

Chapter III

Environmental Setting

1. Overview of Environmental Setting

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15125 requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) include a description of the existing physical environment. This chapter provides a general overview of the existing regional and local setting in which the Project Site is located and a brief description of the existing conditions at the Project Site. Detailed information on existing conditions for each environmental issue is provided in **Chapter IV, *Environmental Impact Analysis***, of this Draft EIR. This chapter also provides an overview of other potential reasonably foreseeable projects (i.e., related projects) in the vicinity of the Project Site that the City of Los Angeles (City) has determined could potentially result in cumulative impacts and are considered as part of the cumulative impacts analysis.

a) On-Site Conditions

The Project Site is presently developed with a 5,738 square-foot vacant educational building and an 8,225 square-foot Big 5 Sporting Goods store.¹ Surface parking associated with these uses is located on the southeastern portion of the Project Site, abutting the frontage road of South San Vicente Boulevard, South Sweetzer Avenue, and the alley to the northeast. Additional surface parking is located in the middle of the Project Site between the two buildings, and to the rear of the Big 5 Sporting Goods store. All parking areas are accessible from two driveways located along the frontage road of South San Vicente Boulevard and two driveways located along the shared alley.

b) Surrounding Uses

The Project Site is in a highly urbanized area, bordered by mid-and high-rise commercial, office, and medical-related uses along a frontage road of South San Vicente Boulevard and Wilshire Boulevard to the west and south. Directly northwest of the Project Site along South San Vicente Boulevard, is a five-story

¹ The 5,738 square-foot vacant building previously housed the Montessori Children's World School. As the building was vacated October 2018, credit for this use was included as part of the baseline under CEQA as this reflects the amount of floor area that was in active use during the past two years.

office building with existing rooftop billboards, and an associated four-story parking structure. Further north is a three-story rehabilitation center. Directly across from the Project Site in the City of Beverly Hills is a 10-story office building with ground floor commercial uses. North of the 10-story office building, is a three-story office/retail building and two apartment complexes, two- and three-stories in height. To the south, across from the intersection of South San Vicente Boulevard and Wilshire Boulevard, is a low-rise commercial center and associated surface parking. To the southeast, fronting Wilshire Boulevard is a 22-story medical office building owned by Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Directly east of the Project Site, across from South Sweetzer Avenue, is a two-story brick building used as office space. East of the brick building, is a 12-story office building used by the Jewish Federation Goldsmith Center and the five-story Los Angeles Obchestvo Remeslenogo Truda (ORT) College.

Directly northeast of the Project Site across the alley are two, two-story apartment buildings. Further to the north and east, along Orange Street and South Sweetzer Avenue, are low-rise multi-family and single-family residential uses, located within and area identified by Survey LA as the proposed 6th Street-Orange Street Multi-Family Residential Historic District.² Low-rise single-family and multi-family residential uses are also located to the south, across from Wilshire Boulevard. Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and the Beverly Center are located approximately 0.68 miles to the northwest; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art campus (LACMA) and La Brea Tar Pits are located approximately 0.75 miles to the southeast.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Purple Line Extension project includes the development of a station planned at the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and La Cienega Boulevard (Wilshire/La Cienega Metro D (Purple) Line Station) and would be located 0.25 miles to the west of the Project Site. The service at this station is anticipated to be operational in 2023.

c) Existing Transportation System

Regional access to the Project Site is provided by the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10), which runs east-west approximately 2 miles to the south of the Project Site, the Hollywood Freeway (US-101), which runs north-south approximately 4 miles east of the Project Site and the San Diego Freeway (I-405), which runs north-south approximately 4 miles west of the Project Site.

The Project Site is currently served by four Metro bus lines (30/330, 20/720, 728 and 105/705), one Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) bus route (786), and

² SurveyLA, Wilshire Historic Districts, Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources, January 26, 2015.

is within 1,500 feet of the future Wilshire/La Cienega Metro D (Purple) Line Station,³ which is currently under construction and is anticipated to be operational in 2023.

Maps and aerial photos depicting the Project Site and surrounding uses are provided in **Chapter II, *Project Description***, of this Draft EIR.

d) Existing Conditions

Detailed descriptions of the environmental setting relevant to each of the environmental topics evaluated in this Draft EIR have been prepared and are included in **Chapter IV, *Environmental Impact Analysis***, in Sections IV.A through IV.J, of this Draft EIR.

e) Land Use Plans

City land use plans applicable to the Project Site include: the City of Los Angeles General Plan and Framework Element; the Mobility Plan 2035; the Citywide Design Guidelines; and the Wilshire Community Plan (Community Plan). Regional plans that are applicable to the Project Site include: the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Connect SoCal: 2020–2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2020-2045 RTP/SCS) and the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP).

2. Related Projects

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires that the EIR discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15355 as "an impact which is created as a result of the combination of a project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts." As identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b), the discussion of cumulative impacts shall "reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone."

Either of the following is necessary to conduct an adequate analysis of cumulative impacts:

³ Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), FAQ, <https://www.metro.net/projects/westside/faq-westside/>, accessed April 9, 2020.

- A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or
- A summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(3), the City has determined in its independent judgement, based on the size and scale of the Project analysis and related projects in the area, 0.25 miles is the appropriate radius applied for the identification of related projects for this Project. This distance includes a portion of the City of Beverly Hills and known development projects in the Wilshire Community Plan area.

A review of the 0.25-mile radius for related projects revealed that the 0.25-mile distance encompasses approximately four known projects (two in the City of Los Angeles, one in the City of Beverly Hills, and one infrastructure project), that may potentially contribute to cumulative impacts. The list of four identified related projects is provided in **Table III-1, *Related Projects List***, with the locations of each of the related projects presented in **Figure III-1, *Related Projects Map***. Although the projects listed in Table III-1 serve as the primary basis for evaluation of cumulative impacts, the individual projects considered may vary from one environmental issue to the next as the geographic context of certain issue areas varies. The cumulative analysis for each environmental issue, including a discussion regarding the identification of relevant related projects, is provided in each environmental section in **Chapter IV, *Environmental Impact Analysis***, of this Draft EIR. Note that non-CEQA related traffic analysis required by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) includes a more expanded radius (i.e., 0.25 miles from the furthest analyzed study intersection), which captures 17 related projects from the City of Los Angeles and City of Beverly Hills, and one infrastructure related project, for a total of 18 related projects. A discussion of this expanded study area is discussed further in **Section IV.I, *Transportation***, of this Draft EIR.

**TABLE III-1
RELATED PROJECTS LIST**

Project	Project Address	Land Use	Size	Unit
City of Los Angeles				
1	6401-6419 Wilshire Boulevard	Residential	90	du
		Retail	5,100	sf
2	488 South San Vicente Boulevard	Residential	53	du
		Retail	6,585	sf
City of Beverly Hills				
3	55 North La Cienega Boulevard	Hotel	200	rooms
Infrastructure Project				
4	Metro Purple Line Extension	Metro Wilshire/Western Station to Metro Westwood/Veterans Administration Hospital Station	-	-

ksf = thousand square feet; du = dwelling units; ac = acres; stu = students

SOURCE: Gibson Transportation Consulting, Inc., 2020.



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656 South San Vicente Medical Office Project

Figure III-1
Related Projects Map