

## 4.7 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

### SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This section identifies the potential for the proposed project to expose the public to hazards or risk of upset that may be related to existing conditions in the City or surrounding areas, or new hazards created as a result of the proposed project. This section includes information from the City of Azusa's *Analysis of Existing Conditions and Trends* report.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials are a topic of concern because they potentially threaten public and environmental safety. The State defines hazardous material as a substance that is toxic, ignitable or flammable, reactive, and/or corrosive. An extremely hazardous material is defined as a substance that shows high acute or chronic toxicity, carcinogenicity, bio-accumulative properties, persistence in the environment, or is water reactive (California Code of Regulations, Title 22). Federal and State governments identify hazardous materials, but Los Angeles County Fire Department and the City of Azusa Emergency Services Team manage local safety concerns.

One of the City's primary concerns is that businesses are housed in buildings which are properly rated for their level of hazardous material use. Proper housing of hazardous materials is enforced through the Hazardous Material Disclosure Program, which is administered by the Los Angeles County Fire Department and the City Building Division.

Under the Hazardous Materials Disclosure Program, businesses are required to identify the type and quantity of the hazardous materials they handle. This information is updated each year and the Fire Department carries out site inspections to determine compliance with the company's business plan. The City Emergency Services Coordinator's office maintains a copy of the list of these businesses.

Currently, there are 170 businesses in Azusa that handle some amount of hazardous material and are required to have a business plan on file with the L.A. County Fire Department. Of the 170 businesses, 20 are classified as "major." **Figure 4.7-1** identifies these "major" hazardous waste businesses and their locations.

Hazardous materials are transported on the City's roads and freeways. Both the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific Railroad lines traverse the City and are used for transporting chemicals. Foothill Boulevard and Arrow Highway are principal east-west thoroughfares where trucks carry chemicals. Irwindale Avenue, Azusa Avenue, and San Gabriel Avenue are on truck routes that would be used for chemical transportation.

L.A. County Fire Department responds to all hazardous material incidents within Azusa. The California Highway Patrol responds to spills on the I-210 Freeway and works in conjunction with local authorities to manage traffic diversion and any off-freeway effects.

**Figure 4.7-1**

### **Petroleum Product Pipelines**

The City is served with natural gas for household and business energy purposes. In the event of a severe earthquake, distribution and service gas lines could be ruptured and create a serious hazard. Transmission pipelines are perhaps of most concern either from earthquake damage or construction accidents.

### **Landfills**

Landfills can have an undesirable effect on both surrounding properties, the ground, and groundwater below the landfill. The concern for these facilities relates to the kind of material put in them. Landfills are classified by their permitted contents:

- Class I – for toxic or hazardous substances
- Class II – for chemically or biologically decomposable substances
- Class III – for non-water soluble, non-decomposable inert solids

The Azusa Landfill facility is located at the northeast corner of Gladstone Avenue and Irwindale Avenue. The southern portion of the site is a closed municipal waste landfill (Class II). The eastern portion of the site is mined for sand and gravel. The balance of the site is to be filled as a Class II inert landfill. This site is on the list of potentially responsible parties for the San Gabriel Valley Superfund Sites.

### **Forest Fires**

Due to its proximity to the San Gabriel Mountains, Azusa is exposed to wildfire threats. Dry summers, steep slopes and dense vegetation make wildfires a constant threat to the Angeles National Forest, especially during the hot summer months. Wildfires destroy trees and hillside vegetation, endanger lives and property, and damage vital watersheds. Forest areas near urban Azusa are described by the Forester and Fire Warden of the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) as a Fire Zone 4, or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). The northern hillsides that border the City, including the incorporated areas, are also classified as fire-hazard areas (**Figure 4.7-2**).

The Forest contains a variety of vegetation that is highly flammable and can be a major fuel source to fires, especially in the dry summer season. Proximity of urban development and heavy recreation usage within the Forest have resulted in numerous wildfires caused by humans. Forest fire risk is greatest when dry, hot conditions created by the “Santa Ana” winds are present.

The Dalton Ranger Station located in northeastern Glendora, the Rincon Ranger Station located 10 miles north of Azusa along San Gabriel Canyon Road, and the East Fork Ranger Station located six miles east of Rincon Ranger Station are the USFS facilities that respond to Forest wildfire emergencies near Azusa. During summer wildfire peak periods, all three stations are staffed with personnel. Additional resources are brought in as needed during the summer. During off-peak periods, only the Dalton Ranger Station has personnel prepared to handle emergencies. Additional fire fighting information is contained in the Public Service section of this document.

Figure 4.7-2

## **SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

The proposed project would result in a significant adverse impact with regard to hazards and hazardous materials if it:

- Creates a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials;
- Creates a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;
- Emits hazardous emissions or handles hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile or a proposed or existing school;
- Is located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, and as a result, would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment;
- Is located within an airport land use plan, or where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, and results in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the hazard area;
- Is located within the vicinity of a private airstrip and results in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area;
- Impairs the implementation of, or physically interferes with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or
- Exposes people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

### **Hazardous Material Management**

The roadways and railroads used in the transport of hazardous materials are expected to remain the same. It is impossible to know the extent of increased transport of hazardous materials resulting from the new General Plan as a result of planned increases in industrial land uses, but potential increases will not interfere with the capacity of emergency response teams to effectively handle accidents. Thus, there are no anticipated significant impacts related to the transport, disposal, and creation of hazardous materials.

The proposed project does not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Individual projects developed within the parameters of the General Plan are subject to their own environmental review and must address possible impacts related to hazardous materials. It is impossible for their possible impacts to be addressed in this report. Therefore, no significant impacts relating to the creation of significant hazards or foreseeable accident conditions will result from this project.

Specific projects will have to address whether they plan to utilize locations listed as hazardous material sites and develop their own mitigation measures. The General Plan has no significant impacts associated with this risk.

The proposed project does not allow for hazardous emissions or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of a proposed or existing school. Thus, there are no significant impacts related to the presence of any hazardous materials or emissions within a quarter mile of a school.

## **Airport Safety**

The two nearest airports are El Monte Airport, approximately 9.5 miles southwest of Azusa, and Brackett Airport, approximately 11 miles east. The closest international airport is Ontario International Airport, located 18.4 miles east of Azusa. The new General Plan does not affect air traffic patterns, nor does it increase the effects of the airports on the residents of Azusa. Therefore, there are no safety hazards or significant impacts related to airstrips that would affect local employees or residents.

## **Emergency Response Planning**

GEO 30, below, calls for the creation and implementation of a disaster response plan that is to provide for heavy search and rescue, major medical response, interim morgue, emergency shelter, traffic and utility impacts, debris removal and disposal, as well as hazardous materials response for any chemicals stored or used in or adjacent to the hazardous buildings.

### **GEO 30 Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response Plans**

- Appropriate disaster response and emergency response plans shall be maintained and updated. Disaster response plans shall include adequate capabilities for heavy search and rescue, major medical response, interim morgue, emergency shelter, traffic and utility impacts, debris removal and disposal, as well as hazardous materials response for any chemicals stored or used in or adjacent to the hazardous buildings. Disaster response plans shall also include procedures for access, traffic control, emergency evacuations, and security of damaged areas.
- Criteria for efficient and orderly evacuation capabilities shall be incorporated into development, street planning, and other land use procedures for the potential inundation area below the dam or reservoir.
- The City in cooperation with other agencies shall conduct emergency response exercises. Exercises shall be designed to test and upgrade various disaster response plans.
- Public participation shall be sought in the development of hazard mitigation and disaster recovery programs.
- A program of public education and preparedness shall be a continuing component of the emergency preparedness program. It should include, at a minimum:
  - the existence and approximate locations of major regional and local identified active faults or potentially active faults of concern, landslide and liquefaction susceptibility areas;
  - the potential for strong ground shaking in the area, and means of strengthening buildings and protecting furnishings, equipment and other building contents from damage;
  - the need for businesses and residents to be self-sufficient for several days following an earthquake, including food, water, medical assistance, and limited firefighting; and
  - specific information describing what an individual should do during and immediately following an earthquake, whether at home, in a car, at work, or in an unfamiliar building.
- Solicit the cooperation of the business community for public education and mutual assistance. Businesses shall be encouraged to develop their own disaster response plans and have provisions for food, water, first aid and shelter of employees who may not be able to return home for several days following a major earthquake.

- Guidelines shall be developed by the City that provide a clear direction for the exercise of authorities following an earthquake related disaster for such purposes as:
  - rapid designation of redevelopment areas;
  - revision of land use, circulation and parking requirements, and institution of other programs for improving the community environment;
  - adaptation and institution of special programs for disaster recovery;
  - funding of disaster recovery measures;
  - moratoria on reconstruction in any high-hazard areas where damage could be repeated in after shocks or in future earthquakes;
  - upgrading of the building code if deficiencies are believed to exist;
  - establishment of Geologic Hazard Abatement Districts, as appropriate;
  - designation of sites for temporary housing (e.g., travel trailers and pre-fab construction) of households made homeless in the disaster, in cooperation with the Disaster Housing Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and
  - use of schools, government, armory, or other interim sites for emergency housing and post-disaster care.
- In order to prepare for post earthquake recovery, the City shall establish procedures for declaring itself a disaster area and for receiving Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and comparable state disaster relief funds.

### **Fire Hazards**

Although Azusa is located in an area frequently threatened by wildfires, the proposed General Plan does not increase this threat. The proposed land use plan shows that most areas of high and extreme fire risk will remain open space areas (see **Figure 4.7-2**). Of note, there is one hotel/conference designation in a high-risk zone, but fire risks are not augmented under the new General Plan. In the northeastern portion of Azusa there are general neighborhood areas located in moderate fire risk zones, but they also are not augmented under the new General Plan. Future projects will evaluate the associated fire hazards in their own environmental review. Therefore, there are no additional fire risks associated with the proposed project and no significant impacts will result from its implementation.

### **MITIGATION MEASURES**

No significant impacts are anticipated. Thus, no mitigation measures are required.

### **LEVEL OF IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION**

As discussed, the General Plan provides policies and implementation programs that would minimize impacts associated with hazards and hazardous waste. Thus, no significant impacts are anticipated.