

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared to evaluate environmental impacts associated with the proposed General Plan Land Use and Urban Design Elements (proposed project) in the City of Long Beach (City). The City is the “public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the project,” and as such is the “Lead Agency” for this project under the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) (*State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15367). CEQA requires the Lead Agency to consider the information contained in the EIR prior to taking any discretionary action on the proposed project. This Draft EIR is intended to serve as an informational document to be considered by the City and the Responsible Agencies during deliberations on the proposed project. The discretionary approvals and permits associated with the proposed project are described in Section 3.0, Project Description.

The Initial Study (IS) (LSA Associates, Inc. [LSA], May 2015) (Appendix A of the Draft EIR) prepared by the City determined that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment and that an EIR would be required to more fully evaluate potential adverse environmental impacts that may result from development of the proposed project. As a result, this Draft EIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA, as amended (Public Resources Code [PRC], Section 21000, et seq.), and the *State CEQA Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA* (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Section 15000, et seq.). This Draft EIR also complies with the procedures established by the City for the implementation of CEQA.

Questions regarding the preparation of this document and the City’s review of the proposed project should be referred to the following:

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2.1 PURPOSE AND TYPE OF EIR/INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This Draft EIR has been prepared to evaluate environmental impacts that may result from implementation of the proposed project. As the Lead Agency, the City has the authority for preparation of this Draft EIR and, after the comment/response process, certification of the Final EIR and approval of the proposed project as described in this Draft EIR.

The City and Responsible Agencies have the authority to make decisions on discretionary actions relating to development of the proposed project. As previously stated, this Draft EIR is intended

to serve as an informational document to be considered by the City and Responsible Agencies during deliberations on the proposed project. This Draft EIR evaluates and mitigates a reasonable worst-case scenario of potential impacts associated with the proposed project.

This Draft EIR will serve as a Program EIR pursuant to the *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15168. According to Section 15168 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, a Program EIR is appropriate for a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either:

- (1) Geographically,
- (2) As logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions,
- (3) In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or
- (4) As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

This Draft EIR analyzes the proposed project under CEQA at a program level. The proposed project includes the adoption of the proposed Land Use Element (LUE) and Urban Design Element (UDE), which are intended to guide the future development patterns and the aesthetic character of the City through the implementation of goals, policies, and implementation strategies. The proposed project would be implemented over the next 24 years, through the year 2040. This EIR has been prepared as a Program EIR for the following reasons:

- The proposed project would be implemented over a 24-year period.
- The proposed project would be implemented over a large geographic area, which is defined as the total area within the City limits (approximately 50 square miles).
- Development plans and details have not been developed for new projects that would be facilitated by project approval.

Although finalized plans for future projects facilitated by project approval have not yet been prepared, a worst-case build out scenario was developed to analyze impacts throughout this Draft EIR.

Subsequent activities associated with implementation of the proposed project would be evaluated for compliance with CEQA in light of this Program EIR to determine whether additional environmental documentation must be prepared. Specifically, as Tentative Tract Maps, improvement plans, or other discretionary approvals associated with implementation of the proposed project are submitted and proposed, the environmental impacts of implementing those maps, plans, and approvals will be compared against the analysis set forth in this Program EIR. To the extent that those impacts are consistent with the Program EIR's comprehensive analysis, no further CEQA documentation would be required, provided that none of the conditions set forth in the *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15162, exist. Subsequent CEQA analysis may be required for specific development plans, as indicated in Chapter 4.0, Existing Environmental Setting, Environmental Analysis Impacts, and Mitigation Measures, of this EIR.

As previously discussed in Chapter 1.0, Executive Summary, an EIR is the most comprehensive form of environmental documentation identified in CEQA and the *State CEQA Guidelines* and provides the information needed to assess the environmental consequences of a proposed project. EIRs are intended to provide an objective, factually supported, full-disclosure analysis of the environmental consequences associated with a proposed project that has the potential to result in significant, adverse environmental impacts.

2.2 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

In compliance with the *State CEQA Guidelines*, the City has taken steps to maximize opportunities for the public and other public agencies to participate in the environmental review process. The City conducted the scoping process, issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed project, and determined that an EIR was required to evaluate the potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed project and related actions. In addition, a public scoping meeting was held, as discussed further below.

2.2.1 Initial Study and Notice of Preparation

The City, as the Lead Agency, issued an Initial Study and a NOP (IS/NOP) of a Draft EIR for the project on May 18, 2015, which was distributed to public agencies via the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH issued a project number for the Draft EIR (SCH No. 2015051054). The primary purpose of preparing the IS was to evaluate potential environmental impacts that may result from project approval and to scope out those document for which “less than significant” and “no impact” significance determinations were made to reduce the overall scope of this Draft EIR.

In accordance with the *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15082, the IS/NOP was circulated to the agencies and individuals listed in Appendix A for a 30-day comment period from May 18, 2015 to June 16, 2015, during which time written comments were solicited pertaining to environmental issues/topics that the Draft EIR should evaluate. Responses to the IS/NOP were received from the following agencies:

- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 7
- County of Los Angeles, Fire Department
- County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (LACSD)
- South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)
- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
- State of California, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR)

The following individuals submitted written comments on the NOP:

- Anne Proffit
- Marilyn Surakus

Key environmental issues and concerns raised in response to the IS/NOP scoping process or at the scoping meeting included:

- **Air Quality:** Concerns were expressed regarding project-related impacts on air quality in the South Coast Air Basin.
- **Land Use and Planning:** Concerns were expressed regarding the project's consistency with applicable land use documents, including SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategies. Concerns were also expressed regarding the project's inclusion of land use goals and policies and zoning requirements that would allow for flexibility in housing densities and types on residential properties throughout the City.
- **Traffic/Circulation:** Concerns were expressed regarding potential project-related conflicts with applicable plans, ordinances, and/or policies establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system and potential project-related impacts to Caltrans facilities.
- **Utilities:** Concerns were expressed regarding the ability of the City to provide water to accommodate new development allowed under General Plan Build Out.

2.2.2 Scoping Meeting Summary

The City held a public scoping meeting at the Long Beach Gas & Oil Department at 2400 East Spring Street on Wednesday, May 27, 2015, to present the proposed project and to solicit input from interested individuals regarding environmental issues that should be addressed in the Draft EIR. Key environmental issues and concerns raised in the response to the IS/NOP scoping process or at the scoping meeting included:

- **Aesthetics:** Concerns were expressed that the development of the proposed project would result in significant increases in allowable building heights and density within the Downtown area, thereby resulting a change to the aesthetic character of this area.
- **Recreation:** Concerns were expressed regarding the potential loss of open space and recreational resources resulting from project implementation.

Please note that these are not exhaustive lists of areas of controversy, but rather key issues that were raised during the scoping process. The Draft EIR addresses each of these areas of concern or controversy in detail, examines project-related and cumulative environmental impacts, identifies significant adverse environmental impacts, and proposes mitigation measures designed to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts. Appendix A includes the IS/NOP and copies of written comments received in response to the IS/NOP, as well as written comment cards received in response to the Public Scoping meeting.

2.2.3 Public Review Period

This Draft EIR is being distributed to numerous public agencies and other interested parties for review and comment. The Draft EIR is also available at the following locations and on the City's website.

City of Long Beach
Development Services Department, Planning Bureau
333 West Ocean Boulevard, Fifth Floor
Long Beach, California 90802

City of Long Beach Main Library
101 Pacific Avenue
Long Beach, California 90802
Hours: Sunday and Monday-Closed; Tuesday-12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Wednesday-
12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Thursday-12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.; Friday and Saturday-
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

All comments received from agencies and individuals on the Draft EIR will be accepted during the public review period, which will not be less than 45 days, in compliance with CEQA. All comments on the Draft EIR should be sent to the following City contact person:

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Following the close of the Draft EIR review period, the City will prepare responses to all comments and will compile these comments and responses into the Final EIR. All responses to comments submitted on the Draft EIR by public agencies during the CEQA comment period on the Draft EIR will be provided to those agencies at least 10 days prior to a decision on the project. The City will make findings regarding the extent and nature of the impacts as presented in the Final EIR. The Final EIR will need to be certified as complete by the City Council prior to making a decision to approve or deny the project. Public input is encouraged at all public hearings before the City (e.g., Planning Commission, City Council) regarding the project.

2.3 SCOPE OF THIS DRAFT EIR

As required by the *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.2, this Draft EIR must identify the effects of the proposed project determined to be significant. Per *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15060, once the City determined that the proposed project may have a significant impact on the environment and that an EIR would be required, the EIR process was initiated.

The scoping process for this EIR included the preparation of an IS. Per the *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15063, the City conducted an IS to determine whether the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment. The City determined that the proposed project may have a significant impact on the environment and issued an NOP soliciting comments from Responsible and Trustee Agencies and other interested parties, including members of the public. In addition to identifying potentially significant impacts of the proposed project that required

additional study, the IS also identified effects determined not to be significant consistent with the *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15063(c)(3)(B). Impacts that were determined to be less than significant were discussed and evaluated in the IS, which is included in Appendix A of this Draft EIR. The analysis determined that the proposed project would result in either no impacts or less than significant impacts related to the following topics: agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, mineral resources, and recreation.

It should be noted that while concerns were expressed during the Scoping Meeting regarding the proposed project's impact on existing recreational resources in the City, Section 4.15, Recreation, of the IS prepared for the project determined that project-related impacts to recreational resources would be less than significant. Specifically, the IS determined that because the project is considered a policy/planning action and would not include physical improvements that would generate an increased use of existing recreational facilities and because the proposed LUE calls for the preservation of existing and the creation of new recreational facilities, the project would result in less than significant impacts with respect to recreational resources. For these reasons, this topic is not discussed further in this Draft EIR.

Potential impacts related to agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, mineral resources, and recreation are discussed solely in Appendix A of this Draft EIR. The City's IS and Environmental Checklist Form are discussed in Chapter 4.0, Existing Environmental Setting, Environmental Analysis Impacts, and Mitigation Measures, of this document, and a copy of the IS and Environmental Checklist for the proposed project is included in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

2.4 FORMAT OF THE DRAFT EIR

Pursuant to the *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15120(c), this Draft EIR contains the information and analysis required by Sections 15122 through 15131 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. Each of the required elements is covered in one of the Draft EIR chapters described below.

2.4.1 Chapter 1.0: Executive Summary

Chapter 1.0 contains the Executive Summary of the Draft EIR, listing all significant project impacts, mitigation measures that have been recommended to reduce any significant impacts of the proposed project, and the level of significance of each impact following mitigation. The summary is presented in a table format.

2.4.2 Chapter 2.0: Introduction

Chapter 2.0 contains a discussion of the purpose and intended use of the Draft EIR.

2.4.3 Chapter 3.0: Project Description

Chapter 3.0 includes discussion of the proposed project’s geographical setting; the planning area; the project history; and the proposed project’s goals, objectives, and characteristics; and anticipated discretionary actions and permits for the project.

2.4.4 Chapter 4.0: Existing Environmental Setting, Environmental Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Chapter 4.0 includes an analysis of the proposed project’s environmental impacts. It is organized into the following topical sections: aesthetics, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, land use and planning, noise, population and housing, public services, transportation/traffic, and utilities and service systems. The environmental setting discussions describe the “existing conditions” of the environment in the planning area and in the vicinity of the site as they pertain to the environmental issues being analyzed (Section 15125 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*).

The project impact discussions identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of the proposed project. The direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed project on the environment are identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects, as necessary (Section 15126.2[a] of the *State CEQA Guidelines*).

Chapter 4.0 also includes within the analysis of each environmental topic a discussion of the cumulative effects of the proposed project when considered in combination with other projects, causing related impacts as required by Section 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. Cumulative impacts are based on the build out of the project and surrounding area, including all other known proposed projects in the surrounding area.

The discussions of mitigation measures identify and describe feasible measures that could minimize or lessen significant adverse impacts for each significant environmental effect identified in the Draft EIR (Section 15126[e] of the *State CEQA Guidelines*). The levels of significance before and after mitigation are provided. Unavoidable adverse effects are identified where mitigation is not expected to reduce the effects to less than significant levels.

2.4.5 Chapter 5.0: Alternatives to the Proposed Project

In accordance with CEQA (Section 15126.6 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*), the alternatives discussion in Chapter 5.0 describes a reasonable range of alternatives that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the proposed project and are capable of eliminating or substantially reducing any of the proposed project’s significant adverse environmental effects or reducing them to a less than significant level. The alternatives analyzed in Chapter 5.0 include the No Project Alternative, Areas of Change Reduction/Reduced Project Alternative, Reduced Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Alternative/Transit-Oriented Alternative, and the Neighborhood-Serving Centers and Corridors Commercial-Only Alternative.

2.4.6 Chapter 6.0: Long-Term Implications of the Project

Chapter 6.0 includes CEQA-mandated discussions on the following topics as required by Section 15126 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*: (1) significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project; (2) significant adverse environmental impacts for which either no mitigation or only partial mitigation is feasible, and (3) growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project.

2.4.7 Chapter 7.0: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Section 15097 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* and PRC, Section 21081.6, requires that agencies adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting program for any project for which it had made findings pursuant to PRC Section 21081. Chapter 7.0 provides a list of all proposed project mitigation measures and applicable performance standards, defines the parties responsible for implementation and review/approval, and identifies the timing for implementation of each control measure.

2.4.8 Chapter 8.0: Significant Unavoidable Impacts

Chapter 8.0 summarizes those significant environmental impacts of the proposed project for which either no mitigation or only partial mitigation is feasible and which, therefore, would remain significant impacts after mitigation (*State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126(b)).

2.4.9 Chapter 9.0: Persons Contacted and Chapter 10.0: List of Preparers

Chapters 9.0 and 10.0 provide the organizations and persons contacted during preparation of the Draft EIR, the Draft EIR preparers and technical report authors, other experts included in the preparation of the Draft EIR.

2.4.10 Chapter 11.0: References and Chapter 12.0: List of Acronyms

Chapters 11.0 and 12.0 provide the references and acronyms used in this Draft EIR, respectively.

2.5 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

As permitted in Section 15150 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, a Draft EIR may reference all or portions of another document that is a matter of public record or is generally available to the public. Informational details from the documents that have been incorporated by reference are summarized in the appropriate sections of this, along with descriptions regarding how the public may review these documents. These documents include:

- City of Long Beach General Plan Elements (as amended) (Website: http://www.lbds.info/planning/advance_planning/general_plan.asp)
- City of Long Beach Municipal Code and other titles referenced herein (Website: https://www.municode.com/library/ca/long_beach/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=16115)

- Proposed Long Beach General Plan Land Use and Urban Design Elements (August 2016) (Appendix F) and also available at:

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