

2.0 SUMMARY

This chapter of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) contains an overview of the proposed projects, its potential environmental effects and mitigation measures, and a summary of the alternatives to the proposed projects evaluated in this Draft EIR.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of an EIR, as defined in Section 15121 (a) of the State Guidelines for the implementation of the CEQA California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 “Guidelines,” is to “inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the potential significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effect and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.” This document assesses the potential significant environmental impacts, including significant unavoidable impacts and cumulative impacts, related to the proposed projects. Where there is potential for a significant adverse effect, this report identifies mitigation measures that would either eliminate the impact or reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level.

This Draft EIR was prepared at the direction and under the supervision of the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning (DCP). The City of Los Angeles is the Lead Agency for the project. The intended use of this Draft EIR is to assist the City in making decisions regarding the approval of the proposed projects.

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this Draft EIR was issued on June 26, 2012, by the DCP for a 30-day public review period. A total of 49 comment letters were received. Information, data and observations resulting from these letters are included throughout this Draft EIR where relevant. Refer to Appendix A for copies of the NOP and NOP comment letters. Three public scoping meeting were held on July 10, 12, and 18, 2012. The purpose of these meetings was to provide early consultation for the public to express their concerns about the proposed projects, and acquire information and make recommendations on issues to be addressed in the Draft EIR.

All comment letters received during the Draft EIR circulation period concerning the Draft EIR will be responded to in a staff report as detailed below.

Comment letters should be sent to:

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In September 2012, Governor Brown signed in to law Assembly Bill (AB) 2245, which allows re-striping of urban roadways to proceed under a Statutory Exemption as long as a traffic and safety analysis is prepared and hearings are held in affected areas. Since this law goes in to effect as this Draft EIR was being completed, this Draft EIR, including a traffic and safety analysis is being circulated. Comments on this the Draft EIR will be addressed in a staff report prepared by the DCP for consideration by the General Manager of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) and will be made available to, the general public, including all parties that commented on the Draft EIR and attended any of the public meetings. Four public hearings and a webinar will be held after circulation of the Draft EIR. The City will not be certifying the

EIR or preparing a Final EIR. Rather, Notices of Exemption will be filed pursuant to 1) California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.20.5 (c)(2) – for the bicycle lanes and 2) CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Sections 15301, 15304, and 15311 for the streetscape improvements proposed as part of the My Figueroa Project. .

2.2 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed projects consist of:

1. First Year of the First Five-Year Implementation Strategy, and
2. Figueroa Corridor Streetscape Project, a project centered around bicycle lanes (potentially separated in some locations) and pedestrian improvements on a three-mile stretch of South Figueroa and adjacent streets around the Staples Center.

Bicycle Plan: First Year of the First Five-Year Implementation Strategy

These proposed projects would include the implementation of approximately 42 miles of projects. Types of treatments being considered under the proposed projects include bicycle lanes (protected bike lanes as part of the My Figueroa project) and reconfiguration of roadway striping as necessary and would in general include the loss of one or more vehicular travel lanes. In addition to, and in some cases as an alternative to the loss of vehicular travel lanes, loss of existing parking lanes could occur where applicable.

Creation of proposed bicycle lanes would include restriping only. No excavation or construction is contemplated in connection with the proposed bicycle lanes. The proposed projects consist of new bicycle lanes that would be striped along existing City of Los Angeles streets within existing rights-of-way.

Figueroa Corridor Streetscape Project (“My Fig”)

The Figueroa Corridor Streetscape Project (My Fig) consists of 4.5 miles of roadways, of which three miles are along Figueroa Street through Downtown and South Los Angeles from 7th Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The project includes pedestrian improvements on Bill Robertson Lane in order to provide better linkages to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Exposition Light Rail Line. This project would also include a one-way westbound bicycle facility (along six blocks of 11th Street in Downtown Los Angeles from Broadway to Figueroa Street). In addition, a separate project, the Downtown LA Streetcar Project includes track service on both 11th Street and Figueroa Street. The bicycle and streetscape facilities of My Fig would coexist with the streetcar where applicable.

2.3 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Section 15382 of the State CEQA Guidelines defines a significant impact on the environment as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within an area affected by the project, including land, air, water, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance.” In order to approve a project with unavoidable and significant impacts, the lead agency must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations (in accordance with Section 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines) indicating that the benefits of approving the proposed projects outweigh the negative environmental consequences. However, since the EIR will not be certified and the City will file Notices of Exemption, preparation and adoption of a Statement of Overriding Consideration is not required. The City will provide a discussion on overriding considerations of project approval in a subsequent staff report. Based on the analysis contained in this EIR, the proposed projects would create significant and unavoidable impacts related to transportation – traffic and circulation.

2.4 LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT OR NO IMPACT

Based on the analysis contained in this Draft EIR, the following were found to result in a less-than-significant impact or no impact:

- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Land Use
- Noise

In addition, transportation impacts related to parking transit construction and safety would be less than significant with mitigation.

The Initial Study (see Appendix A), found the following issues to be less than significant: Aesthetics, Agricultural Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services and Utilities, Recreation.

2.5 SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

CEQA requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project or to the location of the project that could feasibly avoid or lessen significant environmental impacts while substantially attaining the basic objectives of the project.¹ An EIR should also evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. The range of feasible alternatives is selected and discussed in a manner intended to foster meaningful public participation and informed decision making. Among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[f][1]) are environmental impacts, site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and whether the proponent could reasonably acquire, control, or otherwise have access to the alternative site.

The alternatives considered for the proposed projects include:

Alternative 1 – No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative is required by Section 15126.6 (e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines and assumes that the proposed projects would not be implemented. The No Project Alternative allows decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed projects with the impacts of not approving the proposed projects. The No Project Alternative includes “what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services” (CEQA Section 15126.6 [e][2]).

Alternative 2A – Increased Parking Removal/Alternate Travel Lane Impacts Variant

Alternative 2A would include the removal of parking or a different travel lane along 15 streets (the removal of an alternate travel lane to that proposed under the project condition). The affected study streets are Lankershim Boulevard, Cahuenga Boulevard West, Cesar E. Chavez Boulevard, 7th Street, Vermont Avenue, N. Figueroa Street, S. Figueroa Street, Westwood Boulevard, Bundy Drive, Centinela Avenue, Sepulveda Boulevard, Avenue of the Stars, Colorado Boulevard, 2nd Street, and Grand Avenue. Alternative 2A would potentially cause changes in traffic circulation, parking, and transit operation along these affected streets.

¹CEQA Guidelines, CCR, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15126.6.

Alternative 2B – Increased Parking Removal/Alternate Travel Lane Impacts Variant

This alternative would be similar to Alternative 2A, except for the following five streets: N. Figueroa Street, Westwood Boulevard, Bundy Drive, Centinela Avenue, and Colorado Boulevard. Instead of removing a travel lane under Alternative 2A, Alternative 2B proposes the removal of parking along these streets in the study areas.

Alternative 3 – Alternate Bikeway Options

Alternative 3 would be similar to the proposed projects except that it would implement bikeways along Century Park East instead of Avenue of the Stars and along Overland Avenue instead of Westwood Boulevard as follows:

- Century Park East could potentially serve as a potential alternate route to Avenue of the Stars.
- Overland Avenue has been suggested as a potential alternate route to Westwood Boulevard. This route has limitations, as it is too narrow in places and doesn't connect to the University of California at Los Angeles or the future light rail station at the intersection of Westwood Boulevard and Exposition Boulevard.

TABLE 2-1: SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES			
Impact Category	Significant Impact	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
AIR QUALITY			
Regional	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
Localized	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
Toxic Air Contaminants	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
Odor	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
Air Quality Management Plan Consistency	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
City of Los Angeles General Plan Consistency	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS			
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
Applicable Plans, Policies, and Regulations	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
LAND USE			
Consistency with Applicable Plans and Policies	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
Land Use Compatibility	Less than Significant	The following measure would help to address adverse (although less than significant) land use impacts as a result of loss of parking: LU1 The City shall facilitate identification of parking strategies (shared parking districts) in locations where parking supply for commercial uses consists only of on-street parking that would be removed by the projects. The City shall implement feasible options to address any parking shortages.	Less than Significant
NOISE AND VIBRATION			
Noise	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
Groundborne Vibration	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC			
Intersection Level of Service	Significant	T1 LADOT will adjust traffic signal timing after the implementation of the proposed projects (both along project routes and parallel roadways if traffic diversions have occurred as a result of the project). This adjustment would be necessary, especially at the intersections where roadway striping would be modified. Signal timing adjustment could reduce traffic impacts at impacted intersections. (LADOT routinely makes traffic signal timing changes and signal optimization on an as-needed basis to accommodate the changes in traffic volumes to reduce congestion and delay in the City.) T2 The City shall implement appropriate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures in the City of Los Angeles including potential trip-reducing measures such as bike share strategies, bike parking, expansion of car share programs near high density areas, bus stop improvements (e.g. shelters and "next bus" technologies), crosswalk improvements, pedestrian wayfinding signage, etc. (Such improvements shall also be required of private projects as part of the review and approval process.)	Significant and Unavoidable

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		<p>T3 In areas where implementation of bike lanes could potentially result in diversion of traffic to adjacent residential streets, LADOT shall monitor traffic on identified residential streets to determine if traffic diversion occurs. If traffic on residential streets is found to be significantly impacted, LADOT will work with neighborhood residents to identify and implement appropriate traffic calming measures.</p> <p>T4 In cases where project-specific mitigation measures and bicycle lane improvements could overlap and/or be in conflict, LADOT shall assess potential for changes to previously disclosed impacts and shall ensure that any potential for new significant impacts is properly analyzed and addressed and additional mitigation required as appropriate consistent with AB 2245.</p>	
Parking	Less than Significant	None necessary.	Less than Significant
Transit	Significant	See Mitigation Measure T1.	Significant and Unavoidable
Congestion Management Program	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
Emergency Access	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
Adopted Plans	Less than Significant	No mitigation measure is required.	Less than Significant
Construction	Significant	T7 Construction activities will be managed through the implementation of a traffic control plan to mitigate the impact of traffic disruption and to ensure the safety of all users of the affected roadway. The plan will address construction duration and activities and include measures such as operating a temporary traffic signal or using flagmen adjacent to construction activities, as appropriate.	Less than Significant
Safety	Less than Significant	T8 Prior to the implementation of bicycle-transit only lanes, safety training and information sessions shall be conducted for bus drivers and the members of Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition. The training information sessions would involve, but not be limited to, educating drivers and bicyclists about giving equal weight and equal responsibility for each others' safety within shared right-of-ways.	Less than Significant
SOURCE: TAHA, 2012.			