

# 1 Introduction

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This document is a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Alamitos Avenue “Complete Streets” Improvements Project (project), located in the City of Long Beach, County of Los Angeles. For the purposes of this EIR, the Alamitos Avenue “Complete Streets” Improvements Project refers to a modification to Alamitos Avenue, between 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Ocean Boulevard, to a two-lane divided roadway with on-street bike lanes to match the section north of 7<sup>th</sup> Street, as detailed in Section 2, *Project Description*.

This section describes: (1) the general project background; (2) the purpose and legal authority of the EIR; (3) the scope and content of the EIR; (4) lead, responsible, and trustee agencies; (5) the environmental review process required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

## 1.1 Environmental Impact Report Background

The City of Long Beach prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR and distributed it for agency and public review for the required 30-day review period on January 31, 2017. The City received two written responses to the NOP during the public review period. The NOP is presented in Appendix A, along with the Initial Study that was prepared for the project and the NOP responses received. The intent of the NOP was to provide interested individuals, groups, public agencies and others a forum to provide input to the City regarding scope and focus of the EIR. Table 2 lists the issues relevant to the EIR that were brought up in the NOP written comments, as well as the EIR sections where the issues are addressed.

**Table 2 NOP Comments and EIR Response**

Commenter	Comment/Request	How and Where it was Addressed
California State Clearinghouse	States receipt of NOP and confirms posting of document.	No response required.
State of California Native American Heritage Commission	Recommends consultation with local tribes in accordance with Senate Bill (SB) 18 and Assembly Bill (AB) 52.	Tribal cultural resources are discussed in Section 17, <i>Tribal Cultural Resources</i> , of the Initial Study (Appendix A). The Initial Study determined that the project would have no impact to tribal cultural resources. The City of Long Beach has initiated tribal consultation in accordance with AB 52 (see Appendix B) and no tribes have responded with input or expressed concerns regarding this project.
State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	States that the project would not adversely affect I-710 or SR-1 and states support of complete streets projects.	No response required.

## 1.2 Purpose and Legal Authority

The project requires discretionary approvals from the City of Long Beach. Therefore, it is subject to the environmental review requirements of CEQA. In accordance with Section 15121 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the purpose of this EIR is to serve as an informational document that:

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...will inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.

This EIR has been prepared as a Project EIR pursuant to Section 15161 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. A Project EIR is appropriate for a specific development project. As stated in the *CEQA Guidelines*:

This type of EIR should focus primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from the development project. The EIR shall examine all phases of the project, including planning, construction, and operation.

This EIR is to serve as an informational document for the public and City of Long Beach decision-makers. The process will culminate with a Planning Commission hearing to consider certification of the Final EIR and approval of the project, unless the Planning Commission's decision is appealed to the City Council, in which case the process would culminate with a City Council hearing to consider certification of the Final EIR and approval of the project.

### 1.3 Scope and Content

Of the 17 areas discussed in the Initial Study prepared for the project and provided in Appendix A, only the issue of Transportation and Traffic was identified as requiring further study in an EIR. This EIR addresses traffic issues and identifies potentially significant environmental impacts of the project and cumulative development in the City in accordance with provisions set forth in the *CEQA Guidelines*. The EIR also recommends feasible mitigation measures, where needed and possible, that would reduce or eliminate adverse environmental effects. In preparing the EIR, pertinent City policies and guidelines and other background documents were used. A full reference list is contained in Section 7, *References and Preparers*.

The Alternatives section of the EIR was prepared in accordance with Section 15126.6 of the *CEQA Guidelines* and focuses on alternatives that are capable of eliminating or reducing significant adverse effects associated with the project while feasibly attaining most of the basic project objectives. In addition, the Alternatives section identifies the "environmentally superior" alternative among the alternatives assessed. The alternatives evaluated include the CEQA-required "No Project" Alternative and two alternative scenarios for the project.

### 1.4 Lead, Responsible, and Trustee Agencies

The *CEQA Guidelines* define lead, responsible and trustee agencies. The City of Long Beach is the lead agency for the project because it holds principal responsibility for approving the project.

A responsible agency refers to a public agency other than the lead agency that has discretionary approval over the project. There are no responsible agencies for the project.

A trustee agency refers to a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project. There are no trustee agencies for the proposed project.

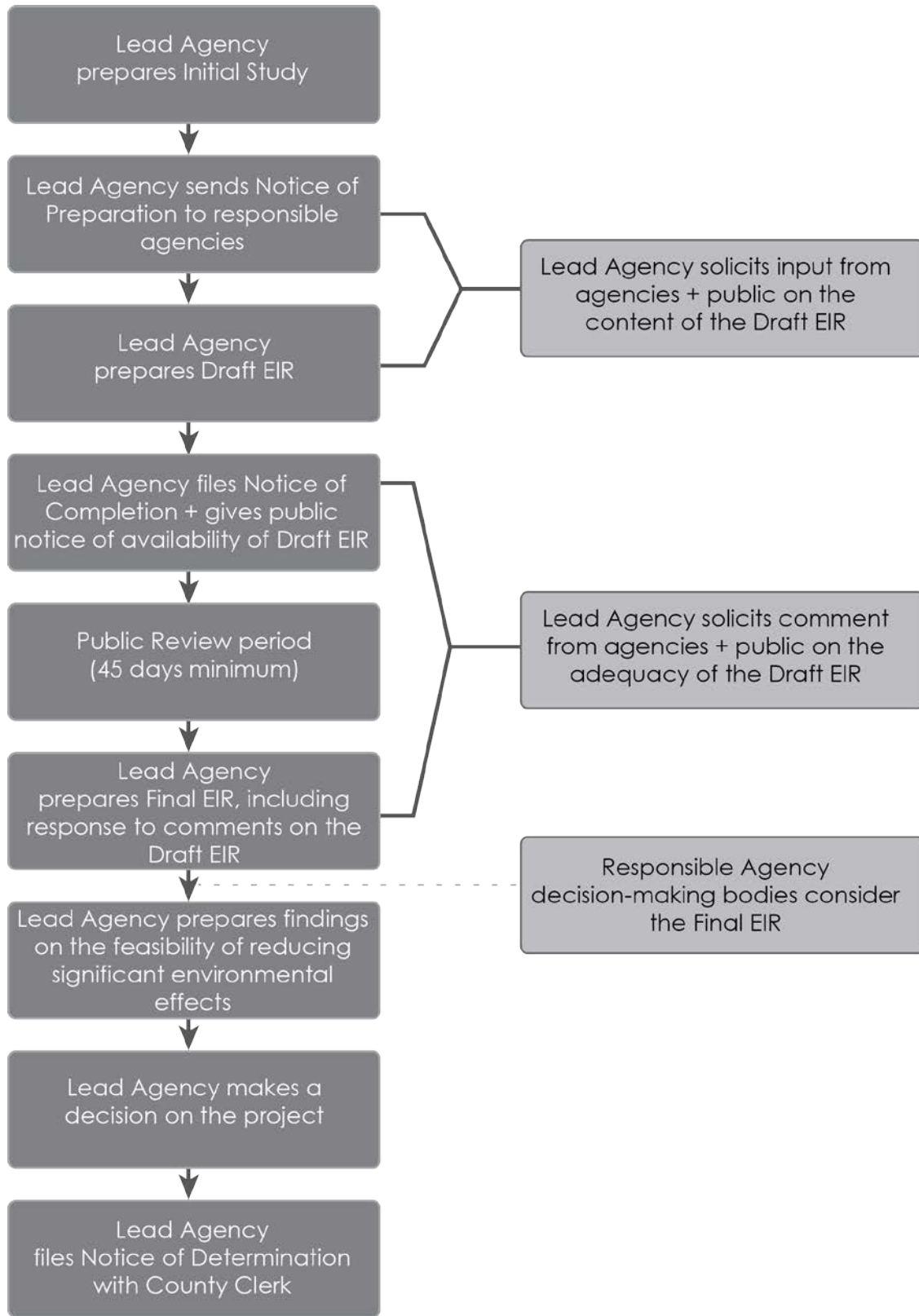
### 1.5 Environmental Review Process

The environmental impact review process, as required under CEQA, is summarized below and illustrated in Figure 1. The steps are presented in sequential order.

1. **Notice of Preparation (NOP) Distributed.** Immediately after deciding that an EIR is required, the lead agency must file a NOP soliciting input on the EIR scope to "responsible," "trustee," and involved federal agencies; to the State Clearinghouse, if one or more state agencies is a responsible or trustee agency; and to parties previously requesting notice in writing. The NOP must be posted in the County Clerk's office for 30 days. A scoping meeting to solicit public input on the issues to be assessed in the EIR is not required, but may be conducted by the lead agency.
2. **Draft EIR Prepared.** The Draft EIR must contain: a) table of contents or index; b) summary; c) project description; d) environmental setting; e) significant impacts (direct, indirect, cumulative, growth-inducing and unavoidable impacts); f) alternatives; g) mitigation measures; and h) irreversible changes.
3. **Public Notice and Review.** A lead agency must prepare a Public Notice of Availability of an EIR. The Notice must be placed in the County Clerk's office for 30 days (Public Resources Code Section 21092) and sent to anyone requesting it. Additionally, public notice of Draft EIR availability must be given through at least one of the following procedures: a) publication in a newspaper of general circulation; b) posting on and off the project site; and c) direct mailing to owners and occupants of contiguous properties. The lead agency must consult with and request comments on the Draft EIR from responsible and trustee agencies, and adjacent cities and counties. The minimum public review period for a Draft EIR is 30 days. When a Draft EIR is sent to the State Clearinghouse for review, the public review period must be 45 days, unless a shorter period is approved by the Clearinghouse (Public Resources Code 21091). Distribution of the Draft EIR may be required through the State Clearinghouse.
4. **Notice of Completion.** A lead agency must file a Notice of Completion with the State Clearinghouse as soon as it completes a Draft EIR.
5. **Final EIR.** A Final EIR must include: a) the Draft EIR; b) copies of comments received during public review; c) list of persons and entities commenting; and d) responses to comments.
6. **Certification of Final EIR.** The lead agency shall certify: a) the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA; b) the Final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency; and c) the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information in the Final EIR prior to approving a project.
7. **Lead Agency Project Decision.** A lead agency may: a) disapprove a project because of its significant environmental effects; b) require changes to a project to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects; or c) approve a project despite its significant environmental effects, if the proper findings and statement of overriding considerations are adopted.
8. **Findings/Statement of Overriding Considerations.** For each significant impact of the project identified in the EIR, the lead or responsible agency must find, based on substantial evidence, that either: a) the project has been changed to avoid or substantially reduce the magnitude of the impact; b) changes to the project are within another agency's jurisdiction and such changes have or should be adopted; or c) specific economic, social, or other considerations make the mitigation measures or project alternatives infeasible. If an agency approves a project with unavoidable significant environmental effects, it must prepare a written Statement of Overriding Considerations that set forth the specific social, economic or other reasons supporting the agency's decision.

9. **Mitigation Monitoring/Reporting Program.** When an agency makes findings on significant effects identified in the EIR, it must adopt a reporting or monitoring program for mitigation measures that were adopted or made conditions of project approval to mitigate significant effects.
10. **Notice of Determination.** An agency must file a Notice of Determination after deciding to approve a project for which an EIR is prepared. A local agency must file the Notice with the County Clerk. The Notice must be posted for 30 days and sent to anyone previously requesting notice. Posting of the Notice starts a 30-day statute of limitations on CEQA challenges.

Figure 1 Environmental Review Process



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