



I. Summary

I. SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This EIR has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) with respect to the proposed expansion of the Pasadena Conference Center (“the Project”).

As described in Section 15121(a) and 15362 of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR is an informational document that will inform public agency decision makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The purpose of this EIR, therefore, is to focus the discussion on those potential effects to the environment of the Project which the lead agency has determined are or may be significant.

The City of Pasadena, which has the principal responsibility for approving the Project, is the Lead Agency pursuant to CEQA Statute Section 21067. CEQA review of the proposed Project was initiated by the City of Pasadena through an Initial Study. In January 2003, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated for a 30-day review period and a public scoping meeting was held on January 23, 2003. The Initial Study concluded that significant impacts would not occur, and mitigation measures would not be required for the following topics: Biological Resources; Energy and Mineral Resources; Geology; Hazards; Hydrology; Population and Housing; Public Services; Recreation; and Utilities and Service Systems. At the same time, the Initial Study identified several environmental topics for which the Project may cause a significant environmental impact. Therefore, it was determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) be prepared and that it address the following topics: Land Use and Planning; Aesthetics; Historic Resources; Transportation & Circulation; Air Quality; and Noise. Potential impacts identified to trees, including the Landmark Moreton Bay Fig adjacent to the Project site, are addressed within the analysis of Aesthetics. The Initial Study, NOP, and comments received in response to the NOP are included as Appendix A of this EIR.

The City of Pasadena circulated the Draft EIR for the proposed Project in September 2003. The 45-day public comment period on the Draft EIR began on September 23, 2003, and concluded on November 7, 2003. The Draft EIR was presented for comment before meetings of the Pasadena Design Commission, as well as the City’s Transportation Advisory Commission, Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Commission. Verbal comments on the Draft EIR were received at these meetings. In addition, comment letters were received from Pasadena

Heritage, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and an anonymous member of the public.

The Applicant substantially revised the design of the Project in response to comments raised by the various City commissions and the public. The City, based on a review of the revised design, conservatively concluded that the changes in the Project's design were of a sufficient magnitude as to warrant the preparation of a revised EIR. While the CEQA Guidelines include a provision that requires recirculation of only those portions of the Project's environmental analysis for which conditions have changed, the City has determined that the process would be best served by updating, as necessary, all analyses that were included in the September 2003 Draft EIR. As such, a Revised Draft EIR was prepared, which includes all of the subjects and environmental analyses included within the September 2003 Draft EIR. Revisions to the Revised Draft EIR ~~are~~ were indicated in ~~this~~ this document using ~~strikeout~~ for deleted text and underline for new text.

As the Lead Agency, the City is responsible for the preparation and distribution of this EIR. *As with the Draft EIR, this EIR identifies potential significant effects that the proposed Project may have on the environment. It also indicates the manner in which the Project's significant effects can be reduced or avoided through the implementation of mitigation measures. Impacts that cannot be mitigated to a level below significance are considered significant unavoidable adverse impacts. For projects that result in any unmitigated or under-mitigated significant environmental effects, the City may, after making a series of findings, certify the EIR upon adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15093.*

The Revised Draft EIR for the Project was submitted to the State Clearinghouse, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and circulated for public review on August 17, 2004. A 45-day comment period is required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15087. However, an 86-day comment period was provided, which concluded on November 10, 2004. During the comment period the Revised Draft EIR was presented for comment before meetings of the Pasadena Design Commission, as well as the City's Transportation Advisory Commission, and Planning Commission. One letter on the Revised Draft EIR was also received.

In accordance with Section 15123 of the CEQA Guidelines, this Summary provides a brief description of the Project; identifies areas of controversy and issues to be resolved; summarizes significant effects and proposed mitigation measures; and identifies alternatives that would reduce or avoid those effects.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Project Characteristics

The Pasadena Conference Center is located in the central portion of the City of Pasadena on the northern half of the block bounded to the north by Green Street, to the east by Euclid Avenue, to the south by Cordova Street, and to the west by Marengo Avenue. The existing Pasadena Conference Center complex consists of the Conference Center building, the Exhibition Hall building, Ludwigshafen Plaza and Mishima Plaza, as well as the Pasadena Civic Auditorium and the adjoining Pasadena Ice Skating Center.

The proposed Project would renovate and expand the Pasadena Conference Center in order to provide modern amenities and facilities that would make it competitive with other conference centers in the region. The Project would involve the addition of approximately 211,320 square feet of new floor area, exclusive of parking and the Ice Skating Center. With the proposed demolition, this represents a net increase of 164,320 square feet on the Project site. New construction includes a new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building to replace the existing Exhibition Hall at the west side of the site. The new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would include a lobby and pre-function space as well as "back of house" (BOH) spaces for storage areas, circulation space, etc. The existing Conference Center located on the east side of the site would be retained; however, the Project does include the construction of a new façade for the Convention Center, as well as a 10,000 square foot addition for administrative office space along Green Street and Euclid Avenue. Two features of the Project that were not part of the previous proposal are the construction of a new parking structure and the conversion of the Ice Skating Center to its previous ballroom use. Finally, the Project includes the redesign and reorganization of the two existing public plazas, and improvements to the forecourt of the Civic Auditorium. There are no changes proposed to the Civic Auditorium structure.

The new Exhibition Hall and the renovated Convention Center building would be constructed at grade in order to engage the adjacent Civic Center and welcome pedestrians onto the Project site from Green Street. The new Parking Structure would consist of two levels of below-grade parking, one level of at-grade parking, and four levels of parking above grade. The proposed Parking Structure would have access from Euclid Avenue. At buildout, a total of 1,216 parking spaces would be available on site, which is an increase of 391 spaces when compared with existing conditions. In the event the Applicant cannot secure funding for a 7-level Parking Structure, a 5-level Parking Structure would be developed. Should this occur, the 5-level Parking Structure would consist of two levels of below-grade parking, one level of at-grade parking, and two levels of above-grade parking. Thus, the difference between the 5-level and 7-level designs is whether there would be two or four levels of above-grade parking. If a 5-level Parking Structure were developed, a total of 972 parking spaces would be available

on site, which is an increase of 147 spaces when compared with existing conditions. Within this EIR, both the 5- and 7-level Parking Structure designs are analyzed.

The Applicant has indicated that the potential exists that the design described herein may be modified prior to the City reaching its final decision on the Project. The Applicant has also indicated that it is committed that any redesign of the Project, should such a redesign occur, would incorporate a building envelope (e.g., development program, building height, setbacks, and building massing), site access, and loading dock plan that would be in substantial compliance with that described in this EIR. As such, the analysis contained in this EIR is applicable to the design proposed at this time or as may be modified at a later date.

2. Discretionary and Ministerial Actions

The City of Pasadena is the lead agency for the Project. Approvals required to be granted by the City of Pasadena, or other responsible agencies, for implementation of the proposed expansion of the Pasadena Conference Center include the following, with the decision maker shown in parentheses:

- Major Project Conditional Use Permit approval (Zoning Hearing Officer);
- Conditional Use Permit to expand a Commercial Recreation Use (Zoning Hearing Officer);
- Approval of funding (Pasadena City Council);
- Demolition Permit (City of Pasadena Building Division);
- Design Review (City of Pasadena Design Commission);
- Tree Removal (Design Commission);
- Permits to Construct and Operate (South Coast Air Quality Management District [SCAQMD] and California Occupational Safety and Health Administration [Cal/OSHA]);
- Storm Water Permits (State Water Resources Board);
- Transportation Permit for Oversized or Excessive Loads (Department of Motor Vehicles);
- Haul route approval (Pasadena Department of Transportation);

- Variance for Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building setback along Green Street and Marengo Avenue, if the Project is approved after the draft Central District Specific Plan (hereinafter referred to as “the Central District Plan”) (Zoning Hearing Officer);
- Specific Plan Amendment for the View Corridor and Pedestrian Access and the number of stories for the Parking Structure, if the Project moves ahead of the draft Central District Specific Plan (Planning Commission and City Council); and
- Other approvals, if determined in the review process to be required.

C. AREAS OF CONTROVERSY AND ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Potential areas of controversy and issues to be resolved by the City of Pasadena include issues known to be of concern to the community and issues raised in the response to the Notice of Preparation and the Draft EIR. Issues known to be of concern to the community include the interface of the Project with the historic Civic Auditorium; the relationship of the Project to the historic urban form established by the 1923 Civic Center Plan and supported by current planning policies; and traffic impacts specifically related to delivery trucks that currently experience occasional queuing along Marengo Avenue. Issues raised in response to the NOP include that analysis of air quality impacts be conducted according to South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) guidelines, analysis of traffic impacts be consistent with the guidelines of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and that proposed tree removal be done in accordance with the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

D. ALTERNATIVES

The CEQA Guidelines require an EIR to “describe the range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.” The CEQA Guidelines direct that selection of alternatives be guided by a “rule of reason” that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice.

As described in detail in Section IV., Alternatives, of this EIR, three alternatives to the Project were identified: No Project Alternative, Alternate Design Alternative, and Reduced Project Alternative. These three alternatives were analyzed with respect to the significant effects of the Project and the basic objectives of the Project, as summarized below.

In addition, an EIR normally includes an analysis reflecting the development of the proposed Project at an alternative site. While this is typically the case, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(f)(2)(B), there may not be alternative locations that are feasible for some projects and, per CEQA Guideline Section 15126.6(a), an EIR need not consider alternatives that are infeasible. The Project involves the expansion of an existing facility that represents a substantial past investment by the City of Pasadena in its current location. Furthermore, an important element of the Pasadena Conference Center is its physical relationship to surrounding uses. The Pasadena Conference Center has been integrated into the site of the historic Civic Auditorium such that they form a complex that is a key element of the Civic Center area of Pasadena. Furthermore, the location of the Project allows for synergy with the Paseo Colorado mixed-use development north of Green Street and with the nearby Sheraton and Hilton hotels. As such, alternative locations that are distant from the Project site would not be able to maintain these critical relationships. In addition, there are no comparable alternative sites in the vicinity of the existing Conference Center site that would allow the Conference Center to function as it does today. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no alternative site that would be a feasible alternative for the Project.

1. No Project

The No Project Alternative assumes that no project is approved and the Project site remains unchanged. Thus, under this alternative the physical conditions of the Project site would remain as they exist today. This alternative would avoid the Project's significant unavoidable short-term significant impact on air quality. It would also reduce non-significant impacts from construction noise. It would eliminate the Project's impacts with respect to aesthetics, but would not include the Project's aesthetic enhancements to the site. This alternative would avoid the non-significant variations to existing land use guidelines that occur with the proposed Project, but would not include the proposed Project's beneficial impacts on land use with regard to enhancing an activity center and the design and interface along Green Street and Garfield Avenue.

The No Project Alternative would not achieve the objectives of the proposed Project. The Pasadena Conference Center would not be expanded and modernized nor would the southern terminus of the Garfield Avenue axis be strengthened or synergy created with the Paseo Colorado project, and thereby the City's planning framework would not be reinforced.

2. Alternate Design Alternative

The Alternate Design Alternative proposes the same uses as set forth in the Project with an alternate arrangement of these uses on the site. The Alternate Design concept would develop the expanded Convention Center on the west side of the Civic Auditorium, and the existing

Convention Center building and Mishima Plaza on the east side of the Civic Auditorium would remain unchanged. Impacts of this alternative would be essentially the same as those of the proposed Project, including the Project's short-term, significant construction impact on air quality. The only variation would occur in regards to the relocation of development from along Euclid Avenue into a taller building along Marengo Avenue. This relocation would cause a similar impact regarding the view corridor policy on Marengo Avenue and along Green Street. Further, the use of a taller building would likely conflict with applicable height standards and would cause the new building to stand taller than the Civic Auditorium thus causing an adverse impact on that buildings prominent standing on the Project site.

The Alternate Design Alternative would achieve the objectives of the City of Pasadena to expand and modernize the Pasadena Conference Center. In addition, the southern terminus of the Garfield Avenue axis would be partially strengthened and synergy would be somewhat created with the Paseo Colorado project. However, although implementation of the Alternate Design Alternative is technically feasible, it would not meet the objectives of the Project or the City to the same extent as the proposed Project would.

3. Reduced Project Alternative

The Reduced Project Alternative includes the proposed uses as set forth with the Project, but with a reduced scale of development at the Project site. The Exhibition Hall and Ludwigshafen Plaza would be redeveloped with the new Conference Center complex. The existing Conference Center building and the conversion of the Ice Skating Center would occur as with the Project. As a result, the proposed amount of new space would be reduced by 55,653 square feet, and Mishima Plaza would not be reconfigured. Parking would remain in the existing subterranean structure and no increase in parking would occur. This alternative would have similar impacts to the proposed Project, including the significant construction impact on air quality, except that construction activity on the east side of the site would be reduced, resulting in a larger area of open space. This alternative would involve the same non-significant land use policy conflicts, as would the proposed Project.

The Reduced Project Alternative would achieve the objectives of the City of Pasadena to expand and modernize the Pasadena Conference Center. In addition, the southern terminus of the Garfield Avenue axis would be partially strengthened and synergy would be somewhat created with the Paseo Colorado project. The Reduced Project Alternative is technically feasible and somewhat meets the objectives, but not to the same extent as the proposed Project.

4. Environmentally Superior Alternative

Based on an analysis of these alternatives, an environmentally superior alternative has been identified. The Reduced Project Alternative is selected as the environmentally superior alternative as it achieves some of the objectives of the Project and reduces some of the potential impacts of the proposed Project to a greater extent than the other alternatives. As such, the Reduced Project Alternative is environmentally superior to the other alternatives.

E. SUMMARY OF PROJECT IMPACTS

1. Land Use

a. Environmental Impacts

The proposed Project involves the renovation and expansion of the existing Convention Center complex. Project modifications would not alter the basic site uses, affect those uses surrounding the Project site, nor alter the general land use relationships in the area. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not create a conflict with the established uses in the area.

The proposed Project occurs under the jurisdiction of several land use plans and policies that are applicable to the Project site. The Project would be supportive of general land use and location policies in the City of Pasadena General Plan and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide as it would: (a) provide improved economic and entertainment activities in a targeted area, thus encouraging economic vitality of the area and the subregion; (b) enhance regionally important cultural, entertainment and educational facilities, utilizing existing infrastructure and facilities; (c) provide facilities within an existing activity center; and (d) provide facilities in an urbanized pedestrian-oriented district featuring transit links to other areas of the City and region.

More specific land use guidelines regarding the form of on-site development are included in the existing Civic Center Specific Plan and certain provisions of the Pasadena Municipal Code. Other guidelines are included in the City's Central District Specific Plan that is currently being developed. Except as noted below, the Project is consistent with the policies contained in these plans.

The Project would not be fully supportive of the policy within the Civic Center Specific Plan which indicates that future development on the Project site should maintain pedestrian and visual access through the site. The purpose of this policy is to maintain pedestrian and visual

access to the historic Civic Auditorium. The Civic Auditorium faces north, forming the southern anchor of the civic axis along Garfield Avenue, and across Green Street is the Paseo Colorado mixed-use development featuring a high intensity of pedestrian activity. Only the less distinctive sides of the Civic Auditorium are visible from Marengo Avenue or Euclid Avenue. In addition, the grade differential between the adjacent sidewalks and the interior of the Project site, coupled with physical separations created by access to the subterranean parking levels, creates an awkward interface between the interior of the Project site and both Marengo and Euclid Avenues. Marengo Avenue and Euclid Avenue slope downward to the south while the Project site retains a level topography, such that the on-site plazas are several feet above the sidewalk and the first level of subterranean parking is exposed at the southern end of the site. Pedestrian access into the existing plazas from Marengo Avenue and from Euclid Avenue is only possible at two points on each side and concrete walls around the perimeter of the plazas impair visual access. For these reasons, pedestrian and visual access to the site along Marengo Avenue and Euclid Avenue is secondary compared to Green Street.

The Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would satisfy the one-story building height limit specified in the Civic Center Specific Plan. However, the Parking Structure would exceed the one-story building height limit and would require an amendment to the Civic Center Specific Plan, if the project moves ahead of the Central District Specific Plan.

The proposed Project would alter pedestrian and visual access along Marengo Avenue and Euclid Avenue by replacing the existing plazas with buildings. However, due to the constrained nature of the existing conditions, the reduction in accessibility along Marengo Avenue is not considered substantial. Furthermore, this impact would be substantially reduced by the enhanced pedestrian and visual access along Green Street and enhanced open space around the auditorium, enabling improved pedestrian and visual access through the site from Green Street. In addition, the proposed Parking Structure would be located approximately 70 feet south of the Conference Center, thus providing visual and pedestrian access from Euclid Avenue. As a result, the Project is considered compatible with the general intent of the existing Civic Center Specific Plan. Moreover, upon adoption of the Central District Specific Plan Framework, the planning guidelines of the Civic Center Specific Plan would no longer be applicable.

The Project would also vary from a maximum setback of 5 feet (proposed for the entire block except the area immediately in front of the Civic Auditorium) that would be established by the proposed Central District Specific Plan. The maximum setback is intended to create a particular urban design character featuring a more active urban streetscape with intense commercial and pedestrian-activity. The Project has been designed to engage the streetscape through design elements such as a colonnade along Green Street and Marengo Avenue. These spaces modulate the building frontage and, as such, these setbacks satisfy the conditions of the proposed Central District Specific Plan. The Project also focuses public access and ambiance

toward the public plaza space wrapping around the Civic Auditorium. This creates an active urban streetscape with intense pedestrian-activity around the forecourt and plazas of the Civic Auditorium and establishes a synergy with the pedestrian portion of Garfield Avenue that is within the Paseo Colorado mixed-use development immediately north of Green Street. The Project design also preserves sight lines to the Civic Auditorium, an important objective of the Central District Specific Plan. Nonetheless, if the Central District Specific Plan were adopted, the Project would require a variance from this specific setback provision with respect to the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building along Green Street and Marengo Avenue. Section 17.33.080(E) of the Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) provides for a modification to setback requirements for the protection of public trees. The Project is considered compatible with the general provisions and the intent of the Central District Specific Plan.

b. Mitigation Measures

Although the Project is located in an urbanized setting that provides minimal habitat to support wildlife resources, existing trees as well as other structures could be utilized by migratory bird species for nesting, feeding and shelter. Therefore, the following mitigation measure is proposed:

- LU1. Construction of the Project shall comply with the provisions of the Federal Migratory Bird Act and disturbance or removal of existing vegetation shall take place outside of the breeding bird season of March 1 to September 1. If the Project cannot avoid the breeding season, nests surveys shall be conducted and active nests shall be avoided and provided with a buffer.

To ensure that access to and use of the Civic Auditorium would be maintained during construction of the Project, the following mitigation measure is proposed:

- LU2. The Applicant shall maintain unobstructed access to the Civic Auditorium throughout the construction of the Project.

The proposed Project's design as presented in this EIR is schematic in nature. The Project's program, massing, height, and setbacks would remain as presented in this EIR. However other aspects of the design, specifically building articulation, exterior colors and materials would be refined through the City's ongoing design review process. To ensure that the final design of the Project complies with City design policies, the following mitigation measure is proposed:

- LU 3. The final Project design shall be in substantial compliance with the following mitigation measures:

- The proposed buildings shall be designed to relate to and support the special characteristics of the site's immediate surroundings as well as to the larger environment of which they are a part.
- The dominance, monumentality and architectural design of the Civic Auditorium shall be respected and the Project shall create a consistent, compatible, and unified context for the Civic Auditorium.
- Overall appearance of the proposed buildings should be based on a clearly regulated set of proportions related to classical precedent, with subtle variations to indicate entrances or other areas of interest.
- The proposed buildings shall feature visual articulation and should employ articulated sub-volumes, noting design elements relating to solids and voids.
- The proposed buildings shall be designed to contribute to a more pleasant and humane living environment.
- The Project shall feature entries and visual transparency that create frequent points of interest along public streets.
- Materials shall be compatible with that of the historic Civic Auditorium and the associated Historic Civic Center District. Materials shall be well-crafted and durable and may include masonry, stucco or colored concrete, and tile.
- Colors shall complement the design and style of the Civic Auditorium.
- The proposed buildings shall allow sun to penetrate to the sidewalks and outdoor spaces.
- Plaza space shall be designed with an elegant, simple landscape design vocabulary and shall feature shade trees, lush plantings, warm materials, and fountains.

No other land use mitigation measures are required or recommended.

c. Net Unavoidable Impacts

The proposed Project would not alter the basic uses on the site, adversely affect the uses surrounding the Project site, nor alter the general land use relationships in the area. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not create a conflict with the established uses in the area. The proposed Project would support objectives and policies of the City of Pasadena's land use plans. However, the Project would conflict with an existing design guideline regarding visual and pedestrian access along Marengo Avenue. In addition, the Project would vary from a proposed setback along Green Street and Marengo Avenue that is included in the draft Central

District Specific Plan. These conflicts are concluded to be minor variations that would not alter the basic land use relationships and the Project implements the objectives of these plans through other design features. Therefore, the Project is compatible with these plans and impacts are less than significant.

d. Cumulative Impacts

The potential for cumulative impacts occurs when the impacts of the Project and the impacts of related projects together yield impacts that are greater than the impacts separately. The Project itself is expected to have a positive land use impact with respect to surrounding uses. A variance would be necessary for building setbacks along Green Street and Marengo Avenue, if the Central District Specific Plan is adopted as currently drafted. However, the Project's proposed setbacks would not be potentially cumulatively significant as it is based on the unique circumstances of the Project site. Therefore, no significant cumulative land use impacts are anticipated.

2. Traffic & Circulation

a. Environmental Impacts

Construction

Project construction is anticipated to generate traffic from construction worker travel, as well as the arrival and departure of trucks delivering construction materials to the site and removing debris generated by on-site demolition activities. Both the number of construction workers and trucks would vary throughout the construction process in order to maintain a reasonable schedule of completion.

In general, the majority of the construction workers are expected to arrive and depart the Project site during off-peak hours (i.e., arrive prior to 7:00 A.M. and depart between 3:00 to 4:00 P.M.), thereby avoiding generating trips during the 7:00 to 9:00 A.M. and 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. peak-traffic periods. Consequently, their impact on peak-hour traffic in the vicinity of the site would be negligible. Given the off-peak nature of construction worker traffic, a less-than-significant impact is anticipated with regard to the local roadway network, as well as the freeway mainline and on/off-ramps.

Depending upon the specific nature of the construction activity (e.g., demolition, excavation, or concrete pouring), it is assumed the majority of truck traffic would be distributed evenly across the workday. Approvals required by the City of Pasadena for implementation of the proposed Project include a Truck Haul Route program approved by the Pasadena Department of Transportation. Because of this approval requirement and that construction truck trips would

occur along major roadways with the number of truck trips during any particular hour of the day being relatively limited, construction impacts from this particular type of construction activity are concluded to be less than significant.

Operations—Impacts on Intersections, Neighborhood Streets, and Regional Transit

The Project is not forecasted to generate an increase in average traffic volume on the roadway network as a result of future site operations. The Project provides amenities that allow the Conference Center to attract higher profile clients and retain existing clients. Though the Project would improve the facilities on site, the future events that would be accommodated at the Conference Center are anticipated to be equal in size to current events. The number of events per year may increase, yet maximum daily attendance is not expected to change. A review of current and future events of the Project site determined that because the size of events would not increase, the Project would not result in an increase in daily traffic volumes on event days. Therefore, no impacts would occur at the 23 nearby intersections that were analyzed, the two CMP monitoring intersections in the vicinity of the Project, nor the 11 nearby street segments that fall within the neighborhood traffic analysis. It is also important to note that while the number of trips occurring on a peak attendance day would be unchanged, the increase in annual facility utilization would result in an increase in the number of trips occurring on an annual basis.

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access to the Project site would continue to be provided primarily along Green Street. The proposed reconfigured steps on Green Street would provide access to the main entrance to the Civic Auditorium, and the proposed reconfiguration of Ludwigshafen and Mishima plazas would provide enhanced pedestrian access to the Civic Auditorium, the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building, the Conference Center, and the Parking Structure. In addition, the Conference Center and the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would feature new entrance lobbies. As a result, no impact to pedestrian access would occur.

Parking

The Project would demolish 530 existing parking stalls and would add 897 new parking stalls in the proposed 7-level Parking Structure and 24 new spaces for employee use in the newly reconfigured loading dock. With the existing 295 parking spaces to remain, the total number of parking spaces at the Project site would be 1,216 spaces, which is an increase of 391 spaces when compared with existing conditions. If funding cannot be secured for a 7-level Parking Structure, a 5-level Parking Structure would be developed, which would contain 653 spaces. With the additional 24 new spaces and the 295 existing spaces to remain, a total of 972 spaces would be provided on site. This would be an increase of 147 spaces when compared with

existing conditions. The Project's peak parking demand, during the early evening time period, is estimated to be 1,052 vehicles. The Project's peak parking demand, during the late evening time period is estimated to be 1,270 vehicles. This forecast indicates that off-site parking for approximately 298 vehicles may be necessary to accommodate the parking demand on those few occasions where a sold out Civic Auditorium event occurs simultaneously with full occupancy of the Sheraton Hotel. In cases where large conference center events overlap with large-scale Civic Auditorium events the anticipated parking demand would be accommodated through available spaces within several parking structures in the vicinity of the conference center (c.g., the Paseo Colorado subterranean parking garage, Los Robles parking structure, Ameron parking structure, and the Marengo parking structure). Over 2,100 spaces are available in nearby parking structures, particularly during the late afternoon and evening hours when the parking demand related to the adjacent office buildings does not occur. Existing and future agreements between the Pasadena Center Operating Company and the operators of these facilities would ensure the accessibility of needed parking. Given the synergy of the adjacent uses and the availability of parking, an adequate supply of parking is considered available to meet the demands of the Project. In the event that the Applicant can only secure funding for a 5-level rather than a 7-level Parking Structure, the spaces that would not occur on site would be offset by additional off-site parking spaces. As noted above, off-site parking facilities are available. Existing and future agreements with the operators of these off-site parking facilities would ensure that the parking demands of the Project would be met. Furthermore, the Project would be subject to the parking requirements set forth in the Project's Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Therefore, parking impacts would be less than significant.

Loading Dock Operations

The general locations of the proposed Conference Center loading dock operations are consistent with those currently provided on site, with dock areas located off of both Marengo Avenue and Euclid Avenue. For Civic Auditorium events, loading activities are accommodated on the site, in an area between the Civic Auditorium and the Exhibition Hall, via a gated driveway on Green Street. The Civic Auditorium loading activities would continue to be accommodated on site with the proposed Project. However, the Project's loading docks would also be provided for the Civic Auditorium in the expanded loading area on Marengo Avenue. The loading dock area on Euclid Avenue currently exists on the Project site and is planned to remain in its current configuration as part of the proposed Project. This loading dock area would provide secondary loading activities associated with the Conference Center and catering services.

Main loading activities for the renovated Conference Center would be provided via the loading docks on Marengo Avenue. This loading dock area is located approximately 400 feet south of Green Street, which is generally consistent with its current location. The driveway configuration would be modified slightly to improve entering and exiting truck maneuvers. The loading dock area on Marengo Avenue is planned to be expanded as part of the proposed Project

so as to provide five loading docks for large trucks (i.e., semi-trailer), two loading docks for smaller trucks (i.e., single-unit trucks, news vans, etc.), five crate storage/RV parking spaces, as well as a trash/refuse area, and 24 new parking spaces for employee use. An analysis of truck turning maneuvers that would be required to access the proposed loading dock indicates that adequate loading operations to sustain functions at the Pasadena Conference Center can be performed through head-in and head-out maneuvers from adjacent streets. As a result, the occasional on-street queuing that currently occurs would be eliminated. Based on a review of existing and future events at the Conference Center, the proposed loading dock configuration would be adequate to meet the needs of the Project. No impacts related to Conference Center loading operations would occur.

Bicycle Circulation

Development of the Project would not interfere with the City's plans for bicycle improvements to Marengo Avenue. Due to the nature and type of events held at the Pasadena Conference Center, the number of patrons arriving via bicycles is anticipated to be nominal. In addition, the CUP process shall determine the appropriate amount of bicycle parking facilities to match the unique characteristics and opportunities presented by the proposed Project.

b. Mitigation Measures

As there is a potential for a cumulative impact from truck trips related to concurrent construction of the Project and other nearby projects such as the City Hall retrofit project, the following mitigation measure is proposed:

- T1. The applicant shall coordinate with the City of Pasadena, DOT with respect to construction truck routes during such time as there is concurrent construction of the Project and other Civic Center improvements.

The Project would not result in any significant impacts from Project operations. Because the proposed Project would not result in an increase in peak traffic volumes, no significant traffic impacts are expected and no mitigation is required.

c. Net Unavoidable Impacts

The Project would cause small temporary increases in traffic, for short durations during construction only. No adverse effects are expected from Project operations, parking, pedestrian access, loading dock operations, or bicycle circulation.

d. Cumulative Impacts

All of the identified related projects have been considered for the purposes of assessing cumulative traffic impacts, and cumulative effects attributable to traffic from ambient growth and related projects have been incorporated into the traffic analysis. Cumulative construction traffic impacts would only occur during periods when construction of one or more of the related projects is occurring at the same time that Project construction is anticipated to occur and then only to the extent that construction traffic is traveling on the same streets at the same time. Since this type of concurrent activity is anticipated to be limited in its occurrence, cumulative construction impacts are concluded to be less than significant. Project Year 2007 traffic conditions, incorporating traffic from related projects, indicates that cumulative development would likely result in a significant cumulative traffic impact on some intersection operations. However, the Project would not contribute to a further cumulative decline in service at any local intersections and, therefore, would have a less-than-significant cumulative impact. Cumulative growth in the Project area would result in increases in traffic on residential street segments in the vicinity. However, it is anticipated that the related projects contributing to cumulative growth would be required on an individual basis to mitigate any significant traffic impacts on residential street segments to less-than-significant levels. Furthermore, the related projects are located distant to the Project site. As the proposed Project's impacts on residential streets have been concluded to be less than significant, it is not anticipated that a cumulative impact on neighborhood streets would occur.

3. Historic Resources

a. Environmental Impacts

The Project site includes the Civic Auditorium, a contributing property to the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District. The proposed Project could affect historic resources through direct impacts to the Civic Auditorium or the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District; compatibility of Project buildings with the adjacent Pasadena Civic Center Historic District and the Civic Auditorium; and potential impacts to historic view corridors.

Because of the district's boundary line delineation, which wraps closely around the Civic Auditorium property only, the Project would not introduce new building elements into the setting of the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District and there are no significant impacts, with implementation of the land use mitigation measures, with respect to the compatibility of the proposed Project's scale, size, design, materials, and color with the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District. The Project would have a direct impact on the Civic Auditorium as a result of the replacement of the front step arrangement of the Civic Auditorium with new steps modeled on the original 1932 design configuration. These changes would not result in any physical change to the exterior of the Civic Auditorium building itself. The interior portion of the Civic

Auditorium currently used as the Pasadena Ice Skating Center would be converted to new ballroom space. This area was originally designed as an exhibition hall and was also used as a ballroom, specifically during the 1940s. Character-defining features of the area, such as the hanging light fixtures and ceiling moldings, would be retained and incorporated into the new use. The existing Exhibition Hall, the Conference Center, Ludwigshafen Plaza, and Mishima Plaza are not considered historic resources for the purposes of CEQA; therefore, the alteration of these Project components is not considered a significant adverse impact.

The Project, with the construction of the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building, would obstruct the view from Marengo Avenue. The obstruction of this view corridor is a less-than-significant impact because it is a view to the Civic Auditorium's secondary elevation (west side). Additionally, the view of the Civic Auditorium for motorists and pedestrians traveling east along Green Street would be retained and enhanced due to the semi-circular design of the northeast corner of the proposed Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building. It is important to iterate that the most important historic public view corridor—along the Garfield Avenue axis—would be preserved and enhanced as a result of the Project.

b. Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures shall be implemented with respect to the proposed alteration of the stairs for the Civic Auditorium and any other work on any portion of the Civic Auditorium:

- HR1. All work shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (1995);
- HR2. Prior to any reconstruction or rehabilitation work, 35-mm black and white or digital photographs shall be taken of the Civic Auditorium's terrace area, the current step configuration, and the area between the steps and Green Street (portions of the Civic Center Historic District) by a photographer familiar with the recordation of historic resources and the photographs should be prepared in a format consistent with Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) standards for field photography and submitted to the Design & Historic Preservation Section of the City's Planning & Development Department and to the Central Library for filing in their Archives;
- HR3. New construction, including reconstruction/rehabilitation work, for the Civic Auditorium and adjacent areas, shall be differentiated from the Civic Auditorium, but compatible with the Civic Auditorium in size, scale, massing, materials, color, features and proportions. The new construction shall also respect the Civic Auditorium's design relationship to solids and voids along primary elevations of the new buildings.

- HR4. Proposed project plans shall be submitted to the City's Design Commission for review prior to the beginning of any construction activities, including demolition.

c. Net Unavoidable Impacts

The Project would not introduce new building elements into the setting of the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District and there are no significant impacts, with implementation of the land use mitigation measures, with respect to the compatibility of the proposed Project's scale, size, design, materials, and color with the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District. The Exhibition Hall, the Conference Center, Ludwigshafen Plaza, and Mishima Plaza are not considered historic resources for the purposes of CEQA, and, therefore, the alteration of these project components is not considered a significant adverse impact. Changes to view corridors would constitute a less-than-significant impact. The Project would have a direct desirable impact on the Civic Auditorium as a result of the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the front steps of the Civic Auditorium. Additionally, the conversion of the Ice Skating Center within the southern portion of the Civic Auditorium into new ballroom space would be considered a beneficial effect since this Project component restores a historical element and use of the building, yet with implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, impacts upon historical resources would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

d. Cumulative Impacts

Neither the Project nor any related projects are known to substantially diminish the number of extant historic resources within the area. Therefore, cumulative impacts on historic resources are not expected.

4. Aesthetics

a. Environmental Impacts

The Project would be generally consistent with applicable City plans, policies and regulations, including the Citywide Design Principles. The Project would respect the architectural design and monumentality of the Civic Auditorium by developing buildings that would be lower in height and overall scale compared with the Civic Auditorium, thereby preserving the prominence of that structure. Under the schematic design, the new buildings would be compatible with the historic character of the Civic Auditorium and its setting in terms of size, scale, massing, material, texture, and color. The new buildings would be constructed at grade serving to encourage pedestrians to enter and use the site while creating a stronger building-street relationship. Varying setbacks and distinctive entries would provide visual interest as well as break up the building mass, providing a substantial change from the

monotonous form of the existing building façade. The use of windows and pilasters would create a pattern and rhythm along the façade and would provide further visual interest.

The view corridor that the existing Ludwigshafen plaza provides from Marengo Avenue to the Civic Auditorium would be obstructed by the Project. However, the obstruction of this view constitutes a less-than-significant impact because this view is to the Civic Auditorium's secondary elevation (west side). A view corridor would be provided from Euclid Avenue, which would be created by the distance between the Conference Center and the Parking Structure. Moreover, the Project would contribute positively to the visual character of the area and would not significantly obstruct views of elements that contribute to the visual character of the area.

The reconfiguration of Ludwigshafen and Mishima Plazas would require the removal of approximately ~~51-77~~ of the ~~108~~ approximately 152 trees identified on and around the Project site. Of these 77 trees, 72 are located on the site and 5 are street trees. The Project would result in the planting of five-replanting of 8 of the trees-on-the-site, thus resulting in the net loss of ~~46~~ 69 trees. These trees would be removed in accordance with the Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC). The Landmark Moreton Bay Fig tree located adjacent to the site, the existing palms on the Project site located to the east and west of the Civic Auditorium, and the majority of the existing Ficus street trees would be protected. Removal of existing trees would be offset by new landscaping in the plaza spaces and along the street edges. As a result, the Project would not result in a significant impact with regard to natural features.

Although the Project may result in an increase in ambient lighting level, the Project would not result in substantial illumination of adjacent sensitive uses because the site is located within an urban setting and the Project would comply with the PMC regarding lighting. The Project also would comply with sections of the PMC that address the use of mirror or highly reflective glass, reducing the potential of glare for motorists or pedestrians along Green Street. Glare reflected from glass surfaces of vehicles within the parking levels would not shine onto surrounding streets, sidewalks, or adjacent lots, due to a solid wall, which would block the light and glare. The rooftop level would not result in light and glare impacts due to the angle of incidence (i.e., angle at which sunlight is reflected off vehicles onto areas below). Therefore, the Project would not result in significant impacts with regard to lighting or glare.

b. Mitigation Measures

The Project would be required to comply with all applicable design guidelines and Land Use mitigation measures and would not result in significant impacts with regard to aesthetics; therefore no mitigation measures are necessary.

c. Net Unavoidable Impacts

The Project would be generally consistent with applicable City plans, policies and regulations, including the Citywide Design Principles and would be compatible with the Civic Auditorium. The Project also would provide visual interest, providing a substantial change from the monotonous form of the existing building façade. The view corridor from Marengo Avenue to the Civic Auditorium would be obstructed by the Project. However, this obstruction constitutes a less-than-significant impact. Removal of existing trees would be offset by new landscaping in the plaza spaces and along the street edges. The Project would result in ambient lighting and glare characteristics that are compatible with its location in an active urban center and is consistent with existing regulations. Therefore, the Project would not result in a net unavoidable impact with regard to aesthetics.

d. Cumulative Impacts

While several projects are proposed in the general vicinity of the Project site, due to the relatively flat topography and the urbanized nature of the area, these projects would not be visible from the Project site or the immediately surrounding area. In addition, each of the related projects would be subject to the City's project and permit approval process and may be required to undergo design review. As such, no significant cumulative impacts to aesthetics are expected.

5. Air Quality

a. Environmental Impacts

Construction

Construction-related daily emissions are forecasted to exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds for NO_x and ROC. Thus, emissions of these pollutants would result in significant short-term regional air quality impacts. Daily emissions of CO, SO_x, and PM₁₀ are forecasted to be adverse, but less than significant, since the levels of these emissions would fall below the SCAQMD significance thresholds. Because the underlying assumptions were conservative, actual emissions could be less than those forecasted.

The greatest potential for toxic air contaminant (TAC) emissions would be related to diesel particulate emissions associated with heavy equipment operations during grading and excavation activities. Given the relatively short-term construction schedule (i.e., less than three years), the Project would not result in a long-term (i.e., 70 years) substantial source of TAC emissions and corresponding individual cancer risk. Additionally, via mandatory compliance with SCAQMD Rules, no construction activities would expose sensitive receptors to substantial

TACs. Therefore, Project-related toxic emission impacts during construction would not be significant.

Potential sources that may emit odors during construction activities include the use of architectural coatings and solvents. Via mandatory compliance with SCAQMD Rules, no significant impacts from objectionable odors would occur.

Operations

Regional air pollutant emissions associated with Project operations are typically generated by both the consumption of electricity and natural gas, and by the operation of on-road vehicles. The Project would not result in an increase in average daily vehicle trips nor would the general number of deliveries change as a result of the Project. Therefore, the Project would not result in any new mobile source emissions or have the potential to adversely effect local CO concentrations. Pollutant emissions associated with energy demand (i.e., electricity generation and natural gas consumption) are classified by the SCAQMD as regional stationary source emissions. The Project would result in small amounts of energy-related criteria pollutant emissions that would be well below the SCAQMD significance thresholds. As such, operational impacts would be less than significant.

The expansion of the kitchen in the Conference Center building could potentially create objectionable odors during operation of the Project. Via mandatory compliance with SCAQMD Rules, no significant impacts from objectionable odors would occur.

b. Mitigation Measures

During the operational phase, the Project would not result in any significant impacts to air quality and, therefore, no mitigation measures are recommended or required. In addition to the requirements of SCAQMD Rule 403 (Fugitive Dust), the following mitigation measures proposed as best management practices to be implemented to the extent feasible.

- AQ1. All equipment shall be properly tuned and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications, to the extent feasible.
- AQ2. General contractors shall maintain and operate construction equipment so as to minimize exhaust emissions. During construction, trucks and vehicles in loading and unloading queues would be kept with their engines off, when not in use, to reduce vehicle emissions. Construction emissions should be phased and scheduled to avoid emissions peaks and discontinued during second-stage smog alerts, to the extent feasible.

- AQ3. Require the use of alternative clean fuels such as compressed natural gas-powered equipment instead of diesel-powered engines, or if diesel equipment has to be used, use particulate filters and low sulfur diesel fuel as defined in AQMD Rule 431.2, (i.e., diesel fuel with less than 15 ppm sulfur content), to the extent feasible.
- AQ4. Use electricity from power poles rather than temporary diesel- or gasoline-powered generators, to the extent feasible.
- AQ5. Prohibit all vehicles from idling in excess of ten minutes, both on and off site, to the extent feasible.

c. Net Unavoidable Impacts

With implementation of Project mitigation measures, NO_x emissions during construction would not exceed the SCAQMD daily significance threshold of 100 pounds per day. As such, daily construction-period emissions of CO, NO_x, SO_x, and PM₁₀ are forecasted to be less than significant. Project mitigation measures would also reduce regional ROC daily emissions during construction, but emissions would continue to exceed the SCAQMD daily significance threshold of 75 pounds per day. As a result, Project construction would result in a short-term significant unavoidable impact on regional air quality.

Via mandatory compliance with SCAQMD Rules, Project-related toxic emission impacts during construction would not be significant and no significant impacts from objectionable odors would occur during construction. During the operational phase, the Project would not result in any significant impacts to local or regional air quality.

d. Cumulative Impacts

The SCAQMD has set forth both a methodological framework as well as significance thresholds for the assessment of a project's cumulative air quality impacts. Based on the SCAQMD's methodology, the Project is not anticipated to result in a significant cumulative impact on regional air quality. In addition, a localized CO impact analysis was conducted for cumulative traffic in which no local CO violations would occur at any of the studied intersections. Therefore, the Project would not have a significant cumulative impact on localized air quality.

6. Noise

a. Environmental Impacts

Noise disturbances in those areas located adjacent to the Project site can be expected during construction. Worst-case L_{eq} noise levels are expected to range from 69 to 90 dBA L_{eq} (1-hour), or more, at noise sensitive locations that surround the Project site. These construction-period noise levels would be considerably higher than ambient noise levels at the Civic Auditorium and portions of the Sheraton Hotel property and would result in a significant impact without incorporation of mitigation measures.

According to the Project traffic study, the Project is not anticipated to generate any net new trips. Since the Project will not add to roadway traffic volumes, nor result in a change in existing circulation patterns, there would be no net increase in roadway noise levels attributable to Project development. As a result, roadway noise impacts would be less than significant.

The loading dock and refuse collection areas would remain entirely below grade and in their same general locations following completion of the Project. Noise from activities such as truck movements/idling and unloading operations currently occur on the Project site and would not intensify as a result of Project development. As such, noise impacts attributable to the continued operation of loading dock and refuse collection activities would be less than significant.

The proposed Parking Structure would generate various noise events, including noise related to automobile movements, car alarms, car horns, door slams, and tire squeals. The activation of car alarms, sounding of car horns, slamming of car doors, and tire squeals would occur periodically and would likely be audible at areas outside of the Parking Structure. Nevertheless, noise level increases with the 5- or 7-level Parking Structure would not exceed the 5-dBA significance threshold at any noise-sensitive receptor. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mechanical equipment (i.e., air handling units, heaters, and exhaust fans) would be located on the rooftops of proposed structures in order to provide for ventilation and temperature control. Due to the fact that all mechanical equipment would be screened by parapet walls, noise levels would be reduced to 50 dBA or less at the closest property line location. As this would not exceed the lowest daytime ambient noise level of 57.6 dBA by 5 dB or more, impacts to surrounding uses would be less than significant.

b. Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures are prescribed to reduce construction-related noise impacts to the extent feasible.

- N1. A 10-foot temporary sound barrier shall be erected along the Project site's southern boundary when construction activity occurs within 250 feet of said property line.
- N2. The Project Applicant shall coordinate construction activities with Civic Auditorium management such that construction-period noise impacts will not disrupt scheduled performances.
- N3. During all project site preparation, grading, and construction, the project contractor(s) shall equip all construction equipment, fixed or mobile, with properly operating and maintained noise mufflers, consistent with manufacturers' standards.
- N4. Sound blankets shall be used on all construction equipment for which use of sound blankets is technically feasible.
- N5. Construction activities shall be scheduled so as to avoid operating several pieces of equipment simultaneously, which causes high noise levels.
- N6. The construction contractor shall locate equipment staging areas in the central portion of the site to create the greatest distance between construction-related noise sources and sensitive receptors during all project site preparation, grading, and construction activities.
- N7. The project contractor(s) shall place all stationary construction equipment as far as feasible from the Civic Auditorium and the Sheraton Hotel and situated so that emitted noise is directed away from those sensitive receptors.

The Project would not result in any significant noise impacts due to Project operations. As such, no mitigation measures are recommended or required.

c. Net Unavoidable Impacts

Construction-period noise levels would result in significant impacts at the Civic Auditorium and portions of the Sheraton Hotel property. With implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, these noise impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels. Since the Project will not add to roadway traffic volumes, nor result in a change in existing circulation patterns, there would be no net increase in roadway noise levels attributable to Project

development. Noise from loading dock and refuse collection activities that currently occur on the Project site would not intensify as a result of Project development; and as such, noise impacts attributable to the continued operation of these activities would be less than significant. Noise level increases due to sound events emanating from the proposed Parking Structure would not exceed the 5-dBA significance threshold at any noise-sensitive receptor, and thus, impacts would be less than significant. Rooftop mechanical equipment would be screened by parapet walls; therefore, noise impacts to surrounding uses would be less than significant.

d. Cumulative Impacts

As each project would be required to comply with the local noise ordinance, cumulative construction-related noise impacts would be less than significant. Cumulative traffic volumes from related projects would result in a noise increase well below the significance threshold. As such, roadway noise impacts due to cumulative traffic volumes would be less than significant. Due to municipal noise ordinance requirements and CEQA provisions that require for significant noise impacts to be mitigated to the extent feasible, stationary-source noise from items such as rooftop mechanical equipment and emergency generators would generally be reduced to a level that is less than significant at the property line for each related project. As such, stationary-source noise impacts attributable to cumulative development would be less than significant.