



CITY OF VERNON

4305 S. Santa Fe Avenue, Vernon, CA 90058

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Notice of Preparation Draft Environmental Impact Report and Public Scoping Meeting for the Vernon Westside Specific Plan

TO: Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

DATE: April 20, 2022

The City of Vernon (City), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Vernon Westside Specific Plan (Proposed Specific Plan). The City is requesting identification of environmental issues and information that you or your organization believes should be considered in the EIR. The City is also conducting a Scoping Meeting for this Proposed Specific Plan as further described below. The Proposed Specific Plan would include the development of a Specific Plan to guide future growth in the western portion of the City.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Plan Area includes approximately 840 acres located in the western portion of the City of Vernon five miles south of downtown Los Angeles, California, as shown in **Figure 1, Regional Context**. The Plan Area roughly corresponds to a 1.75 by 0.75-mile area bound generally to the north by 27th Street; to the east by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and Pacific Boulevard; to the south by Slauson Avenue; and to the west by Alameda Corridor, as shown in **Figure 2, Plan Area**.

The Plan Area is served by the Metro A line Vernon Station and Slauson Station, both located one block west of the Plan Area. The northern portion of the Plan Area is located approximately one-half mile from the I-10 Freeway, providing access to greater Los Angeles region.

The City of Vernon is bordered by the City of Los Angeles to the north and west; Huntington Park, Bell, and Maywood to the South; Commerce to the East; and East Los Angeles to the northeast. The Plan area is in proximity to several rapidly changing areas of Los Angeles. The Plan area is adjacent to the Downtown Los Angeles Warehouse District, and the Arts District has been steadily expanding toward the Plan Area.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Proposed Specific Plan is the preparation of a Specific Plan to spur development of people-centric environments that attract talent and stimulate innovation in the western portion of the City.

The purpose of the Proposed Specific Plan is to reinvigorate the City's competitive advantage as a center of production; strengthen and provide long-term stability to the City's fiscal position; increase the residential population; diversify and reorient the Westside's land uses to take advantage of changes in the economic landscape of Southern California; increase amenities available to local residents and workers; and create a physical environmental that is supportive of diverse land uses, welcoming to the larger region, and enhancing to the City's image and identity.

The Proposed Specific Plan, land use, zoning, and street improvement changes will be established to facilitate new community supporting development. In general, the Proposed Specific Plan land use plan:

- Identifies certain clusters of existing buildings with redevelopment potential and identifies catalytic sites within the clusters to undertake mixed-use development, including:
 - **Cluster 1 (South Santa Fe District):** This cluster is located in the southern portion of the Plan Area and holds creative office buildings and retail uses along with the prevailing industrial development. The Proposed Specific Plan will identify this stretch of Santa Fe Avenue for roadway improvements and live/work, multifamily residential, retail, production retail and creative office development.
 - **Cluster 3 (Civic Center/Santa Fe North):** This cluster is in the northern portion of the Plan Area and is primarily composed of light industrial and commercial uses, and includes the Vernon Civic Center, single-family residential buildings, and religious uses. Many of the existing buildings are older and some have been adapted into light manufacturing, distribution, and office uses. The Plan identifies the intersection of Santa Fe Avenue, Pacific Avenue, and Vernon Avenue to be transformed into a Civic Center, creating a node of office, retail, and residential. The Plan also proposes roadway and streetscape improvements to Santa Fe Avenue.
- Strengthens Santa Fe Avenue as a walkable Main Street that connects clusters and is suitable for a greater diversity of land uses. Proposed changes include eliminating the center turn lane and replacing it with on-street parking; adding large canopy shade trees; improve pedestrian crossings; and separate bike lanes.



- Redirects truck traffic: Create a truck route system which guides most heavy truck traffic off Santa Fe Avenue and improve Alameda East as a primary, functional truck route for the Westside through signal timing and infrastructure changes.
- Provides a streetscape and open spaces framework for connecting catalytic sites and clusters, other development sites, and regional active and public transportation connections.

The Proposed Specific Plan is being developed as part of the implementation of the 2021-2029 Housing Element (currently in draft form) and was included as Program 8: Westside Specific Plan.

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 Specific Plan, it is anticipated that implementation of the Proposed Specific Plan has the potential to result in significant environmental effects associated with some or all of the following topics, consistent with Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* and analyzed in detail in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems (including Energy)

The EIR will analyze the reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes to the environment in the above topic areas caused by the Proposed Specific Plan. The City does not anticipate impacts in the following categories and as such, those impacts will not be discussed in detail in the EIR: Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Biological Resources, Geology and Soils, Mineral Resources, and Wildfire. Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15060(d), no initial study was prepared.

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 in the EIR may include, but are not limited to, the "No Project" Alternative, as required by CEQA and alternative land use configurations.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code Sections 21083.9, 21092.2, and California Code of Regulations, Title 14 (*CEQA Guidelines*) Sections 15082 and 15083, the City, as the Lead Agency, will conduct a Scoping Meeting for the purpose of soliciting oral and written comments from interested parties



requesting notice; responsible agencies; agencies with jurisdiction by law; trustee agencies; and involved federal agencies, including transportation agencies, as to the appropriate scope and content of the EIR.

The Scoping Meeting is scheduled as follows:

Date: Wednesday, May 04, 2022 | Time: 9:00 A.M. Pacific Time

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87605880654>

Webinar ID: 876 0588 0654

Call in: 1-669-900-6833

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 CITY OF VERNON AND CONSULTANT TEAM PREPARING THE EIR.

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 Proposed Specific Plan, in accordance with *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) 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

In accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15082, this NOP is being circulated for a 30-day comment period. Responses to this NOP must be provided during this response period as outlined below:

Wednesday, April 20, 2022, through Friday, May 20, 2022

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

A hardcopy of the NOP will be available at Vernon City Hall, 4305 S. Santa Fe Avenue, Vernon, CA 90058. In addition, a copy can be viewed at the project website (ReimagineVernon.com). For more information about the Vernon Westside Specific Plan, please visit the project website.



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. The City of Vernon requests that written comments be provided at the earliest possible date, but **no later than Friday, May 20, 2022.**

Please submit comments electronically through the project website or send a hard copy via mail (including name and contact information) to the following:

Project Website: ReimagineVernon.com

Mail:

ATTN: Daniel Wall
City of Vernon
4305 S. Santa Fe Avenue
Vernon, CA 90058

<p>30-DAY NOP COMMENT PERIOD: April 20, 2022, through May 20, 2022</p>	<p>SCOPING MEETING: Date: May 4, 2022 Time: 9:00 A.M. Pacific Time Zoom Link: <i>see above</i></p>
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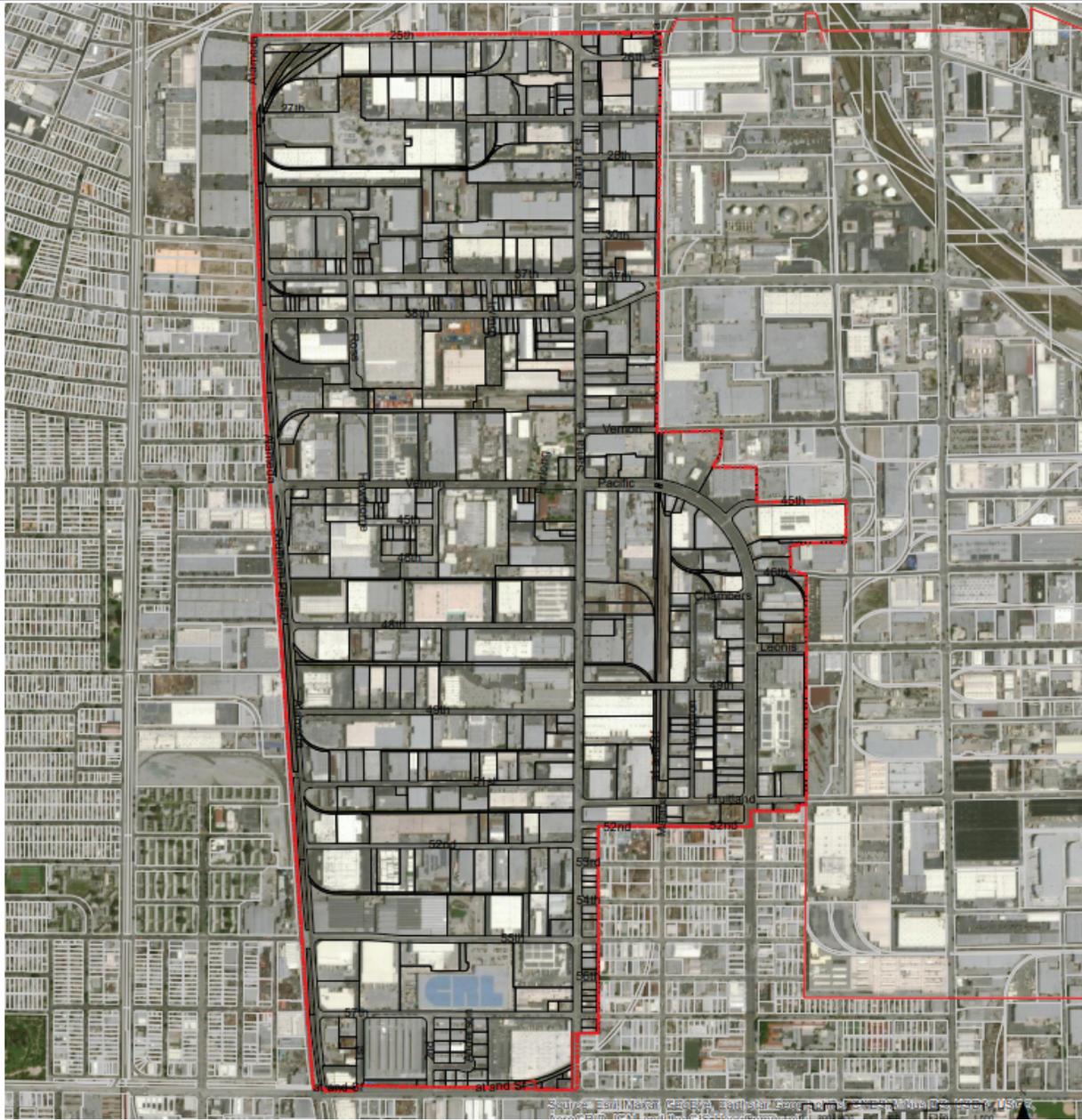
Attachments:

- Figure 1, Regional Context
- Figure 2, Plan Area



SOURCE: Google Earth, 2020

FIGURE 1



SOURCE: Google Earth, 2020

FIGURE 2

Plan Area