VIII SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

A. INTRODUCTION

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines states that use of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of a project may be irreversible if a large commitment of these resources makes their removal, indirect removal, or nonuse thereafter unlikely. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) indicates that "uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely." Section 15126.2(c) further states that "irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified." This section of the environmental impact report (EIR) evaluates whether the Project would result in the irretrievable commitment of resources, or would cause irreversible changes in the environment.

B. IRREVERSIBLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

The construction and operation of the Project would require consumption of resources, including nonrenewable and slowly renewable resources. The Project would require a commitment of resources that would include (1) building materials; (2) fuel and operational materials/resources; and (3) the transportation of goods and people to and from the Project Site. Resources, such as lumber and other forest products, aggregate materials used in concrete (e.g., sand, gravel, and stone), natural gas, petroleum products, asphalt, petrochemical construction materials, steel, copper, and other metals, are generally considered renewable resources. To varying degrees, the aforementioned materials are all readily available and some materials, such as asphalt or sand, and gravel, are abundant. Other commodities, such as metals, natural gas, and petroleum products, are also readily available, but they are also finite in supply, given the length of time required by the natural process to create them.

This resource consumption would be consistent with growth and anticipated change in the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, and the Southern California region as a whole. The demand for all such resources is expected to increase regardless of whether or not the Project is developed. The State Department of Finance projects that California's population will exceed 50 million people in 2049 and grow to nearly 52.7 million by 2060.[1] The increases in population would directly result in the need for more residential, retail, commercial, and industrial facilities in order to provide the needed services associated with this growth. If not consumed by this Project, natural and unrenewable resources would

1 California Department of Finance, "New Population Projections: California to Surpass 50 Million in 2049" (January 31, 2013), accessed February 2014, http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/projections/P-1/documents/Projections_Press_Release_2010-2060.pdf.

likely be committed to other projects in the region intended to meet this anticipated growth. Furthermore, the investment of resources in the Project would be typical of the level of investment normally required for a residential mixed-use development of this scale.

C. SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

The Project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts for noise and vibration and for transportation and traffic.

Noise and Vibration

The nearest related project (Academy Square) is located approximately 100 feet from the Project Site, just east of Cahuenga Boulevard. It is possible that some construction activities at the Project Site and the Academy Square project could overlap. Construction noise impacts associated with the Project are considered potentially significant, but are reduced to less than significant through mitigation. While Project impacts would be reduced to less than significant, in cannot be conclusively determined whether the Project mitigation would fully mitigate for the Project and Academy Square project, combined. Due to the distance to the Project Site, and the potential noise levels from multiple construction activities occurring simultaneously, the Project's contribution to a cumulative increase in construction noise experienced at nearby receptors is considered potentially significant and unavoidable.

In addition, the Project is conservatively considered to have a significant vibration impact with regard to human annoyance. Project-related vibration impacts from haul trucks and construction traffic would have a less than significant impact with respect to building damage, but would have a temporary and intermittent but significant and unavoidable impact with regard to human annoyance.

Transportation and Traffic

Prior to mitigation, the Project would result in a significant cumulative contribution to impacts at Intersection 7 (Cahuenga Boulevard and Fountain Avenue), Intersection 8 (Cahuenga Boulevard and Santa Monica Boulevard), and Intersection 10 (Vine Street and Fountain Avenue) under the future 2018 traffic conditions plus Project traffic. Upon implementation of the mitigation measures, the Project's contribution to cumulative impacts at Intersections 7 and 8, while reduced, would not be fully mitigated without physical intersection improvements at those locations (which were deemed not feasible by LADOT due to constraints of the existing physical conditions) and would remain significant and unavoidable.

D. IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Project construction and operation would commit the use of slowly renewable and nonrenewable resources and would limit the availability of these resources and the Project Site for future generations or for other uses during the life of the Project. However, the continued use of such resources during Project operation would be on a relatively small scale and consistent with regional and local urban design and development goals for the area. Project Design Features have been incorporated into the development proposal and mitigation measures are proposed in this EIR that would minimize the effects of the environmental changes associated with the development of the Project to the maximum degree feasible. In addition, the Project Site is currently an urban area and the implementation of the Project would provide for improvement through the introduction of new structures at this location of the City. Further, Project changes are relatively small scale in relation to the fulfillment of regional and local urban design and development goals for the area. The incorporation of sustainable design features promotes smart growth that is consistent with the City's policies. As such, the irreversible environmental changes would not be considered significant.