

Chapter I

Introduction

1. Purpose of the Draft EIR

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared for the proposed 656 South San Vicente Medical Office Project (Project). As described in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Sections 15121(a) and 15362, an EIR is an informational document that will inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental impacts resulting from the project, identify possible ways to minimize any significant effects, and consider reasonable project alternatives. The City of Los Angeles (City) is the Lead Agency under the CEQA responsible for preparing this Draft EIR. This Draft EIR has been prepared in conformance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.), and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.). The primary CEQA Guidelines sections governing the content of this document are CEQA Guidelines Sections 15120 through 15132 (Contents of an EIR), and CEQA Guidelines Section 15161 (Project EIR).

The City is responsible for processing and making a decision on the Project pursuant to PRC Section 20167. The City will consider the information in this Draft EIR, along with other information that may be presented during the CEQA process, including the Initial Study and a Final EIR. The EIR will be used in connection with all other permits and approvals necessary for the construction and operation of the Project. The EIR will be used by the City's Department of City Planning (DCP); Department of Building and Safety (LADBS); Department of Transportation (LADOT); and Department of Public Works (LADPW), including the Bureaus of Engineering (BOE) and Sanitation (LASAN); and other responsible public agencies that must approve activities undertaken with respect to the Project.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15121, this Draft EIR provides specific information regarding the environmental effects associated with development of the Project Site and ways to minimize any significant environmental effects through mitigation measures or reasonable alternatives to the Project. This Draft EIR complies with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064, which discusses determining the significance of the environmental effects caused by a project. For some effects, significant environmental impacts cannot be mitigated to a level considered less than significant; in such cases, impacts are considered significant and unavoidable. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section

15093(b), if a public agency approves a project that has significant impacts that are not substantially mitigated (i.e., significant unavoidable impacts where impacts cannot be mitigated to less-than-significant levels), the agency must state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project, based on the Final EIR and any other information in the public record for the project. This is known as a “statement of overriding considerations.”

This document analyzes the environmental effects of the Project, as described in detail in **Chapter II, *Project Description***, of this Draft EIR to the degree of specificity appropriate to the actions by the Project, as required under CEQA Guidelines Section 15146. This analysis considers the actions associated with the Project to determine the short-term and long-term effects associated with their implementation. This Draft EIR discusses both the direct and indirect impacts of this Project, as well as the cumulative impacts associated with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. CEQA requires the preparation of an objective, full disclosure document to inform agency decision-makers and the general public of the direct and indirect environmental effects of the proposed action, including mitigation measures and reasonable alternatives that can reduce or eliminate any identified significant adverse impacts.

2. EIR Scoping Process

In compliance with the CEQA Guidelines, the City has taken steps to provide opportunities for participation in the environmental process. During the preparation of the Draft EIR, an effort was made to contact various State, regional, and local government agencies and other interested parties to solicit comments and inform the public of the Project. As further described below, this included the distribution and noticing of an Initial Study and Notice of Preparation (NOP), and conducting a public scoping meeting.

a) Initial Study

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a), the City prepared an Initial Study. The Initial Study determined that the Project had the potential to result in significant impacts associated with a number of environmental issues. As a result, the Initial Study determined that this Draft EIR should address those environmental issues where the Project could result in significant environmental impacts and consider mitigation measures.

The Draft EIR focuses primarily on changes in the environment that would result from the Project, individually and cumulatively with other development projects. The Draft EIR identifies potentially significant direct and indirect impacts resulting from construction and operation of the Project and provides project design features and mitigation measures to reduce or avoid such effects. Based on public input

and the results of the Initial Study, this Draft EIR addresses environmental effects in the following areas:

- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Fire Protection
- Police Protection
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources

Based on the Initial Study, environmental issues for which no significant impacts are anticipated to occur, including aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, biological resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, mineral resources, population and housing, public services (as it relates to schools, parks, and libraries), recreation, utilities and services systems, and wildfire, are addressed in **Chapter VI, Other CEQA Considerations**, of this Draft EIR. See also the Initial Study in Appendix A, of this Draft EIR.

b) Notice of Preparation

Pursuant to the provision of CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the City circulated an NOP to relevant State, regional, and local agencies, interested organizations, and members of the public including owners and occupants of properties within a 500-foot radius of the Project Site boundaries for a 30-day period, commencing January 14, 2020 and ending February 13, 2020. The purpose of the NOP was to formally convey that the City was preparing a Draft EIR for the Project and to solicit input regarding the scope and content of the Draft EIR. See Appendix A, of this Draft EIR.

c) Public Scoping Meeting

The NOP included notification that a public scoping meeting would be held to further inform public agencies and other interested parties of the Project and to solicit input regarding the Draft EIR. The public scoping meeting was held on January 28, 2020, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Council of Jewish Women

located at 543 North Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90048. The meeting was held in an open house or workshop format and provided public agencies and interested parties the opportunity to view materials, ask questions, and provide oral and written comments to the City regarding the scope and focus of the Draft EIR as described in the NOP and Initial Study. The scoping meeting materials and other documentation from the scoping meeting are provided in Appendix A, of this Draft EIR.

d) Comments Received

A total of 23 written comment letters and emails responding to the NOP were submitted to the City. Comment letters were received from various public agencies and organizations, including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), LA Sanitation (LASAN), the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), State Clearinghouse, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD); as well as various organizations, business, interested parties, and area residents. During the public scoping meeting, eight individuals signed the sign-in sheet that was provided. However, no written public comments were received during the public scoping meeting. Public comments received during the NOP circulation period are provided in **Appendix A**, of this Draft EIR.

3. Format of the Draft EIR

The Draft EIR includes an Executive Summary, nine chapters, and appendices, which are organized as follows:

Executive Summary. This chapter of the Draft EIR provides an overview of the entire document in a concise, summarized format. It briefly describes the Project (location and key Project features), the CEQA review process and focus, identifies effects found to be significant and unavoidable, identifies areas of controversy, provides a summary of the Project alternatives (descriptions and conclusions regarding comparative impacts), and provides a summary of Project impacts, project design features and mitigation measures, and the level of impact significance following implementation of mitigation measures.

- I. Introduction.** This chapter describes the purpose of the EIR, including CEQA compliance requirements, the steps undertaken to date regarding implementation of the CEQA process, and summarizes the Draft EIR's organization.
- II. Project Description.** This chapter describes the location, objectives, and physical and operational characteristics of the Project.

- III. Environmental Setting.** This chapter presents an overview of the Project's environmental setting, including on-site and surrounding land uses. This chapter also provides a list and the mapped locations of past, present, and probable future projects (i.e., related projects) considered in the analysis of potential Project contributions to cumulative impacts.
- IV. Environmental Impact Analysis.** This chapter contains the environmental setting, regulatory framework, methodology, thresholds of significance, Project characteristics and/or project design features, Project-specific and cumulative impact analyses, mitigation measures, and conclusions regarding the level of significance after mitigation for each of the following environmental issues: (A) Air Quality; (B) Cultural Resources; (C) Energy; (D) Geology and Soils; (E) Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions; (F) Land Use and Planning; (G) Noise; (H.1) Fire Protection; (H.2) Police Protection; (I) Transportation; and (J) Tribal Cultural Resources.
- V. Alternatives.** This chapter describes a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project, including the No Project/No Build Alternative, Development under Existing Zoning Alternative, Reduced Square Footage Alternative, and Residential Mixed-Use Alternative. This chapter also evaluates the environmental effects of the alternatives for each issue area analyzed in the Draft EIR.
- VI. Other CEQA Considerations.** This chapter includes a discussion of issues required by CEQA that are not covered in other chapters. This includes significant unavoidable impacts, reasons why the Project is being proposed, notwithstanding significant unavoidable impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, potential secondary effects caused by the implementation of the mitigation measures for the Project, and effects found not to be significant.
- VII. References.** This chapter lists the references and sources used in the preparation of this Draft EIR.
- VIII. List of EIR Preparers and Organizations and Persons Contacted.** This chapter lists the persons, public agencies, and organizations that were consulted or who contributed to the preparation of this Draft EIR.
- IX. Acronyms and Abbreviations.** This chapter defines acronyms used in the Draft EIR.

The Environmental Impact Analyses in this Draft EIR are supported by the following appendices:

- Appendix A – Notice of Preparation (NOP), Initial Study, Scoping Meeting Materials, and NOP and Scoping Meeting Comments
 - A-1 NOP
 - A-2 Initial Study and Appendices
 - A-3 Scoping Meeting Materials
 - A-4 NOP and Scoping Meeting Comments
- Appendix B – Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Appendix
- Appendix C – Historic Resources Assessment
- Appendix D – Cultural Resources Assessment
- Appendix E – Energy Calculations
- Appendix F – Geotechnical Investigation
- Appendix G – Land Use Plans and Policies: Project Consistency Tables
- Appendix H – Noise Analysis
- Appendix I – Public Service Letters
 - I-1 Los Angeles Fire Department Correspondence
 - I-2 Los Angeles Police Department Correspondence
- Appendix J – Transportation Analysis
 - J-1 Traffic Assessment
 - J-2 LADOT Correspondence Approving the Transportation Assessment
- Appendix K – Tribal Cultural Resources Correspondence
 - K-1 AB 52 Notification Letters
 - K-2 AB 52 Response Letters and Evidence

4. Public Review of the Draft EIR

The Draft EIR is subject to a 45-day review period in which the document is made available to responsible and trustee agencies and interested parties. In compliance with the provision of CEQA Guidelines Sections 15085(a) and 15087(a)(1), the City, serving as the Lead Agency: (1) published a Notice of Completion (NOC) and a Notice of Availability (NOA) 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) posted the NOC/NOA and the Draft EIR on the City's website at <https://planning.lacity.org/development->

services/eir; (3) prepared and transmitted the NOC to the State Clearinghouse; (4) sent a copy of the NOC/NOA to all property owners and occupants within 500 feet of the Project Site; and (5) sent a copy of the NOC/NOA 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 public review period commenced on June 17, 2021 and will end on August 2, 2021 for a total of 45 days.

Any public agency or members of the public desiring to comment on the Draft EIR must submit their comments in writing or send them via email to the following address prior to the end of the public review period:

Mail: *Paul Caporaso
City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
221 N. Figueroa Street, Suite 1350
Los Angeles, California 90012*

Email: *paul.caporaso@lacity.org*

Upon the close of the public review period, the City will proceed to evaluate and prepare responses to all relevant oral and written comments received from public agencies and other interested parties during the public review period. A Final EIR will then be prepared. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15132, the Final EIR will consist of possible revisions to the Draft EIR, comments submitted by responsible agencies or reviewing parties during the public circulation period for the Draft EIR, and City responses to those comments. After the Final EIR is completed and at least 10 days prior to its certification, responses to comments made by public agencies on the Draft EIR will be provided to the commenting agencies.

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