

# IV. Environmental Impact Analysis

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## H. Land Use and Planning

### 1. Introduction

Development on the Project Site is controlled and guided by policies and regulations set forth in local and regional plans as well as local zoning regulations. This section of the Draft EIR analyzes the Project's consistency with applicable land use plans, laws, regulations, and policies that have been adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Evaluation of specific policies set forth in SCAG's Connect SoCal: 2020–2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2020-2045 RTP/SCS) and the City of Los Angeles General Plan Framework Element (Framework Element), Central City North Community Plan (Community Plan), and the River Improvement Overlay (RIO) District are provided in tables contained in Appendix I-1, *Land Use Plans and Policies: Project Consistency Tables*, of this Draft EIR. Policies and regulations related to other environmental topics are also addressed in other sections of this Draft EIR. Related to the analysis in this section, Section IV.A, *Air Quality*, addresses relevant air quality plans and policies; Section IV.E, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, discusses relevant plans and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; Section IV.J, *Population and Housing*, addresses the amount of development that would occur relative to growth projections and planned development capacity; Section IV.K.4, *Parks and Recreation*, describes regulations regarding open space and park requirements; Section IV.L, *Transportation*, discusses traffic mobility, parking requirements, and pedestrian access; and Chapter VI, *Other CEQA Considerations*, addresses issues pertaining to growth inducement.

### 2. Environmental Setting

#### a) Regulatory Framework

##### (1) Regional or State

##### (a) *Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) with responsibilities pertaining to regional planning issues for the following six counties: Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura and Imperial. SCAG is a joint powers agency and its mandated responsibilities include developing plans and policies addressing the region's population

growth, transportation programs, air quality, housing, land use, sustainability, and economic development. The 2020–2045 RTP/SCS presents a transportation vision for the region through the year 2045 and provides a long-term investment framework for addressing the region’s transportation and related challenges.

Adopted by SCAG on September 3, 2020,<sup>1</sup> the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS builds on the long-range vision of the prior 2016-2040 RTP/SCS to balance future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental and public health goals. A substantial concentration and share of growth is directed to Priority Growth Areas (PGAs), which include high quality transit areas (HQTAs), Transit Priority Areas (TPAs), job centers, Neighborhood Mobility Areas (NMAs) and Livable Corridors. These areas account for only four percent of SCAG’s total land area but the majority of directed growth. HQTAs are corridor-focused PGAs within one half mile of an existing or planned fixed guideway transit stop or a bus transit corridor where buses pick up passengers at a frequency of every 15 minutes (or less) during peak commuting hours. TPAs are PGAs that are within a half mile of a major transit stop that is existing or planned. Job centers are defined as areas with significant higher employment density than surrounding areas which capture density peaks and locally significant job centers throughout all six counties in the region. NMAs are PGAs with robust residential to non-residential land use connections, high roadway intersection densities, and low-to-moderate traffic speeds. Livable Corridors are arterial roadways where local jurisdictions may plan for a combination of the following elements: high-quality bus frequency; higher density residential and employment at key intersections; and increased active transportation through dedicated bikeways.

Among the performance outcomes of the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS is location efficiency. Location Efficiency refers to improvements in the coordination of land use and transportation planning to promote development of more sustainable communities throughout the region that are less dependent on single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel and reduce regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Focusing new residential and commercial development in HQTAs serves this outcome by situating employment centers and new housing closer to reliable transit options, thereby providing viable alternatives to driving alone to the workplace and to other destinations. Under the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS, with more people living and working within locations proximal to efficient and convenient transit options, traffic congestion on freeways and arterial roadways would be reduced.

Another substantial location efficiency improvement under the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS would be the reduction of urban sprawl into the rural periphery of the region. The 2020-2045 RTP/SCS would reduce such expansion by 29 percent through the concentration of growth within the PGAs, among other strategies. VMT per capita is another performance criterion under the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS. Under the 2045 baseline (non-inclusive of implementation of Connect SoCal), SCAG region residents would drive an average of

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<sup>1</sup> Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Connect SoCal - 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy of the Southern California Association of Governments, September 2020.

21.8 miles per day. The 2020-2045 RTP/SCS would reduce this figure to 20.7 miles per day.

HQTAs also foster the mixing of both employment and housing, further enhancing opportunities to reduce commute times and distances. The Project's consistency with applicable goals of the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect is analyzed in Subsection 3.d, *Analysis of Project Impacts*, below. Project consistency with the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS is also addressed in Section IV.E, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, of this Draft EIR.

(b) *Air Quality Management Plan*

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), which was established in 1977 pursuant to the Lewis-Presley Air Quality Management Act, is responsible for ensuring that air quality in the South Coast Air Basin (Basin) conforms with federal and State air pollution standards. The SCAQMD is also responsible for monitoring ambient air pollution levels throughout the Basin and for developing and implementing attainment strategies to ensure that future emissions will be within federal and State standards. The SCAQMD's Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) presents strategies for achieving the air quality planning goals set forth in the Federal and California Clean Air Acts (CCAA), including a comprehensive list of pollution control measures aimed at reducing emissions.<sup>2</sup> Additional discussion of the AQMP, and Project consistency with the AQMP, is addressed in Section IV.A, *Air Quality*, of this Draft EIR.

(c) *California Green Building Standards (CALGreen) Code*

Part 11 of the Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards is referred to as the California Green Building Standards (CALGreen) Code. The purpose of the CALGreen Code is to "improve public health, safety and general welfare by enhancing the design and construction of buildings through the use of building concepts having a reduced negative impact or positive environmental impact and encouraging sustainable construction practices in the following categories: (1) Planning and design; (2) Energy efficiency; (3) Water efficiency and conservation; (4) Material conservation and resource efficiency; and (5) Environmental air quality." As of January 1, 2011, the CALGreen Code is mandatory for all new buildings constructed in the State. The CALGreen Code establishes mandatory measures for new residential and non-residential buildings. Such mandatory measures include energy efficiency, water conservation, material conservation, planning and design, and overall environmental quality. The CALGreen Code was most recently updated in 2019 to include new mandatory measures for residential and nonresidential uses; the new measures took effect on January 1, 2020.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), Final 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), March 2017.

<sup>3</sup> California Building Standards Commission, 2019 CALGreen (Part 11 of Title 24).

## (2) Local

### (a) *City of Los Angeles General Plan*

California law requires that every city and county prepare and adopt a long-range comprehensive General Plan to guide future development and to identify the community's environmental, social, and economic goals. As stated in Section 65302 of the California Government Code, "The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals."

The City of Los Angeles General Plan (General Plan) sets forth goals, objectives, policies, and programs to provide an official guide to the future development of the City, while integrating seven state-mandated elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Safety, and Noise. The City's General Plan also includes an Air Quality Element, which is described in Section IV.A, *Air Quality*, of this Draft EIR. Other elements of the General Plan include the Framework Element, Health and Wellness Element (Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles), and the Land Use Element (in the form of the Central City North Community Plan), which provides further policy guidance at the community level.

### (i) *General Plan Framework Element*

The General Plan Framework Element (Framework Element) establishes the conceptual basis for the City's General Plan.<sup>4</sup> The Framework Element sets forth a Citywide comprehensive long-range growth strategy and establishes Citywide policies regarding land use, housing, urban form and neighborhood design, open space and conservation, economic development, transportation, infrastructure and public services. Framework Element land use policies are further refined through policies contained in Community Plans and Specific Plans for specific geographic areas.

The Land Use chapter of the Framework Element designates Districts (i.e., Neighborhood Districts, Community Centers, Regional Centers, Downtown Centers, and Mixed-Use Boulevards) and provides policies applicable to each District to support the vitality of the City's residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. These designations do not connote land use entitlements or affect existing zoning for specific properties, but rather are intended to guide community plan and specific plan updates to bring uses into alignment.<sup>5</sup> The Project Site is not located within any Districts as designated within the Framework Element.

The Housing chapter of the Framework Element states that housing production has not kept pace with the demand for housing. According to the Housing chapter, the City has insufficient vacant properties to accommodate the projected population growth and the

<sup>4</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Citywide General Plan Framework, An Element of the Los Angeles General Plan, July 27, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, General Plan Framework Element, An Element of the Los Angeles General Plan, Chapter 3, Land Use, July 27, 1995, page 3-1.

supply of land zoned for residential development is the most constrained in the context of population growth forecasts. Therefore, new residential development will require the recycling and/or intensification of existing developed properties. As further indicated in the Housing chapter, the intensification of both commercial and residential development, which has occurred in the City, has been at the expense of the integrity and character of existing residential neighborhoods. A balance is required between the need to produce new housing units for all income levels and the desire to conserve the livability and character of existing neighborhoods. The housing goals indicate that the City must strive to meet housing needs of the population in a manner that contributes to stable, safe, and livable neighborhoods, reduces conditions of overcrowding, and improves access to jobs and neighborhood services.<sup>6</sup>

The Urban Form and Neighborhood Design chapter of the Framework Element establishes the goal of creating a livable city for existing and future residents; a city that is attractive to future investment; and a city of interconnected, diverse neighborhoods that builds on the strength of those neighborhoods and functions at both the neighborhood and citywide scales. “Urban form” is defined as “the general pattern of building height and development intensity” and the structural elements that define the City physically, such as natural features, transportation corridors, activity centers, and focal elements. “Neighborhood design” refers to the physical character of neighborhoods and communities within the City.<sup>7</sup> The Framework Element does not directly address the design of individual neighborhoods or communities but embodies generic neighborhood design and implementation programs that guide local planning efforts and lay a foundation for the updating of community plans. With respect to neighborhood design, the Urban Form and Neighborhood Design chapter encourages growth in regional centers, which have a sufficient base of both commercial and residential development to support transit services.

The Open Space and Conservation chapter of the Framework Element encourages an integrated citywide/regional public and private open space system that serves and is accessible to the City’s population. The policies of this chapter recognize that there are communities where open space and recreation resources are currently in short supply and, therefore, suggest that vacated railroad lines, drainage channels, planned transit routes and utility rights-of-way, or pedestrian-oriented streets and small parks, where feasible, might serve as important resources for serving the open space and recreation needs of residents.<sup>8</sup>

The Transportation chapter of the Framework Element is implemented through Mobility Plan 2035, which was adopted by the City Council on September 7, 2016, and is a comprehensive update of the prior Transportation Element.

<sup>6</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, General Plan Framework Element, An Element of the Los Angeles General Plan, July 27, 1995, pages 4-1 and 4-2.

<sup>7</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, General Plan Framework Element, An Element of the Los Angeles General Plan, July 27, 1995, page 5-1.

<sup>8</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, General Plan Framework Element, An Element of the Los Angeles General Plan, July 27, 1995, page 6-2.

The Infrastructure and Public Services chapter of the Framework Element includes goals, objectives and policies to address public infrastructure and services necessary to support population growth and maintain and improve quality of life.

(ii) *Other Elements of the General Plan*

As described previously, the General Plan includes other elements that integrate the seven state-mandated elements, as well as an Air Quality Element, Health and Wellness Element (Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles), and Service Systems Element/Public Recreation Plan.

The Health and Wellness Element (Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles) includes a high-level policy vision, along with measurable objectives and implementation programs to elevate health as a priority for the City's future growth and development.

The Air Quality Element sets forth the goals, objectives and policies to guide the City in the implementation of its air quality improvement programs and strategies. Applicable policies of the Air Quality Element are described in Section IV.A, *Air Quality*, of this Draft EIR.

The Conservation Element has the purpose of identifying, preserving, protecting, and managing the City's broad range of natural resources. Conservation Element topics address agricultural lands; animal keeping, nurseries and crop gardens; archaeological and paleontological resources, conservation (no policies), cultural and historical resources; endangered species, equine areas; erosion; fisheries; forest resources; geologic hazard (no policies) natural habitats; hazardous materials; landform and scenic vistas, ocean protection; open space and parks (no policies); mineral resources; and fossil fuels.

The City's 2010 Bicycle Plan (Bicycle Plan), adopted March 1, 2011, has been incorporated into Mobility Plan 2035.<sup>9</sup> Mobility Plan 2035, which was adopted by the City Council on January 20, 2016, and amended by the City Council on September 7, 2016, is a comprehensive update of the General Plan Transportation Element. Mobility Plan 2035 provides the policy foundation for achieving a transportation system that balances the needs of all road users, incorporates "complete streets" principles and lays the policy foundation for how future generations of Angelenos interact with their street. The purpose of Mobility Plan 2035 is to present a guide to the further development of a citywide transportation system for the efficient movement of people and goods. The Mobility Plan recognizes that primary emphasis must be placed on maximizing the efficiency of existing and proposed transportation infrastructure through advanced transportation technology, through reduction of vehicle trips, and through focusing growth in proximity to public transit. In addition, the Plan sets forth street designations and related standards.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Mobility Plan 2035: An Element of the General Plan, adopted by City Council, January 20, 2016, and amended by City Council, September 7, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Mobility Plan 2035: An Element of the General Plan, adopted by City Council, January 20, 2016, and amended by City Council, September 7, 2016, page 17.

## (a) Housing Element 2013-2021

The Los Angeles General Plan Housing Element (Housing Element) is prepared pursuant to state law and provides planning guidance in meeting the housing needs that are identified in SCAG's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The Housing Element identifies the City's housing conditions and needs, establishes the goals, objectives, and policies that are the foundation of the City's housing and growth strategy, and provides the programs the City intends to implement to create and preserve sustainable, mixed-income neighborhoods across the City. The most recent Housing Element was adopted in December 2013 and addresses the housing needs for 2014–2021.<sup>11</sup> The following goals, objectives, and policies from the Housing Element are applicable to the Project:

**Goal 1:** An adequate supply of ownership and rental housing that is safe, healthy and affordable to people of all income levels, races, ages, and suitable for their various needs

**Objective 1.1:** Produce an adequate supply of rental and ownership housing in order to meet current and projected needs.

**Objective 1.2:** Preserve quality rental and ownership housing for households of all income levels and special needs.

**Objective 1.3:** Forecast and plan for changing housing needs over time in relation to production and preservation needs.

**Goal 2:** Safe, Livable, and Sustainable Neighborhoods

**Objective 2.1:** Promote safety and health within neighborhoods.

**Objective 2.2:** Promote sustainable neighborhoods that have mixed-income housing, jobs, amenities, services and transit.

**Objective 2.3:** Promote sustainable buildings, which minimize adverse effects on the environment and minimize the use of non-renewable resources.

**Policy 2.3.2:** Promote and facilitate the reduction of water consumption in new and existing housing.

**Policy 2.3.3:** Promote and facilitate reduction of energy consumption in new and existing housing.

**Policy 2.3.4:** Promote and facilitate reduction of waste in construction and building operations.

**Objective 2.4:** Promote livable neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, quality design and a scale and character that respects unique residential neighborhoods in the City.

<sup>11</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Housing Element 2013-2021, adopted December 3, 2013.

**Policy 2.4.1:** Promote preservation of neighborhood character in balance with facilitating new development.

Project consistency with these goals and objectives is evaluated below. The Housing Element is also discussed in Section IV.J, *Population and Housing*, of this Draft EIR.

(b) Central City North Community Plan

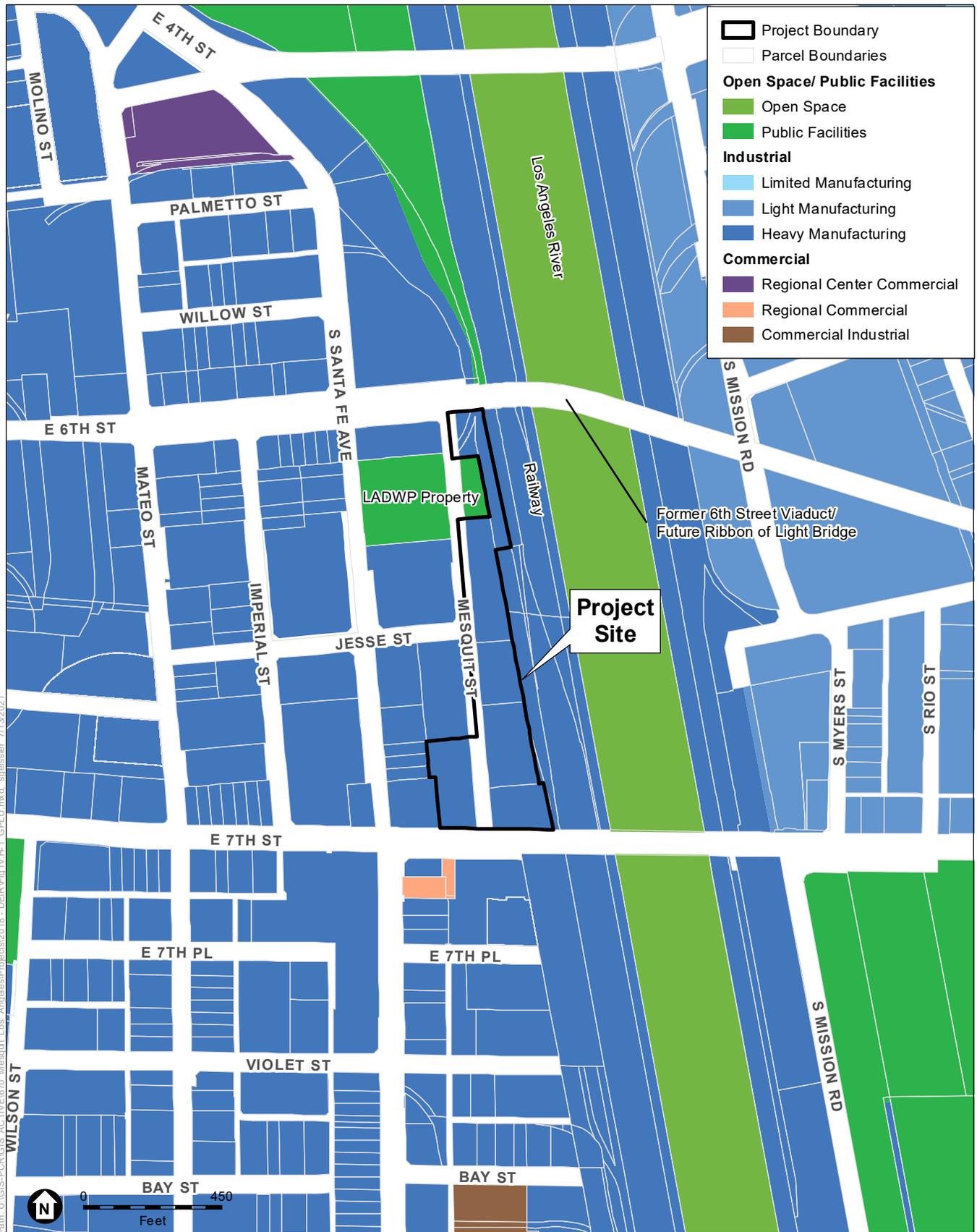
The land use policies and standards of the Framework Element and the General Plan elements are implemented at the local level through the community planning process. Community plans are oriented toward specific geographic areas of the City, defining locally the Framework Element's more general policies and programs and are intended to promote an arrangement of land uses, streets, and services that will encourage and contribute to the economic, social, and physical health, safety, welfare, and convenience of the people who live and work in the community. Goals, objectives, policies, and programs are created to meet the existing and future needs of the community. The Project Site is located within the Central City North Community Plan area.

The Community Plan's most recent update was adopted by the City Council on December 15, 2000.<sup>12</sup> The Community Plan area includes some of the oldest, most iconic parts of downtown Los Angeles, including Chinatown, Little Tokyo, and part of El Pueblo, and is divided into seven subareas. Figueroa Terrace, Alpine Hill, Chinatown, North Industrial, and Government Support make up the northernmost portion of the Community Plan area, predominantly north of the Hollywood Freeway (US-101). South of that is the Artists-in-Residence District, between 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets, and the South Industrial District, which extends south from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to the boundary between the cities of Los Angeles and Vernon, between the Los Angeles River and Alameda Street. Industrial uses dominate this portion of the Community Plan area, with large warehouses and trucking and railroad yards. The Alameda Corridor, which terminates in the South Industrial Area, connects the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach with downtown Los Angeles.

The Community Plan land use designations for the Project Site and surrounding land uses are shown on **Figure IV.H-1, General Plan Land Use Designation**. As shown therein, the Project Site is designated as Heavy Industrial (Central City North Community Plan Map), which corresponds to the M3 (Heavy Industrial) zoning designation.

The Project Site also has a Height District designation of "1", which limits FAR to 1.5. Pursuant to Footnote 6 of the Community Plan, development on properties designated as Height District Nos. 1, 1L, 1VL, or 1XL (or their equivalent) may exceed a floor area ratio of 1:5:1 up to 3:1 subject to approval of a zone change/height district and applicable environmental clearance.

<sup>12</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Central City North Community Plan, December 15, 2000.



SOURCE: City of Los Angeles, 2021.

670 Mesquit Street

**Figure IV.H-1**  
 Existing Land Use Designations

(b) *River Improvement Overlay (RIO) District*

The RIO District is a special use district established by Ordinance Nos. 183,144 and 183,145 in August 2014 to support the goals of the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (LARRMP); contribute to the environmental and ecological health of the City's watersheds; establish a positive interface between river adjacent property and river parks and/or greenways; promote pedestrian, bicycle and other multi-modal connection between the river and its surrounding neighborhoods; provide native habitat and support local species; provide an aesthetically pleasing environment for pedestrians and bicyclists accessing the river area; provide safe, convenient access to and circulation along the river; promote the river identity of river adjacent communities; and support the Low Impact Development Ordinance, the City's Irrigation Guidelines, and the Standard Urban Stormwater Maintenance Program. The RIO District Ordinances establish landscaping, design criteria, and administrative review procedures for projects within the RIO District.<sup>13</sup> The RIO District extends from Topanga Canyon Boulevard (just west of the headwaters of the Los Angeles River) east and then south to the point at which the Los Angeles River flows out of the City of Los Angeles at 26th Street in the Boyle Heights area. The RIO District's boundaries generally extend for one-half mile on either side of the river, creating an area approximately 32 miles long and one mile wide that includes the Project Site. The Project Site is located approximately 200 feet west of the Los Angeles River (measured from the top of the channel) and is therefore within the RIO District's "outer core", indicating that it does not front directly on the river but is still within the half-mile-wide corridor lining the river.

The RIO District Ordinances include regulations that address landscaping, screening/fencing, exterior site lighting, noise, and river access. Pursuant to Ordinance No. 183,145, the purposes of RIO Districts include: supporting the goals of the LARRMP; contributing to the environmental and ecological health of the City's watersheds; establishing a positive interface between river adjacent property and river parks and/or greenways; promoting pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-modal connections between the Los Angeles River and its surrounding neighborhoods; providing a pleasing environment for pedestrians and bicyclists accessing the river area; providing safe, convenient access to and circulation along the Los Angeles River; and supporting the City's various irrigation and development programs.

The LARRMP largely focuses on projects and developments that directly border the Los Angeles River or otherwise affect its drainage or its banks. The LA River Design Guidebook complements the LARRMP and builds on the original draft Los Angeles River Design Guidelines from July 2015, including expanding the areas addressed to include the Arts District and therefore, the Project Site.

(c) *Los Angeles Industrial Land Use Project*

In or about 2007, the City of Los Angeles Planning Department and Community Redevelopment Agency formulated an Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP) that was

<sup>13</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Zoning Information No. 2358, River Improvement Overlay District, Ordinance Nos. 183,144 and 183,145, revised January 12, 2015.

intended to preserve certain industrially zoned land in the City for industrial use. The City Planning Commission approved the ILUP, but it was never formally presented to the City Council for consideration or adoption.

As summarized in a memo to the Department of City Planning, the ILUP underscores that the City's adopted policy is to retain industrial land for job-producing uses, as established in the adopted General Plan Framework and Community Plans, reinforced in several Redevelopment Plans, and consistent with the then-Mayor's economic development strategy.<sup>14</sup> Industrially-zoned lands in Los Angeles are defined as those occupied by active and productive businesses that provide employment and services to City residents, and under the ILUP are identified as an essential component of the City's diversified economic base.

Under the ILUP, the City's Industrially-zoned lands were categorized under four typologies, including the following:

- "Employment Protection Districts" – Areas where industrial zoning should be maintained, and where adopted General Plan, Community Plan and Redevelopment Plan industrial land use designations should continue to be implemented. Residential uses in these Districts are not appropriate.
- "Industrial Mixed Use Districts" – Areas that should remain as predominantly industrial/employment districts, but which may support a limited amount of residential use such as what is allowed in the Arts District.
- "Transition Districts" – Areas where the viability of industrial use has been compromised by significant land use conversions or the adoption of Alternate Policies such as Specific Plans or Transit Oriented Districts (TODs), and where this transition to other uses should be continued. Unlike Industrial Mixed Use Districts, stand-alone housing or mixed-use developments containing housing and commercial uses may be appropriate in Transition Districts, and
- "Correction Areas" – Areas where earlier land use decisions resulted in inappropriate land use patterns. A change in zoning and land use designations to correct existing land use conflicts is appropriate and should be encouraged.

The Project Site is within the ILUP's Central City North–Alameda Study area, and together with most of the remainder of the Community Plan Area south of 6<sup>th</sup> Street, is identified as an Employment Protection District.<sup>15</sup>

Since 2008, a number of other planning and policy studies have been undertaken involving industrial land use policy. For example, the City embarked on a new policy

<sup>14</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning and the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, Industrial Land Use Policy Project: Staff Direction Memorandum, January 3, 2008, page 1, January 3, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning and the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, Industrial Land Use Policy Project, Attachment A, Geographically-Specific Directions: Central City-Alameda, December 2007.

initiative that culminated in the City Council's adoption of the Hybrid Industrial (HI) Ordinance in 2016, which provided a new zoning tool to allow residential uses in areas that are predominately industrially zoned. The HI Ordinance was successfully challenged on CEQA grounds, and was subsequently rescinded. In the absence of this more current planning tool, and since the ILUP was never formally adopted by the City Council, the City is considering zone changes and the General Plan Amendments from industrial designations on a case-by-case basis, as it has historically done.

(d) *City of Los Angeles Municipal Code*

Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), Chapter 1 (Planning and Zoning Code) identifies a range of zoning classifications throughout the City, identifies the specific permitted uses applicable to each zone designation, and applies development regulations to each zone. **Figure IV.H-2, Existing Zoning Designations**, shows the zoning for the Project Site and surrounding area. The existing zoning designation and development standards for the Project Site are discussed below.

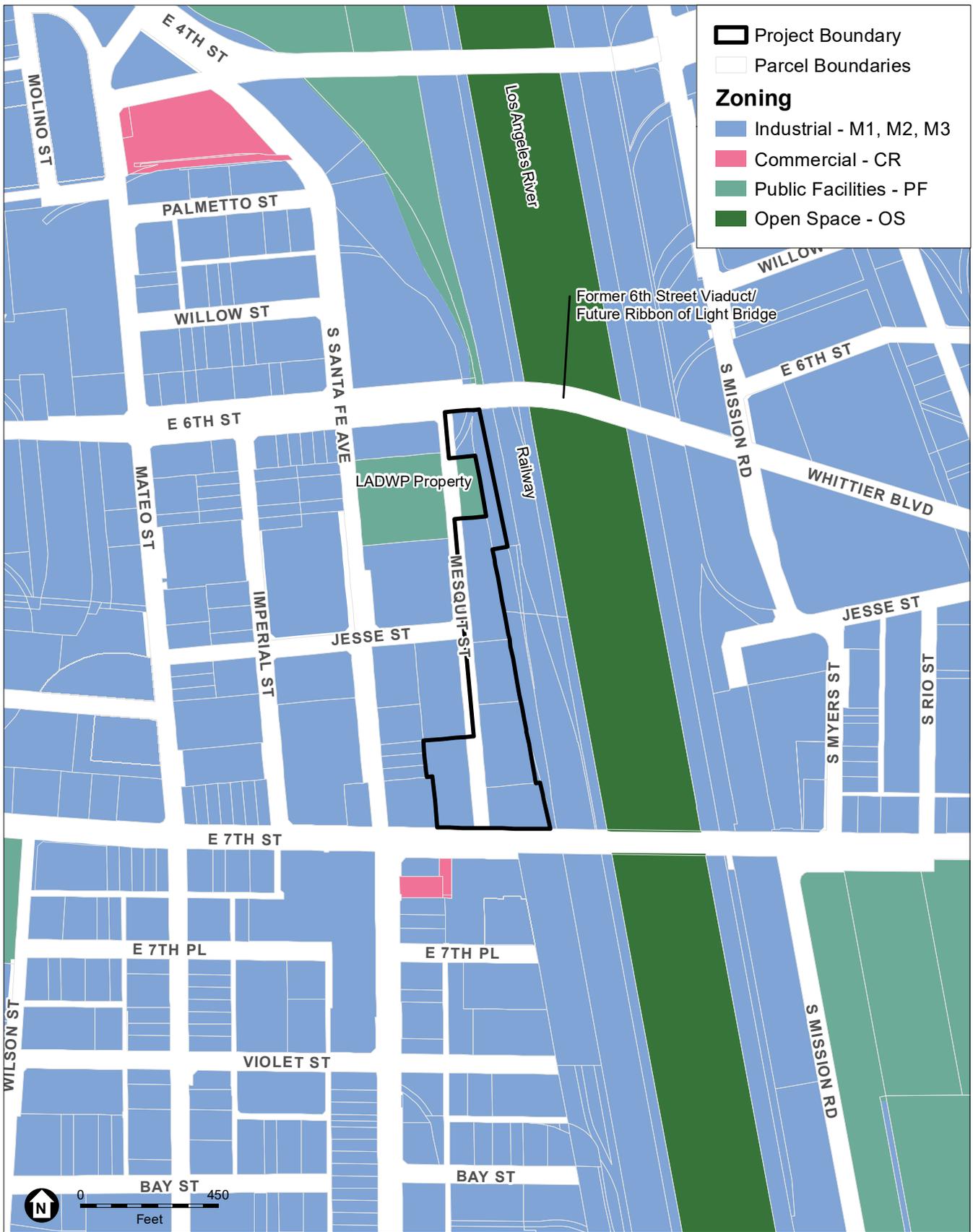
The entire Project Site is zoned M3-1-RIO. The M3 (Heavy Industrial) Zone permits a wide range of industrial and manufacturing uses such as warehouse, cold storage, and food processing facilities, and also permits commercial and office uses.<sup>16</sup> The "1" indicates Height District 1, which in combination of the M3 Zone, has no height limit and an FAR limitation of 1.5 to 1. The "RIO" designation indicates that the Project Site is located within the RIO District, as discussed above.

## b) Existing Conditions

### (1) On-Site Uses

As discussed in more detail in Chapter II, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, the Project Site encompasses eight parcels and multiple lots totaling approximately 201,151 gross square feet or 4.62 acres. With the proposed lot merger, dedications, and vacation of portions of Mesquit Street, the proposed Project Site area would be approximately 237,714 net square feet or 5.45 acres. These additions include portions of the adjacent Mesquit Street right-of-way (ROW), a City-designated Collector Street. The Project Site flanks Mesquit Street on the east and west between the former 6<sup>th</sup> Street Viaduct ROW on the north and the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge on the south. The majority of the Project Site is on the east side of Mesquit Street; with additional parcels located in the southern portion of the Project Site on the west side of Mesquit Street at 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

<sup>16</sup> Note that portions of the Project Site are identified on ZIMAS as within the boundaries of the Redevelopment Plan for the Central Industrial Redevelopment Project. However, ZIMAS is showing this in error (as of July 15, 2021), as confirmed by CRA/LA staff.



SOURCE: City of Los Angeles 2018

670 Mesquit Street

**Figure IV.H-2**  
Existing Zoning Designations

The Project Site is currently developed with existing one- to four-story freezer, cold storage, and dry storage warehouses with associated office space, loading docks, and surface parking. The existing warehouses range in height from approximately 22 to 61 feet and total approximately 205,393 gross square feet of floor area.

Local access to the Project Site vicinity is provided by 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets, with direct access to the Project Site provided from Jesse Street and Mesquit Street. The Project Site is inaccessible to vehicles and pedestrians along its eastern edge, as it directly abuts freight and passenger rail lines and rail yards (Railway Properties). The Project Site is currently inaccessible directly from the north, due to construction of the Ribbon of Light (Sixth Street) Bridge, and is inaccessible directly from the south, as the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge is elevated along the Project Site's southern edge and acts as the southern terminus to Mesquit Street.

## (2) Adjacent Land Uses

The Project Site is located along the southeastern edge of the Artists-in-Residence District, as defined in the Community Plan. The area surrounding the Project Site is comprised of historically industrial and manufacturing-oriented properties, many of which are experiencing changes in land use through adaptive reuse, infill development, and redevelopment, including residences, office, and live/work uses, as well as retail, galleries and museums, studios, restaurants, and bars.

The Project Site is bordered on the east by the Railway Properties, owned by National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak), BNSF Railway Company (BNSF), and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). The Los Angeles River is located east of the Railway Properties with the Boyle Heights community further to the east across the Los Angeles River.

North of the Project Site is the construction site for the Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement project, the centerpiece of which is a new multi-modal bridge known as the Ribbon of Light Bridge, which will replace the original viaduct and maintain the connection between Boyle Heights and the Arts District across the Los Angeles River. The Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement Project is expected to be completed in early 2022.<sup>17</sup> The Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement project, led by the City's Bureau of Engineering, also includes an approximately 12-acre area with open space and recreational amenities, known as the Sixth Street Park, Arts, River, and Connectivity (PARC) Improvements.<sup>18</sup> The PARC improvements will be constructed under and adjacent to the Ribbon of Light Bridge with access ramps and stairs connecting to the bridge. Metro owns several vacant parcels north of 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Land uses north and northwest of the new bridge site include a mix of restaurants, bars and cafes, commercial uses, and creative and traditional office space.

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<sup>17</sup> City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering, Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement Project, September 2020 News Letter, [http://www.sixthstreetviaduct.org/september\\_2020](http://www.sixthstreetviaduct.org/september_2020). Accessed January 12, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> The PARC Improvements are analyzed as Related Project No. 141 and is noted in Chapter III, *Environmental Setting*, of the Draft EIR.

The elevated 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge forms the southern boundary of the Project Site. The 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge provides access between the Arts District and greater Downtown area and Boyle Heights, east of the Los Angeles River. The 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge is listed on the California Register and is a City-designated Historical Cultural Monument (HCM No. 904).<sup>19</sup> It does not currently provide access to the Project Site. The area south of the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge comprises a mix of uses in converted industrial and other buildings, including live/work spaces and restaurants and coffee shops. There are warehouses and light manufacturing uses located throughout this area as well.

The west side of Mesquit Street, adjacent to the Project Site, is developed with warehouses and an under-construction creative office building at the northwest corner of the intersection of Jesse Street and Mesquit Street (640 S. Santa Fe Avenue), in addition to the LADWP Property. Other land uses to the west include existing creative office space; restaurants; and commercial uses; the newly constructed AMP Lofts live/work and commercial development, the recently completed Ford Motor Factory located a block from the Project Site to house Warner Music Group's new corporate campus, which includes office space, recording studios, and performance spaces; and various low-rise industrial and warehouse uses similar to those on the Project Site. A three-story multi-family residential building (Artist Lofts DTLA at 688 S. Santa Fe Avenue) occupies the northeast corner of S. Santa Fe Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street and directly abuts the Project Site.

Several creative office, creative space, and mixed-use projects are currently proposed or developed farther to the west, beyond S. Santa Fe Avenue. These include the proposed 6 AM project at 6<sup>th</sup> and Alameda Streets, which would include more than 2.8 million square feet of development in two 58-story towers including apartments, condominiums, a hotel, offices, retail and restaurant uses, a school, and art space; a proposed mixed-use development located 7<sup>th</sup> and Alameda Streets; and the completed redevelopment of the Los Angeles 30-acre Terminal Market property as the mixed-use ROW DTLA project.

### 3. Project Impacts

#### a) Thresholds of Significance

In accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project would have a significant impact related to land use and planning if it would:

***Threshold (a): Physically divide an established community; or***

***Threshold (b): Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.***

For this analysis, the Appendix G thresholds listed above are relied upon. The analysis utilizes factors and considerations identified in the City's 2006 L.A. CEQA Thresholds

<sup>19</sup> Historic Places LA, Seventh Street Bridge, No. 53C1321, <http://historicplacesla.org/reports/cbfab194-735d-4cb9-9bb8-525615fc0842>. Accessed February 2, 2021.

Guide, as appropriate, to assist in answering the Appendix G threshold questions. The factors used to evaluate land use impacts are listed below.

### (1) Land Use Consistency

- Whether the proposal is inconsistent with the adopted land use/density designation in the Community Plan, redevelopment plan or specific plan for the site; and
- Whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans.

### (2) Land Use Compatibility

- The extent of the area that would be impacted, the nature and degree of impacts, and the type of land uses within that area;
- The extent to which existing neighborhoods, communities, or land uses would be disrupted, divided or isolated, and the duration of the disruptions; and
- The number, degree, and type of secondary impacts to surrounding land uses that could result from implementation of the proposed project.

## b) Methodology

The analysis of potential land use impacts considers consistency of the Project with adopted plans, regulations, and development guidelines, and in some instances advisory guidance, that are applicable to the Project Site and the Project and that have been adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(d) requires that in describing the environmental setting, an EIR include a discussion of any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans. Separately, Appendix G recommends that a lead agency consider whether the project would cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Importantly, a conflict between a project and an applicable plan is not necessarily a significant impact under CEQA unless the inconsistency will result in an adverse physical change to the environment that is a “significant environmental effect” as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 15382. As provided in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2 “an EIR shall identify and focus on the significant effects of the proposed project on the environment.” An excerpt from the legal practice guide, Continuing Education of the Bar, Practice Under the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 12.34 illustrates the point:

*“An inconsistency between a proposed project and an applicable plan is a legal determination not a physical impact on the environment. ...if a project affects a river corridor, one standard for determining whether the impact is significant might be whether the project violates plan policies protecting the*

*corridor; the environmental impact, however, is the physical impact on the river corridor.”*

Under the Planning and Zoning law (Government Code Section 65000 et seq.) strict conformity with all aspects of a plan is not required. Generally, plans reflect a range of competing interests and agencies are given great deference to determine consistency with their own plans. A proposed project should be considered consistent with a general plan or elements of a general plan if it furthers one or more policies and does not obstruct other policies. Generally, given that land use plans reflect a range of competing interests, a project should be compatible with a plan’s overall goals and objectives but need not be in perfect conformity with every plan policy.

Project consistency with applicable policies that have been adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect as set forth in SCAG’s 2020–2045 RTP/SCS, the Framework Element, the Community Plan, and the RIO District are provided in tables contained in Appendix I-1, *Land Use Plans and Policies: Project Consistency Tables*, of this Draft EIR. The results and determination of whether the Project would cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect is provided in the impact analysis below. To the extent that the Projects’ potential conflict with a plan, program or policy is analyzed in another section of the EIR that plan is not further discussed in the Land Use Section. For example, consistency with transportation plans is analyzed in Section IV.L, *Transportation*, of this Draft EIR.

### **c) Project Design Features**

There are no Project Design Features that relate to land use.

### **d) Analysis of Project Impacts**

***Threshold (a): Would the Project physically divide an established community?***

#### **(1) Impact Analysis**

The Project Site is located in an urbanized, developed setting within the Central City North Community Plan area in the City. The Project Site is bordered along its entire eastern property line by the Railway Properties and is inaccessible from this direction. The Project Site is only directly accessible to vehicles and pedestrians from Mesquit Street, which is cut off on the south by the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and can only be accessed via Jesse Street at its midpoint. The Project Site has historically been accessible from the northern end of Mesquit Street near 6<sup>th</sup> Street. However, the construction of the Ribbon of Light Bridge has temporarily blocked access to Mesquit Street at its northern end, but upon completion

of the bridge, access to Mesquit Street from Santa Fe Avenue just south of 6<sup>th</sup> Street is planned to be restored.<sup>20</sup>

No east-west pedestrian or visual access exists under existing conditions between Mesquit Street and the Railway Properties or Los Angeles River, as the Project Site is currently developed with a nearly uninterrupted wall of warehouses that occupy the Project Site's eastern side and face the Los Angeles River and Boyle Heights. Moreover, direct pedestrian access does not currently exist between the Project Site and the elevated Seventh Street Bridge along the Project Site's southern property line.

Therefore, the Project Site is not currently directly accessible from the east, north, or south by vehicles or pedestrians. Vehicles and pedestrians coming from the east (e.g., Boyle Heights and points farther east) must go west across the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, past the Project Site to the intersection of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Santa Fe Avenue, and then head north on Santa Fe Avenue and east on Jesse Street to gain access. Similarly, vehicles and pedestrians coming from the south must go to the intersection of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Santa Fe Avenue, and then head north on Santa Fe Avenue and east on Jesse Street. Vehicles and pedestrians coming from the north must likewise head south on Santa Fe Avenue and east on Jesse Street.

Project implementation would open the Project Site to both north-south and east-west access, creating new direct connections between the Arts District neighborhoods north and south of the Project Site and between the neighborhoods west of the Project Site and the Los Angeles River and Boyle Heights to the east.

The Project would create new, direct vehicular and bicycle access to the Project Site via four driveways: (1) a two-way full-access driveway on Mesquit Street at the northern end of the Project Site at the ground level of Building 1; (2) a two-way full-access driveway at the intersection of Mesquit Street and Jesse Street at the ground level of Building 2; (3) a two-way signalized driveway connecting the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and Building 4 near the southeastern corner of the Project Site with full access out and right-turns only in; and (4) a one-way driveway from Building 5 restricted to right turns out onto the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge near the southwestern corner of the Project Site.

The Project would create new pedestrian access to the Project Site from surrounding neighborhoods through the four mid-block Entry Plazas between Buildings 1 through 5 and as shown in Figure II-5 of Chapter II, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR. The Entry Plazas would provide access from Mesquit Street through to the Elevated Pedestrian Walkway and the Project River Balconies along the eastern edge of the Project Site, overlooking the Los Angeles River, Ribbon of Light Bridge, proposed PARC Improvements, and Boyle Heights. The Entry Plaza between Buildings 4 and 5 would provide a public connection from the Mesquit Paseo through to the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. The northerly River Balcony would connect to the Project Site's Northern Landscaped Area

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<sup>20</sup> City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering, Sixth Street Viaduct Community Briefing, October 6, 2014, Landscape Concept Plan slide.

and proposed PARC Improvements to the north, and the potential future 6<sup>th</sup> Street/Arts District Metro light rail station.<sup>21</sup>

The Project would create pedestrian access directly from the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge via the southerly River Balcony to the Elevated Pedestrian Walkway, as well as via the Entry Plaza between Buildings 4 and 5 that would connect to the Mesquit Paseo.

Additionally, the Project proposes a new pedestrian crosswalk across 7<sup>th</sup> Street on the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge to provide pedestrian access to the Project Site near Building 4. Pedestrian access internal to the Project Site would be available on two separate levels: on the ground level of Mesquit Street and on the 7<sup>th</sup> Street level with stairway, elevator, and escalator connections between the two levels through the Entry Plazas. Elevators would also connect to the basement parking levels. As pedestrians enter from the 7<sup>th</sup> Street entrance by Building 5, they would have the option to stay on the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Level or walk down to the Mesquit Street Level via stairs, escalators, or elevators between Buildings 4 and 5. Pedestrians would be able to move from the Mesquit Street level to the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Level and Elevated Pedestrian Walkway through the Entry Plazas. The 7<sup>th</sup> Street Level is accessible from the Northern Landscaped Area adjacent to the 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and has a throughway to 7<sup>th</sup> Street via the River Balconies.

The Applicant also seeks the vacation of a portion of Mesquit Street as part of the Project. Mesquit Street currently has a 50-foot right of way (ROW) and is designated as a Collector Street (66-foot ROW and a 40-foot roadway). Also as part of the Project, Mesquit Street is proposed for redesignation as a Local Limited street (50-foot ROW and 30-foot roadway) and may operate as a private street, which would maintain access while allowing for temporary programming such as farmer's markets or other community-serving events. The proposed vacation would not prevent vehicles from using Mesquit Street to access the properties and businesses along its western side, nor would it interfere with their operations. As previously stated, the Project Site is currently only accessible from Mesquit Street, which is in turn only accessible from Jesse Street, and no through-access to the Project Site is provided from the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. Upon Project completion and the proposed 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge connection, Mesquit Street would be more accessible from surrounding streets and neighborhoods. Additionally, while separate from the Project, the completion of the under-construction Ribbon of Light Bridge on 6<sup>th</sup> Street/Whittier Boulevard would also allow access to Mesquit Street from its northern end to be restored. The under-construction Ribbon of Light Bridge will also include two bicycle lanes.<sup>22</sup> The two bicycle lanes would provide access between the Arts District, the planned bicycle and pedestrian path along the banks of the Los Angeles River, and Boyle

<sup>21</sup> Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), System Safety, Security and Operations Committee, Downtown Los Angeles Arts District Connectivity Board Report, January 19, 2017, <https://metro.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2938269&GUID=681E0C6A-0CA0-4806-A037-21BCFF25B994>. Accessed February 2, 2021.

<sup>22</sup> City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Engineering, Sixth Street Viaduct, [https://www.sixthstreetviaduct.org/fact\\_sheets](https://www.sixthstreetviaduct.org/fact_sheets), accessed July 15, 2021.

Heights.<sup>23</sup> Additional existing and planned bikeways are located throughout the Arts District and Downtown Los Angeles to the north, south and west of the Project Site.

Thus, the Project would increase pedestrian access between the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and the Ribbon of Light Bridge, including connections with the Northern Landscaped Area and the City's planned PARC Improvements, via an activated, pedestrian-friendly Mesquit Street, Entry Plazas, the River Balconies, and the Elevated Pedestrian Walkway on the east side of the Project Site. The Project would also increase pedestrian connectivity with surrounding land uses and the Los Angeles River and would provide access to existing and planned multimodal (e.g., bicycle, pedestrian, etc.) connections nearby and adjacent to the Project Site. No adverse change in vehicular access to or circulation on Mesquit Street or interference with existing or proposed uses in the Project vicinity would occur as the result of the proposed vacation of Mesquit Street. Where the Project Site is currently cut off from surrounding neighborhoods by existing streets and lack of access and itself prevents east-west pedestrian access through the Project Site, Project implementation would improve connectivity from the east and to the Los Angeles River from the west, north, and south. For example, rather than a cul-de-sac at Mesquit where it meets 7<sup>th</sup> Street, the Mesquit Paseo would provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge through stairs, elevators and escalators. The Project would also complement and expand public use adjacent to the Ribbon of Light Bridge and proposed PARC Improvements. **For these reasons, the Project would not physically divide an established community. This impact would be less than significant.**

(a) *Project with the Deck Concept*

As stated in Chapter II, *Project Description*, the Applicant seeks to construct a Deck that extends over a portion of the off-site Railway Properties east of the Project Site. Implementation of the Project with the Deck Concept would, similar to the Project, open the Project Site to both north-south and east-west access, creating new direct connections between the Arts District neighborhoods north and south of the Project Site and between the neighborhoods west of the Project Site and the Los Angeles River and Boyle Heights to the east. The Project with the Deck Concept would include the same vehicular and bicycle access to the Project Site as under the Project.

Under the Project with the Deck Concept, the Entry Plazas would provide access from Mesquit Street through to the Deck and the Project's River Balconies along the eastern edge of the Project Site. The Deck would provide expanded pedestrian areas that are not available under the Project (through the Elevated Pedestrian Walkway) to the residents, visitors, and employees on the Project Site. The Deck would provide expanded pedestrian access to future Metro transit projects and would provide a closer potential connection to the Los Angeles River. Pedestrians would be able to move from the Mesquit Street Level to the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Level and Deck via the Entry Plazas. With the inclusion of the Deck, the Project with the Deck Concept and the proposed 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge connection would

<sup>23</sup> City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Engineering, Sixth Street Viaduct, <https://www.sixthstreetviaduct.org/parcproject>, accessed July 15, 2021.

increase accessibility of Mesquit Street from the surrounding streets and neighborhoods. The Deck would allow for expanded pedestrian connections and connectivity to the surrounding amenities as compared to the Project. **Therefore, impacts under the Project with the Deck Concept related to physically dividing an established community would be less than significant.**

## (2) Mitigation Measures

Impacts regarding physically dividing an established community were determined to be less than significant without mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

## (3) Level of Significance after Mitigation

Impacts regarding physically dividing an established community were determined to be less than significant without mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures were required or included, and the impact level remains less than significant.

***Threshold (b): Would the Project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?***

## (1) Impact Analysis

Project development would be subject to various land use plans and policies as well as development standards in the LAMC's Planning and Zoning Code. Project consistency with the applicable regional and City plans, policies, guidance, and regulations are addressed below and include SCAG's 2020-2045 RTP/SCS, the City's Framework Element, Housing Element, Central City North Community Plan, and LAMC.

Other plans that address the distribution of land use in the region and that are linked with the SCAG Plans are addressed in other sections of this Draft EIR. Specifically, Project consistency with the AQMP is analyzed in Section IV.A, *Air Quality*, and Senate Bill (SB) 375 and SCAG's RTP/SCS are discussed in Section IV.E, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, of this Draft EIR.

### (a) SCAG's 2020-2045 RTP/SCS

SCAG's 2020-2045 RTP/SCS incorporates several goals that are applicable to the Project and that would avoid or reduce the Project's environmental impacts. **Table LU-1, Project Consistency with Applicable Policies of the 2020–2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy**, provided in Appendix I-1 of this Draft EIR, provides a detailed analysis of applicable RTP/SCS policies. As shown in Table LU-1, the goals of the RTP/SCS are focused on such priorities as improving mobility, accessibility, reliability, and travel safety for people and goods, reducing GHG emissions and improving air quality, and encouraging development of diverse housing types in areas that are supported by multiple transportation options. The Project would support these RTP/SCS goals through such features and characteristics as: siting a high density mixed-use

development within a Transit Priority Area (TPA) and HQTAs; providing bicycle parking spaces, bike lockers, and showers in accordance with the LAMC; facilitating active transportation with publicly accessible open space; facilitating connections to Downtown Los Angeles and adjacent communities; compliance with LEED Silver certification or equivalent standards; provisions for on-site electric vehicle (EV) charging stations; incorporating green building features, such as heat reduction strategies, on-site recycling, use of materials meeting sustainability standards, and use of high efficiency fixtures, appliances, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. Accordingly, and as further described in Appendix I-1 of this Draft EIR, the Project would be consistent with and not conflict with applicable goals of SCAG's 2020–2045 RTP/SCS adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Therefore, impacts with respect to consistency with the RTP/SCS would be less than significant.

(b) *City of Los Angeles General Plan*

(i) *City of Los Angeles General Plan Framework*

**Table LU-2, Comparison of the Project to Applicable Policies of the Framework Element**, provided in Appendix I-1 of this Draft EIR, evaluates the consistency of the Project with objectives and policies of the Framework Element. As discussed in Table LU-2, the Project would not conflict with applicable objectives and policies of the Framework Element adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The following summarizes the results of Table LU-2.

The Project would develop a mixed-use project consisting of 308 residential units and up to 1,484,196 square feet of commercial space including: 944,055 square feet of office space; a 236-room hotel; 136,152 square feet of commercial/retail space including an Arts District Central Market and a grocery store; restaurants; studio/event/gallery space and a potential museum; and a gym. The Project would intensify development, address housing needs, and facilitate a reduction in per capita VMT and air pollution. The Project's location within a TPA would provide residents, visitors, and employees with convenient access to multiple Metro bus routes and the potential future Metro transit projects. Residents, visitors, and employees would also have access to restaurant, retail, recreation, and entertainment activities within walking and biking distances.

The Project proposes more open space (up to 141,876 square feet) than is required by code (31,225 square feet). The Project's 141,876 square feet of open space consists of 73,848 square feet of publicly accessible open space, as well as 68,028 square feet of common and private open space and recreational amenities for use by Project residents, hotel guests, and Project employees. Publicly accessible open space features and amenities would include the Northern Landscaped Area, which would connect the Project Site with the City's proposed PARC Improvements adjacent to and beneath the Ribbon of Light Bridge; the four Entry Plazas providing east-west midblock access through the Project Site; the River Balconies and Elevated Pedestrian Walkway connecting the Entry Plazas and River Balconies; the Mesquit Paseo; and, upper-story terraced walkways and terraces.

Accordingly, and as further described in Appendix I-1 of this Draft EIR, the Project would be consistent with and would not conflict with applicable objectives and policies of the Framework Element, which were adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Therefore, impacts with respect to consistency with the Framework Element would be less than significant.

(ii) *Housing Element 2013-2021*

As presented in **Table LU-3, Comparison of the Project to the Applicable Policies of the Housing Element 2013-2021**, as the Project proposes a mixed-use development that includes 308 multi-family rental units, including market rate and affordable housing units, the Project would support a number of Housing Element objectives to produce an adequate supply of rental housing, promote sustainable neighborhoods that have mixed-income housing, jobs, amenities, services, and transit. In addition, as a mixed-use Project that includes residential uses to be developed in conjunction with creative office space, hotel, and commercial/retail uses, the Project would support the Housing Element policy that encourages the integration of housing with other compatible land uses. The Project would not conflict with the applicable goals, objectives, and policies of the Housing Element adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect and would not preclude their attainment.

(iii) *Central City North Community Plan*

The Project Site is located within the boundaries of the Central City North Community Plan in an area designated with Heavy Industrial land uses and a zoning designation of M3-1-RIO. The M3 (Heavy Industrial) zoning designation is cumulative in that it allows all uses allowed in less intensive industrial zones as well as most uses allowed in the C2 zone. **Table LU-4, Project Comparison to Provisions of the Central City North Community Plan**, includes a detailed evaluation of the consistency of the Project with objectives of the Central City North Community Plan. The following summarizes the results of Table LU-4.

Implementation of the Project would include a General Plan Amendment to amend the Community Plan to redesignate the Project Site to Regional Center Commercial with a corresponding zone of Mesquit Specific Plan (MSP). In addition, the Project would include a Vesting Zone Change and Height District Change from M3-1-RIO to MSP-RIO. The zone change from M3 to MSP would allow the proposed multiple dwelling residential and hotel uses and would correspond to the proposed Regional Center Commercial land use designation. The proposed General Plan Amendment and Vesting Zone Change and Height District Change would be adopted concurrently with the approval of the Project and certification of the EIR. The Project would increase population density within a TPA, which would facilitate transit use and minimize VMT. In addition, the Project would provide new residential, retail, restaurant, office, and hotel uses, which would activate and enhance the street frontage for pedestrians in a manner consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Central City North Community Plan.

As discussed above and further in Appendix I-1, of this Draft EIR, the Project would support the with the goals, objectives, and policies within the Central City North Community Plan that relate to a strong and competitive commercial sector; compatibility with existing uses and development; strengthening of the economic base; enhancement of pedestrian street activity; provision of residential uses; preservation of open space; and provide sufficient and safe parking. Accordingly, and as further described in Appendix I-1 of this Draft EIR, the Project would be consistent with and not conflict with applicable policies of the Community Plan adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Accordingly, impacts with respect to consistency with the Community Plan would be less than significant.

(c) *River Improvement Overlay (RIO) District*

The Project is located within the outer core of the RIO District. The RIO District Ordinances establish landscaping, design criteria, and administrative review procedures for projects within the RIO District. As codified in LAMC Section 13.17, the RIO Ordinances introduced compulsory standards for development projects within the RIO District that would support the goals of the LARRMP.

The RIO District Ordinances include specific regulations that apply to the Project, including lighting regulations intended in part to address environmental concerns. On-site lighting for the Project would be designed to provide clear identification and locations of major tenants, safe lighting for pedestrian pathways and other outdoor areas, well lit vehicle entrances, exits and parking areas, and, accent lighting for architectural features and landscape elements. Exterior lighting would be shielded or directed towards the areas to be illuminated to limit light spillover onto off-site uses in compliance with applicable LAMC and CALGreen Code standards. As stated in the Lighting Study, prepared by Francis Krahe & Associates, included in Appendix I-2, of this Draft EIR, the Project would conform with requirements for building lighting at light sensitive properties as lighting would be below the 2.0 footcandles (fc) limit established within LAMC Chapter 9, Article 3, Div. 1, Sec. 93.0117. Furthermore, as indicated in the Lighting Study, the Project's signage related lighting would conform with requirements and be below the 3.0 fc limit for illuminated signs as defined by the LAMC Chapter 1, Article 4.4, Sec. 14.4.4 E, and would also conform with the lighting requirements in the CALGreen Code. However, as further detailed in the Lighting Study, Project lighting would exceed the more stringent standards that apply to the RIO District pursuant to RIO District Ordinances exterior site lighting requirements at the Project boundary and 15 feet beyond the boundary. Although the Project would exceed these requirements, which would represent a conflict with the RIO District Ordinances, the environmental effect of the lighting levels would not represent a significant impact on the environment. Foremost, as further described in Chapter II, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21099(d)(1) and City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Zoning Information (ZI) File No. 2452, the aesthetic and lighting/glare impacts of the Project are not considered significant impacts on the environment. Furthermore, the areas where Project lighting would exceed the RIO standards include streets, rail yards, electrical switching stations,

and industrial use properties and do not include natural habitat or residential uses. As such, pursuant to the 2006 L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, and as indicated under Section IV., Biological Resources, in Attachment B of the Initial Study provided in Appendix A-2, Initial Study, of this Draft EIR, there would be no substantial adverse effects on light sensitive natural habitat or residential receptors. In addition, it should be noted that the Project includes a proposed Specific Plan and Sign District to establish the land use regulations for the Project Site to ensure consistent implementation of development standards throughout the Project Site in recognition of the Project Site's unique characteristics, including unique opportunities for public benefits and unique constraints posed by the Project Site's location which are not experienced by other sites. With approval of the proposed Specific Plan, which would include its own lighting standards, there would not be a conflict with the RIO District Ordinances lighting provisions.

Accordingly, the Project would be consistent with and not conflict with applicable RIO District Ordinances regulations. While the Project would conflict in part with the RIO District Ordinances lighting standard, the conflict would not represent a significant physical impact under CEQA. Therefore, impacts with respect to consistency with the RIO District would be less than significant.

(d) *City of Los Angeles Municipal Code*

As discussed in Subsection 2.a, *Regulatory Framework*, the Project Site is zoned M3-1-RIO (Heavy Industrial, Height District 1, River Improvement Overlay District). The M3 zoning designation permits most industrial uses, including certain "nuisance" uses provided they are located 500 feet from a more restrictive zone, and those uses permitted in more restrictive industrial zones (including but not limited to commercial manufacturing, machine shops, storage yards, clinics, public storage, wireless communications, and animal kennels). The M3 designation also permits uses permitted in the CM (Commercial Manufacturing) zone, which include wholesale, storage, clinics, limited manufacturing, and a limited number of the uses permitted in the C2 (Commercial) zone, which includes retail with limited manufacturing, service stations and garages, churches, schools, auditoriums, studios and media production, auto sales, and parking. However, the M3 zone does not permit residential and hotel uses.

The Project proposes a mixed-use development totaling up to 1,792,103 square feet and including creative office, hotel, and commercial space and 308 multi-family residential dwelling units. The resulting floor area ratio (FAR) would be approximately 7.5:1.<sup>24</sup> Buildings 1 through 4, on the east side of Mesquit Street, would range in height from 378 feet on the north to 84 feet on the south (32 floors maximum), and Building 5, on the west side of Mesquit Street, would be 378 feet in height (26 floors maximum).

<sup>24</sup> The FAR may be as low as 4.8:1 if the buildable lot area of the Project Site includes the full Deck Concept and Mesquit Street vacation, or as high as 8.9:1 if the lot area includes only the parcels currently under Applicant ownership and does not include additional air rights over the Railway Properties or proposed Mesquit Street vacation.

To permit the Project, a General Plan Amendment is sought to change the Community Plan designation from Heavy Industrial to Regional Center Commercial with a corresponding zone of MSP. This redesignation would allow the proposed multi-family residential dwellings and hotel, as well as the other proposed Project uses that are permitted under both the Heavy Industrial and Regional Center Commercial designations. These include creative office space, retail space (including an Arts District Central Market, a grocery store, and general retail uses), restaurants, studio/event/gallery space and a potential museum, and a gym. The General Plan Amendment would also redesignate Mesquit Street from a collector street to a local limited street to better reflect Mesquit Street's current function, since it only provides access to abutting land parcels between 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street and does not connect directly to major or secondary roadways or assist the flow of heavy truck traffic.

The Project seeks a Vesting Zone Change and Height District Change to change the current zoning to MSP-RIO. The proposed MSP zone, as noted above, would permit a number of residential uses, including hotels. The MSP zoning designation would also allow multiple dwelling residential uses.

The Vesting Zone Change would allow multiple dwelling residential and hotel uses not permitted in the M3 zone, and would correspond to the Regional Center Commercial land use designation sought as part of the General Plan Amendment.

Pursuant to LAMC Section 11.5.7, a Specific Plan would be established for the Project to ensure the consistent implementation of proposed development standards throughout the Project Site, in light of the Project Site's unique characteristics, including opportunities for public benefits and constraints posed by the Project Site's location, which are not experienced by other sites.

Wherever provisions of the Specific Plan are different from, more restrictive or more permissive than would be allowed pursuant to the provisions of the LAMC, the Specific Plan would prevail and supersede the otherwise applicable provisions of the LAMC. The regulations and procedures in the Specific Plan would supersede and serve as a substitute ordinance for the following provisions of the LAMC, among others, that would accordingly not be required: a Major Development Project Conditional Use Permit; Master CUPs for FAR averaging and residential density transfer in unified development, on-site and off-site sale of alcoholic beverages and dance halls; a vesting CUP for heliports; a parking reduction; and other variances.

Pursuant to LAMC Sections 13.11 and 12.32.S, the Project would include a Sign District on the Project Site for a comprehensive set of sign regulations.

The proposed FAR exceeds the maximum floor area permitted under the base Height District 1, which allows a maximum FAR of 1.5:1. Therefore, the Project would require approval of a change to the MSP zone, which would allow the Project's total floor area. Setbacks would not be required within the proposed MSP zone.

The Project would be consistent with the LAMC requirement for open space on the Project Site, given the proposed uses. The Project would incorporate at-grade and above-grade open space for use by Project residents, hotel guests, employees, and the general public totaling up to 141,876 square feet, which would exceed the LAMC requirement for the Project of 31,225 square feet. Open space elements on the Project Site, as depicted on Figure II-5 in Chapter II, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, are proposed to include the publicly accessible Northern Landscaped Area; the four Entry Plazas that serve as midblock east-west pedestrian passageways through the Project Site; the River Balconies and Elevated Pedestrian Walkway on the eastern side of the Project Site; the Mesquit Paseo; and, upper-story terraces and decks. Up to 40,006 square feet or 28 percent of the open space would be landscaped, exceeding the City's landscape requirements of 25 percent for open space. Moreover, the Project's Northern Landscaped Area would be adjacent to the City's proposed PARC Improvements, which include landscaped open space, underneath and adjacent to the Ribbon of Light Bridge.

The Vesting Tentative Tract Map requests the merger and re-subdivision, as well as the vacation of Mesquit Street and absorption into the Project Site of a portion of Mesquit Street, to create ground lots and airspace lots, together with approval of a haul route. The portion proposed for vacation and absorption into the Project Site encompasses the full width of Mesquit Street near the southern property line, where the Project Site occupies parcels on both sides of the street, and the eastern half-width of the street between that point and the northern property line. The vacated portion of Mesquit Street to the south of Jesse Street would total up to 36,563 square feet and would include a publicly accessible paseo (Mesquit Paseo). The Mesquit Paseo would connect to the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge through the Entry Plaza between Buildings 4 and 5. Mesquit Street currently has a 50-foot ROW and is designated as a Collector Street (66-foot ROW and a 40-foot roadway). Also as part of the Project, Mesquit Street is proposed for redesignation as a Local Limited street (50-foot ROW and 30-foot roadway) and may operate as a private street, which would maintain access while allowing for temporary programming such as farmer's markets or other community-serving events. Additionally, the Mesquit Paseo could allow for additional streetscape elements such as street furniture, etc., that enhance the Project's frontage along Mesquit Street, resulting in increased connectivity between the Project Site and the surrounding area. The vacation of Mesquit Street also would not impede vehicles from using Mesquit Street to access the properties located on the western side of Mesquit Street nor interfere with their operations.

With approval of the requested discretionary actions, the Project would be consistent with and would not conflict with the provisions of the LAMC governing land use and planning, and impacts with respect to the provisions of the LAMC governing land use and planning would be less than significant.

(e) *Conclusion*

Based on the analysis of Project consistency with applicable policies of SCAG's 2020-2045 RTP/SCS, the Framework Element, the Community Plan, the RIO District Ordinances, and the LAMC, the Project would be consistent with and would not conflict

with relevant land use policies and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating a significant environmental effect.

Approval of the Project's requested entitlements, including the proposed Specific Plan, would bring the Project into consistency with the applicable plans and regulations. **Therefore, with approval of the proposed entitlements, the Project would be consistent with and would not conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating a significant environmental effect, and impacts would be less than significant.**

*(f) Industrial Displacement*

The City has goals, objectives, and policies within various documents which discourage the displacement of industrial land. These goals, objectives, and policies are not adopted for the purposes of avoiding an environmental effect; nonetheless, they are discussed in Appendix I-1 of this Draft EIR. The potential impacts from industrial displacement to the physical environment could include, but are not limited to, an increase in criteria air pollutants, VMT, and numerous site specific impacts from new construction. Nonetheless, these impacts are speculative, and it is beyond the scope of this analysis to determine possible future impacts from a myriad of uncertain economic conditions.

According to the Community Plan, there are 1,180 acres (approximately 60 percent of the 2,005-acre total) of industrially zoned property in the Community Plan area. The Project Site comprises 5.45 acres, or approximately 0.47 percent of the industrially zoned land and approximately 0.27 percent of the total land in the Community Plan area. The conversion of industrial land is an economic issue that is not within the scope of CEQA review. If nearby industrial businesses were to relocate, it is unclear whether these businesses would move into existing buildings or seek to develop new facilities. Any impacts from relocation of facilities would be speculative and outside the scope of this analysis. Additionally, new facilities would require discretionary approval, CEQA review, and would be required to implement feasible mitigation for any significant impacts that would result. As such, the Project would have a less than significant impact as it relates to industrial displacement.

*(g) Project with the Deck Concept*

The Project with the Deck Concept would develop the same uses as proposed under the Project, and would include a 132,000 square foot Deck in place of the Elevated Pedestrian Walkway. As the Project with the Deck Concept would develop the same residential and commercial uses as the Project, the Project with the Deck Concept would be consistent with the same applicable policies and plans of the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS, Framework Element, Central City North Community Plan, RIO District Ordinances, and the LAMC.

The Project with the Deck Concept would provide 273,876 square feet of open space, exceeding the amount proposed under the Project and over what is required by Code. Approximately 71,208 square feet or 26 percent is proposed to be landscaped, which meets the City's landscape requirements of 25 percent for open space. The construction

of the Deck under the Project with the Deck Concept would provide residents, visitors, and employees with expanded and convenient access to future Metro transit projects, including the potential future Metro Arts District/6<sup>th</sup> Street light rail station.

The Project with the Deck Concept would develop the Deck on the eastern boundary of the Project Site. The Deck would be located on the 7<sup>th</sup> Street level and would extend the pedestrian oriented open space area further east in closer proximity to the Los Angeles River. The Project with the Deck Concept would provide a sizeable publicly accessible open space amenity area, in addition to the open space provided under the Project, that would further enhance the new pedestrian connections and create additional opportunities for public programming. The Deck would include a landscape plan and plant palette to complement the LARRMP. The Deck would also include various amenities for pedestrians, including a sculpture garden, benches and seating areas, landscaping, and other visitor-serving features.

Similar to and as further described above for the Project, the Project with the Deck Concept would conform with LAMC lighting and illuminated signage related requirements and with the lighting requirements in the CALGreen Code. However, Project lighting would exceed the more stringent standards that apply to the RIO District pursuant to RIO District Ordinances exterior site lighting requirements at the Project boundary and 15 feet beyond the boundary. Although the Project would exceed these requirements, which would represent a conflict with the RIO District Ordinances, the environmental effect of the lighting levels would not represent a significant impact on the environment. Pursuant to PRC Section 21099(d)(1) and ZI File No. 2452, the aesthetic and lighting/glare impacts of the Project are not considered significant impacts on the environment, and the areas where Project lighting would exceed the RIO standards include streets, rail yards, electrical switching stations, and industrial use properties and do not include natural habitat or residential uses. Furthermore, approval of the requested entitlements, including the proposed Specific Plan, would bring the Project with the Deck Concept into consistency with the applicable plans and regulations, including lighting regulations. **Therefore, with approval of the proposed entitlements, the Project with the Deck Concept would be consistent with and would not conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating a significant environmental effect, and impacts would be less than significant.**

## (2) Mitigation Measures

Impacts regarding land use and planning were determined to be less than significant without mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

## (3) Level of Significance after Mitigation

Impacts regarding land use and planning were determined to be less than significant without mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures were required or included, and the impact level remains less than significant.

## e) Cumulative Impacts

### (1) Impact Analysis

Chapter III, *Environmental Setting*, lists 142 related projects that are planned or are under construction within Downtown Los Angeles. The area surrounding the Project Site is comprised of historically industrial and manufacturing-oriented properties, many of which are recently experiencing changes in land use through adaptive reuse, infill development, and redevelopment, including residences, office, and live/work uses, as well as retail, galleries and museums, studios, restaurants, and bars. The related projects within close proximity to the Project Site would have the greatest potential to contribute to cumulative adverse land use impacts.

The majority of the related projects are mixed-use, residential and commercial, including retail, restaurant and office floor area. A number of the projects do not include residential uses and propose solely commercial and/or retail uses. Of the related projects within proximity to the Project Site, four are on Mesquit Street or Santa Fe Street immediately to the west of the Project Site.

#### (a) *Physically Divide a Community*

The Project and related projects are located in an area which, as described above, is comprised of historically industrial and manufacturing-oriented properties, many of which are experiencing changes in land use through adaptive reuse, infill development, and redevelopment. As with the Project, the related projects are infill developments that would be constructed within sites currently or previously constructed with other uses. The uses proposed by both the Project and related projects would be compatible with the existing and planned uses in the Project vicinity. Based on the mix of buildings types and buildings heights that are currently seen in the Project vicinity, the Project along with the related projects would be compatible with the various existing developments in vicinity of the Project Site and larger surrounding area. In addition, both the Project and related projects are not linear infrastructure projects that would result in the construction or development of new physical barriers that could divide existing neighborhoods. Furthermore, as discussed above, the Project would improve the permeability and connectivity of the Project Site and, as such, would not combine with other related projects to result in cumulative significant impacts.

Based on the above, the Project and the related projects would be consistent with the current development trends in the Project vicinity and would not be expected to result in the physical division of a community. **As such, cumulative impacts related to physically dividing a community would be less than significant.**

#### (b) *Consistency with Plans and Policies*

The Project Site is located within a TPA as designated by the City in response to SB 743. The Project would contribute to the concentration of mixed-use infill development within a TPA. Many of the relevant related projects are also concentrated along key

transportation corridors and within TPAs, and the majority of these projects are mixed-use in nature, combining multi-family residential with commercial uses.

As with the Project, related projects would also be required to comply with the relevant land use polices and regulations through review by City regulatory agencies and would be subject to CEQA review. The related projects represent urban infill in nature and, while increasing density, would be required to seek individual entitlements to change existing zoning and land use designations in order to be implemented, and would be evaluated for consistency with existing and proposed zoning and land use designations for given properties.

The Project, together with the related projects, would provide a range of much-needed housing and employment opportunities in the Arts District and Downtown Los Angeles. The Project, in combination with related projects, which include high-density residential and commercial uses, would not conflict with the applicable plans and policies adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating a significant environmental effect. **Therefore, cumulative impacts with respect to land use and planning would be less than significant.**

*(c) Industrial Displacement*

As discussed above, the City has goals, objectives, and policies within various documents, which discourage the displacement of industrial land. These goals, objectives, and policies are not adopted for the purposes of avoiding and environmental effect; nonetheless, they are discussed in Appendix I-1 of this Draft EIR. The potential impacts from industrial displacement to the physical environment could include, but are not limited to, an increase in criteria air pollutants, VMT, and numerous site specific impacts from new construction. Nonetheless, these impacts are speculative and it is beyond the scope of this analysis to determine possible future impacts from a myriad of uncertain economic conditions.

As noted above, the Project Site comprises 5.45 acres, or approximately 0.47 percent of the industrially zoned land, and together with the related projects in the vicinity, would replace industrially zoned land in the Community Plan area. However, the conversion of industrial land is an economic issue that is not within the scope of CEQA review. While the Project and the related projects may displace existing warehouse or industrial uses, it is unclear whether these existing industrial uses will go out of business or relocate. It would be speculative to assume whether they will relocate to other sites in the area. If they were to relocate, it is unclear whether these businesses would move into existing buildings or seek to develop new facilities. Any impacts from relocation of facilities would be speculative and outside the scope of this analysis. Additionally, new facilities would require discretionary approval, CEQA review, and would be required to implement feasible mitigation for any significant impacts that would result. **Therefore, the Project together with the related projects would not cause cumulative impacts due to the loss of industrially zoned land and impacts would be less than significant.**

(d) *Project with the Deck Concept*

Similar to the Project, the Project with the Deck Concept would establish connections from the Project Site to the surrounding neighborhoods that do not currently exist. The Project with the Deck Concept would, similar to the Project, not conflict with applicable plans and policies adopted for the purpose of mitigating or avoiding a significant environmental effect. As cumulative impacts associated with land use and planning for related projects would be the same under the Project and the Project with the Deck Concept, the analysis and conclusions regarding cumulative impact significance presented above are the same under the Project with the Deck Concept. **As such, cumulative impacts on land use and planning under the Project with the Deck Concept would be less than significant.**

(2) Mitigation Measures

Cumulative impacts regarding land use and planning were determined to be less than significant without mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

(3) Level of Significance after Mitigation

Cumulative impacts regarding land use and planning were determined to be less than significant without mitigation. Therefore, no mitigation measures were required or included, and the impact level remains less than significant.