

6.7 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

This section describes the existing hazards (potential for wildland fires) on the project site and in the vicinity, potential environmental impacts, recommended mitigation measures to help reduce or avoid impacts to identified hazards, and the level of significance after mitigation.

6.7.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Wildland fires (wildfires) can occur in open spaces containing a mixture of flammable and nonflammable vegetation cover. The native areas surrounding the active landfill operation area are vulnerable to wildfires due to the steep topography, highly flammable scrub vegetation and limited access for firefighting. The County Fire Department has published Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps for the City of Glendale and has listed the project site, as shown on Tile 4 of these maps, in the Very High Fire Hazard Zone (refer to Figure 6.7-1). The City of Glendale Fire Department has also published a map identifying Proposed High Fire Hazard Areas. The SCLF and the surrounding area are within the current High Fire Hazard Area. Despite the mapping designations, the active operation area has little wildfire potential due to the large areas with little or no native vegetation (fuel). The majority of the front face of the landfill has been landscaped with ornamental vegetation that is unlikely to burn. In the case of a wildfire, expansive unvegetated areas would provide access for site evacuation or waiting for a surrounding fire to be controlled.

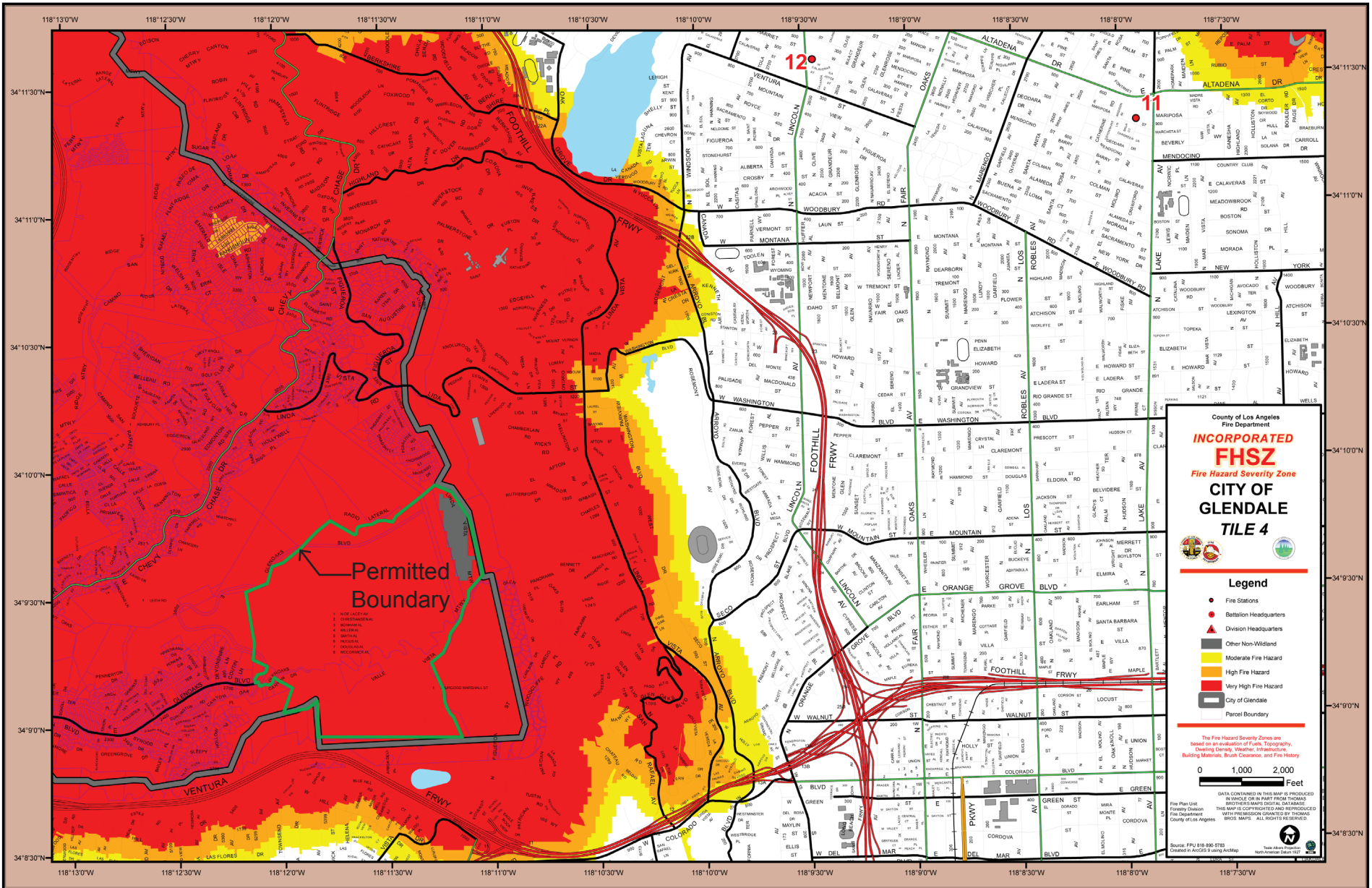
The Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Sanitation Districts) operate the landfill and design and construct ancillary facilities in compliance with the City of Glendale's Fire Prevention Regulations and applicable fire standards as required in Public Resources Code (PRC), Section 44151. In addition, the SCLF is operated in a manner intended to reduce or eliminate fire hazards resulting from the landfill operation, such as receipt of combustible loads. A number of measures are used to contend with such issues. First, customers are not allowed to smoke on site. Employee smoking is prohibited in and near site facilities and buildings, and within 50 feet of the landfill gas system. Fire extinguishers are located at the SCLF field office, the flare station, and in various trailers. Additional fire extinguishers are mounted on all on site vehicles. In the event of a fire, dozers can be used to smother exposed fires with soil, and scrapers can be used to transport cover soil to the fire area. Alternatively, on site water vehicles are dispatched to the fire area to begin fire control and suppression. A large capacity water storage tank, two reclaimed water fill stands, and one fresh water fill stand are available on the project site to fill water trucks for firefighting purposes. Fire hydrants are provided at different locations around the perimeter of the project site, at the scales facility, and at the SCLF gas flare station in the southern portion of the project site. In the event of a fire that cannot be controlled by these measures, the local fire department would be alerted.

There is a potential for underground fires if the gas collection system draws excessive oxygen from the atmosphere leading to composting of buried refuse. Such fires can cause excessive settlement and lead to cracking of the surface but do not pose a threat to site workers or customers. The landfill cover and gas control system are designed and constructed in a way to limit the potential for refuse composting. Further, the gas collection system is monitored and operated in a way to avoid refuse composting.

6.7.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on Appendix G of the GEQA Guidelines, implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant adverse impact on the environment related to hazards and hazardous materials if it would:

- Expose people or structures to a significant risk or loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.



Source: Los Angeles County Fire Department Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map, City of Glendale, Tile 4

Figure 6.7-1
Fire Hazard Severity Zone in Scholl Canyon Landfill Area

6.7.3 METHODOLOGY

The information in this section was compiled from various sources, including the Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps published by the City of Glendale, the Los Angeles County Fire Department, the California Division of Forestry, and the Sanitation Districts' Landfill Operations Section. The fire hazard mapping was supplemented by site-specific information on policies, procedures, and vegetation at the SCLF.

6.7.4 IMPACTS

6.7.4.1 Variations 1

Variations 1 would increase the height of the landfill and the amount of landfill side slope. The new landfill side slopes would likely be landscaped with native vegetation that would be more flammable than the relatively bare top deck areas that exist currently. However, all customers and almost all landfill employees would be in the operational areas that would still be essentially barren of vegetation and somewhat protected from surrounding wildfires. Therefore, implementation of Variation 1 would not result in significant impacts related to the risk of injury to people or structures from wildfire.

Increasing the tonnage from 1,400 to 3,400 tons per day (TPD) and extending the active life of the landfill would increase the probability of receiving a combustible load. However, the probability of a combustible load would still be very low and existing fire response measures are expected to be adequate to extinguish such fires without needing assistance from the Glendale Fire Department. Therefore, implementation of Variation 1 would not result in significant impacts related to the potential for fire from combustible loads and subsequent injury to people or property.

Extending the landfill life would extend the period in which refuse is decomposable and could potentially compost leading to an underground fire. Existing design and operational practices would be continued, making the likelihood of an underground fire very low. Therefore, implementation of Variation 1 would not result in significant impacts related to the potential for underground fires and subsequent injury to people or structures.

6.7.4.2 Variation 2

Similar to Variation 1, Variation 2 would increase the height of the landfill and the amount of landfill side slope. However, implementation of Variation 2 would result in a horizontal expansion (approximately 13 acres) which would have a larger landfill side slope. The new landfill side slopes would likely be landscaped with native vegetation that would be more flammable than the relatively bare top deck areas that exist currently. All customers and almost all landfill employees would be in the operational areas that would still be essentially barren of vegetation and somewhat protected from surrounding wildfires. Therefore, implementation of Variation 2 would not result in significant impacts related to the risk of injury to people or structures from wildfire.

Similar to Variation 1, Variation 2 would increase the probability of receiving a combustible load. However, the probability of a combustible load would still be very low and existing fire response measures are expected to be adequate. Therefore, implementation of Variation 2 would not result in significant impacts related to the potential for fire from combustible loads and subsequent injury to people or property.

Similar to Variation 1, Variation 2 would extend the period in which refuse is decomposable and could potentially compost leading to an underground fire. However, existing design and operational practices

would be continued, making the likelihood of an underground fire very low. Therefore, implementation of Variation 2 would not result in significant impacts related to the potential for underground fires and subsequent injury to people or structures.

6.7.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

6.7.5.1 Variation 1

No mitigation measures are required.

6.7.5.2 Variation 2

No mitigation measures are required.

6.7.6 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

6.7.6.1 Variation 1

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials.

6.7.6.2 Variation 2

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials.