SECTION 1.0
INTRODUCTION

This *Master Environmental Impact Report (Master EIR)* has been prepared by the City of Pasadena Department of Planning and Development (City) to assess the environmental consequences of the proposed *Arroyo Seco Master Plan project* (proposed project). The City is the lead agency for this project pursuant to the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

1.1 PROJECT HISTORY

The proposed project area lies within and is owned by the City of Pasadena. Major landowners within the Hahamongna Watershed Park Basin and adjacent to the proposed project area include the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and the Metropolitan Water District (MWD). The City of Pasadena has maintained the physical structure of the Arroyo Seco with modifications for recreation, flood control, and water conservation. The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works owns and operates Devil's Gate Dam and maintains a flood control easement to 1,075 feet above mean sea level (msl), which carries water from Devil•s Gate Dam at the base of Hahamongna Watershed Park through the Central and Lower Arroyo Seco to its confluence with the Los Angeles River. The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Flood Maintenance Division is responsible for maintaining everything within the 1,075-foot easement related to flood control and debris removal, and the City of Pasadena is responsible for maintaining recreation-related features within and outside that easement. The Central and Lower Arroyo Seco are channelized for flood control, but the City has purposefully maintained the natural order of the surrounding floodplain via rubble retaining walls built by the Conservation Corps during World War II. The Arroyo Seco links the steep-rising front ranges of the San Gabriel Mountains to the diverse and historic landscape of Pasadena. The dynamic floodplain of the Arroyo Seco supports a classic assemblage of Southern California plant and animal communities. The Hahamongna watershed comprises the valley and waters that once supported the Gabrieliño people, who inhabited the area from around 500 B.C. to the 1800s.

Recreation in the Arroyo Seco has an extensive history dating back to 1884 and the then-famous Switzer's Camp, the premier wilderness resort in the range through the 1930s. Visitors accessed Switzer's Camp and Falls by foot, horse, or burro from the Upper Arroyo Seco. Starting in 1913, acquisition and plans for the Upper, Central, and Lower Arroyo Seco were initiated by the City of Pasadena. In 1917 and 1918, plans to preserve the Arroyo Seco were initiated. Emil T. Mische, a landscape architect, and Myron Hunt, head of the Arroyo Seco Park Committee, recommended that the Lower Arroyo Seco be preserved, restricted to walking and bridle paths, and planted with only native plants. In the early 1920s, development of parks and fields continued in the Arroyo Seco, including an outdoor amphitheater, built in the Central Arroyo Seco in 1924, and the Rose Bowl, built by the Tournament of Roses in 1926. The acquisition of public lands within the Arroyo Seco by the City of Pasadena had largely been completed by 1927. City acquisition of these lands conserved these areas for public recreation. Through the 1950s, the Arroyo Seco was one of the most popular vacation spots in the San Gabriel Mountains, and included well-used picnic areas and trails.

In August 2000, the City prepared an *Initial Study*[1] to identify potential environmental consequences resulting from a proposed project consisting of the (1) Hahamongna Watershed Park Master Plan[2], (2) Central Arroyo Master Plan[3], (3) Lower Arroyo Master Plan[4], (4) Design Guidelines, and (5) Rose Bowl Use Plan[5]. The *Initial Study* concluded that the proposed project would have less than significant or no impacts on the following environmental conditions:

Agricultural Resources
Land Use and Planning
Population and Housing

The *Initial Study* concluded that the proposed project had the potential for significant impacts on the following environmental issues, which are the subject of this draft *Master EIR*:

Aesthetics
Air Quality
Biological Resources
Cultural Resources
Geology and Soils
Hazards and Hazardous Materials
Hydrology and Water Quality
Mineral Resources
Noise
Public Services
Recreation
Transportation/Traffic
Utilities and Service Systems

On September 13, 2000, a *Notice of Preparation* (NOP) to prepare a draft *Master EIR* on the proposed project was submitted to the State Clearinghouse and distributed to various Federal, State, regional, and local government agencies for review (City of Pasadena Department of Planning and Permitting). The NOP was sent to over 400 private individuals and to the appropriate Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies. A Public Notice was posted in the Star News. The comment period closed on October 12, 2000. The City received 33 letters of comment in response to the NOP (Appendix A). Though some letters of comment were received after the official close of the comment period, all letters of comment to the NOP were considered by the City in preparing the *Master EIR*.

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[1] City of Pasadena, 2000. *Initial Study Arroyo Seco Mater Plan Project.* Contact: Department of Planning and Permitting, 175 North Garfield, Pasadena, CA 91109. Prepared by: Sapphos Environmental Inc., 133 Martin Alley, Pasadena, CA 91105.

[2] City of Pasadena, 2002.

[3] City of Pasadena, 9 July 2001. *Central Arroyo Master Plan.* Contact: 100 N. Garfield Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91109.

[4] City of Pasadena, June 1988.

[5] City of Pasadena, 14 August 2000. Agenda Report to the City Council: *Rose Bowl Use Plan from Rose Bowl Operating Company.* Contact: 100 N. Garfield Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91109.

1.2 PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed project is to support Policy 9.2 of the City of Pasadena's *Comprehensive General Plan*[6] and provide passive and active recreation facilities and programs to meet the diverse needs of City of Pasadena residents and visitors.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The purpose of the draft *Master EIR* is to inform public agency decision makers and the general public about the proposed project and its significant environmental effects, possible ways to minimize those significant effects, and to describe reasonable alternatives. The draft *Master EIR* will be subject to a 45-day public review period specified on the transmittal memo accompanying this draft *Master EIR*. Written comments provided by the general public and public agencies will be evaluated, and written responses will be prepared for all comments received during the designated comment period. Upon completion of the evaluation, a final *Master EIR* will be prepared and provided to the Pasadena City Council for certification of compliance with CEQA, and for review and consideration as part of the decision making process for the proposed project.

A Public Notice of the *Notice of Availability* (NOA) of the draft *Master EIR* is scheduled to appear in the Pasadena Star News and the Pasadena Journal, to be mailed directly to the appropriate private and Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies; and to be posted at numerous locations around the proposed project area. The draft *Master EIR* will be distributed to agencies as indicated in the annotations to the Distribution List in Section 11.0.

Section 15200 of the 1998 State CEQA Guidelines defines the purpose of the review of an EIR as including: (a) sharing expertise; (b) disclosing agency analyses; (c) checking for accuracy; (d) detecting omissions; (e) discovering public concerns; and (4) soliciting counter proposals. Section 15204 of the CEQA Guidelines continues with a description of the focus of review of draft EIRs:

> Persons and public agencies should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects.

The CEQA Guidelines further explain that reviewers should:

> ...be aware that the adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible in light of factors such as the magnitude of the project at issue, the severity of its likely environmental impacts, and the geographic scope of the project. CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or

[6] City of Pasadena, Planning Division, 1994. *City of Pasadena Comprehensive General Plan*. Contact: Community Planning Section, 175 North Garfield Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91109-7215.

perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commentors.

Written comments on the draft *Master EIR* should be addressed to:

City of Pasadena Department of Planning and Development
ATTN: Mr. Brian League
Project Planner
175 North Garfield
Pasadena, California 91105

1.4 ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

For purposes of function and clarity, this draft *Master EIR* has been divided into the following sections:

- **Executive Summary** provides a brief overview of the proposed project, the environmental analysis of the proposed project, and a summary of the alternatives considered.

- **Section 1, Introduction,** provides information related to the history of the proposed project; purpose and need for the proposed project; purpose of the draft *Master EIR*; and organization and content of the draft *Master EIR*.

- **Section 2, Project Description,** provides a precise location and boundaries of the proposed project; statement of objectives; a general description of the project's technical, economic, and environmental characteristics, including principal engineering considerations; and intended uses of the draft *Master EIR*.

- **Section 3, Existing Conditions, Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Level of Significance After Mitigation,** describes the potential for the proposed project to result in significant impacts. This portion of the draft *Master EIR* is organized in accordance with applicable environmental resources. As described in the *Initial Study*, the proposed project is not expected to result in significant impacts on agricultural resources, land use and planning, or population and housing. The balance of the environmental evaluation in this draft *Master EIR* is directed at the potential for the proposed project to result in significant impacts on aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, mineral resources, noise, public services, recreation, transportation, and utilities and service systems. This assessment of impacts considers the regulatory framework, environmental baseline conditions at the time of publication of the NOP, thresholds for significance recommended by CEQA and other relevant statutes and regulations, and the potential to reduce or avoid significant impacts.

- **Section 4, Alternatives to the Proposed project,** describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the project or to the location of the project that would

attain most of the basic objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, including a "no-project" alternative. Although not capable of meeting most of the basic objectives of the proposed project, the ■no-project• alternative was analyzed in accordance with the requirements of CEQA. The anticipated environmental effects of the alternatives are compared to those analyzed in Section 3 for the proposed project.

- **Section 5, Significant Environmental Effects That Cannot Be Avoided If the Proposed project Is Implemented,** describes impacts on the natural and human environment that cannot be avoided if the proposed project is implemented.

- **Section 6, Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Related to Implementation of the Proposed project,** describes irreversible changes to the natural and human environment that are anticipated in association with the proposed project. In addition, this section describes short-term impacts on air quality. There are no anticipated irreversible changes related to the use of non-renewable resources.

- **Section 7, Growth-Inducing Impacts,** evaluates the potential for the proposed project to foster economic or population growth, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.

- **Section 8, Organizations and Persons Consulted,** provides a list of all governmental agencies, community groups, and other organizations consulted during the preparation of this draft *Master EIR*.

- **Section 9, Report Preparation Personnel,** provides a list of all personnel that provided technical input to or review of the draft *Master EIR*.

- **Section 10, References,** lists all sources, communications, and correspondences used in the preparation of this draft *Master EIR*.

- **Section 11, MEIR Distribution List,** provides a distribution list of agencies and libraries receiving this draft *Master EIR* during the 45-day public review period.