

# Section Four:

## Economic Development

### OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Commercial enterprises are located in two different areas of the City. The most visible location for commercial enterprise is in the central business district or “downtown”. The center of the district is located at the intersection of Baldwin Avenue and Sierra Madre Boulevard, roughly three-quarters of a mile north of the Interstate 210 Foothill Freeway. The business district was established when the City was settled in the late 1800s. Less obvious are the businesses which are located throughout the City as home or internet-based businesses.

The Sierra Madre business community includes retail, professional office, light industrial and neighborhood services centered along Sierra Madre Boulevard, Baldwin Avenue, and East Montecito Avenue. This area is covered by Measure V and is referred to herein as the central core area.

The community has never been a dominant shopping focus for residents of the San Gabriel Valley. Most residents of Sierra Madre seek major item shopping opportunities outside of the City in conveniently located regional and community shopping centers which feature a wide variety of durable goods.

In terms of employment, the most recent data states that approximately 3,294 persons were employed in the City of Sierra Madre in 2013, compared to 3,393 in 2006. Services employment was the largest employment sector in the City, comprising 65 percent of all employment in Sierra Madre. Retail/wholesale 10 percent, manufacturing (4 percent), and government jobs (4 percent) comprised a total of 18 percent ~~10 percent, 4 percent, and 4 percent~~ of City employment, ~~respectively~~. Construction and other jobs contributed the remaining 17 percent of City employment. (Southern California Association of Governments , Profile of the City of Sierra Madre Report October 2013).

A Retail Site Assessment was prepared in 2012 by Buxton. It concluded that the Sierra Madre Trade Area captures only approximately half of the retail sales generated by residents. It

should be noted that the trade area is larger than the City boundaries and includes a number of nearby shopping centers, so retail businesses within the City likely captures an even lower percentage of potential sales to residents.

The State Board of Equalization reported that taxable sales in the City increased from \$22.9 million in 2002 to \$31.1 million in 2008. However, due to the recent economic downturn, taxable sales within the City declined to \$25.4 million in 2012.

Programs identified by the study to improve the existing downtown included business attraction, retention and promotion, including a branding campaign to define and highlight Sierra Madre as a lively and viable business opportunity with a small village character.

## CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### **Opportunities**

1. Sierra Madre has a special “foothill village” character because of its history and people, its natural beauty, mountain recreational access and ambiance, and its semi-isolation within the Los Angeles basin. Visitors to the village find it welcoming and charming.
2. Sierra Madre has a reputation for interests and activities related to arts and crafts, film, video, literary and theatrical interests. The annual Wistaria ~~Festival~~te and Art Fair are two examples of events which bring visitors to the City. In addition, a number of civic organizations and businesses provide art and related classes, programs and exhibitions for adults and children. There are several studios and galleries in the City, as well as artisans and craftsmen in furniture, clothing and similar fields. The Sierra Madre Playhouse runs live plays throughout the year, and local coffeehouses as well as the City Library sponsor poetry readings. Sierra Madre is also a popular location for Hollywood film companies to shoot on location.

3. As an entryway into the San Gabriel Mountains, Sierra Madre draws locals and visitors to outdoor activities such as walking, hiking, and cycling.
4. Although downtown is small, there are some properties which, with attrition of existing businesses, could be developed into additional retail and commercial space.
5. The historic building stock in Sierra Madre provides potential for adaptive reuse of residential, commercial, light industrial/warehouse and institutional properties as bed and breakfasts, galleries, studios, retail shops, and other income generating ventures.

### **Constraints**

1. The downtown area of Sierra Madre is small and made up primarily of small shallow lots, thus reducing the ability to consolidate lots for larger projects. ~~There are no provisions for eminent domain, thus reducing the City's ability to consolidate lots for large projects.~~
2. Existing commercial structures are primarily divided into small business spaces, limiting the type of businesses that may locate in Sierra Madre.
3. There is limited commercial space in the City, and a sizeable portion of that is being used for non-retail purposes.
4. There is no visibility from highways or major arterials.
5. Limited funds from the City make it difficult to undertake a comprehensive marketing strategy.
6. Total taxable sales in the City comprise only a very small portion of the total taxable sales and total retail sales in the San Gabriel Valley, thus significantly limiting City revenues.
7. The City is generally perceived as having restrictive land use regulations, high utility taxes, high business license fees, and is generally perceived as being “unfriendly” to businesses.
8. Portions of the central core area lack sufficient parking (such as East Montecito Avenue).

9. Existing parking is poorly identified and lacks satisfactory pedestrian access to businesses.

## OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There are two primary purposes for an economic development strategy in the City of Sierra Madre. The first is to generate necessary revenues to offset public services. The second is to preserve a quality of life for Sierra Madre residents which allows them to have commercial retail and services, along with the ambiance of a village atmosphere, in their own community. Another purpose of the economic development policy is to provide business and employment opportunities to local residents.

Economic development includes land use strategies, financing strategies and organizational strategies. The land use strategy includes identifying locations for new business opportunities, achieving the highest and best use of the properties located in the downtown, and providing capital improvements with public funds. The financing strategies include ways in which public and private dollars can be channeled into the business community. The organizational strategies address the strength of the Chamber of Commerce and the City's Department of Development Services in partnering to market the City to potential new businesses and to consumers.

## SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. A diverse mix of uses to meet the needs of local residents as well as visitors to the City.
2. An enhanced relationship between the City and the Chamber of Commerce to maximize the effectiveness of both organizations to assist businesses in the City.
3. Sierra Madre as a destination point accenting the area's natural beauty, artist community, and historic character.

## OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The City has established the following objectives and policies for economic development in Sierra Madre. The implementation measures are contained in the Implementation Chapter at the end of the General Plan.

Objective L42: Provide a business friendly environment in Sierra Madre.

Policies:

- L42.1** Streamline the permitting process for new businesses.
- L42.2** Support efforts of the Chamber of Commerce to support business activities, such as festivals and programs which bring residents and visitors to the downtown.
- L42.3** Continue to allow home based businesses which do not negatively impact the residential neighborhoods in which they are located.
- L42.4** Consider reducing utility taxes, business license fees and other taxes and fees to the extent feasible.
- L42.5** Consider implementing a Business Improvement District in the central core area.

Objective L43: Improve the aesthetics, safety, and usability of the public realm within the downtown area.

Policies:

- L43.1** Encourage restoration of original building facades, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings through educational programs and economic incentives such as reduced permit fees and parking requirements.

- L43.2 ~~Provide~~Maintain enhanced paving for all pedestrian crosswalks on Sierra Madre Boulevard and Baldwin Avenue within the downtown district, and consider installation of the same on East Montecito Avenue.
- L43.3 Maintain pedestrian-level street lighting in the downtown district to enhance the nighttime dining and shopping experience, and consider installation of the same on East Montecito Avenue in accordance with dark sky guidelines.
- L43.4 Permit closure of Kersting Court during the evenings, weekends, and special events for musical events, outdoor dining, farmers market or similar activities.
- L43.5 Adopt a long-term design plan for Kersting Court which enhances the park as a focal point of the downtown and increases its usability.
- L43.6 Develop a coordinated parking plan for the downtown business area, including East Montecito, and ensure that any in-lieu or other parking fees generated downtown are used to improve downtown parking.
- L43.7 Improve pedestrian connections between the street and the public parking lots through signage, coordination with property owners, purchase of properties and other mechanisms.
- L43.8 Improve the aesthetic qualities of the public parking lots by adding color plantings and encouraging improvements to rear facades of buildings.
- L43.9 Encourage outdoor dining, sidewalk sales, street fairs, and other uses of the sidewalk which encourage pedestrian activity.

Objective L44: Maximize retail opportunities.

Policies:

- L44.1** Provide incentives for the location of restaurants and retail uses on the ground floor of buildings fronting Sierra Madre Boulevard and Baldwin Avenue (and possibly portions of East Montecito Avenue). Such incentives may include reduced/waived utility taxes, permit fees or business license fees and streamlined permit processing.
- L44.2** In order to increase daytime demand for City retail, provide incentives for the location of service retail, office and other commercial uses ~~(and light industrial uses on East Montecito)~~ above and/or behind street-facing, ground-floor retail. Such incentives may include reduced/waived utility taxes, permit fees or business license fees and streamlined permit processing.
- L44.3** Prohibit any new and the expansion of existing institutional facilities in the central core area.

# Section Five:

## Circulation

### OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

There are no regional transportation facilities located within the City boundaries of Sierra Madre. The City is served by Interstate 210 Foothill Freeway located approximately one-half mile south of the City. This is controlled by the State of California Department of Transportation. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) maintains two bus lines in town as well as nearby light rail service (the Sierra Madre Villa Gold Line Station is approximately two miles from the center of town). Major streets which are operated by the City include Michillinda Avenue, Santa Anita Avenue, Grandview Avenue, Sierra Madre Boulevard, and Orange Grove Avenue.

The circulation system in the City of Sierra Madre includes a network of surface streets which serve two distinct and equally important functions: access to adjacent properties, and movement of persons and goods into and out of the City. The design and operation of each street depends upon the importance placed on each of these functions. A classification system is used to identify the function of each street in the City. This system is important because it provides a logical framework for the design and operation of the street system. The functional classification system allows the residents and elected officials to identify preferred characteristics of each street.

### STREET CLASSIFICATIONS

Roadways in Sierra Madre are categorized into four functional classification types: major street, collector street, local collector street, and local streets. Traffic volumes were measured in 2011.

#### **Major Street**

Major streets are generally commercial arteries. They carry the majority of traffic entering or traveling through the City. A major artery would contain either four or six lanes of through traffic plus left turn lanes. Minor arterials serve the same function as

major arterials, but have four lanes of through traffic and may or may not have separate left-turn lanes. Recommended design volumes on arterials range from 30,000 to 60,000 vehicles per day depending on the number of lanes and left-turn movements. Arterials serve two primary functions: to move vehicles into and through the City and to adjacent commercial land uses. Driveways and other curb cuts along arterials are generally limited to minimize disruption to traffic flow.

The only street in Sierra Madre that can be considered a major street is Michillinda Avenue. It runs along the western boundary of Sierra Madre and is shared by Pasadena and Sierra Madre. As Michillinda Avenue leaves Sierra Madre south of Orange Grove Avenue, it is shared by Pasadena and Arcadia. Michillinda Avenue is classified as a four lane major street in Sierra Madre (84'/64') and as a four lane secondary arterial in Arcadia (80'/60'). Currently, Michillinda Avenue has two lanes along the Sierra Madre/Pasadena segment and four lanes along the Arcadia/Pasadena segment.

Following is information regarding traffic volumes and volume/capacity ratios:

<b>Road Segment: Michillinda</b>	<b>Daily Traffic</b>	<b>Existing Capacity</b>	<b>Volume/Capacity Ratio</b>
Grandview-Sierra Madre	6,600	15,000	0.44
Sierra Madre-Orange Grove	12,900	15,000	0.86

Table V-1

### **Collector Streets**

Collector streets are intended to carry traffic between residential neighborhoods and the arterial street network. They are generally two-lane roadways with a mixture of residential and commercial land uses. Based upon planning criteria developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation and other agencies, average daily traffic volumes on collector streets should be held below 15,000 vehicles per day in order to maintain acceptable levels of service at intersections and to preserve the ambiance of adjacent land uses. Higher density residential land uses or side yards of single

family homes would be appropriately located adjacent to collector streets. Local commercial development is also appropriate for collector streets.

In Sierra Madre, only Baldwin Avenue and Sierra Madre Boulevard can be classified as collector streets. Baldwin Avenue is classified as a four-lane collector street in Sierra Madre (80'/64') and as a four-lane secondary arterial in Arcadia (80'/60'). These classifications are consistent although the curb-to-curb width would change by four feet at the city boundary. Currently, Baldwin Avenue has two lanes in Sierra Madre and four lanes in Arcadia.

Sierra Madre Boulevard is classified as a four-lane collector street in Sierra Madre (80'/64') and as a ~~one~~four-lane secondary arterial in Arcadia (80'/60') with a bike lane. These classifications are consistent although the curb-to-curb width would change by four feet at the city boundaries. Currently, Sierra Madre Boulevard has two lanes in Arcadia and Sierra Madre.

West of Michillinda Avenue, Sierra Madre Boulevard enters the City of Pasadena and widens to become a four-lane divided roadway. It is classified as a principal mobility corridor in Pasadena, but as of early 2013, it is not planned to be further widened. Although the four-lanes on each side of the City boundary would be consistent, there is a median divider in Pasadena while none currently exists in Sierra Madre.

<b>Road Segment: Baldwin Avenue</b>	<b>Daily Traffic</b>	<b>Existing Capacity</b>	<b>Volume/Capacity Ratio</b>
Grandview-Sierra Madre	3,800	15,000	0.25
Sierra Madre-Orange Grove	10,500	15,000	0.70

Table V-2

Road Segment: Sierra Madre Boulevard	Daily Traffic	Existing Capacity	Volume/Capacity Ratio
Michillinda – Baldwin	8,600	15,000	0.57
East of Baldwin	3,600	15,000	0.24

Table V-3

### Local Collector Streets

Local collector streets or “feeder” streets are similar to collectors in that they carry traffic between residential neighborhoods and the arterial network; however, they are almost solely residential in character. Feeder streets generally have single-family or multi-family residences fronting the street, and are therefore intended to carry lower volumes of traffic than collector streets, usually below 7,500 vehicles per day.

There are four local collectors in Sierra Madre: Lima Street, Mountain Trail Avenue, Grandview Avenue, and Orange Grove Avenue.

Grandview Avenue is two lanes (60’/40’) in Sierra Madre and Arcadia. The City of Arcadia, however, has classified Grandview Avenue as a four-lane secondary arterial (80’/60’). There are no known plans to improve Grandview Avenue to a four-lane arterial at this time.

Orange Grove Avenue runs along the southern boundary of Sierra Madre and is shared with the City of Arcadia. It is classified as a two-lane local collector street in Sierra Madre (60’/40’) and as a two-lane collector street in Arcadia (60’/40’). Orange Grove Avenue currently has two travel lanes.

Orange Grove Avenue becomes Greenhill Road west of Michillinda Avenue in the City of Pasadena, where it continues as a two-lane local street.

<b>Road Segment: Grandview Avenue</b>	<b>Daily Traffic</b>	<b>Existing Capacity</b>	<b>Volume/Capacity Ratio</b>
Michillinda – Baldwin	3,000	7,500	0.40
East of Baldwin	2,700	7,500	0.36

Table V-4

<b>Road Segment: Orange Grove</b>	<b>Daily Traffic</b>	<b>Existing Capacity</b>	<b>Volume/Capacity Ratio</b>
Michillinda – Baldwin	6,100	7,500	0.81
East of Baldwin	4,600	7,500	0.61

Table V-5

No traffic counts were available for Lima Street and Mountain Trail Avenue.

### **Local Streets**

Local streets are designed to serve adjacent residential land uses only. They allow access to residential driveways and often provide parking for the neighborhood. They are not intended to serve thru-traffic traveling from one location in the city to another, but primarily to serve traffic with an origin or destination in that street. Traffic volumes on a local street should not exceed 2,500 per day or 200-300 vehicles per hour. The maximum residential traffic volume which is acceptable to persons living along a street may vary from one street to another depending upon roadway width, type of dwelling units, presence of schools, and other factors. These factors may dictate the need for lower traffic volumes than 2,500 per day. All other public streets in Sierra Madre are local streets.

### **Accident Locations**

The majority of traffic accidents occur along Sierra Madre Boulevard and Baldwin Avenue, the two most heavily traveled streets in the City. West Sierra Madre Boulevard alone accounted

for 27% of the total accidents in Sierra Madre between 2007 and 2011. Over the same period the most significant cause of accidents were unsafe backing out of a parking lot or parking space (13%), unsafe turn/failure to signal (12%), driving while intoxicated (10%), failure to yield (9%), and unsafe entering from a private drive (5%). Pedestrians were involved in 11% of accidents.

### **Traffic Signals**

There are no signalized intersections in the City of Sierra Madre, except at the western entry points along the border with the City of Pasadena at West Orange Grove Boulevard/South Michillinda Avenue and West Sierra Madre Boulevard/North Michillinda Avenue.

### **Bike Routes**

There are currently no defined bicycle facilities within the City of Sierra Madre. The City's outdated bikeway plan has identified the need for a bike lane along Sierra Madre Boulevard through the length of the City, but this lane has not been built.

### **Truck Routes**

The following road segments are truck traffic routes for the movement of vehicles exceeding a maximum gross weight of 3 (three) tons:

- a. Michillinda Avenue from the southerly City limits northerly to Sierra Madre Boulevard;
- b. Sierra Madre Boulevard from Michillinda Avenue easterly to Mountain Trail Avenue;
- c. Mountain Trail from Sierra Madre Boulevard northerly to Montecito Avenue;
- d. Montecito Avenue from Mountain Trail Avenue westerly to Baldwin Avenue;
- e. Baldwin Avenue from Montecito Avenue southerly to the City limits.

### **Transit Network**

There are currently two forms of transit in operation within the City: fixed-route transit and paratransit.

#### *Fixed-Route Transit*

Within the City, there are two entities operating transit routes: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro) and the City of Sierra Madre.

Metro Line 487: This is an express line connecting Downtown Los Angeles to the cities of San Gabriel, Sierra Madre, and El Monte. Within Sierra Madre, the line runs down Sierra Madre Boulevard with stops every few blocks. Headways are approximately 20 minutes during the weekday peak periods. This line also stops at the Metro Gold Line train station in Pasadena, providing another method of connectivity to Los Angeles. Because the route runs along Sierra Madre Boulevard, the majority of the City's residents live within a half-mile of the line, making it a usable commuting choice for many.

Metro Line 268: This line runs through the western portion of the San Gabriel Valley, connecting the cities of Altadena, Pasadena, Sierra Madre, Arcadia, and El Monte. Within Sierra Madre, the line runs along Sierra Madre Boulevard from Michillinda Avenue to Baldwin Avenue, and along Baldwin Avenue from Sierra Madre Boulevard south to Orange Grove Avenue where it crosses into Arcadia. This line operates on 30-minute headways during the weekday peak periods, and it stops near the Metro Gold Line at East Foothill Boulevard/North Haslstead Street.

City of Sierra Madre Gateway Coach: The City operates a fixed-route shuttle bus to serve residents during the week, Monday through Friday. The line only operates mid-day from 11:00 am-1:20 pm, providing access to Downtown Sierra Madre, and the shopping center located at the intersection of Michillinda Avenue and Sierra Madre Boulevard. Headways are 40 minutes. Several key City locations are linked by the shuttle, including the public schools, library, City Hall, and post office. While there are defined stops with scheduled times, the shuttle will also pick up hailing residents along the route.

#### *Paratransit*

The City provides full demand-responsive transportation service through the Dial-A-Ride program. Dial-A-Ride provide same day, curb-to-curb transit to anyone who is a city resident, and is either 62 years of age or older, or disabled in a manner that makes use of regular transit unduly difficult. Any qualifying users must submit an application to the City before using the service. The service will typically not travel to destinations more than two miles outside of City limits. The relatively small size of the City makes this type of paratransit possible. The Dial-A-Ride service operates Monday through Friday during the day.

### *Transit Connectivity*

Metro Line 487 stops at the Sierra Madre Villa Gold Line station. This station provides access to the regional light rail system as well as serving as a bus transit hub for the northwest San Gabriel Valley, with several bus lines from multiple jurisdictions intersecting at this location. Metro Line 487 also connects to Downtown Los Angeles, providing access to commuter rail and interstate rail service through Metrolink and Amtrak, respectively.

## FUTURE TRAFFIC DEMANDS

Since the City is significantly built-out, it is not anticipated that traffic will significantly increase on City streets.

### **Transportation Issues**

The following have been identified as primary issues:

1. Pedestrian and vehicular safety at certain locations in the City.
2. Public parking opportunities in the downtown (including East Montecito Avenue), near schools and in the Sierra Madre Canyon.
3. Street width and configurations vis-a-vis public safety and emergency evacuation situations.

## SUMMARY OF CIRCULATION GOALS

1. A balanced transportation system which accommodates all modes of travel including automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles, and transit users.
2. Safe and well-maintained streets.
3. Preservation of quiet neighborhoods with limited thru traffic.

## OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The City has established the following objectives and policies for circulation in Sierra Madre. The implementation measures are contained in the Implementation Chapter at the end of the General Plan.

Objective L45: Develop a balanced and multi-modal transportation system to serve the needs of all roadway users, including motorists, public transit patrons, pedestrians and cyclists.

### Policies:

- L45.1 Maintain the existing street classification system.
- L45.2 Limit the development of new roadways or the expansion of existing roadways.
- L45.3 Maintain existing facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users.
- L45.4 Explore the development of new facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users.
- L45.5 Encourage and support the use of non-automotive travel throughout the City.
- L45.6 Encourage City staff, employees, residents and visitors to walk and bicycle as often as possible.

- L45.7 Utilize non-automotive transportation solutions as a tool to further goals related to environmental sustainability and economic development.
- L45.8 Prioritize improvements for non-vehicular modes like bicycles, pedestrians, and transit to eliminate the need for new or expanded roadways and intersection improvements like traffic signals.

Objective L46: Improve streets to maintain levels of service, vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian safety.

Policies:

- L46.1 Ensure that all pedestrians, particularly seniors and the disabled, are able to travel safely and easily throughout the City.
- L46.2 Prioritize opportunities to implement traffic calming techniques limit new driveway curb cuts and driveway reduction along roadways such as Sierra Madre Boulevard and East Montecito.
- L46.3 Provide safe travel routes for bicyclists including designated bicycle lanes on streets where these facilities can be accommodated.
- L46.4 Evaluate the impact of any capital improvement project on the travel needs of bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicle users.
- L46.5 Install and maintain mirrors on blind streets in the canyon.
- L46.6 Improve pedestrian crossing opportunities work to increase pedestrian safety, and eliminate painted crosswalks where they provide a false sense of security, and make a more concerted effort to enforce laws related to pedestrian safety.

L46.7 Update and implement the City's bikeway plan ~~and implement a bike lane along Sierra Madre Boulevard.~~

L46.8 Require the incorporation of bicycle facilities into the design of land use plans and capital improvements, including bicycle parking within new multi-family and non-residential sites or publicly accessible bicycle parking.

~~L46.9 Explore the possibility of sidewalk continuity where feasible.~~

Objective L47: Protect residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of through traffic.

Policy:

L47.1 Develop a comprehensive Citywide approach to residential street traffic calming.

L47.2 Coordinate with law enforcement agencies to ensure adequate enforcement of speed limits along streets, including local collector and local streets.

L47.3 Maintain and enforce speed limits which address the residential nature of local collector and local streets.

L47.4 Install and maintain traffic calming measures where appropriate.

Objective L48: Provide off-street parking requirements, on-street parking and public parking facilities to maximize parking opportunities and address future parking needs.

Policy:

L48.1 Maintain on-street parking in the downtown business area which is safe for motorists, pedestrians, and sidewalk diners.

L48.2 Implement parking management approaches for portions of the City such as the downtown business area.

L48.3 Consider opportunities for shared parking, off-site parking, and other parking management approaches to reduce excessive off-street parking for new development.

Objective L49: Enhance the aesthetic character and safety of residential streets by addressing nighttime parking.

Policy:

L49.1 Limit overnight parking within residential areas.

Objective L50: Maximize accessibility for the disabled.

Policies:

L50.1 Make streets handicap-accessible with more ramps and curb cuts.

L50.2 Identify locations for handicap parking stalls on the street, and also install and maintain those spaces.

L50.2 Promote usage of the Dial-A-Ride paratransit service.

L50.3 Ensure that all streets are accessible to all persons including those with mobility challenges.