

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The subject of this Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA) is the proposed Belmont Village Senior Living Westwood II project (Project) at 10822 W. Wilshire Boulevard and 10812 W. Ashton Avenue (Project Site). The Project is discussed in further detail in **Section 2.0, Project Description**. The Project Site is located within the adopted Westwood Community Plan Area of the City of Los Angeles. The City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This SCEA has been prepared pursuant to Section 21155.2 of the Public Resources Code (PRC).

Project Information

Project Title: Belmont Village Senior Village Westwood II

Project Applicant: Stephen Brollier
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Lead Agency: City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning
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Project Summary

The proposed Project would construct a new 12-story, 176,580-square foot Eldercare Facility containing up to 53 Senior Independent Housing dwelling units, 77 Assisted Living Care Housing guest rooms, 46 Alzheimer's/Dementia Care Housing guest rooms, and associated residential amenity and service areas on the northern portion of the project site located at 10822 Wilshire Boulevard that is owned by the Westwood Presbyterian Church (Church). In addition, the Eldercare Facility would provide a new 2,520-square foot fellowship hall on the ground level fronting Wilshire Boulevard for use by the Church, and 2,923 square feet of shared spaces consisting of a multipurpose and toddler room, pantry, kitchen, and storage space to be used by both the Church and the residents of the Eldercare Facility. The Project would also construct a new two-story, 19,703-square foot Education Center containing 10,238 square feet of classroom, administrative, and multipurpose/group space and 1,845 square feet of church related administrative offices on the southern portion of the project site at 10812 Ashton Avenue. A minimum of 184 parking spaces for the Project would be provided on the ground level adjacent to the Education Center and within a three-level subterranean parking garage. The Project would also provide up to 27 short-term and 43 long-term bicycle parking spaces. To allow for construction of the Project, the Church's existing preschool, fellowship hall, administrative offices, and a surface parking lot located at 10822 Wilshire Boulevard, and a Church-owned single-family residence located at 10812 Ashton Avenue would be demolished. The Church's existing Sanctuary located on the northern portion of the project site fronting Wilshire Boulevard would remain. Export of approximately 62,000 cubic yards of earth materials and approval of a haul route would be required.

The discretionary entitlements, reviews, permits and approvals required to implement the Project include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- **Eldercare Facility Unified Permit** pursuant to LAMC Section 14.3.1 to allow the construction

of an Eldercare Facility in the R5 and R1 zones with the following associated development characteristics:

- A maximum building height of 12 stories/157 feet, in lieu of the 6 story/75 foot height limit set forth in the Wilshire-Westwood Scenic Corridor Specific Plan;
- A building width in excess of 75 feet in consideration of a lack of shade and shadow impacts, pursuant to the Specific Plan;
- Parking in compliance with the LAMC's Eldercare Facility and bicycle parking requirements, in lieu of the 2.5 space per dwelling unit requirements of the Wilshire-Westwood Scenic Corridor Specific Plan;
- Eldercare Facility use in the R1 zone, in conjunction with the Project's proposed subterranean garage being partially located in the R1 zone;
- Setback reductions from the residential and institutional setback requirements of LAMC Sections 12.12 C and 12.21 C.3 as follows:
 - Zero-foot side yard setbacks for the Eldercare Facility where it abuts the Sanctuary;
 - Zero-foot rear yard setback for the Eldercare Facility where it abuts the Project Site's R5/R1 zone boundary; and
 - Zero-foot side and rear yard setbacks for the Sanctuary Building where it abuts the Eldercare Facility.
- Interior common open space to comprise more than 25 percent of the Eldercare Facility's total common open space, in lieu of the requirements of LAMC Section 12.21 G;
- Creation of an approximately 3,641 square foot R1-zoned portion of the Eldercare Facility development site in lieu of the minimum lot area standards of LAMC Section 12.08 C.4; and
- Location, utilization, and access between accessory and main buildings and uses on the R5- and R1-zoned portions of the Eldercare Facility development site in lieu of the restrictions imposed by LAMC Section 12.21 C.5(h).
- **Conditional Use Permit** pursuant to LAMC Section 12.24 W.51 and 12.24 W.9 to allow the proposed Childcare Facility's childcare facility and church administrative office uses within the R1 zone, and the following associated deviations from the otherwise applicable height and area requirements pursuant to LAMC Section 12.24 F:
 - Maximum building height of 33 feet, 3 inches measured from lowest grade to top of building, in lieu of 28 feet and application of an encroachment plane height limit established by LAMC Sections 12.21.1 and 12.08 C.5(a);
 - Consistent side yard setbacks of 5 feet in lieu of those setback dimensions and building plane break dimensions otherwise required by the R1 zone LAMC Section 12.08 C.2 and LAMC Section 12.21 C.3;
 - Floor area of 19,703 square feet (utilizing LAMC Floor Area calculations in lieu of LAMC Residential Floor Area calculations) and corresponding 1.24:1 FAR for the proposed Childcare Center's lot in lieu of the 0.45:1 FAR otherwise permitted by LAMC Section 12.08 C.5(a);
- **Site Plan Review** pursuant to LAMC Section 16.05 for the development of 50 or more dwelling units or guest rooms in connection with the Eldercare Facility.
- **Design Review and Project Permit Compliance** pursuant to LAMC Sections 16.50 and

11.5.7.C and the Wilshire-Westwood Scenic Corridor Specific Plan.

- **Vesting Tentative Tract Map** pursuant to LAMC Section 17.15 to create three ground lots (Lot 1 would accommodate the Sanctuary, Lot 2 would accommodate the Eldercare Facility, and Lot 3 would accommodate the Childcare Facility) and multiple commercial condominium units, designation of yards as shown on the proposed map, provision of a public access easement for a Fire Department turnaround in lieu of a dedication of land for a public right of way, and to grant approval of a haul route.
- Other permits and approvals that may be deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, street tree and protected tree removal permits, temporary street closure permits, grading permits, excavation permits, foundation permits, building permits, and sign permits.

Background Information on Senate Bill 375 and the SCEA

The State of California has adopted Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), also known as "The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008," which outlines growth strategies that better integrate regional land use and transportation planning in order to help meet the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction mandates. SB 375 requires the State's 18 metropolitan planning organizations to incorporate a "sustainable communities strategy" (SCS) into the regional transportation plans to achieve their respective region's GHG emission reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). SB 375 provides various CEQA streamlining provisions for projects that are consistent with an adopted applicable SCS and meet certain objective criteria; one such CEQA streamlining tool is the SCEA.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the metropolitan planning organization for the County of Los Angeles (along with the Counties of Imperial, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, and Ventura). On April 7, 2016, SCAG's Regional Council adopted the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016-2040 RTP/SCS). The 2016-2040 RTP/SCS is a long-range visioning plan that builds upon and expands land use and transportation strategies established over several planning cycles to increase mobility options and achieve a more sustainable growth pattern within the SCAG region, including achieving CARB's GHG reduction goals. For the SCAG region, CARB has set GHG emissions reduction targets at 8 percent below 2005 per capita emissions levels by 2020, and 13 percent below 2005 per capita emissions levels by 2035. The 2016-2040 RTP/SCS outlines strategies to meet or exceed the targets set by CARB. By Executive Order, approved June 28, 2016, CARB officially determined that the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS would achieve CARB's 2020 and 2035 GHG emission reduction targets. These targets were updated in 2018 to an 8 percent reduction by 2020 and a 19 percent reduction by 2035 in per capita passenger vehicle GHG emissions, which became effective October 1, 2018.

On September 3, 2020, SCAG's Regional Council approved and adopted the Connect SoCal plan (2020–2045 RTP/SCS) which, similar to the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS, sets forth goals, policies, and programs intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve active transportation, and promote development near existing transportation networks. CARB has not yet certified the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS; accordingly, this SCEA primarily assesses the Project in relation to the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS, with supplemental references to and assessment of the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS, as applicable.

SB 375 allows the City, acting as lead agency, to prepare a SCEA as the environmental CEQA clearance for "transit priority projects" (as described below) that are consistent with SCAG's RTP/SCS.

Transit Priority Project Criteria

SB 375 provides CEQA streamlining benefits to qualifying transit priority projects (TPPs), including preparation of a SCEA. For purposes of projects in the SCAG region, a qualifying TPP is a project that meets the following four criteria [see PRC Section 21155 (a) and (b)]:

1. Is consistent with the general use designation, density, building intensity, and applicable policies specified for the project area in the SCAG RTP/SCS;
2. Contains at least 50 percent residential use, based on total building square footage and, if the project contains between 26 percent and 50 percent nonresidential uses, a floor area ratio of not less than 0.75;
3. Provides a minimum net density of at least 20 units per acre; and
4. Is within one-half mile of a major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor included in a regional transportation plan.

SCEA Process and Streamlining Provisions

Qualifying TPPs that have incorporated all feasible mitigation measures and performance standards or criteria set forth in the prior applicable EIRs¹ and that are determined to not result in significant and unavoidable environmental impacts may be approved with a SCEA. The specific substantive and procedural requirements for the approval of a SCEA include the following:

1. An initial study shall be prepared for a SCEA to identify all significant impacts or potentially significant impacts, except for the following:
 - a. Growth-inducing impacts, and
 - b. Project-specific or cumulative impacts from cars and light trucks on global warming or the regional transportation network.
2. The initial study shall identify any cumulative impacts that have been adequately addressed and mitigated in a prior applicable certified EIR. Where the lead agency determines the impact has been adequately addressed and mitigated, the impact shall not be cumulatively considerable.
3. The SCEA shall contain mitigation measures that either avoid or mitigate to a level of insignificance all potentially significant or significant effects of the project required to be identified in the initial study.
4. A draft of the SCEA shall be circulated for a public comment period not less than 30 days, and the lead agency shall consider all comments received prior to acting on the SCEA.
5. The SCEA may be approved by the lead agency after the lead agency's legislative body conducts a public hearing, reviews comments received, and finds the following:

¹ *As a new predominantly residential project to be developed at an urban infill site that is within a SCAG-identified High Quality Transit Area (as well as a Transit Priority Area), the most relevant prior EIR for the Project is the SCAG 2016-2040 RTP/SCS Program EIR, which was adopted in April 2016. The 2016-2040 RTP/SCS Program EIR's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program includes various mitigation measures, both at the regional level that would be implemented by SCAG and at the project level that would be implemented by the lead agency.*

- a) All potentially significant or significant effects required to be identified in the initial study have been identified and analyzed, and
 - b) With respect to each significant effect on the environment required to be identified in the initial study, either of the following apply:
 - i. Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project that avoid or mitigate the significant effects to a level of insignificance.
 - ii. Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been, or can and should be, adopted by that other agency.
6. The lead agency's decision to review and approve a TPP with a SCEA shall be reviewed under the substantial evidence standard.

1.1 REQUIRED FINDINGS

Based on a review of the entire administrative record, the City of Los Angeles has determined that the Project qualifies for a SCEA, based on the following criteria:

1. The Project qualifies as a TPP pursuant to PRC Section 21155(b) because it contains more than 50 percent residential use; provides a minimum net density greater than 20 units an acre; and is within 0.5 mile of a major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor included in a regional transportation plan;
2. The Project is a residential or mixed-use project as defined by PRC Section 21159.28(d);
3. The Project is consistent with the general use designation, density, building intensity, and applicable policies specified for the Project area in the RTP/SCS prepared by SCAG;
4. The Project incorporates all feasible mitigation measures, performance standards, or criteria set forth in the prior applicable environmental reports and adopted findings made pursuant to PRC Section 21081, including the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS Program EIR;
5. All potentially significant or significant effects required to be identified and analyzed pursuant to CEQA have been identified and analyzed in an initial study; and
6. With respect to each significant effect on the environment required to be identified in the initial study, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Project that avoid or mitigate the significant effects to a level of less than significant.

Therefore, the City of Los Angeles finds that the Project complies with the requirements of CEQA for using a SCEA as authorized pursuant to Public Resource Code Section 21155.2(b).

1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE SCEA

This SCEA is organized into four sections as follows:

Section 1.0: Introduction provides introductory information, such as the Project title, the Project Applicant, and the lead agency for the Project, and background information regarding SB 375, the TPP criteria, and the required content of the SCEA.

Section 2.0: Project Description provides a detailed description of the Project, including the environmental setting, Project characteristics, related project information, Project objectives, and environmental clearance requirements.

Section 3.0: SCEA Criteria, Transit Priority Project Consistency Analysis, RTP/SCS EIR Measures. This section includes a discussion of the Project’s consistency with the TPP criteria listed above and demonstrates that the Project satisfies all necessary criteria for approval of a SCEA as set forth in PRC Sections 21155 and 21155.2. In addition, this section also identifies all of the mitigation measures contained in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for SCAG’s 2016–2040 RTP/SCS Program EIR and provides a discussion of the applicability of the mitigation measures to the Project.

Section 4.0: Sustainable Communities Environmental Analysis/Initial Study identifies each environmental issue identified in the Initial Study Checklist which contains an assessment and discussion of impacts associated with each subject area. When the evaluation identifies potentially significant effects, as identified in the Checklist, mitigation measures are provided to reduce such impacts to a less than significant level.

In addition, appendices include Project-specific reports and data used to support the analysis and determinations in this SCEA.