFC-1 San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities Challenges and Opportunities**

### 1. Wildland/Urban Interface

#### **Limiting Wildland/Urban Interface and Habitat Fragmentation.**

Development continues to threaten encroachment into previously undeveloped areas, increasing the threat of habitat fragmentation and wildfire hazards resulting from expanding the wildland/urban interface. Recent development for residences and religious or institutional campuses has taken place within the wildland/urban interface, with considerable negative impacts to natural resources and wildlife

**Wildlife Movement and Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions.** Development encroaching into habitat areas impacts wildlife movement and increases habitat loss and fragmentation. The increased presence of roads results in collisions and increased danger to wildlife.

**Fire Hazard Zones.** Most of the structures built within the wildland/urban interface in the ESGV are within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZs). As wildfire risks mount due to climate change, communities that have developed within the wildland/urban interface and VHFHSZ face significant challenges. Further development in these high-risk areas should be avoided.

**TABLE SGMFC-1 San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities Challenges and Opportunities**

## 2. Preservation of Biological Resources

### **San Gabriel Canyon and San Dimas Canyon/San Antonio Wash SEAs.**

Five of the unincorporated communities contain lands with rare and increasingly threatened natural resources designated as part of two different SEAs. However, there are also threatened biological resources on lands outside of the SEAs. The San Gabriel Canyon SEA is in the west part of the Planning Area, partly located in East Azusa. The San Dimas Canyon/San Antonio Wash SEA is partly located on Northeast La Verne, Northeast San Dimas, North Claremont, and West Claremont. It is bordered by the Angeles National Forest; however, generally to the south, the borders are mostly defined by the edge of suburban/exurban development. The wide range in elevation, topography, slope, and geology allow for many different habitats to be found in the SEAs, including grasslands, riparian, shrublands, woodlands, and forests with many different plant sub-communities within each type. Several rare and threatened species, as well as significant habitat areas, exist throughout the SEAs that are in need of preservation.

## 3. Preservation of Significant Ridgelines

**Significant Ridgeline Protections.** The area contains significant ridgelines that are also used for wildlife movement and serve as firebreaks in wildfires. For wildlife, habitat, and safety issues, development along ridgelines should be avoided. As with other communities located in the foothills, significant ridgelines should be identified, and protection requirements should be developed.

## 4. Preservation of Wildlife Movement Corridors and Linkages

**Habitat Linkages and Corridors.** Habitat linkages are an important resource to ensure regional biodiversity, species movement, and habitat connectivity. The South Coast Missing Linkages Project, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Department of Transportation have designated a wildlife linkage from the undeveloped northern section of North Claremont through San Bernardino County as one of 11 critical landscape linkages in California.

## 5. Preservation of Riparian Woodlands, Wetlands, Streams, and Natural Drainage Channels

**Riparian Areas Preservation.** Riparian corridors, wetlands, streams, and natural drainages are found across the San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities. The protection of riparian areas, creeks, and natural drainages in their unaltered states provides irreplaceable ecosystem services, habitat, and water quality protections.

**Community-Specific Riparian Areas.** The northern section of North Claremont has a concentration of riparian areas, creeks, and natural drainages from water gathered in Chicken Canyon, which then flows downhill through the Padua Hills residential community. The Live Oak Wash flows through Northeast La Verne and downhill into Live Oak Reservoir in West Claremont. Thomas Creek flows into Thomas Creek Channel and downhill through West Claremont's western section. The San Gabriel River runs through the northern section of East Azusa in a largely natural state until it is channelized farther downhill near development.

**TABLE SGMFC-1 San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities Challenges and Opportunities**

## 6. Critical Habitat for Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

**Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Wildlife.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated parts of East Azusa and Glendora Islands as critical habitat for endangered and threatened species. The San Gabriel River runs through the northern section of East Azusa and is habitat for the federally endangered southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*). This section of East Azusa is designated as part of the San Gabriel Canyon SEA. In addition, the lower slopes in and around San Dimas Canyon in Northeast San Dimas support one of the largest populations of the coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) in the county. The federally threatened California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica*) has been documented in the Glendora foothills.

**Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants.** The Glendora Islands are home to a rare and endemic plant, thread-leaved brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*). However, the area designated as critical habitat by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not part of a designated SEA. The presence of these rare species on lands in the ESGV is a clear indication that just beyond the developed areas lies habitat and wildlife whose survival is severely threatened.

## 7. Multi-Jurisdiction Collaboration on Protection of SEAs, Habitat Conservation, and Wildlife Linkages

**Protection of Biological Resources Across Jurisdictional Boundaries.** The San Gabriel Canyon SEA, designated on the northern portions of East Azusa, continues into adjacent jurisdictions, including the cities of Azusa, Duarte, Monrovia, Arcadia, and Glendora. The San Dimas Canyon/San Antonio Wash SEA, designated on portions of Northeast San Dimas, West Claremont, Northeast La Verne, and North Claremont, continues into adjacent jurisdictions, including the cities of San Dimas, La Verne, and Claremont. In some cases, these jurisdictions may not yet have adopted a comparable program for protection of biological resources. In the past, some property owners have sought annexation to avoid the regulatory review and controls of the SEA program. Coordinated efforts to preserve and protect priority conservation areas is key to prevent further habitat fragmentation and loss.

## 8. Hazards

**Hazard Areas.** The San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities have designated VHFHSZs on almost all of their lands. The few areas outside of the VHFHSZ are the flatter, residential areas away from the base of the hills. The western part of East Azusa is designated as a dam inundation area. The hills and canyon areas of all the communities are designated as landslide hazard areas. Liquefaction hazard areas are found in the Padua Hills residential area, in the southern part of North Claremont, and in the central part of West Claremont. The increased threat of hazards poses risks to residents, wildlife, and natural resources in all these communities.

## Land Use

The **San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities Land Use Maps**, found in Appendix E, *Land Use Maps*, present land use designations and establish the general location and diversity of each land use in the San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities.

## C. COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC POLICIES

The following provides the policies for the San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities, organized to implement each of the six elements of the Area Plan and address the community-specific issues and opportunities presented above. Each policy is linked to a relevant vision statement (referenced as “VS”), as presented in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of this Area Plan.

All policies in the ESGVAP Elements are applicable at the community-specific level. Refer to Chapter 2, *Land Use Element*, and Chapter 5, *Natural Resources, Conservation, and Open Space Element*, for policies particularly relevant to the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills Communities. Refer to Chapter 9, *Implementation Programs and Actions*, for actions and programs that serve to implement the plan’s policies.

### VS 1 – Sustainable Growth Patterns

**Policy SGMFC-1: Preservation Areas.** Maintain sustainable preservation of the San Gabriel Mountains Foothill Communities neighborhoods and facilities. Any future development should preserve the character of the developed communities and be considered only for locations in the southern portions of East Azusa and West Claremont, away from natural resources and hazard areas.



### VS 3 – Connected and Active Communities

**Policy SGMFC-2: Improved Access in East Azusa.** Support enhancing access from East Azusa neighborhoods to the nearest major transit stop, at Foothill Boulevard and Citrus Avenue, in the southwest, as well as to commercial services and other services and amenities.

## VS 4 – Shared Community Identity and Character

**Policy SGMFC-3: Equestrian District Designation.** Engage community members in West Claremont to assess support for designating an equestrian district in the area.

**Policy SGMFC-4: Street Beautification.** Beautify and reinforce community identity and character through added native drought-tolerant street trees, lighting, community signage, bike lanes, public art, and other strategies. Focus beautification efforts on Sierra Madre Avenue in East Azusa, and on Base Line Road in West Claremont.

**Policy SGMFC-5: Natural Resource Preservation.** Protect and preserve natural and biological resource areas, including those identified in the San Gabriel Canyon and San Dimas Canyon/San Antonio Wash SEAs and those found on lands outside of the designated SEA.

**Policy SGMFC-6: Biological Resources Protection.** Ensure the protection of biological resources and critical habitats for endangered species that occur on private lands. Support collaborations with organizations, institutions, agricultural enterprises, businesses, and property owners to preserve the biological resources located on private lands.

**Policy SGMFC-7: Preserve Marshall Creek.** Preserve Marshall Creek’s riparian area and natural streambed in an unaltered state.

**Policy SGMFC-8: Hydrologic Resource Areas.** Preserve Webb and Live Oak Canyons’ riparian oak woodland and natural drainages and creeks, enhance the riparian corridor habitat, and maintain high-water quality.

**Policy SGMFC-9: Water Quality.** Ensure implementation of water quality best management practices on properties with equestrian uses, horses, and livestock.

**Policy SGMFC-10: Multi-Jurisdiction Collaboration.** Collaborate with other local agencies, such as the Watershed Conservation Authority and the National Forest Service, and nongovernmental organizations on the planning, acquisition, and management of lands containing biological resources in the San Gabriel Mountain foothills for their protection and preservation to maintain maximum biodiversity and protection of biological resources.

**Policy SGMFC-11: Preserve Views.** Preserve scenic vistas and views of the San Gabriel Mountains, landforms, and natural resources from trails and public access points.

**Policy SGMFC-12: Dam Inundation Areas.** Avoid new development in dam inundation areas in the western portion of East Azusa, north of Sierra Madre Avenue.