
I. INTRODUCTION

This document is a Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) that has been prepared at the direction and under the supervision of the City of Pasadena (City) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Guidelines for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines), as amended.^{2,3} The proposed 16 E. California Project includes the demolition of the existing on-site structures and surface parking areas in order to develop a four-story, 113,200 gross square foot office building with 255 parking spaces provided within a two-level subterranean parking garage. The project's background and the legal basis for preparing an EIR are described below.

1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Section 15125 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Draft EIR evaluated the project in the context of the conditions that existed at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Draft EIR was circulated by the City (October 2008). The Draft EIR was circulated for a 45-day public review period from March 17 to May 1, 2009. A public hearing was held by the Hearing Officer on April 15, 2009 to accept public comments on the Draft EIR. In addition, public meetings before the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC), Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and Planning Commission were held on April 2, 2009, April 6, 2009, and April 22, 2009 respectively, and accepted comments on the Draft EIR. The TAC and HPC meetings and the public hearing were publicly noticed within the Notice of Availability of a Draft EIR for the Project, which was circulated by the City in March 2009. Notice of the Planning Commission meeting was provided through the City's standard noticing procedures for public meetings.

An Initial Study was prepared for the project and distributed to the State Clearinghouse, Office of Planning and Research, responsible agencies, and other interested parties on October 1, 2008, for a 30-day circulation period, ending on October 30, 2008. The Initial Study provides a detailed discussion of the potential environmental impact areas and the reasons that each topical area is or is not analyzed further in the EIR. A public scoping meeting for the Draft EIR was held on October 16, 2008. The Initial Study and NOP are included as Appendix A of this EIR.

² *Public Resources Code Section 21000-21178.*

³ *California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000-15387.*

Impacts associated with the proposed Project were determined in the Initial Study not to be significant and include: aesthetics, agricultural resources, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, population/housing, public services, recreation, and utilities (wastewater, solid waste, and dry utilities such as gas and electricity).

2.0 PURPOSE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY

The proposed Project requires the discretionary approval of the City of Pasadena Hearing Officer. As such, the project is subject to the requirements of CEQA. In accordance with Section 15121 of the CEQA Guidelines, the purpose of the EIR is to serve as an informational document that:

“...will inform public agency decisionmakers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.”

The 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 this section:

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

This Final EIR is to serve as an informational document for the public and the City’s decision-makers. No final actions (approval or denial of the proposed Project) will be taken until the Final EIR has been reviewed, certified as complete, and considered by the appropriate decision-makers. Dates of meetings when the Project is scheduled to be considered will be published and officially noticed in accordance with all City requirements.

3.0 SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THIS EIR

The content of this EIR was established based on the findings in the Initial Study and public and agency input. In accordance with CEQA, the analysis in the EIR is focused on issues determined in the Initial Study to be potentially significant, whereas issues found in the Initial Study to have less than significant impacts or no impacts do not require further evaluation. Based on the analyses contained in the Initial Study, this EIR analyzes in detail the following environmental issues:

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- Air Quality
 - Cultural Resources (Historical Resources/Archaeological and Paleontological Resources)
 - Noise
 - Traffic and Circulation
 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials
 - Water Supply

The content and format of this EIR are designed to meet the current requirements of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The EIR is organized into sections summarized below:

- **Executive Summary**, presents a summary of the proposed project and alternatives, potential impacts and mitigation measures, and impact conclusions regarding significant unavoidable adverse impacts and effects not found to be significant.
- **Section I. Introduction**, describes the purpose and use of the EIR, provides a brief overview of the environmental review process, and outlines the organization of the EIR.
- **Section II. Project Description**, includes a discussion of the project location, details of the project, and the objectives of the project.
- **Section III. Environmental Setting**, includes an overview of the existing conditions or setting for each issues area prior to project implementation. In addition, this section identifies the cumulative projects in the City of Pasadena and adjacent areas, which is used for the cumulative analysis.
- **Section IV. Environmental Impact Analysis**, includes an analysis of each of the environmental issues outlined above and a detailed description of the existing conditions or setting for each issue area before project implementation, methods and assumptions used in the impact analysis, thresholds of significance, impacts that would result from the proposed project, and applicable mitigation measures that would eliminate or reduce significant impacts. This section also includes a discussion of cumulative impacts associated with the implementation of the proposed project and related projects in the area.
- **Section V. Alternatives**, evaluates the environmental effects of four feasible project alternatives, including the No Project Alternative. It also identifies the environmentally superior project.
- **Section VI. Other CEQA Considerations**, provides a discussion of the irreversible environmental changes to the natural environment resulting from the implementation of the proposed project. In addition, this section provides a summary of the proposed project's potential to lead to population growth and indirect implications of that growth on the City. This section also contains a summary of the issue areas that were

determined in the Initial Study for the project to result in less than significant environmental impacts. Furthermore, the significant unavoidable impacts that would result from project implementation are summarized in this section. Finally, an analysis of potential secondary effects that could result from the implementation of recommended mitigation measures is provided in this section.

- **Section VII. Comments and Responses**, provides the comment letters received on the Draft EIR, comments received at meetings and the public hearing on the Draft EIR, and the City's responses to each comment.
- **Section VIII. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program**, provides the mitigation program that will be adopted by the City to ensure that if the project is developed, all recommended mitigation measures are implemented thereby minimizing identified environmental effects.
- **Section IX. Persons and Organizations**, lists the individuals involved in preparation of this EIR and organizations and persons consulted to ascertain supporting information to support the EIR analysis.
- **Section X. References**, identifies the documents (printed references) and individuals (personal communications) consulted in preparing this EIR.
- **Appendices**, present data supporting the analyses or contents of this EIR. The appendices include the following:
 - Appendix A: NOP/IS and NOP Comments
 - Appendix B: Air Quality Assessment Worksheets
 - Appendix C1: Cultural Resources (Historic Resources Search Results)
 - Appendix C2: Cultural Resources (Archaeological and Paleontological Resources Results)
 - Appendix D: Noise Worksheets
 - Appendix E: Traffic Study
 - Appendix F: Hazardous Materials

4.0 LEAD, RESPONSIBLE, AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

The CEQA Guidelines define lead, responsible, and trustee agencies. The City of Pasadena 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. A trustee agency refers to a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project. At this time, there are no responsible or trustee agencies for this project.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

This EIR was prepared following input from the public, responsible, and affected agencies through the EIR scoping process. In accordance with Section 15063 of the State CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study/ and a Notice of Preparation (NOP), were prepared and distributed to responsible agencies, affected agencies, and other interested parties on October 1, 2008. The NOP is a required document that must be submitted to the State Clearinghouse to officially solicit participation in determining the scope of the EIR. In turn, the State Clearinghouse distributed the NOP to involved public agencies. In addition, the NOP was posted at the Office of the Los Angeles County Clerk for 30 days. A public scoping meeting was held on October 16, 2008 to further solicit public input. A copy of the Initial Study and NOP are provided in Appendix A of this EIR.

As stated above, the Initial Study indicated that an EIR is required for the project. The EIR focuses on the environmental impacts identified as potentially significant during the Initial Study and scoping process, which includes air quality, cultural resources (historic, archaeological and paleontologic), traffic and circulation, noise, water supply and hazards and hazardous materials. All issues not evaluated in detail in Section IV of this EIR are addressed as required in the Initial Study.

The Draft EIR was circulated for 45 days for public review and comment in accordance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines. This Final EIR provides written responses to comments received on the Draft EIR. Written comments received from any State agencies will be made available to those agencies at least ten days prior to the public hearing during which the certification of the Final EIR will be considered. These comments and their responses are included in this Final EIR for consideration by the Hearing Officer.

Prior to approval of the Project, the City, as the lead agency and decision-making entity, is required to certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the proposed project has been reviewed and the information in this EIR has been considered, and that this EIR reflects the independent judgment of the City. As defined by Public Resource Code (PRC) Section 21081, CEQA also requires the City to adopt “findings” with respect to each significant environmental effect identified in the EIR. For each significant effect, CEQA requires the approving agency to make one or more of the following findings:

- The project has been altered to avoid or substantially lessen significant impacts identified in the Final EIR;
- The responsibility to carry out the above is under the jurisdiction of another agency; or
- Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

In addition, when approving a project, public agencies must adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), describing the changes that were incorporated into the project or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment in compliance with PRC Section 21081.6. The MMRP is included in Section VIII of this Final EIR. The MMRP is adopted at the time of project approval and is designed to ensure compliance with the measure during project implementation. Upon approval of the proposed project, the City will be responsible for the implementation of the proposed project's MMRP.

Environmental impacts may not always be mitigated to a less than significant level. When this occurs, impacts are considered significant and unavoidable. If the City concludes that the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable effects, which are identified in this Final EIR, the City must adopt a "statement of overriding considerations" prior to approval of the proposed project in compliance with PRC Section 21081. Such statements are intended under CEQA to provide a written means by which the lead agency balances the benefits of the proposed project and the significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. Where the lead agency concludes that the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable environmental impacts, the lead agency may find such impacts "acceptable" and approve the project.

6.0 INTENDED USE OF THIS EIR

This EIR shall serve as the environmental document for the proposed actions associated with the 16 E. California Project, pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The purpose of this EIR is to assist the City of Pasadena, serving as the Lead Agency, in the decision-making process regarding this Project. In accordance with CEQA, as defined by PRC Code Section 21002.1, the intended uses of this EIR are to identify any significant environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project, indicate the manner in which these significant effects can be mitigated or avoided, and identify alternatives to the proposed Project.

7.0 CUMULATIVE PROJECTS

CEQA requires that EIRs analyze cumulative impacts. Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” In addition, Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that the analysis of cumulative impacts need not be as in-depth as what is performed relative to the proposed project, but instead is to “be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness.”

Cumulative impacts are anticipated impacts of the project along with reasonably foreseeable growth. According to Section 15130(b)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines, either one of the following elements is necessary to provide an adequate discussion of significant cumulative impacts:

- A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts; or
- A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental planning document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

Known planned and pending projects in the City of Pasadena and adjacent areas are listed in Table III-1 on page III-9 and are shown in Figure III-1 on page III-10. These projects, as appropriate and pertinent, are considered in the cumulative analyses in Section IV, Environmental Impact Analysis.