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NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING FOR THE CITYWIDE HOUSING ELEMENT 2021-2029 UPDATE AND SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE

TO: Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

DATE: January 13, 2021

The City of Los Angeles is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a project involving updates to the City of Los Angeles General Plan, including the Housing Element, as well as associated necessary updates to the Safety Element to comply with State law (“Housing Element Update” or “Project”). The proposed Housing Element Update establishes programs, policies and actions to further the goal of meeting the existing and projected housing needs of all income levels of the community, provides evidence of the City’s ability to accommodate the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation through the year 2029, as established by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and identifies a rezoning program needed to reach the required housing capacity. The Project also includes necessary updates to the Safety Element, which are triggered under State law upon the update to the Housing Element. More details on the Project are provided below.

The City is requesting identification of environmental issues, environmental impacts, and information that you or your organization believes needs to be considered and analyzed in the EIR, including environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives.

NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21083.9 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3 (“CEQA Guidelines”) Section 15082(c)(1), the Lead Agency will conduct two public scoping meetings for the purpose of soliciting written comments from interested parties requesting notice, responsible agencies, agencies with jurisdiction by law, trustee agencies, transportation agencies, and involved federal agencies, as to the appropriate scope and content of the EIR.

The Public Scoping Meetings will be held in an online format using GoToWebinar, to share information regarding the Project and the environmental review process, and provide information on how interested parties can provide written comments. City staff and environmental consultants will be available during this meeting which will begin with a pre-recorded presentation with options

in both English and Spanish. The City is holding two Public Scoping Meetings; however, the content presented will be the same at both meetings. After the Public Scoping Meeting has ended, a copy of the prerecorded presentation will be posted to the Department's website at <https://planning.lacity.org/development-services/eir/housing-element-2021-2029-update-safety-element-update>.

The City encourages all interested individuals and organizations to attend this meeting. Questions may be submitted in English or Spanish via the 'Questions' chat box in the control panel, but there will be no verbal comments or public testimony taken at the Public Scoping Meeting. Interested parties wishing to provide comments or public testimony should provide them in writing, as described under "Submittal of Written Comments," below. No decisions about the Project will be made at the Public Scoping Meeting. A separate public hearing for the update to the City of Los Angeles General Plan will be scheduled after the completion of the EIR. The date, time, and virtual location of the Public Scoping Meetings are as follows:

SCOPING MEETING DATES

Note: content presented will be the same at both meetings.

Date:	January 26, 2021	Date:	January 28, 2021
Time:	5:15 PM – 6:30 PM	Time:	11:15 AM – 12:30 PM
Place:	Virtual Meeting Visit joinwebinar.com and enter webinar ID and email address	Place:	Virtual Meeting Visit joinwebinar.com and enter webinar ID and email address
Webinar ID:	733-042-203 (English) 248-966-475 (Spanish)	Webinar ID:	715-621-491 (English) 679-132-603 (Spanish)

ACCOMMODATIONS: As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate. Closed captioning or other assistive services may be provided upon request. Other services, such as translation between English and other languages, may also be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request no later than three working days (72 hours) prior to the meeting by contacting Cally Hardy at (213) 978-1643 or cally.hardy@lacity.org.

RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

The City requests your agency's views on the scope and content of the environmental information relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project, in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15082(b). Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by the City when considering any permits or other project approvals that your agency must issue. As such, your responses to this Notice of Preparation (NOP), at a minimum should identify: (1) the significant environmental issues and reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that your agency will need to have explored in the EIR; and (2) whether your agency will be a responsible or trustee agency for this Project.

REVIEW AND RESPONSE PERIOD

January 13, 2021 to February 15, 2021

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b), responses to this NOP must be provided during this response period.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Los Angeles Citywide Housing Element 2021-2029 Update, Safety Element Update, and rezone program (hereafter referred to as the “Housing Element Update” or “Project”) will apply to the entire geographic area located within the boundaries of the City of Los Angeles (City), which encompasses 467 square miles. Figure 1 shows the boundaries of the City within the southern California region.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Housing Element is one of the eight State-mandated elements of the General Plan and identifies the City’s housing conditions and needs, establishes the goals, objectives, and policies that are the foundation of the City’s housing strategy, and provides an array of programs to create sustainable, mixed-income neighborhoods across the City.

The Housing Element Law, enacted in 1969, mandates that local governments adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community through the preparation of a Housing Element. The law requires local governments to adopt land use plans and regulatory systems that provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development. The law requires the update of the Housing Element every eight years. The Housing Element Update will establish new policies, goals, and programs for the City to accommodate the City’s required housing needs allocation as determined by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The Update to the Housing Element is required to be adopted by October 15, 2021 and will be in effect through October 2029.

Housing Element law also requires that HCD review local Housing Elements for compliance with State law and report written findings to the local government. The City expects to submit the Draft Housing Element to HCD in the summer of 2021. Following release of the Draft Housing Element, HCD will provide comments to the City, which will be incorporated in a revised Housing Element that will be submitted to HCD by no later than October 15, 2021.

The Safety Element is one of the eight State-mandated elements of the General Plan. The purpose of the update to the Safety Element is to comply with recent State legislation and guidelines (such as Senate Bill 2141, Assembly Bill 162, Senate Bill 99, Assembly Bill 747, Senate Bill 1035 and Senate Bill 379). Technical amendments will be made to the Safety Element to achieve compliance with State, regional and local policies and guidelines. The technical amendments will incorporate data and maps, address vulnerability to climate change; incorporate policies and programs from the City’s updates to the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Floodplain Management Plan, as well as partial or full integration of other recent city documents (including but limited to: Resilient Los Angeles, LA’s Green New Deal / 2019 Sustainability Plan and the Emergency Management Department Emergency Plans and Annexes). The Safety Element amendments will be submitted to the California Geological Survey, California Office of Emergency Services, California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, and Federal Emergency Management Agency for review.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project involves state mandated updates to the Housing Element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan to generally further the goal of meeting the existing and projected housing needs of all income levels of the community, and specifically to demonstrate compliance by documenting adequate sites to accommodate the RHNA allocation through the year 2029, as established by SCAG. As of September 3, 2020, the City’s Draft RHNA Allocation is 455,577 units. SCAG is

expected to issue the final RHNA Allocation in February 2021, pending the completion of the RHNA appeals process; however, the City does not anticipate a significant change to the RHNA Allocation as a result of that process.

In order to ensure compliance with State law, the City anticipates amending the Safety Element to formally integrate related long-range planning efforts, such as the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, and to address recently adopted State requirements pertaining to climate change and wildfire. Technical revisions to related General Plan Elements, including but not limited to the Plan for a Healthy LA and Framework Element, may be required to ensure consistency with the updated Housing Element and new State law requirements pertaining to the Safety Element and Environmental Justice Element.

Under State Housing Element law, the Project is required to identify an inventory of land suitable for residential development (“Opportunity Sites”) that can be developed during the eight-year planning period to accommodate the RHNA Allocation by income category (“Sites Inventory”). The City is not required to physically construct the 455,577-unit RHNA Allocation, but must demonstrate adequate zoning capacity. The Opportunity Sites are selected based on criteria established in state law regarding the adequacy and suitability of zoning, development standards, and infrastructure capacity needed to accommodate new housing development (GC §65583.2). The number of unit capacity assigned to each Opportunity Site is based on what can be realistically accommodated on each site and must consider impediments to the development of non-vacant sites.

The Project will analyze the reasonable “worst case” scenario of environmental impacts from future implementation of the Housing Element 2021-2029, which is the full build-out of the City’s RHNA Allocation. The most substantial potential impact under this approach relates to the potential construction and operation of between 419,261 and 429,261 housing units, which represents the City’s current Draft RHNA Allocation of 455,577 units, less the 36,316 already approved pipeline housing units expected to receive a certificate of occupancy (COO) during the sixth cycle. The high end of the range reflects a 10,000-unit buffer, to account for potential increases to the final RHNA Allocation figure. The RHNA Allocation represents the City’s housing goal over the eight-year planning period. Considering the production of between 419,261 to 429,261 units is intended to provide an analysis of the reasonable worst-case scenario with respect to environmental impacts associated with future implementation of the Housing Element 2021-2029.

Construction of these 419,261 to 429,261 housing units may occur anywhere in the City where residential uses are permitted, as described below. While many units are anticipated to be built on the Opportunity Sites required to be identified in the Sites Inventory, it is not reasonable to expect that housing development will occur solely on those Opportunity Sites. Housing may occur on a wide variety of sites, including any site that is currently zoned for residential use; whereas the Opportunity Sites are subject to a number of requirements to demonstrate the suitability and realistic likelihood of development of each site. Housing may also occur on sites that do not currently allow residential uses or multi-family residential uses of adequate density, including sites that will be rezoned in the future under a Housing Element rezoning implementation program (Re-Zoned Sites). The rezoning program will need to be completed by 2024 and will likely be accomplished through updates to the City’s Community Plans, an update to the City’s Density Bonus program, targeted zone changes and zoning ordinances, and updates to specific plans and overlays. The rezoning program will prioritize opportunities for rezoning or development incentives in areas that are located in a Transit Priority Area, near major job centers, and in higher resource areas.

The anticipated 419,261 to 429,261 units may occur in types of development such as multi-family residential, single-family residential, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), mixed use development, and conversion and/or rehabilitation of existing nonresidential, residential, and mixed used structures. In addition, these units may occur on sites currently zoned for residential use, commercial use which permit residential uses, hybrid industrial uses which permit joint live-work residential uses, non-vacant sites, sites with existing housing units, as well as publicly owned sites, sites designated as having potential historical or environmental significance, and sites that may be rezoned as a result of the rezoning program.

Project Objectives

The underlying purpose of the Project is to comply with all State Housing Element laws.

The primary objectives of the Project will be to:

- Accommodate the RHNA through the Sites Inventory and applicable rezoning program.
- Expand access to opportunity. This may include revisions to existing objectives, policies and implementation programs that promote housing development near transit and jobs centers, to also include a priority for housing development (and in particular, affordable housing development) in higher resource areas.¹
- Prevent displacement and promote housing stability. This will include additional policies and programs to assist tenants facing eviction as well as programs to expand tenant protections and new or revised programs to preserve and replace existing affordable and RSO housing. This will also include a program to comply with new housing replacement requirements for the Inventory of Sites (Government Code Section 65583.2(g)(3)).
- Promote climate and disaster resiliency, sustainability, and Environmental Justice.
- Promote homeless prevention and diversion while expanding access to shelter and housing for persons experiencing homelessness.
- Coordinate housing regulation and design to increase access to amenities that support public health and wellbeing.
- Promote the provision of housing that meets the needs of special needs populations in the City, including but not limited to: seniors, seniors with disabilities, people with disabilities, large families (5 or more persons), single female-headed households, people living with HIV/AIDS, people experiencing homelessness, and transition-aged youth.
- Result in reduced vehicle trips by promoting a jobs-housing balance.

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE EIR

Based on the project description and the Lead Agency's understanding of the environmental issues associated with the proposed Project, based on the Initial Study prepared for the Project, the Project is anticipated to have probable impacts in the following topic areas which will be analyzed in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials

¹ As defined by the California Tax Credit Allocation/California Department of Housing and Community Development Opportunity Maps, which can be accessed at <https://www.treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac/opportunity.asp>.

- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems

The EIR will analyze the reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect physical changes to the environment in the above topic areas caused by the proposed Project, including the updates to the Housing Element and Safety Element.

The Hazards and Hazardous Materials section of the Draft EIR will discuss the potential impacts associated with housing development on sites identified as hazardous materials sites, known as the Cortese List, pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Because the Housing Element Update and Safety Element Update are Citywide, thousands of sites are within the Project area. Interested parties can research individual sites using the various resources found at the following links:

<https://calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/> or <https://www.epa.gov/enviro/sems-search>.

Alternatives to be analyzed in the EIR are to be defined and analyzed consistent with the requirements of CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6. The specific alternatives to be evaluated will include a “No Project” alternative, as required by CEQA, and may include land use configurations.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

The Notice of Preparation, along with the Initial Study, can be viewed on the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning website at: <https://planning.lacity.org/development-services/eir/housing-element-2021-2029-update-safety-element-update>.

To request to make an appointment to view a hard copy of the documents, please contact Cally Hardy at (213) 978-1643 or housingelement@lacity.org.

SUBMITTAL OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

The Lead Agency solicits comments regarding the scope, content and specificity of the EIR from all interested parties requesting notice, responsible agencies, agencies with jurisdiction by law, trustee agencies, and involved agencies. Please send written/typed comments (including a name, telephone number, and contact information) to the following:

City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning
 ATTN: Cally Hardy, City Planning Associate
 Case Numbers: CPC-2020-1365-GPA; ENV-2020-6762-EIR
 200 N. Spring Street, Room 750, Los Angeles, CA 90012

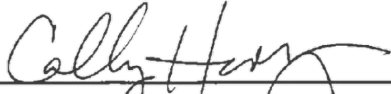
Phone: (213) 978-1643

E-mail: housingelement@lacity.org

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, this Notice of Preparation is being circulated for a 30-day comment period. **The City of Los Angeles requests that written comments be provided at the earliest possible date, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 15, 2021.**

For more information about the Housing Element 2021-2029 Update, please visit <https://planning.lacity.org/plans-policies/housing-element-update>

ALL INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING TO ASSIST IN IDENTIFYING ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE EIR. ATTENDEES WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE INPUT TO THE CONSULTANTS PREPARING THE EIR.



Cally Hardy, City Planning Associate
City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

Attachment:

Figure 1: Citywide Map

Figure 1 Citywide Map

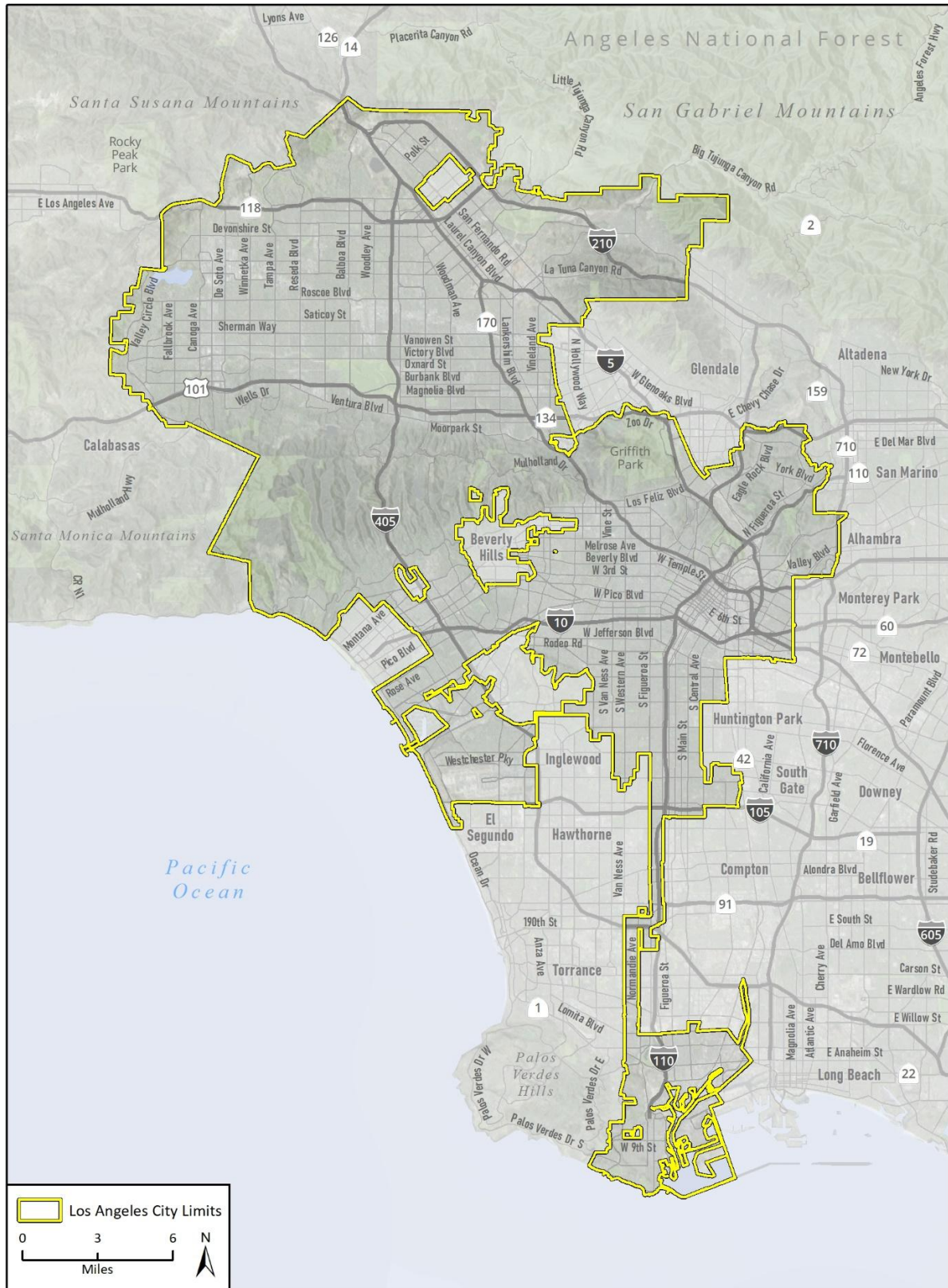


Fig 1 Regional Location