

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts that could result from a proposed three-level, 750-space, Parking Structure with rooftop (lighted) athletic field and pedestrian bridge across Coldwater Canyon Avenue. The Parking Structure and athletic field would be located on an approximately 5.5-acre Development Site across Coldwater Canyon Avenue from the approximately 19-acre existing Harvard-Westlake Campus. The Parking Structure would be an accessory use to the Harvard-Westlake Campus that would alleviate current impacts that occur as a result of school-related parking (buses and cars) along Coldwater Canyon Avenue and in the surrounding residential neighborhood. The Project also includes improvements to Coldwater Canyon Avenue from the Harvard-Westlake Campus to Ventura Boulevard that would improve traffic flow and safety along that stretch of Coldwater Canyon Avenue.

This EIR has been prepared in conformance with the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines, including the CEQA Thresholds Guide.

### PURPOSE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY

In accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15121(a), the purpose of an EIR is to serve as an informational document that will generally inform public agency decision makers and the public of potentially significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15151 contains the following standards for EIR adequacy:

*An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.*

An EIR is an informational document for use by decision makers and the public in their review of the potential impacts of a proposed project, as well as in the evaluation of alternatives and mitigation measures which may minimize, avoid, or eliminate those impacts. As such, this document includes a full discussion of the project description, the existing environmental setting, environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and residual impacts that may exist after mitigation has been implemented, and project alternatives that could alleviate potential impacts.

To gain the most value from this report, the following points should be kept in mind:

- This report is a tool to provide the reader an overview of the possible ramifications of the Proposed Project. It identifies potential environmental impacts and subsequent effects on the local community's natural resources;
- As the public agency with the authority to approve or deny the Proposed Project, the City of Los Angeles, which is the Lead Agency, will consider the information in this EIR along with other information before taking any action on the Proposed Project. The conclusions of the EIR regarding environmental impacts do not control the City of Los Angeles' discretion to approve, deny or modify

the Proposed Project, but instead are presented as information intended to aid the decision-making process.

## DRAFT EIR ORGANIZATION

As shown in the Table of Contents and illustrated in **Table 1-1**, this Draft EIR is organized into six chapters each dealing with a separate aspect of the required content of an EIR as described in the *CEQA Guidelines*. To help the reader locate information of particular interest, a brief summary of the contents of each chapter of the EIR is provided. The following chapters are contained within the EIR:

**TABLE 1-1: REQUIRED DRAFT EIR CONTENTS**

Requirement/CEQA Guidelines Section	Location in Draft EIR
Table of contents (Section 15122)	Table of Contents
Summary (Section 15123)	Executive Summary
Project Description (Section 15124)	Chapter 2
Environmental Setting (Section 15125)	All Sections in Chapter 3
Significant environmental impacts (Section 15126.2 (a))	Chapter 4
Unavoidable significant environmental impacts (Section 15126.2 (b))	Chapter 4
Mitigation measures (Section 15126.4)	All sections in Chapter 3
Cumulative impacts (Section 15130)	All sections in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4
Alternatives to the Proposed Project (Section 15126.6)	Chapter 5
Growth-inducing impacts (Section 15126.2 (d))	Chapter 4
Effects found not to be significant (Section 15128)	Chapter 4 and Appendix B
References (Section 15129)	Throughout
List of preparers; organizations and persons consulted (Section 15129)	Chapter 6
Acronyms and abbreviations	Throughout

**Executive Summary:** This chapter provides an overview of the purpose and use of the EIR, the scope of this EIR, the environmental review process for the EIR and the Proposed Project, and the general format of the document. It also includes an overview of the scope of the EIR, as well as a summary of the Proposed Project, environmental impacts, proposed mitigation, level of significance after mitigation, and unavoidable impacts. Also contained within this section is a summary description of Project alternatives.

**Chapter 1. Introduction:** This chapter describes the process and provides background on the Proposed Project.

**Chapter 2. Project Description:** This chapter identifies the Project location, summarizes the Proposed Project, and outlines the Project objectives, need for the Project and identifies Project characteristics and associated anticipated development.

**Chapter 3. Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures:** This chapter provides a detailed setting for each issue area and evaluates environmental issues anticipated to be affected by the Project. Each section includes existing environmental setting, the regulatory context within which the Project would occur, thresholds of significance, environmental impacts (both short-term and long-term), cumulative impacts, mitigation measures capable of minimizing environmental harm, and identification of level of significance after mitigation.

**Chapter 4. Impact Overview:** This chapter provides a summary of the Proposed Project's potential growth-inducing impacts; identifies Project impacts that are significant and unavoidable; discusses the environmental effects of the Proposed Project found not to be significant; and discusses irreversible changes to the natural

environment resulting from the Proposed Project.

**Chapter 5. Alternatives Analysis:** This chapter analyzes feasible alternatives to the Proposed Project and identifies the Environmentally Superior Alternative. The alternatives analyzed in this EIR consist of: No Project Alternative, Existing Zoning (4 homes), Reduced Development (two-story structure, no athletic field, no pedestrian bridge), smaller footprint structure, Zone Change (14 homes) and a structure on the east side of Coldwater Canyon Avenue in the existing southern parking lot.

**Chapter 6. Lead Agency and Consultants; Organizations and Persons Contacted:** This chapter identifies the public and private agencies and individuals contacted during the preparation of this report, and all individuals responsible for the preparation of this report.

**Appendices:** Data supporting the analysis or content of the EIR are provided in the appendices to the document. These include the Notice of Preparation and Responses, Initial Study, Biological Resources report, Protected Tree Report, Preliminary geotechnical report, Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan, and Traffic Report.

## EIR PROCESS

As described in Section 15143 of the *CEQA Guidelines*:

*The EIR shall focus on the significant effects on the environment. The significant effects should be discussed with emphasis in proportion to their severity and probability of occurrence. Effects dismissed in an Initial Study as clearly insignificant and unlikely to occur need not be discussed further in the EIR unless the Lead Agency subsequently receives information inconsistent with the finding in the Initial Study.*

As a first step in complying with the procedural requirements of CEQA, the City of Los Angeles published a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to inform responsible agencies and interested parties that an EIR was to be prepared for the Proposed Project and to request information and concerns relative to the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project.

In compliance with CEQA, the City of Los Angeles completed a multi-step process to determine the appropriate scope of issues to be examined in this Draft EIR. The City filed the NOP with the State Clearinghouse (SCH No. **2013041033**) in the Office of Planning and Research as an indication that an EIR would be prepared. A copy of the NOP and the responses received are included in **Appendix A** of this EIR. The NOP was distributed to involved public agencies and interested parties for a 30-day public review period, which began on April 12, 2013, and ended on May 13, 2013. A scoping meeting was held on April 25, 2013. The purpose of the public review period was to solicit comments on the scope and content of the environmental analysis to be included in the EIR. The City of Los Angeles received comments in response to the NOP; these comments are also included in **Appendix A** of this EIR.

During the preparation of the EIR, agencies, organizations, and persons whom the City believed might have an interest in this Proposed Project were specifically contacted. Information, data, and observations from these contacts are included in the EIR. Agencies or interested persons who did not respond during the public review period of the NOP will have an opportunity to comment during the public review period of the Draft EIR, as well as at subsequent hearings on the Proposed Project.

This EIR has been prepared to meet all of the substantive and procedural requirements of CEQA (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), the *CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.). Accordingly, the City of Los Angeles is the Lead Agency for this Proposed

Project, taking primary responsibility for conducting the environmental review and approving or denying a project.

Any environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level are considered to be significant and unavoidable. If a public agency approves a project that has significant and unavoidable impacts, the agency must state in writing the specific reasons for approving a project, based on the Final EIR and any other information in the public record for the project. This is termed a “statement of overriding considerations,” which is used to explain the specific reasons why the benefits of a project make its unavoidable environmental effects acceptable. The statement is prepared, if required, after the Final EIR has been completed, yet before action to approve a project has been taken.

This EIR is intended to function as both a project-specific EIR for those projects that are consistent with the proposed Specific Plan and as a programmatic EIR for those projects that do not fall within the assumptions made in this EIR and could result in potentially significant impacts not identified in this EIR. For those projects that could result in significant impacts not disclosed in this EIR additional environmental review will be required.

#### **AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT EIR**

This Draft EIR is being distributed to affected agencies, surrounding cities, counties, and interested parties for a 66-day review period in accordance with Section 15087 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. During the review period (which commenced on October 10, 2013 and originally was to end on November 25, 2013 and was extended to December 16, 2013), the Draft EIR is available for general public review at the following locations:

City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring Street, Room 750  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

City Planning Department -Valley Office  
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard, Room 351  
Van Nuys, CA 91401

Central Library  
630 West Fifth Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90071

Sherman Oaks Branch Library  
14245 Moorpark Street  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

Encino-Tarzana Branch Library  
18231 Ventura Boulevard  
Tarzana, CA 91356

Additionally, the Draft EIR can be downloaded or reviewed via the Internet at the Department of City Planning’s website [<http://planning.lacity.org/> (click on “Environmental” and then “Draft Environmental Impact Reports”)]. The DEIRs can be purchased on cd-rom for \$7.50 per copy. Contact **Diana Kitching** of the City of Los Angeles at **[Diana.Kitching@lacity.org](mailto:Diana.Kitching@lacity.org)** to purchase one.

Interested parties may provide written comments on the Draft EIR. Written comments on the Draft EIR must be received by 4:00pm on December 16, 2013 and should be addressed to:

Diana Kitching  
(ENV-2013-0150)  
City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring Street, Room 750  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Comments may also be submitted electronically to Diana Kitching at: [Diana.Kitching@lacity.org](mailto:Diana.Kitching@lacity.org).

Upon completion of the public review period, written responses to all comments on environmental issues discussed in the Draft EIR and raised by commenters will be prepared and incorporated into the Final EIR. These comments, and their responses, will be included in the Final EIR for consideration by the City of Los Angeles, as well as other public decision makers.