

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This section of the EIR provides a general overview of the existing environmental setting of the Project site and surrounding area. The purpose of describing and defining the environmental setting is to define the baseline physical conditions to determine the significance of the environmental impacts that would result from the proposed Project. A listing and description of the related projects considered part of the future conditions in evaluating potential cumulative environmental impacts is also provided.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Project site is located within the City of South Pasadena (City), which is within Los Angeles County. Surrounding communities include the Cities of Los Angeles and Alhambra to the south; Cities of San Marino and San Gabriel to the east; the City of Pasadena to the north; and the City of Los Angeles to the west. Addresses associated with the Project site are 1101, 1107, and 1115 Mission Street. The Project site is bound by Mission Street to the north, Fairview Street to the west, and commercial uses to the east and south.

EXISTING ONSITE USES

The Project site is currently occupied by three buildings: 1115 Mission Street is currently occupied by Amy's Playground; 1107 Mission Street is occupied by La Fiesta Grande restaurant; and 1101 Mission Street is occupied by Divergent Crossfit, a commercial gym.

ACCESS

Vehicular access to the Project site is provided by Mission Street to the north, and Fairview Avenue to the west. The Project area is served by the 176 and 260 bus lines operated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Authority (Metro), with stops located at Mission Street and Fremont Avenue, and Mission Street and Fair Oaks Avenue, respectively. State Route 110 (SR 110) is located approximately 1,200 feet north. In addition, the Project site is approximately 600 feet east of the Metro Gold Line South Pasadena station.

LAND USE AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS

The Project site is designated by the City's General Plan as Mission Street Specific Plan (MSSP), and is zoned MSSP Core Area, District A.

CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

In addition to Project-specific impacts, the environmental analysis contained in this EIR examines the potential environmental effects associated with cumulative development. CEQA requires that EIRs discuss cumulative impacts in addition to project-specific impacts. In accordance with CEQA, the discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts and the likelihood of their occurrence; however, the discussion need not be as detailed as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to a proposed project alone. According to Section 15355 of the State CEQA Guidelines:

“Cumulative impacts” refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

Section 15130(a)(l) of the State CEQA Guidelines further states that “a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts.”

Section 15130(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines also requires that EIRs discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the proposed project's incremental effect is “cumulatively considerable.” When a lead agency is examining a proposed project with an incremental effect that is not cumulatively considerable, it need not consider the effect significant but must briefly describe the basis for its conclusion. If the combined cumulative impact associated with a project's incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant, Section 15130(a)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires a brief discussion in the EIR of why a cumulative impact is not significant and why it is not discussed in further detail. Section 15130(a)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires supporting analysis in the EIR if a determination is made that a project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact is rendered less than cumulatively considerable and, therefore, is not significant. CEQA recognizes that the analysis of cumulative impacts need not be as detailed as the analysis of project-related impacts, but instead should “be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness” (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)). The discussion of cumulative impacts in this Draft EIR focuses on whether the impacts of the proposed Project are cumulatively considerable.

To support each significance conclusion, this Draft EIR provides a cumulative impact analysis. Where Project-specific impacts have been identified that, together with the effects of other related projects, could result in cumulatively significant impacts, these potential impacts are documented.

Section 15130(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines defines consideration of either of the following two elements as necessary to provide an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts: “(A) a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency, or (B) a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.” In this Draft EIR, a combination of these two methods is used, depending upon the specific environmental issue area being analyzed.

Cumulative study areas are defined based on an analysis of the geographical scope relevant to each particular environmental issue. Therefore, the cumulative study area for each individual environmental impact issue may vary. For example, a cumulative land use impact may only affect the compatibility of uses within the vicinity of the Project site, while a cumulative air quality impact may affect the entire South Coast Air Basin. The specific boundaries and the projected growth within those boundaries for the cumulative study area of each environmental issue are identified in the applicable environmental issue section of this Draft EIR.

For purposes of the traffic analysis, the following related projects were identified.:

- 820 Mission Street, a development proposal consisting of 38 dwelling units and 3,585 square feet of office
- South Pasadena Downtown Revitalization Project, consisting of 201 condominiums; 9,000 square feet of senior housing; 5,029 square feet of general office; and 13,872 square feet of retail and restaurant uses.

Additionally, the City is in the process of updating its General Plan and preparing a new Downtown Specific Plan. Cumulative analysis in this DEIR also considers the growth projections contained in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the City’s planning initiatives.