II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. PROJECT APPLICANT

The project applicant for the LA Lofts Chinatown project is LA Lofts Chinatown, LLC, located at P.O. Box 1373, Torrance, California 90505.

B. PROJECT LOCATION

The Proposed Project would include a General Plan Amendment (from Light Industrial to Regional Commercial and Add Areas), a Zone Change (from MR2-1 to C2-2, and Add Areas), a Height District Change (from District 1 to District 2), a Tentative Tract Map, and a Zoning Administrator’s Adjustment (for reduced front and side yards) to permit the construction and operation of a 272-unit condominium facility totaling 334,900 gross square feet of floor area with 614 parking spaces on a 137,044 square foot lot. The project involves two components: 1) the physical development of 272 condominium units located at 1101 N. Main Street (see Figure II-1, Proposed Site Plan with Add Area) with corresponding Plan Amendment, Zone Change, Tract Map and Zoning Administrators Adjustment and, 2) an Add Area involving the theoretical development of one parcel located at 129 W. College Street, 1009 N. Main Street, and 1007 N. Main Street. The Add Area would involve a Plan Amendment and Zone Change initiated by the City of Los Angeles for this parcel located adjacent to the Proposed Project site. The Proposed Project does not involve any physical development of the Add Area.

Proposed Project Site

The 3.4-acre Proposed Project site is located in Los Angeles County, within the Chinatown community of the City of Los Angeles, at the northwest corner of the intersection of North Main Street and Llewlyn Street (see Figure II-2, Proposed Site Plan). The Proposed Project site is currently occupied by an approximately 31,000-square foot vacant light industrial facility, the former Biner-Ellison Manufacturing machine shop that operated on-site for more than 50 years. The buildings are made of wood and steel frames with metal, plywood, concrete block and tilt-up concrete walls with a painted stucco finish and are built upon concrete foundations. There is an office/storage area, storage room, machine shop, several storage areas and a warehouse. The Proposed Project site is zoned MR2-1 and is located within the Central City North Community Plan.

Add Area

The 5.4-acre Add Area is located directly adjacent to, and contiguous with, the Proposed Project site. Similar to the Proposed Project site, the Add Area is located in Los Angeles County, within the Chinatown community of the City of Los Angeles, at the northwest corner of the intersection of N. Main Street and Llewlyn Street (see Figure II-1, Proposed Site Plan with Add Area). The Add Area is currently used for the storage of large trucks and other equipment. Except for a small industrial office
building located along the southern boundary, the site does not contain any structures or infrastructure. The project site is also zoned MR2-1 and is located within the Central City North Community Plan.

C. PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

Proposed Project Site

The Proposed Project would involve the removal of the existing industrial uses and the development of 272 residential condominium units with associated amenities in one structure (see Figure II-1, Proposed Site Plan with Add Area). The Proposed Project would include approximately 334,900 square feet of Floor Area\(^1\) built upon a 137,044 square foot lot and would be 6 stories in height. The proposed building would extend approximately 75 feet in height. As shown in Figure II-2, the single structure would be constructed to resemble the “L” and “A” of Los Angeles, and would be sited at a diagonal, extending towards the western and eastern corners of the 3.4-acre project site. The condominium units would range in size from approximately 800 square feet to approximately 1,600 square feet. The 272 condominium units would include 177 one-bedroom units, and 95 two-bedroom units.

The Proposed Project would include various resident-only amenities, such as an outdoor swimming pool and spa, an approximate 2,155 square foot recreation/community room, two viewing platforms combining for a total of approximate 6,000 square foot located on the roof of the Proposed Project, approximately 14,000 square feet of active outdoor courtyard space, 11,740 square feet of passive outdoor courtyard space, and an exercise path on the former Rondout Street right-of-way.

Onsite residential parking, consisting of 614 parking spaces, would be provided on the ground level and one subterranean level.

\(^1\) In accordance with Section 12.03 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, Floor Area is defined as those areas “within the exterior walls of a building, but not including the area of the following: exterior walls, stairways, shafts, rooms housing building-operating equipment or machinery, parking areas with associated driveways and ramps, space for the landing and storage of helicopters, and basement and storage areas.”
INSERT FIGURE II-1

PROPOSED SITE PLAN WITH ADD AREA
INSERT FIGURE II-2

PROPOSED SITE PLAN
Add Area

Pursuant to a request made by the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, several development scenarios have been created and will be analyzed within this EIR. These theoretical development scenarios are based on what is allowed under the existing zoning and General Plan land use designations, and are as follows:

All Commercial Alternative (6 x lot area).
- Minimum: 127,140 square feet.
- Maximum: 1,284,612 square feet

All Residential Alternative (6 x lot area less setbacks (10%)).
- Minimum: 114,426 s.f. (R4 Density = 1 unit per 400 square feet of buildable area = 47 units)
- Maximum: 1,156,151 square feet (R4 Density = 1 unit per 400 square feet of buildable area = 481 units).

Mixed-Use Alternative (The mixed-use alternative assumes ground-level commercial and 5 levels of residential).
- Minimum: Commercial = 21,190 square feet.
- Minimum: Residential = 91,541 square feet (46 units).
  Total: 112,731 square feet
- Maximum: Commercial = 214,102 square feet.
- Maximum: Residential: = 924,921 square feet (384 units).
  Total: 1,139,023 square feet

As previously discussed, this EIR utilizes the 1,284,612 square foot All Commercial Alternative as the worst case scenario. In order to simplify the analysis, impact discussions associated with the Add Area therefore, assume future implementation of this theoretical development scenario. In addition, it is assumed that because the All Commercial Alternative for the Add Area represents a worst-case scenario, impacts associated with the remaining theoretical development scenarios would be less than the All Commercial Alternative, and therefore, are not individually analyzed.

Design Concept

As shown in Figure II-3, (Conceptual Design), the Proposed Project would be approximately 65 feet tall and would be constructed to resemble the “L” and “A” of “Los Angeles”. The materials on the exterior of the proposed building would mainly consist of cast-stone and tinted glass. The glass would not be highly reflective and would not be covered with a mirrored tinting. It is anticipated that the glass materials would comprise less than 50 percent of the exterior materials.
INSERT FIGURE II-3

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN
INSERT FIGURE II-4

LANDSCAPE PLAN
Landscaping and Open Space

The Proposed Project would integrate approximately 59,100 square feet of landscaped open space into the Proposed Project. Due to the relative size of the Proposed Project site as compared to the proposed building, the open space that would be provided and the slender design of the building, above-grade massing would be minimized. The proposed landscape plan is conceptually depicted in Figure II-4, (Landscape Plan).

Sustainability practices would be employed in the design of the proposed landscaping. Such practices would include re-use of existing trees onsite, use of drought-tolerant plants, water-efficient irrigation systems, and the maximization of permeable surfaces throughout the Proposed Project site.

Access and Circulation

Regional access to the Proposed Project site would be provided by the Pasadena Freeway (I - 110) and the Hollywood Freeway (U.S. 101) which are immediately west and south of the site, respectively. Project access to the Pasadena Freeway is primarily provided from Hill Street. Project access to the Hollywood Freeway is primarily provided from Vignes Street and Alameda Street. As shown in Figure III-2, primary automobile access to the Proposed Project site subterranean parking structure would be from Llewellyn Street. One inbound-only driveway and one outbound-only driveway will provide access to and from the structure.

Parking

The Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) specifies parking requirements for condominium residential developments at a ratio of 2 spaces per unit. Thus, 544 parking spaces (i.e., 2 spaces x 272 dwelling units) would be required for the Proposed Project. Guest parking at a rate of one-quarter space per unit is also usually provided, which would amount to 68 guest parking spaces for the Proposed Project. In total, 612 parking spaces would be required of the Proposed Project. As the Proposed Project would provide a total on-site parking supply of 614 spaces, adequate on-site parking is anticipated, and no parking overflow impacts are expected. Vehicular access to the subterranean parking structure will be provided by a project driveway located on Llewellyn Street at mid-block.

Demolition

The demolition of the existing building would be generally approached from the outside and working its way in. The existing exterior walls would remain in place during “soft” demolition work (i.e., interior walls and equipment). Light-duty excavators with hydraulic breakers would be then be used to break up concrete and steal floors and walls.

The portions of the building that extend from the ground to approximately 25 feet high would be demolished with heavy equipment, including conventional excavators with hydraulic breaking, and
shearing and pulverizing attachments. The building foundations would then be removed with heavy equipment. Demolition of the existing building would occur over an approximate one month period with approximately two to three weeks overlap being anticipated during concurrent activities.

**Grading and Construction**

Grading and construction of the Proposed Project is expected to begin in early Spring 2007. Grading would include approximately 24,000 cubic yards of excavation. Grading and construction would occur over the course of approximately 12 to 18 months, with full project buildout in Spring 2009.

**Add Area**

The project characteristics of the Add Area would be developed at the time a project would be proposed to the City. Therefore, at this time no project level design characteristics are included.

**D. PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The objectives for the proposed LA Lofts Chinatown Project are:

- To provide an attractive and harmonious development in Chinatown, which takes into consideration the architectural character and the environmental setting of the area;
- To provide high-quality housing for local and area residents to meet existing and future needs of those desiring to live in Chinatown and to help alleviate the substantial housing shortage in the City;
- To provide for the housing, commercial, or other service needs of the current and future residents of the Chinatown area;
- To redevelop the existing property with a financially viable development; and
- To redevelop the existing property in a manner that is consistent with the development requirements in the Central City North Community Plan.

**E. DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS**

Implementation of the Proposed Project would require the following discretionary actions from the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning and other bodies and agencies:
• Zone Change;
• Height District Change;
• Vesting Tentative Tract Map;
• General Plan Amendment;
• Zoning Administrator Adjustment.

F. INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This EIR serves as the environmental document for the City’s discretionary action and ministerial permits or approvals associated with development of the Proposed Project. This EIR is also intended to cover all federal, State, regional and/or local government discretionary or ministerial permits or approvals that may be required to develop the Proposed Project, whether or not they are explicitly listed above. Federal, State, and regional agencies that may have jurisdiction over the Proposed Project include, but are not limited to:

• Regional Water Quality Board; and
• South Coast Air Quality Management District.