

III. Environmental Setting

1. Overview of Environmental Setting

CEQA Guidelines Section 15125 requires that an 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 topic 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 located within the Central City Community Plan Area of the City. The Project Site is generally located at 400 Central Avenue and is made up of six (6) parcels, with a total land area of approximately 7.6 acres (333,602 gross sf of lot area). The parcels that make up the Project Site are clustered across three City blocks and include the following three areas:

- The 1.35-acre North Site (APN 5147-001-007) is generally located at the northeast corner of Central Avenue and 4th Street.
- The 5.98-acre South Site (APN 5147-013-016) is generally bound by 4th Street to the north, Alameda Street to the east, Central Avenue to the west and industrial uses to the south. The southern boundary of the South Site generally terminates near the intersection of 5th Street and Central Avenue.
- The 0.32-acre West Site (APNs 5147-012-015, 5147-011-015, -016, -017) is generally located west of the intersection of Gladys Avenue and Central Avenue.

Currently, the Project Site is occupied by cold storage facilities that include warehouse and associated office space, truck loading docks, and surface parking. The existing buildings on the Project Site total 360,734 sf of floor area. Specifically, the North Site is currently developed with a six-story cold storage warehouse building and attached single-story warehouse. The six-story warehouse also includes a one-level basement, which is not counted as part of the six, above ground stories. The combined floor area of the two buildings is 167,596 sf. Twenty (20) loading docks for the North Site are located along 4th Street and Central Avenue. The South Site is developed with a single-story high-bay warehouse cold storage building totaling 190,267 sf and a adjoining 2,871 sf, single-story office building, constructed between 1957 and 1959, respectively. The two buildings have a total floor area of 193,138 sf. The South Site also includes 47 loading docks and paved

surface parking with 33 spaces that serve the warehouse building. The West Site provides 39 parking spaces in a fenced, paved surface parking lot and is not improved with any buildings. The paved lot allows for additional parking for the existing cold storage facilities across Central Avenue on the North and South Sites.

Above ground utility lines are present at the intersection of Central Avenue and 4th Street, and along the south side of 4th Street and the west sides of Central Avenue and Alameda Street adjacent to the Project Site. There is no landscaping on the Project Site. On-Site vegetation is limited to 20 fern pines (*Podocarpus* sp.) within the adjacent roadway right-of-way, with ten trees being located on the southern boundary of the North Site (along 4th Street) and ten trees along the eastern boundary of the South Site along Alameda Street.

b) Surrounding Uses

Locally, the Project Site is in a highly urbanized area and situated on the eastern border of the Central City East District, which is largely developed with general commercial and manufacturing uses such as wholesale, warehouse, and food processing facilities. Alameda Street, which borders the Project Site to the east, separates the Central City East District and the Arts District. Thus, the Project Site is located adjacent to the Arts District, which is an emerging neighborhood in the City's Downtown area and has experienced an increased demand for new retail, hotel, creative office, and residential spaces. The Project Site is also situated just south of the Little Tokyo neighborhood, where numerous former warehouse structures are being converted to artists' workshops, live-work spaces, and neighborhood-serving retail and commercial uses.

Specific to the immediate surrounding area, as shown in Figure 3-4, uses directly north of the North Site include a three-story commercial shopping center (Little Tokyo Market Place). A six-story parking structure and surface parking lot are located directly east of the North Site.

The South Site is located south of 4th Street between Central Avenue and Alameda Street. The North Site and a surface parking lot are located to the north of 4th Street. A mix of one to three-story warehouse/light manufacturing and commercial uses are located east and west of the South Site, across Central Avenue and Alameda Street, respectively. Directly south of the South Site is a low-rise distribution center (Young's Market) and associated parking and loading dock areas.

The West Site is adjacent to low-rise warehouse/light manufacturing uses and supporting surface parking.

c) Existing Transportation System

The Project Site is served by a network of regional transportation facilities that provide access to the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area. Regional access to the Project Site is provided by Interstate 10 (I-10), which runs east-west approximately one-mile south of the Project Site (at its closest point); United States Route 101 (US-101), which generally

runs north-south and is located both north and east of the Project Site, with the closest segment of US-101 located approximately 0.7 miles north of the Project Site, Interstate 5 (I-5), which runs north-south approximately 1.1 miles east of the Project Site, and Interstate 110 (I-110), which runs north-south approximately 1.2 miles west of the Project Site (at its closest point). Local access to the Project Site is provided by 4th Street, Central Avenue, and Alameda Street.

The Project Site is located in an area served by a variety of mobility options and is within walking distance of major transit options. The Project Site is also located within a Transit Priority Area, which is defined by the Public Resources Code as an area within 0.5 miles of an existing or planned major transit stop. (Pub. Res. Code, § 21099(a).) Bus and light rail service is provided by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT). The closest bus stop to the Project Site is located at Alameda Street and 4th Street, approximately 100 feet northeast of the Project Site, which is served by the LADOT Downtown Area Short Hop (DASH) Route A, which is a downtown route that connects the Arts District and Little Tokyo with the rest of Downtown Los Angeles. Other bus lines in the vicinity of the Project Site include Metro bus lines 16, 18, 53, 50, 62, 72, and 760 and LADOT DASH Route D.

The Project Site is also located within walking distance (less than 0.4 miles) of the Metro Regional Connector Little Tokyo/Arts District station that is currently under construction and scheduled to be open and operational in 2023. The Regional Connector Project will make it easier to ride across Los Angeles County as passengers will be able to travel between Azusa and Long Beach, and between East Los Angeles and Santa Monica, without transferring lines. It will improve connections, bringing together the Metro L (Gold), A (Blue), E (Expo), B (Red) and D (Purple) Lines at the 7th Street/Metro Center Station. The 1.9-mile alignment will serve Little Tokyo, the Arts District, Civic Center, the Historic Core, Broadway, Grand Avenue, Bunker Hill, Flower Street, and the Financial District. Three new transit stations will be developed as part of the Metro Regional Connector Project. The closest new transit station will be located at 1st Street and Central Avenue, less than 0.4 miles north of the Project Site.

d) Existing Environmental 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.L, of this Draft EIR.

2. Related Projects

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires that an EIR consider the environmental effects of a proposed project individually, as well as cumulatively. As defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15355, cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects, which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.

As set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15130, the determination of cumulative impacts is generally a two-step process. The first step is to determine whether or not the combined effects from the Project and related projects, as identified below, would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact. If the answer is no, then the EIR only briefly needs to indicate why the cumulative impact is not significant and is not discussed in further detail in the EIR. If the answer is yes, then the analysis proceeds to the second step, which is to determine whether the Project's incremental effects are cumulatively considerable. CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a)(3) defines "cumulatively considerable" to mean that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a)(3), a project's contribution is less than cumulatively considerable if the project is required to implement or fund its fair share of a mitigation measure or measures designed to alleviate the cumulative impact. In addition, the lead agency is required to identify facts and analyses supporting its conclusion that the contribution will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) further provides that the discussion of cumulative impacts reflect "the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great of detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone." Rather, the discussion is to "be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute."

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) states that complying with one of the following two protocols is necessary to provide an adequate discussion of significant cumulative impacts:

- (A) 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
- (B) 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. Such plans may include: a general plan, regional transportation plan, or plans for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. A summary of projections may also be contained in an adopted or certified prior environmental document for such a plan. Such projections may be supplemented with additional information such as a regional modeling program. Any such document shall be referenced and made available to the public at a location specified by the lead agency.

Cumulative study areas are defined based on an analysis of the geographical scope relevant to each particular environmental issue. Therefore, the cumulative study area for each individual environmental impact issue may vary. For example, a cumulative land use impact generally may only affect the compatibility of uses within the vicinity of the project site, while a cumulative air quality impact may affect the entire South Coast Air Basin. The

specific boundaries and the projected growth within those boundaries for the cumulative study area of each environmental issue are identified in the applicable environmental issue section in Chapter IV, *Environmental Impact Analysis*, of this Draft EIR.

A list of proposed development projects in the area of the Project that could affect conditions in the Project area (e.g., by generating population increases requiring public services) was prepared based on information obtained primarily from LADOT and the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning (DCP). A total of 39 potential related development projects have been identified within the vicinity of the Project Site for inclusion in the cumulative impact analysis for this EIR. These related projects are in varying stages of the approval/entitlement/development process and reflect the diverse range of land uses in the vicinity of the Project Site. Specifically, the related projects comprise a variety of uses, including, but not limited to, apartments, retail, restaurant, commercial, and other mixed-use land uses.

The list of 39 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**. According to the LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines (TAG), related projects are new development within a one-half mile radius of the Project Site plus one-quarter mile from the farthest outlying intersection.

**TABLE III-1
RELATED PROJECTS LIST**

No.	Address	Use	Size
1 ^a	540 S Santa Fe Ave	Office	98,825 sf
2 ^a	950 E 3rd St	Commercial/Retail	22,554 sf
		Apartments	481 du
3 ^a	963 E. 4th St	Office	72,448 sf
		Retail	25,000 sf
		Restaurant	20,000 sf
4 ^a	555 S Mateo St	Retail	75,291 sf
		Office	48,040 sf
5	1129 & 1101 E 5th St, 445-457 S. Colyton St, 450-456 S. Seaton St	Restaurant	47,575 sf
		Commercial	81,326 sf
		Hotel	113 rooms
6 ^a	500 S Mateo St	Apartment	129 du
		Restaurant	12,682 sf
		Patio/Mezzanine	7,8001 sf

**TABLE III-1
RELATED PROJECTS LIST**

No.	Address	Use	Size
7	1525 E Industrial St	Live/Work	344 du
		Office	24,774 sf
		Restaurant	4,042 sf
8 ^a	649 S Wall St	Medical Office	66 employees ^b
		Residential Units	56 du
9	719 E 5th St	Hotel	42 rooms
10	929 E 2nd St	Retail	42,019 sf
		Event Space	18,261 sf
		Office	40,249 sf
		Health Club	5,383 sf
11	520 Mateo St	Live/Work	475 du
		Office	105,000 sf
		Retail	10,000 sf
		Restaurant	10,000 sf
12	668 S Alameda St	Live/Work	475 du
		Arts and Production Space	15,815 sf
		Grocery Store	15,105 sf
		Restaurant	16,140 sf
		Supporting Space	4,200 sf
		Commercial/Retail	9,945 sf
13	1206-1338 E 6 th St/ 1205-1321 Wholesale St	Hotel	412 rooms
		Apartments	1,736 du
		Warehouse	316,632 sf
		Office	253,514 sf
		Restaurant	45,278 sf
		Retail	82,332 sf
		School	300 students
Museum	22,429 sf		
14 ^a	656 S Stanford Ave	Apartments	82 du
15	554 S San Pedro St	Apartments	407 du
		Commercial	12,300 sf

**TABLE III-1
RELATED PROJECTS LIST**

No.	Address	Use	Size
16	600 S San Pedro St	Apartments	303 du
		Commercial	19,909 sf
17	527 S Colyton St	Apartments	310 du
		Commercial	11,375 sf
		Production Space	11,736 sf
18	713 E 5th St	Apartments	51 du
19	508 E 4th St	Apartments	41 du
		Office	255,514 sf
		Retail	4,970 sf
		Restaurant	9,940 sf
20	405 S Hewitt St	Museum	7,800 sf
		Apartments	170 du
		Retail	16,518 sf
21	1340 E 6th St	Apartments	170 du
		Retail	16,518 sf
22	1100 E 5th St	Live/Work	218 du
		Open Space/Recreation	21,975 sf
23	414 S Crocker St	Apartments	175 du
		Commercial	8,691 sf
24	400 S Alameda St	Hotel	66 rooms
		Restaurant/Retail	5,400
25	200 N Central Ave, 122-128, 130-230 N Judge John Aiso St 308-312 & 307 E Jackson St	Apartments	248 du
		Commercial	29,800 sf
		Institutional	10,763 sf
26	407 E. 5th Street	Restaurant	2,460 sf
		Apartments	150 du
27	501 E. 5th Street	Apartments	98 du
28	401 E. 6th Street	Apartments	96 du
29	803 E. 5th Street	Apartments	95 du
		Commercial	9,210 sf
30	118 S. Astronaut e.s. Onizuka St	Apartments	77 du
31 ^a	1745 E 7 th Street	Apartments	57 du
		Commercial	6,000 sf

**TABLE III-1
RELATED PROJECTS LIST**

No.	Address	Use	Size
32	1800 E 7 th St	Apartments	122 du
		Commercial	9,500 sf
		Amenity Space	5,885 sf
33	701 S Maple Ave	Apartments	452 du
		Commercial	13,603 sf
34	755 S Wall St	Apartments	323 du
		Office	64,363 sf
		Retail	4,385 sf
		Space/Storage	63,785
		Food/Beverage	13,420 sf
35 ^a	640 S Santa Fe Ave	Event Space	21,295 sf
		Office	107,224 sf
36	676 S Mateo St	Live/Work	172 du
		Commercial	23,025 sf
37	655 S Mesquit St	Office	184,629
		Retail	4,325 sf
38	670 S Mesquit St	Hotel	236 rooms
		Apartments	308 du
		Retail	79,240 sf
		Restaurant	89,576 sf
		Event Space	93,617 sf
		Gym	62,148 sf
		Grocery	56,912 sf
Office	944,055 sf		
39	2053-2057 E 7th St	Hotel	103 rooms

NOTES

du = dwelling unit; sf = square feet

^a Although construction of the related project may be partially complete/entirely complete, the project was not fully occupied at the time of the NOP or when traffic counts were conducted. Therefore, the related project was considered and listed to provide a more conservative analysis.

^b No square footage was provided for this related project. However, the number of employees was provided.

SOURCE: Gibson Transportation Inc., 2022.



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SOURCE: Gibson Transportation Consulting, Inc., 2023

Fourth & Central Project

Figure III-1
Related Projects Map

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