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CHAPTER 5 Natural Resources, Conservation, and Open Space Element

5.1 Introduction

The Planning Area contains a broad range of natural resources and open space with some of the last remaining natural lands within urbanized Los Angeles. It is defined historically, topographically, and ecologically by its river, valley, hillsides, and mountains and characterized by constructed drainage channels and creeks that drain into San Gabriel River and connect across communities.

The San Gabriel Mountains, Puente Hills, and San Jose Hills contain ridgelines, natural canyons, and drainage channels that provide wildlife habitat and connectivity corridors, connecting to preserved lands in San Bernardino County. These areas contain significant ecological resources and allow for free-flowing drainage from the hillsides into canyons. The hillside areas also contain vast trail networks for hiking,

biking, and equestrian uses. Scenic views and experiential aspects of these natural environments are highly valued assets of the region.

The Natural Resources, Conservation, and Open Space Element establishes goals and priorities to guide conservation of open space, biological, water, and scenic resources in the ESGV. The vision guiding the development of the goals and policies is to conserve, restore, and connect native habitats across jurisdictions; preserve and enhance species biodiversity; integrate urban ecological principles into multi-benefit and infrastructural projects; direct development away from lands with sensitive resources and hazards; support the preservation and acquisition of biologically sensitive lands; and protect the scenic integrity of the region's hillsides and ridgelines.

This element aligns with the Vision Statements found in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of this plan and provides guidance for development to ensure its conformance with the natural environment, conservation of biological resources and open space, protection of sensitive watersheds and water quality, and preservation of scenic resources. Below includes a summary of the types of open space, biological, water, and scenic resources considered in this element. For an extended description of these resources and existing conditions, refer to Appendix I, *Existing Conditions Background for the Natural Resources, Conservation, and Open Space Element*.

A. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Open space resources consist of largely undeveloped publicly and privately held lands and waters preserved in perpetuity for open space, recreational, conservation, and educational use. Open space resources in the ESGV consist of lands whose primary purpose is habitat preservation allowing for passive recreation as determined by the sensitivity of the resources present. Such lands include Los Angeles County (County)-owned parks and managed trails, public parks and trails owned and managed by joint-powers authorities, national forest lands, and lands owned by nonprofit conservation organizations. Additionally, lands subject to recorded easements or deed restrictions for open space purposes may allow passive recreational use in line with the limitations established for the site by the terms of the applicable easement or deed restriction.

B. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES



Los Angeles County is part of the California Floristic Province, which has been designated by Conservation International as one of the world’s top 36 hotspots of biodiversity loss. The ESGV contains large areas of open space and undeveloped land with identified biological resources. These areas have become threatened due to development, habitat fragmentation, and are further stressed by climate change impacts including wildfires, droughts, increasing temperatures, and extreme climatic events.

The main types of biological resources located in the ESGV include habitat linkages, wildlife corridors, riparian habitats, streambeds, wetlands, woodlands, chaparral, and coastal sage scrub, and the species that reside or migrate through the habitat areas. These resources are described in further detail in Appendix I, *Existing Conditions Background for the Natural Resources, Conservation, and Open Space Element*.

Significant Ecological Areas

Significant Ecological Areas are officially designated areas within Los Angeles County that contain irreplaceable biological resources.

Significant Ecological Areas

In Los Angeles County, land that contains irreplaceable biological resources is designated as a **Significant Ecological Area (SEA)**. The objective of the County’s SEA Program is to conserve genetic and physical diversity by designating biological resource areas that can sustain themselves into the future. Much of the land in SEAs is privately held, used for public recreation, or abuts developed areas. Use of the privately owned land or recreational open space must ensure that the ecological function of the SEA is maintained. Each individual SEA is sized to support sustainable populations of its component species, and includes undisturbed or lightly disturbed habitat, along with linkages and corridors that promote species movement.

The following SEAs are located in the Planning Area:

- East San Gabriel Valley SEA
- Puente Hills SEA
- San Dimas Canyon and San Antonio Wash SEA
- San Gabriel Canyon SEA

At least 89 plant and vertebrate California species of special concern, including 25 state and federally threatened and endangered species,

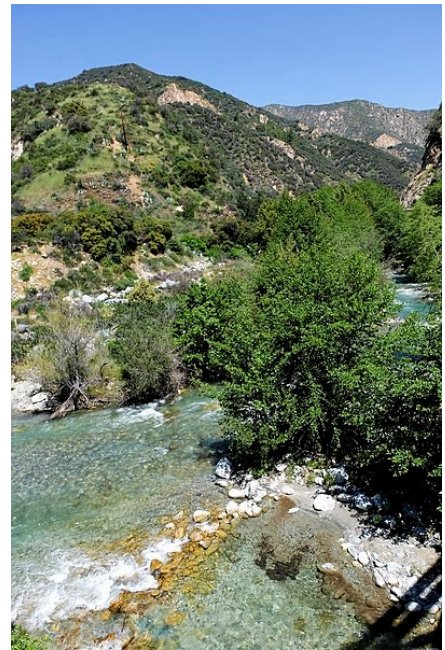
have been identified as occurring or potentially occurring in the Planning Area. The Planning Area is part of the Pacific Flyway, with 287 avian species known to occur in the Planning Area. Nearly the entire Puente Hills SEA is designated as the Puente-Chino Hills State Important Bird Area by Audubon California.

For a complete description of each of the four SEAs, refer to *General Plan, Appendix E, Conservation and Natural Resources Element Resources*, https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/5.-gp_final-general-plan-appendix-E.pdf. For a complete description of the SEA program, refer to the SEA Program website, <https://planning.lacounty.gov/site/sea/home/>.

C. WATER RESOURCES

The San Gabriel Valley was once a wealth of wetlands and riparian habitat with high ground water, seeps, streams, wet meadows, marshes, and creeks that eventually flowed into the shifting course of the San Gabriel River. The water-influenced landscape changed drastically with the extractive economy brought by the westward migrants who settled the San Gabriel Valley in the 19th and 20th centuries. The development of the floodplain resulted in channelization of the rivers and creeks, altering hydrology patterns and eliminating the formerly plentiful wetlands' ecological benefits to water quality in the valley. The San Gabriel Valley has lost approximately 86% of its historical wetlands.

The Planning Area's main watershed is the San Gabriel River Watershed, which totals more than 640 square miles and encompasses part of the Angeles National Forest, the San Gabriel Valley, and large urban areas in the southeast portion of Los Angeles County. The main watercourse in this watershed is the San Gabriel River, which extends 59 stream miles from the Angeles National Forest to the Pacific Ocean. The major tributaries that feed the San Gabriel River and flow through the communities include Coyote Creek, Walnut Creek, Puente Creek, and San Jose Creek. Impacts to water quality negatively affect surface and groundwater, establishing a clear link between the health of this watershed and the quality of life for millions of Los Angeles County residents.



D. SCENIC RESOURCES

A *scenic viewshed* is a scenic vista from a specific location along a highway, trail, waterway, or in a park or neighborhood.

Scenic Viewsheds

Scenic resources consist of designated scenic highways and corridors (or routes), hillsides, scenic viewsheds, scenic vistas, and ridgelines, among other scenic resources. **Scenic viewsheds** can include elements such as ridgelines, unique landscape features, and scenic landforms, among other scenic elements. The County recognizes mountain vistas and other scenic features as significant resources and has adopted policies and ordinances to address preservation of valuable designated scenic areas, vistas, and roadways. The General Plan provides protection and preservation policies that allow individual communities to identify and regulate ridgeline protections.

The Planning Area contains scenic views of the San Gabriel Mountains, Puente Hills, and San Jose Hills. Scenic resources in the Planning Area also include significant ridgelines, hillsides, rivers and waterways, viewsheds and vistas, and scenic routes and corridors, among other scenic features in the landscape. Unfortunately, some of the region’s scenic features have already been lost, degraded, and/or encroached upon by development. For this reason, it is important to identify, protect, and preserve the existing scenic resources in the ESGV to be enjoyed by future generations.

5.2 Challenges and Opportunities

The following provides a summary of overarching natural resources, conservation, and open space challenges and opportunities observed in the Planning Area. These challenges and opportunities, combined with regional planning guidance, inform the strategies, goals, and policies presented in this element.

A. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Open Space Preservation

Sprawling development fragments open space areas. There are vast areas of privately owned undeveloped land in the Puente Hills, as well as the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. No residents or permanent residential structures exist in South Diamond Bar. These areas should be explored for acquisition to preserve sensitive habitat, wildlife corridors, and connectivity. Community members have strongly

voiced concerns over habitat fragmentation and hillside development, asking for privately owned, habitat-rich land to be preserved in perpetuity. The Rowland Heights Community Plan, adopted in 1981, placed the preservation of Tonner Canyon as a priority. The Puente Hills area contains undeveloped lands that have ecological value and are crucial for wildlife connectivity linking to Chino Hills State Park. For additional discussion on open space lands refer to Chapter 6, *Parks and Recreation Element*.

Open Space Management Plan for Acquisition and Planning

The County does not have an adopted countywide master plan for prioritizing land acquisition or managing and preserving resource-sensitive lands and open space areas. As habitat becomes increasingly fragmented, the region will require a planning document that focuses conservation efforts by outlining criteria for preserving and acquiring land, setting standards for identifying priority acquisitions for wildlife connectivity, establishing conservation and land management goals, and identifying funding sources. This effort would be strengthened by collaboration with other agencies and jurisdictions to leverage resources and further the impact.

B. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Preservation of Biotic Diversity

Development continues to be the main cause of species decline in the Southern California region, where approximately 20% of the species on the federal endangered species list are found. The County has designated SEAs for areas rich in biological resources to ensure the sustainability of these valued resources in the future. However, with the increased threat of climate change and development pressures, greater efforts for preservation of SEA lands should be supported. The SEAs feature large areas of relatively undisturbed habitat that are listed as highest priority communities for preservation by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, due to their restricted distribution in the Southern California region. These communities include walnut woodland, oak riparian woodland, southern willow scrub, coastal sage scrub, and alluvial fan scrub. In addition, much of the SEAs are listed as designated State Important Bird Areas by Audubon California.

Habitat Fragmentation

Habitat loss and fragmentation are the leading threats to biodiversity. Roads and development are major obstacles to wildlife movement. Mountain lions have been recently listed as Candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act due to the threatened evolutionary viability of the populations in Southern and Central California. There is a need to reduce the impacts of transportation barriers and reconnect larger habitat areas to facilitate species movement and their genetic diversity for long-term sustainability of the populations.

Connectivity for Wildlife Movement



There are major wildlife corridors in the Planning Area, such as the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor, which should be preserved and protected to allow for species migration and movement. There is a further need to establish more links and expand connectivity for wildlife movement to support the health of native species countywide. The ESGV provides a particularly rich opportunity to further these countywide goals, as rare plant communities, rare species of flora and fauna, and documented wildlife movement corridors exist in the Planning Area. Large areas of privately owned, undeveloped lands exist throughout the region and function as continuous wildlife habitat when not fenced. These lands should be reviewed for potential acquisition, with strategies developed toward maximum preservation of biological diversity and habitat connectivity.

Multi-Jurisdiction Collaboration on Habitat Protection and Linkages

The Planning Area contains several designated SEAs that are mapped to extend into adjacent jurisdictions, but which do not fall under County jurisdiction. A multi-agency effort is needed to ensure habitat and resource conservation and connectivity across the entire Planning Area and adjacent jurisdictions. In some cases, to avoid limits of development on SEA-designated lands in unincorporated Los Angeles County, property owners have sought annexation to adjacent jurisdictions. Working with other jurisdictions to create and enforce protections across jurisdictional boundaries would help to preserve habitat and prevent fragmentation of the remaining habitat areas and wildlife linkages.

Limiting Wildland/Urban Interface

To reduce environmental impacts from development and limit human exposure to hazards including wildfire, landslides, erosion, and floods, it is necessary to minimize the impacts to and prevent any further expansion of wildland/urban interface areas along the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountain and Puente Hills. Maintaining vegetated hillsides helps retain and absorb moisture and reduce the occurrence of extreme erosion and landslides after fire and rain events. In Fire Hazard Severity Zones, the fuel modification requirements of development can extend the impact of development into native vegetation, well beyond the footprint of development.

Climate Change and Conservation

Fire risk and hazards are on the rise with climate change, and specific areas in the hillsides present significant hazards that threaten humans, animals, and the sustainability of native habitats. To counter the ongoing cumulative effect of climate change undeveloped lands with severe hazards are best left in their natural condition and protected from development.

Restoration of Defunct Industrial Lands near Biological Resources

The ESGV has idle oil and gas wells (defined by California Department of Conservation as wells not in use for 2 or more years and that have not been properly plugged and abandoned) and orphaned oil and gas wells (disused and idle facilities where the original owner is insolvent or there is no owner of record) in hillside and near SEA areas, as well as in the developed communities. In addition, mining lands are located along the Interstate 605 corridor adjacent to the San Gabriel River, some of which have ceased operation. Defunct industrial and extractive uses provide a clear opportunity for remediation and habitat restoration on hillsides and ridgelines, and where adjacent to the San Gabriel River, restoration would be especially useful for flood attenuation as the risk of floods rises with climate change. These areas can be considered for mitigation banks or other habitat restoration programs.

A key outcome for restoring habitat on these lands is to provide linkages between habitat islands and other conservation strategies. This would require cross-jurisdictional collaboration, with industrial and extractive uses in adjacent cities impacting Planning Area residents.

Refer also to Chapter 2, *Land Use Element*, for additional ESGVAP policies related to this topic.

Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions

Wildlife crossings are structures—such as bridges, underpasses, tunnels, or viaducts—that allow animals to cross human-made barriers safely.

Wildlife Crossings

The Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority has documented wildlife-vehicle collisions on Harbor Boulevard, Workman Mill Road, Hacienda Boulevard, and Colima Road, and likely occur on other roads in the Planning Area given the extent of wildland/urban interface at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains and in the Puente Hills. Strategies are needed to reduce the incidences of wildlife-vehicle collisions., such as the **wildlife crossing** that was built on Harbor Boulevard to provide a safe option for wildlife movement and support wildlife connectivity. In addition, increased ranger and California Highway Patrol presence, as well as implementing traffic-calming strategies, can reduce incidences of speeding, which plays a role in the severity of wildlife-vehicle collisions. Additionally, buffer areas should be established around wildlife crossings that allow for compatible, low-intensity land uses to ensure safe passage and movement of wildlife.

Potential Impacts to Biological Resources of Road Widening Projects

Portions of the Planning Area share boundaries with other jurisdictions, which can result in County roads crossing into those jurisdictions. For instance, a portion of Brea Canyon Road runs through Orange County, and there are plans to widen the Orange County portion of the road. This project has concerning impacts for Los Angeles County lands in an area with designated open space, ecological resources, and safety concerns. Cross-jurisdictional coordination will be required to minimize impacts to biological resources. Public Works does not have plans to widen the Los Angeles County portion of Brea Canyon Cutoff Road.

C. WATER RESOURCES

Watershed Impacts and Land Use

Rivers, streams, and people can be adversely affected by poorly designed land uses within a watershed. With urbanization comes impervious surfaces, channelizing water courses, filling wetlands, loss of vegetation, increased and polluted runoff, eroded streams, and impaired surface and groundwaters. A watershed-based planning approach integrated with site-level land use planning is needed to

protect, conserve, and restore water resources through integration of multi-benefit projects that mimic the ecosystem services of the natural hydrologic cycle, when and where feasible.

Surface Water Impairments

Clean Water Act Section 303(d) requires states to identify and establish a list of water bodies that do not meet applicable water quality standards. Those water bodies are considered “impaired” and are placed on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list. More than a dozen different stormwater and wastewater pollutants—including metals, nutrients, indicator bacteria, organics, pesticides, trash, and other contaminants—are found in the county’s water bodies in amounts significantly above established water quality standards. In the ESGV, the listed water bodies include Coyote Creek, Puddingstone Reservoir, Puente Creek, San Gabriel River, San Jose Creek, Santa Fe Dam Park Lake, and Walnut Creek.

Groundwater Impairment and Depletion

In urbanized areas, compacted soils and impervious surfaces impact the natural recharge process. In the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains downhill flow of snowmelt and rainwater recharge the groundwater recharge areas. With climate change and decreasing snowpack and rainfall, the recharge capacity of these areas becomes limited. Compounding this issue, portions of the Planning Area and the cities of Diamond Bar, Pomona, San Dimas, and Walnut are on septic systems, which are subject to failure and potential groundwater contamination if not properly maintained.

D. SCENIC RESOURCES

Protection of Scenic Routes

Scenic highways or corridors have not been identified for the ESGV. However, State Route 57 has been identified through the 1981 Rowland Heights Community Plan as a corridor to study for designation. A scenic routes and corridors study should be completed to identify resources for designation as part of a cultural resources study of the Planning Area.

Hillside Regulation

A majority of the mountains and hilly terrain have natural slope gradients of 25% or steeper, with a significant portion having natural slope gradients of 50% or steeper. Development of steep terrain can be costly and impact the scenic quality of the region.

In addition, hillside development changes natural drainage systems and removes native vegetation furthering impacting the scenic quality of the hillsides. Much of the hillside areas also fall within High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones—any further development in these areas needs to consider the environmental, scenic, public health, and safety impacts of development in these zones.

Significant Ridgeline Protections

Ridgelines are important for scenic qualities and for wildlife movement, among other environmental benefits of their preservation. However, specific ridgelines for preservation need to be identified for the ESGV. As part of the ESGVAP, a review of ridgelines should be conducted to identify ridgelines for preservation and protection. There are regulatory precedents in the county for communities to have codified ridgeline protection standards.



5.3 Natural Resources, Conservation, and Open Space Element Goals and Policies

Goals and policies for natural resources, conservation, and open space are organized to implement relevant Vision Statements as presented in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, and are referenced as “VS.” See Chapter 8, *East San Gabriel Valley Unincorporated Communities*, for goals and policies associated with specific unincorporated communities. See Chapter 9, *Implementation Programs and Actions*, for implementing programs and actions corresponding to each goal and policy. See Chapter 2, *Land Use Element*, and Chapter 6, *Parks and Recreation Element*, for related goals and policies.

VS 6 – Sustainable Built and Natural Environment

OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Goal NR-1: Communities support biodiversity at the neighborhood scale.

Policy NR-1.1: Native Habitat in Developed Communities.

Provide habitat areas for locally native species within developed communities and local parks, selecting species that function well in urban conditions and thrive in smaller, isolated stands of vegetation, which are particularly important for native insects and birds.

Policy NR-1.2: Collaborations for Biodiversity. Collaborate with agencies, community-based organizations, and conservation organizations to increase biodiversity within developed communities and local parks, broaden programs for environmental education and stewardship, and create experiential value and learning for residents.

Policy NR-1.3: Biodiverse Urban Forest. Ensure a healthy urban forest in parks, public rights-of-way, and on private properties by developing programs to plant locally native, climate-appropriate species that are most supportive of native and migratory species and help build healthier soils, enrich biodiversity, and improve community health and well-being. Include tree maintenance education as part of the program.

Goal NR-2: Open spaces meet multiple needs and are expanded through acquiring land that protects biologically sensitive resources, supports ecosystem services, increases biodiversity, and provides access to recreation as appropriate.

Policy NR-2.1: Acquisition of Sensitive Lands. Support acquisition of land for open space preservation and passive recreational use, as appropriate. Prioritize acquiring land in SEAs, and land that protects biodiversity, biologically sensitive resources, water resources, water quality, wildlife corridors, and biological resources against the impacts of climate change.

Policy NR-2.2: Multi-benefit Open Spaces. Provide multi-benefit open spaces that incorporate or provide environmental services with water quality improvements, including slowing and capturing water and enabling groundwater recharge; native habitat; connectivity between open space areas; enhanced biodiversity; and improved open space access.

Goal NR-3: Open spaces and trails are managed to ensure habitat protection.

Policy NR-3.1: Biological Resources and Open Space. In biologically sensitive areas, designate and manage open spaces and trails such that the protection of biological resources takes precedence over recreational access.

Policy NR-3.2: Minimize Habitat Fragmentation. Design trails and public access recreation areas to minimize habitat fragmentation. Close or reroute trails if negative impacts to threatened or endangered species occur because of recreational access and activities.

See Chapter 6, *Parks and Recreation Element*, for additional open space policies.

Policy NR-3.2

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Goal NR-4: Lands with sensitive biological resources are buffered, preserved, restored, and protected for the benefit of all beings, enhancing biodiversity and natural processes.

Policy NR-4.1: Preserve Lands with Sensitive Biological Resources. Acquire, restore, and preserve lands in SEAs, wildlife corridors, sensitive habitats, land with unique ecological resources, water resources, and areas adjacent to existing preserved natural areas, sanctuaries, preserves, and open space. This includes lands across jurisdictional and agency boundaries, including but not limited to land adjacent to Angeles National Forest, San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area, and the Puente Hills Habitat Preserve.

Policy NR-4.2: Preserve Natural Canyons. Preserve and protect Sycamore, Brea, Turnbull, Powder, and Tonner Canyons, which have high preservation value with rare habitat existing in a largely natural state and provide wildlife connectivity to Chino Hills State Park.

Policy NR-4.3: Cross-Jurisdictional Protection of Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs). Work with jurisdictions with mapped SEA land to maximize protection of natural resource areas.

Policy NR-4.4: Open Space Dedications and Continuity. Ensure that open space dedications for development projects prioritize the preservation of sensitive resources and are continuous with existing open space and preserved lands.

Policy NR-4.5: Regional Connectivity. Create, support, and protect an established network of dedicated open spaces that provide connectivity for the wildlife corridor from the Puente Hills to Chino Hills.

Policy NR-4.6: SEA-Adjacent Lands Contain Habitat-Sensitive Designs. Ensure that lands adjacent to SEAs incorporate wildlife-friendly fencing, limit removal of native vegetation, and incorporate design features that support and enhance the biodiversity and natural processes of the region.

Policy NR-4.7: Native Vegetation Removal. Minimize the removal of native vegetation to the minimum necessary for fire hazard protection to maintain the integrity of biological resources and ensure connectivity between habitat areas.

Goal NR-5: Biologically sensitive areas are acquired, preserved, and restored through multiple strategies to maximize their protection.

Policy NR-5.1: Protect Priority Ecological Sites. Develop and implement strategies and programs to enhance preservation and protection of priority ecological sites, supporting sites, and priority species (including but not limited to SEAs, habitat connections, wildlife corridors, terrestrial streams, wetlands, and aquatic habitats).

Policy NR-5.2: Incentivize Conservation. Incentivize conservation of undeveloped land to relieve development pressures along the wildland/urban interface. Tools and strategies to explore can include transfer of development rights, transfer of floor area rights, and mitigation land banking, among others.

Policy NR-5.3: Collaborations for Restored Habitat. Collaborate with agencies, jurisdictions, and nongovernmental organizations to ensure that habitat is restored on degraded lands (e.g., those used for oil and gas drilling, and surface mining operations) near biologically sensitive resources.

Policy NR-5.4: Restoration of Degraded Lands. Support decommissioning idle and abandoned oil wells, as defined by the California Geologic Energy Management Division, in the Puente Hills and surrounding areas, following requirements per state law. Remediate impacts and restore habitat in areas near SEAs and on any lands containing sensitive biological resources.

Policy NR-5.5: Habitat Stepping-Stones. Create habitat stepping-stones on County-owned or managed properties and County facilities to better link SEAs and sensitive habitats in the region.

Goal NR-6: Wildlife corridors and linkages are protected, preserved, and enhanced to facilitate wildlife movement, especially as climate change alters habitats making habitat connectivity imperative for survival.

Policy NR-6.1: Wildlife Crossings. Construct sensitively designed wildlife crossings to allow unobstructed wildlife movement and safe passage beyond infrastructure such as roads, highways, railroads, and other such obstructions. Ensure access points are properly located and designed for maximum usage and safety for wildlife.

Policy NR-6.2: Wildlife Crossings and Infrastructure Projects. Incorporate wildlife crossings into road improvement and infrastructure projects at locations that would benefit the safe passage and movement of wildlife.

Policy NR-6.3: Buffers for Wildlife Crossings. Establish compatible, low-intensity land uses as a buffer around wildlife crossings to ensure safe passage and undeterred movement of wildlife through the landscape.

Policy NR-6.4: Habitat Connectivity. Protect and preserve habitat connectivity, wildlife corridors, and wildlife access to corridors. Facilitate movement between major habitat areas, including preserving the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor and movement between and the San Gabriel Mountains, San Gabriel River, and Puente Hills.

Policy NR-6.5: Facilitate Species Migration. Identify and protect networks of habitat connectivity, linkages, and wildlife corridors between open spaces, reserves, and protected areas to facilitate species migration and range shifts—in consideration of future climate change impacts—across jurisdictional boundaries and infrastructural barriers, in the Puente Hills, along ridgelines and riparian corridors, along the San Gabriel River, in the San Gabriel Mountains foothills, and any other areas that facilitate species migration and movement.

Goal NR-7: Development in areas near conservation land and lands with biological resources prioritizes resource preservation, buffers resource-rich lands, and supports local biodiversity.

Policy NR-7.1: Protect Natural and Scenic Resources. Direct development away from natural and scenic resource areas and toward areas where development already exists.

Policy NR-7.2: Protection from Light and Noise Pollution. Screen SEAs, open space, conservation areas, and lands with sensitive biological resources from direct and spillover lighting and noise pollution from land uses in their vicinity.

Policy NR-7.3: Wildlife-Permeable Fencing. Require fence materials and design that allow wildlife movement and limit other potential blockages adjacent to SEAs and habitat areas.

Policy NR-7.4: Planting of Native Vegetation. In fire hazard areas, require development to plant fire-resistant and fire-adapted locally native vegetation.

See Chapter 2, *Land Use Element*, for goals and policies related to growth and land use.

Policy NR-7.1

Policy NR-7.5: Compact Development. Require compact development to limit impacts to habitat and natural resource areas, safeguard from exposure to wildfire threats, limit extent of wildland/urban interface, prevent further habitat fragmentation, and preserve wildlife corridors.

Policy NR-7.6: Land Use and Zoning Supportive of Conservation. Ensure land use and zoning designations minimize exposure to wildfire hazards, support opportunities for conservation of undeveloped lands, prevent habitat fragmentation, and preserve wildlife connectivity.

Policy NR-7.7: Consider Future Climate Change Impacts on SEA Land. Consider the future impacts of climate change on biological resources potentially impacted by development proposed on or near SEA-designated lands. Develop conditions and mitigation measures that further protect and buffer the potentially impacted biological resources from the added stresses of climate change, which may be exacerbated by development.

Policy NR-7.8: Incorporate Urban Ecology. Collaborate with other agencies and relevant groups to promote and incorporate urban ecological principles and designs as a key element of open space projects, infrastructure projects, and in the review of development plans.

Goal NR-8: Public agencies, residents, businesses, property owners, and property managers have access to knowledge and tools to steward the land toward enhanced biodiversity and planting and preservation of native species.

Policy NR-8.1: Habitat-Supportive Properties. Collaborate with agencies and community-based and nongovernmental organizations to educate property owners, property managers, and homeowners' associations to enhance local soils by composting, convert high-water landscapes to locally native plants that promote residential-scale biodiversity, and create native habitat on their properties. Support creating neighborhoods whose yards form continuous areas of locally native plants that enhance local biodiversity.

Policy NR-8.2: Education on Nontoxic Land Management.

Collaborate with agencies, community-based and nongovernmental organizations to educate property owners, property managers, and homeowners' associations to prevent use of pesticides, rodenticides, herbicides, and other harmful chemicals that negatively impact the health of all beings, water resources, and the natural environment.

Policy NR-8.3: Prohibit Rodenticides and Harmful Chemicals.

Support regulation to prohibit the use of rodenticides and other chemicals harmful to all beings, water resources, and the natural environment.

Policy NR-8.4: Avoiding Pesticide, Rodenticide, and Herbicide Use. Avoid pesticide, rodenticide, and herbicide use on County-owned or -managed land due to their negative impact on all beings and the natural environment.

Policy NR-8.5: Invasive Species Management. Manage invasive species with the safest available and least toxic method and educate the public, property owners, property managers, maintenance workers, and green waste haulers about safe control of invasive species.

Policy NR-8.6: Wildland/Urban Interface Land Stewardship. Support information sharing and education for those living along the wildland/urban interface to manage and steward their properties responsibly to enhance and support biodiversity and minimize impacts to wildlife.

Policy NR-8.7: Sensitive Tree-Trimming on Public Properties. Public agencies responsible for maintaining trees along rights-of-way, on public properties, and in open spaces and parks must avoid tree maintenance activities during bird nesting season, generally between February and August.

Policy NR-8.8: Sensitive Tree-Trimming Education. Support educational programming that informs the public to avoid tree maintenance activities during bird nesting season, generally between February and August.

WATER RESOURCES

Goal NR-9: Local waterways are developed and maintained to mimic the hydrologic cycle, provide ecosystem services, and support native and migratory species, when and where feasible.

Policy NR-9.1: Riparian Habitat Restoration. Restore riparian and upland habitat, where feasible, to facilitate plant and wildlife movement and improve water quality adjacent to washes, drainage channels, and creeks, along the unchannelized portions of Walnut and San Jose Creeks or where a trapezoidal channel has adjacent space for habitat improvement. Include restoring riparian and upland habitat when upgrading concrete-banked streams and channels, when feasible.

Policy NR-9.2: Management Guidelines for Waterways. Establish comprehensive and coordinated management guidelines for local waterways, which balance priorities such as water management, flood risk mitigation, habitat, biodiversity, and community preference.

See Our County, Los Angeles Countywide Sustainability Plan, Action 68.

Policy NR-9.2

Goal NR-10: Watersheds are protected from the impacts of development, recreation, and agricultural uses.

Policy NR-10.1: Protect Natural Drainage Systems. Require development to protect the functions of natural drainage systems on site. Site and design development, to complement and use existing drainage patterns and systems, and convey drainage from the developed area of the site in a nonerosive manner. Restore disturbed or degraded natural drainage systems, where feasible.

Policy NR-10.2: Implement Road Best Management Practices. Support local and state transportation agencies' implementation of best management practices that promote infiltration of runoff from roads and highways and minimize urban runoff flows into waterways.

Policy NR-10.3: Revegetate with Native Vegetation. Require all cut and fill slopes and other disturbed areas to be landscaped and revegetated with locally native, drought-tolerant plant species that blend with existing natural vegetation and natural habitats of the surrounding area prior to the beginning of the rainy season.

Policy NR-10.4: Water Quality Protections. Prevent the disposal of animal waste, wastewater, and any other byproducts of human, crop-based agricultural, or equestrian activities in or near any drainage course. Require confined animal facilities and agricultural activities to implement best management practices to minimize erosion, manage animal waste, and avoid sediment and pollutant impacts.

Policy NR-10.5: Maintain Riparian Buffers. Require maintenance of natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats. Buffers must be of a sufficient size to ensure the biological integrity and preservation of the riparian habitat.

Policy NR-10.6: Alteration of Streams for Stream Crossings. Prohibit the alteration of natural streams for the purpose of creating stream road crossings, unless there is no other feasible alternative to provide access to public recreation areas or lawfully established development on legal parcels and the stream crossing is accomplished by bridging. Locate bridge columns outside streambeds and banks. Use shared bridges wherever possible. Culverts may be used for the crossing of minor drainages lacking beds and banks and riparian vegetation.

Policy NR-10.7: Access for Geologic Testing. Use existing roads or truck-mounted drill rigs to access geologic testing (or percolation or well testing) sites, where feasible. Where there is no feasible access, a temporary access road may be permitted when it is designed to minimize length, width, and total grading to only that necessary to accommodate required equipment. Restore all such temporary roads through grading to original contours, revegetating with plant species native to the site, and monitoring to ensure successful restoration.

Goal NR-11: Streams, wetlands, natural drainage channels, riparian habitat, and other natural intermittent and perennial waterbodies are protected, preserved, and restored.

Policy NR-11.1: Mechanisms for Water Resource Protection. Evaluate and implement mechanisms, such as a stream protection ordinance, for the protection, preservation, and restoration of natural buffers to waterbodies, such as floodplains, streams, and wetlands.

See OurCounty, Los Angeles Countywide Sustainability Plan, Action 36.

Policy NR-11.1

Policy NR-11.2: Stream Protections. Require protection of stream courses in their natural state, along with development designs that respect natural flows.

Policy NR-11.3: Conditions for Stream Alterations. Prohibit channelization or other substantial alteration of streams, except for (1) necessary water supply projects where no feasible alternative exists; (2) flood protection for existing development where there is no other feasible alternative, as approved by the Department of Public Works or (3) the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat. Any channelization or stream alteration permitted for one of these three purposes shall minimize the depletion of groundwater and shall include maximum feasible mitigation measures to mitigate unavoidable impacts. Bioengineering alternatives shall be preferred for flood protection over "hard" solutions, such as concrete or riprap channels.

Policy NR-11.4: Endangered Aquatic Species. Preserve and protect water bodies from alteration where endangered aquatic species have been identified.

Goal NR-12: Surface and ground water resources are protected and maintained at a high quality.

Policy NR-12.1: Well Construction. Permit the construction of new water wells only where they will not have significant adverse individual or cumulative impacts on groundwater, streams, or natural resources. Require that a groundwater assessment be performed by a qualified professional for a well location in proximity to a stream, drainage courses, and similar surface water conveyance, to ensure surface water will not adversely impact groundwater quality.

Policy NR-12.2: Development Meets County and Regional Water Quality Control Board Standards. Prohibit development of rural and exurban areas where established County and Regional Water Quality Control Board standards cannot be met, such that the cumulative effect of on-site wastewater treatment systems will negatively impact the environment, either by stream pollution or by contributing to the potential failure of unstable soils.

Policy NR-12.3: Protect Biological Resources. Site new on-site wastewater treatment systems and require them to be designed to minimize impacts to sensitive environmental resources, including grading, site disturbance, and the introduction of increased amounts of water. Require adequate setbacks and/or buffers to protect biological resources, native trees, and surface waters from lateral seepage from the sewage effluent dispersal systems and to protect the on-site wastewater treatment systems from flooding and inundation.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Goal NR-13: Scenic resources, including but not limited to significant ridgelines, scenic hillsides, riparian corridors, scenic highways, and corridors, scenic viewsheds and vistas, natural landforms, and scenic routes along rivers and waterways, among other scenic features in the landscape, are protected and preserved.

Policy NR-13.1: Protect Scenic Hillsides and Ridgelines.

Protect scenic hillsides, natural landforms, and significant ridgelines in the Puente Hills, San Jose Hills, and San Gabriel Mountain foothills from development that impacts their scenic and ecological value.

Policy NR-13.2: Limit Grading. Regulate project designs to blend seamlessly with the natural terrain and native vegetation. Require that grading for a development project is limited to the minimum amount necessary.

Policy NR-13.3: Minimize Impacts of Development. Design and site structures and development so that they are as far away as feasible from scenic resources and so that their visual impact is minimized.

Policy NR-13.4: Scenic Viewsheds. Identify and preserve scenic viewsheds visible from trails and public roads.

Policy NR-13.5: Regulate Development. Prepare regulations that prevent the intrusion of development into a scenic viewshed visible from trails and public roads.

Policy NR-13.6: Protect Scenic Qualities of Riparian Areas.

Protect and preserve the scenic qualities of riparian corridors in undeveloped areas and canyons, and scenic portions of waterways in developed communities including the San Gabriel River, Walnut Creek, San Jose Creek, Thompson Creek, and Coyote Creek, among others.

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