

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose of the Final EIR

An application for the proposed 670 Mesquit Project (Project) has been submitted to the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning for discretionary review. The City of Los Angeles, as Lead Agency, determined that the Project is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to determine whether there is substantial evidence that the Project may have a significant effect on the environment.

As described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15089, the Lead Agency must evaluate comments received on the Draft EIR and prepare written responses and consider the information contained in a Final EIR before approving a project. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15132, a Final EIR consists of: (a) the Draft EIR or a revision of the Draft EIR; (b) comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR either verbatim or in summary; (c) a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR; (d) the responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process; and (e) any other information added by the Lead Agency.

This Final EIR constitutes the second part of the EIR for the Project and is intended to be a companion to the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR for the Project, which was circulated for public review and comment from December 30, 2021, through February 14, 2022, constitutes the first part of the EIR and is incorporated by reference and bound separately (refer to Volumes 1 through 12 of the Draft EIR).¹

Accordingly, the EIR for the Project comprises two parts as follows:

- Part 1: Draft EIR and Appendices
 - Draft Environmental Impact Report (Chapters I through VIII)
 - Draft Environmental Impact Report – Appendices A through P
- Part 2: Final EIR and Appendices
 - Final Environmental Impact Report (Chapters 1 through 4)
 - Final Environmental Impact Report – Appendix A

¹ The hardcopy, printed version of the Draft EIR was bound in 12 separate volumes.

2. Organization of the Final EIR

This Final EIR is organized into chapters as follows:

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the purpose of the Final EIR, provides a summary of the proposed project, provides an overview of the CEQA process, summarizes the Final EIR public review process, and presents the contents of this Final EIR.

CHAPTER 2. RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

This chapter presents comments on the Draft EIR, as well as responses to those comments pertaining to significant environmental issues, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15088. The Department of City Planning received comment letters from six (6) commenters which were responded to in this Final EIR. Letters responded to in this Final EIR are included in Appendix A, Original Draft EIR Comment Letters, in this Final EIR.

CHAPTER 3. REVISIONS, CLARIFICATIONS, AND CORRECTIONS TO THE DRAFT EIR

This chapter includes revisions to the Draft EIR that represent minor revisions, clarifications, and corrections in response to the comments received on the Draft EIR and additional edits to provide clarification of Draft EIR text. Changes to the Draft EIR are shown with strikethrough text for deletions and double-underlined text for additions. As demonstrated in this Final EIR, the comments submitted on the Draft EIR, the responses to these comments, and the corrections and additions presented in Chapter 3 of this Final EIR, do not constitute significant new information warranting recirculation of the Draft EIR as set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5. Rather, the Draft EIR is comprehensive and has been prepared in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

CHAPTER 4. MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

The Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) is the document that will be used by the enforcement and monitoring agencies responsible for the implementation of the Project's Mitigation Measures (MMs) and Project Design Features (PDFs). MMs and PDFs are listed by environmental topic.

Final EIR Appendices

A. Original Draft EIR Comment Letters

3. Project Summary

The proposed development (the Project) is a mixed-use project totaling up to 1,792,103 square feet of floor area on approximately 5.45 acres of land at 670 Mesquit Street (Project Site), along the southeastern edge of the Artists-in-Residence District within the Central City North Community Plan area of the City of Los Angeles (City).²

² Project floor area is calculated in accordance with Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 12.03, unless otherwise noted.

The Project would have a floor area ratio (FAR) of up to 7.5:1,³ and would consist of the following primary components:

- Creative office space totaling up to 944,055 square feet;
- A 236-room hotel;
- 308 multi-family residential housing units;
- An Arts District Central Market (food hall), a grocery store, and general retail uses totaling up to 136,152 square feet;
- Restaurants totaling up to 89,577 square feet;
- Studio/event/gallery space and a potential museum totaling up to 93,617 square feet; and,
- A maximum 62,148-square-foot gym.

The Project would provide a minimum of 2,000 traditional vehicle parking spaces, with parking for a total of up to 3,500 vehicles using a combination of automated parking systems, valet parking, or other efficiency parking methods. Parking would be provided in below-grade, at-grade, and above-grade structured parking spanning the Project Site. A rooftop heliport would be located on Building 5 for emergency and occasional private use.

The Project would provide a total of approximately 141,876 square feet of open space for use by Project residents, hotel guests, employees, and visitors. Proposed open space features include at-grade landscaped areas, pedestrian passageways and walkways, balconies offering views of the Los Angeles River, and above-grade landscaped terraces and pool amenity decks. In addition, the Project may include a Deck Concept (Project with the Deck Concept) that would involve construction of a 132,000-square-foot Deck that would extend over a portion of the freight and passenger rail lines and rail yards (Railway Properties) east of the Project Site.

Pursuant to Section 11.5.7 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), the Project includes the proposed Mesquit Specific Plan (Specific Plan) to establish the land use regulations for the Project Site (including, but not limited to, standards such as densities, heights, uses, parking, signage, open space, and landscape requirements). These regulations would be in addition to those set forth in the planning and zoning provisions of the LAMC, and where they differ from what would be allowed under the LAMC, the Specific Plan would supersede and prevail.

Additionally, the Project includes a proposed Sign District with specific regulations for the Project Site.

³ With the proposed lot merger and vacation of portions of Mesquit Street, the Project Site area would be approximately 5.45 acres or 237,714 net square feet, an increase over the existing Project Site's gross area of 4.62 acres or 201,151 square feet. The FAR may be as low as 4.96:1 if the buildable lot area of the Project Site includes the Deck Concept and the proposed Mesquit Street vacation (361,185 square feet), or as high as 8.9:1 if the lot area includes only the parcels currently under Applicant ownership and does not include the proposed Mesquit Street vacation.

Project implementation would require the removal of all existing on-site uses, including existing freezer, cold storage, and dry storage warehouses and associated office space totaling approximately 205,393 gross square feet of floor area, as well as existing surface parking.

Based on the analysis included in the Draft EIR, the Project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to construction air quality (regional NO_x emissions), operational air quality (regional VOC emissions), Project-level and cumulative on-site construction noise, cumulative off-site construction noise, construction vibration (structural), construction vibration (human annoyance), vehicle miles traveled (regional serving retail), and geometric hazards (freeway safety).

All other potential impacts would be less than significant or mitigated to less-than-significant levels.

4. Public Review Process

Below is a general overview of the environmental review process for the Project, which was conducted in accordance with CEQA.

a) Initial Study

At the onset of the environmental review process and pursuant to the provisions of CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the City prepared an Initial Study and circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for public comment to the State Clearinghouse, Office of Planning and Research, responsible agencies, and other interested parties on April 25, 2017 for a 30-day public review period. The Initial Study was included in Appendix A-2 of the Draft EIR, and the NOP was included in Appendix A-1.

The purpose of the NOP was to formally convey that the City was preparing a Draft EIR for the Project, notify the public regarding a public Scoping Meeting, and solicit input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the Draft EIR. The Scoping Meeting was held on May 8, 2017, from 5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. at Art Share L.A., located at 801 East 4th Place, Los Angeles, CA 90013. The meeting was held in an open house format and provided interested individuals, groups, and public agencies the opportunity to view materials, ask questions, and provide written comments to the City regarding the scope and focus of the Draft EIR as described in the NOP and Initial Study. A copy of attendees and Scoping Meeting Materials was provided in Appendix A-3 of the Draft EIR. Approximately eight individuals attended the public scoping meeting and submitted two written comments at the meeting. Ten written comment letters and emails responding to the NOP were submitted to the City. A copy of written comments received during the NOP circulation period was provided in Appendix A-4, *NOP and Scoping Meeting Comments Received*, of the Draft EIR. Comments received in response to the NOP and Scoping Meeting were summarized in Chapter I, *Introduction*, of the Draft EIR and taken into consideration in the preparation of Chapter IV, *Environmental Impact Analysis*, of the Draft EIR.

b) Draft Environmental Impact Report

Following the circulation of the NOP, the City prepared technical studies and a Draft EIR to identify and evaluate the potential environmental effects of the Project, indicate whether any significant effects could be mitigated or avoided, and analyze potentially feasible alternatives to the Project. The Draft EIR was subject to a 47-day review period during which the document was made available to responsible and trustee agencies, interested parties, and the general public. The public review period commenced on December 30, 2021 and ended on February 14, 2022.

In compliance with the provision of Sections 15085(a) and 15087(a)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines, the City, serving as the Lead Agency: (1) published a Notice of Completion and Availability (NOCA) of a Draft EIR which indicated that the Draft EIR was available for review at the Department of City Planning (221 N. Figueroa Street, Suite 1350, Los Angeles, CA 90012); (2) provided copies of the NOCA and Draft EIR to the Los Angeles Central Library, Little Tokyo Branch Library, and Robert Louis Stevenson Branch Library; (3) posted the NOCA and the Draft EIR on the City's website at <https://planning.lacity.org/development-services/eir>; (4) prepared and transmitted a Notice of Completion (NOC) to the State Clearinghouse; (5) sent a NOCA to all property owners and occupants within 500 feet of the Project Site; (6) published availability of the Draft EIR in the Los Angeles Times, and (7) sent a NOCA to the last known name and address of all organizations and individuals who previously requested such notice in writing or attended public meetings about the Project. Proof of publication is available at the City.

The Department of City Planning received comment letters from six (6) public agencies and organizations which were responded to in this Final EIR. These letters, which were provided through written correspondence and emails, are presented and addressed in Chapter 2, *Responses to Comments*, in this Final EIR.

c) Final Environmental Impact Report

Before approving a project, CEQA requires the Lead Agency to prepare and certify a Final EIR. The Draft EIR and this Final EIR will be submitted to the decision-makers for consideration prior to taking any action on the Project.

The Final EIR is available for public review at the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning at the following location:

Mail: William Lamborn
City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
221 N. Figueroa Street, Suite 1350
Los Angeles, California 90012

Email: William.Lamborn@lacity.org

In addition, the Final EIR is available online at the Los Angeles Department of City Planning's website (<https://planning.lacity.org/development-services/eir>). The Final EIR can be purchased on CD-ROM or USB drive for \$5.00 per copy. Contact William Lamborn of the City of Los Angeles at William.Lamborn@lacity.org to purchase the CD-ROM or USB drive. Copies of the Final EIR are also available at the Los Angeles Central Library, the Little Tokyo Branch Library, and the Robert Louis Stevenson Branch Library.

CEQA requires that the lead agency provide each public agency who commented on the Draft EIR with a copy of the lead agency's proposed response at least 10 days before certifying the Final EIR.