

2. Introduction

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all state and local governmental agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority prior to taking action on those projects. This Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been prepared to satisfy CEQA, as set forth in the Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations, Section 15000, et seq. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the public document designed to provide decision makers and the public with an analysis of the environmental effects of the Proposed Project, to indicate possible ways to reduce or avoid environmental damage and to identify alternatives to the project. The EIR must also disclose significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided; growth inducing impacts; effects not found to be significant; and significant cumulative impacts of all past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Pursuant to CEQA Section 21067, the Lead Agency means “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project which may have a significant effect upon the environment.” The City of Long Beach has the principal responsibility for approval of the Proposed Project. For this reason, the City of Long Beach is the CEQA Lead Agency for this project.

The intent of the DEIR is to provide sufficient information on the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project to allow the City of Long Beach to make an informed decision regarding approval of the project. Specific discretionary actions to be reviewed by the City are described later in Section 3.4, *Intended Uses of the EIR*, of Chapter 3, *Project Description*.

This DEIR has been prepared in accordance with requirements of the:

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.)
- State Guidelines for the Implementation of the CEQA of 1970 (herein referenced as CEQA Guidelines), as amended (California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et seq.)

The overall purpose of this DEIR is to inform the lead agency, responsible agencies, decision makers and the general public of the environmental effects of the development and operation of the Proposed Project. This DEIR addresses the potential environmental effects of the project, including effects that may be significant and adverse, evaluates a number of alternatives to the project, and identifies mitigation measures to reduce or avoid adverse effects.

2. Introduction

2.2 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

The City of Long Beach determined that an EIR would be required for the Proposed Project and issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study in March 2015 (See Appendix A). In addition, a scoping meeting was held at the Veteran's Memorial Park Community Room, 101 E. 28th Street, Long Beach, California on March 25, 2015. Comments received during the public review period, which extended from March 9 to April 7, 2015, and during the scoping meeting are contained in Appendix B. A summary of the comments are also detailed in Table 1-1, *NOP and Scoping Meeting Comment Summary*.

The NOP process is used to help determine the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the DEIR. Based on this process and the Initial Study for the project, certain environmental categories were identified as having the potential to result in significant impacts. Issues considered Potentially Significant are addressed in this DEIR. Issues identified as Less Than Significant or No Impact are not addressed beyond the discussion contained in the Initial Study. Refer to the Initial Study in Appendix A for discussion of how these initial determinations have been made.

Based upon the Initial Study and Environmental Checklist Form, the City of Long Beach staff determined that a DEIR should be prepared for the Proposed Project. The scope of the DEIR was determined based on the City's Initial Study, comments received in response to the NOP, and comments received at the scoping meeting conducted by the City. Pursuant to Sections 15126.2 and 15126.4 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the DEIR should identify any potentially significant adverse impacts and recommend mitigation that would reduce or eliminate these impacts to levels of insignificance.

The information contained in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, establishes the basis for analyzing future project-related environmental impacts. However, further environmental review by the City may be required as more detailed information and plans are submitted on a project by project basis.

The City's General Plan policies and programs, existing regulations, and mitigation measures have been identified that either reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts. In addition, the DEIR describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project, while substantially avoiding or lessening any of the significant impacts of the Proposed Project, and evaluates the comparative merits of the alternatives and the Proposed Project.

2.3 SCOPE OF THIS DEIR

The DEIR evaluated potential environmental impacts associated with the topical areas that were identified as being potentially affected by the Proposed Project in the Initial Study (see Appendix A).

2. Introduction

2.3.1 Impacts Considered Less Than Significant

Four environmental impact categories are identified here as not being significantly affected by, or affecting the Proposed Project and as such are not discussed in detail in this DEIR. This determination was made by the City of Long Beach in its preparation of the Initial Study. The following topical issues are not addressed in this DEIR:

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources (archeological resources, paleontological resources, and human remains)
- Mineral Resources

2.3.2 Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts

Thirteen environmental factors have been identified as potentially significant impacts if the Proposed Project is implemented. These factors are:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources (specifically, historic resources)
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

2.3.3 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

This DEIR identifies four topical areas of significant and unavoidable adverse impacts for the Proposed Project: air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise. Unavoidable adverse impacts may be considered significant on a project-specific basis, cumulatively significant, and/or potentially significant. If the City of Long Beach, as the Lead Agency, determines that unavoidable significant adverse impacts will result from the project, the City must prepare a “Statement of Overriding Considerations” before it can approve the project.

2. Introduction

A Statement of Overriding Considerations states that the decision-making body has balanced the benefits of the Proposed Project against its unavoidable significant environmental effects and has determined that the benefits of the project outweigh the adverse effects and, therefore, the adverse effects are considered to be acceptable. The impacts that were found in the DEIR to be significant and unavoidable are:

Air Quality

- **Impact 5.2-1:** The Proposed Project would generate short-term emissions that exceed the South Coast Air Quality Management District's regional construction significance thresholds and would significantly contribute to the nonattainment designations of the South Coast Air Basin. Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-3 would reduce criteria air pollutants generated from project-related construction activities. However, buildout of the Proposed Project would occur over a period of approximately 18 years or longer. Construction time frames and equipment for individual site-specific projects are not available at this time. There is a potential for multiple developments to be constructed at any one time, resulting in significant construction-related emissions. Therefore, despite adherence to Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-3, Impact 5.2-1 would remain **significant and unavoidable**.
- **Impact 5.2-2:** The Proposed Project would generate long-term emissions that exceed the South Coast Air Quality Management District's regional operational significance thresholds and would significantly contribute to the nonattainment designations of the South Coast Air Basin. Incorporation of Mitigation Measures AQ-4 through AQ-6 would reduce operation-related criteria air pollutants generated from stationary and mobile sources. Mitigation Measures AQ-5 and AQ-6 would encourage and accommodate use of alternative-fueled vehicles and nonmotorized transportation. However, despite adherence to Mitigation Measures AQ-4 through AQ-6, Impact 5.2-2 would remain **significant and unavoidable** due to the magnitude of land use development associated with the Proposed Project.
- **Impact 5.2-3:** Construction activities related to the buildout of the Proposed Project could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations NO_x, CO, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. Mitigation Measures AQ-1, AQ-2, and AQ-3 applied for Impact 5.2-1 would reduce the project's regional construction emissions and therefore also reduce the project's localized construction-related criteria air pollutant emissions to the extent feasible. However, because existing sensitive receptors may be close to project-related construction activities, construction emissions generated by individual development projects have the potential to exceed the South Coast Air Quality Management District's localized significance thresholds. Therefore, Impact 5.2-3 would remain **significant and unavoidable**.
- **Impact 5.2-6:** The Proposed Project is a regionally significant project that would contribute to an increase in frequency or severity of air quality violations in the South Coast Air Basin and would conflict with the assumptions of the applicable Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). Mitigation measures applied for Impact 5.2-1 and Impact 5.2-2 would reduce the Proposed Project's regional construction-related and operational phase criteria air pollutant emissions to the extent feasible. However, given the potential increase in growth and associated increase in criteria air pollutant emissions, the Proposed

2. Introduction

Project would continue to be potentially inconsistent with the assumptions in the AQMP. Therefore, Impact 5.2-6 would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- **Impact 5.5-1:** Buildout of the Proposed Project would result in a substantial increase in GHG emissions compared to existing conditions and would not meet the South Coast Air Quality Management District's Year 2035 Target efficiency metric of 2.4 metric tons of CO_{2e} per year per service population or the long-term GHG reduction goal under Executive Order S-3-05. Mitigation Measures AQ-4 through AQ-6 would encourage and accommodate use of alternative-fueled vehicles and nonmotorized transportation and ensure that GHG emissions from the buildout of the Proposed Project would be minimized. However, additional statewide measures would be necessary to reduce GHG emissions under the Proposed Project to meet the long-term GHG reduction goals under Executive Order S-3-05, which identified a goal to reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, and Executive Order B-30-15, which identified a goal to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The new Executive Order B-30-15 requires the California Air Resources Board to prepare another update to the Scoping Plan to address the 2030 target for the state. At this time, there is no plan past 2020 that achieves the long-term GHG reduction goal established under Executive Order S-3-05 or the new Executive Order B-30-15. As identified by the California Council on Science and Technology, the state cannot meet the 2050 goal without major advancements in technology. Since no additional statewide measures are currently available, Impact 5.5-1 would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

Noise

- **Impact 5.9-1:** Noise from construction activities associated with future development projects that would be accommodated by the Proposed Project could result in substantial impacts to sensitive receptors. Mitigation Measures N-1 and N-2 would reduce potential noise impacts during construction to the extent feasible. However, due to the potential for proximity of construction activities to sensitive uses and potential longevity of construction activities, Impact 5.9-1 (construction noise) would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

These impacts are individually analyzed in Sections 5.2, *Air Quality*, 5.5, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, and 5.9, *Noise*, and summarized in Chapter 6 of this DEIR.

2.4 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The following documents are incorporated by reference in this DEIR, consistent with Section 15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines, and are available for review at the City of Long Beach Planning Bureau, 333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 4th Floor, Long Beach, California 90802.

- City of Long Beach General Plan
- City of Long Beach Municipal Code

2. Introduction

In each instance where a document is incorporated by reference for purposes of this report, the DEIR shall briefly summarize the incorporated document or briefly summarize the incorporated data if the document cannot be summarized. Chapter 13, *Bibliography*, provides a complete list of references utilized in preparing this DEIR.

2.5 FINAL EIR CERTIFICATION

This DEIR is being circulated for public review for a period of 45 days. Interested agencies and members of the public are invited to provide written comments on the DEIR to the City address shown below. Upon completion of the 45-day review period, the City of Long Beach will review all written comments received and prepare written responses for each comment. A Final EIR (FEIR) will then be prepared incorporating all of the comments received, responses to the comments and any changes to the DEIR that result from the comments received. This FEIR will then be presented to the Long Beach City Council for potential certification as the environmental document for the Proposed Project. All persons who commented on the DEIR will be notified of the availability of the FEIR and the date of the Long Beach Planning Commission and City Council public hearings concerning potential certification of the FEIR.

The DEIR is available to the general public for review at the following locations:

- City of Long Beach Planning Bureau
333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 4th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
- Main Library
101 Pacific Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90802
- Burnett Neighborhood Library
560 East Hill Street
Long Beach, CA 90806
- Dana Neighborhood Library
3680 Atlantic Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90807
- Mark Twain Library
1401 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, CA 90813

The DEIR can also be viewed on the City of Long Beach website at the following addresses:
http://www.lbds.info/planning/environmental_planning/environmental_reports.asp.

All comments received from agencies and individuals on the DEIR will be accepted during the 45-day public review period. All comments on the DEIR should be sent to:

Craig Chalfant, Planner
City of Long Beach
Development Services Department, Planning Bureau
333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 5th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
Craig.Chalfant@longbeach.gov

2. Introduction

All public agencies that submit comments during the 45-day public review period on the DEIR will receive written responses to their comments at least 10 days prior to final action on the Proposed Project. If the Long Beach City Council decides to certify the FEIR, it will make the necessary findings required by CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines regarding the extent and nature of the impacts as presented in the FEIR. The FEIR must be certified by the City prior to making a decision to approve the Proposed Project. Public input is encouraged at all public hearings and meetings before the Long Beach City Council and Planning Commission concerning the Proposed Project.

2.6 MITIGATION MONITORING

Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 requires that agencies adopt a monitoring or reporting program for any project for which it has made findings pursuant to Public Resources Code 21081 or adopted a Negative Declaration pursuant to 21080(c). Such a program is intended to ensure the implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration.

The Mitigation Monitoring Program for the Proposed Project will be completed concurrently with the FEIR and will be completed prior to consideration of the project by the Long Beach City Council.

2. Introduction

This page intentionally left blank.