

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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On May June 13, 1974, the City Council of the City of Los Angeles adopted the existing Westchester Playa del Rey Community Plan (CPA). The City's Planning Department is updating the existing Community Plan and is refining the existing 1996 General Plan Framework Element as part of the Community Plan Update (CPU) program. The intent of the CPU program is to evaluate existing land use policies and programs as well as guide future development through the year 2025.

1.2 AUTHORIZATION AND FOCUS

This Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been prepared by the Department of City Planning of the City of Los Angeles in accordance with the Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended (Sections 15000-15387 of the California Administrative Code). In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study was prepared and found that the proposed project could have a significant environmental impact. A copy of the Initial Study is attached as an appendix.

The Environmental Staff Advisory Committee of the Department of City Planning determined the scope of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to be prepared. It is the intent of the Department of City Planning to prepare a program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Westchester Community Plan Update (proposed plan). CEQA Guidelines define a program EIR under Section 151681 as "an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions than can be characterized as one large project and/or are related either: (1) Geographically, (2) As logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions, (3) In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or (4) As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

A program EIR is not project specific, but instead addresses policy interventions and the broad land use changes that may be incorporated into a Community Plan. Under CEQA, specific projects may "tier" off of a program EIR and further reduce and expedite environmental review processing time when actual projects to implement the Community Plan are proposed by private and/or public entities.

The purpose of this EIR is to provide a document that will inform the Department of City Planning, the Planning Commission, the City Council, the Mayor, and the general public of the environmental effects of the proposed plan. The EIR document, in itself, does not determine whether a project will be approved. According to Section 15121 of the State CEQA Guidelines, its purpose is to identify all potentially significant effects of a project on the physical environment, to determine the extent

to which those effects could be reduced or avoided, and to identify and evaluate feasible alternatives to the project. When an EIR determines that a project could cause significant impacts on the physical environment, those agencies with permit authority over the project are required to make one or more of the following findings before the project can be approved:

1. The project has been altered to avoid or substantially lessen significant impacts identified in the Final EIR.
2. The responsibility to carry out the responsibilities identified above is under the jurisdiction of another agency.
3. Specific social, economic or other concerns render the mitigation measures or alternatives to the project infeasible.

According to the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15151), the EIR need not be exhaustive in its analyses of a project, but should analyze important issues to a sufficient degree that permitting and approving agencies can make informed decisions. Disagreements between experts, for example, do not render an EIR inadequate, but the major points of such disagreements should be summarized.

1.3 LEAD AGENCY

The Department of City Planning is the “lead agency” in accordance with Section 15367 of the State CEQA Guidelines, which defines the lead agency as “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the project”.

Lead Agency:

The Department of City Planning
of the City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street, 667
Los Angeles, California 90012

1.4 PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

Although Community Plans are scheduled to be reviewed every 5 years for practical purposes, the life span of a community plan is considered to be 10-20 years. The life span of the proposed plan is up to the year 2025.

Implementation of the proposed Community Plan Update may have the following significant effects, either by itself or cumulatively, with existing and proposed development in the area:

1. Land Use Compatibility

2. Population/Employment and Housing
3. Public Services
4. Utilities
5. Traffic
6. Air Quality
7. Noise
8. Geology
9. Cultural/Archaeological Monuments
10. Safety/Risk of Upset (Human Health)

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE DEIR

This document is organized into the following Seven Sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Summary, (3) Project Description, (4) Environmental Setting, (5) Other Discussions Required By CEQA, (6) References, and (7) Appendices. Included in this document are Vicinity Map, and a Notice of Preparation Appendix. The Executive Summary contains a review of the potential impacts associated with the proposed Community Plan Update and the measures recommended to mitigate those impacts. Also, included in this Section is whether impacts are mitigated to a level of insignificance.

Impact analysis for each subject is addressed and presented in five subsections as described below. (Note: This EIR has regrouped some of the subjects listed above for the purpose of analysis).

Section 1: Introduction/Setting

This Section describes the overall study approach. It also includes the Setting of the existing conditions of plan area which may be subject to change as a result of ultimate development of the proposed plan area.

Impacts

Each environmental category has identified criteria for determining whether or not an impact is considered significant. This subsection provides information on the characteristics of the proposed plan which would have an affect with regard to environmental concerns, the nature and extent to which the proposed plan is expected to change the existing environment, and whether or not the proposed plan impacts meet or exceed the threshold levels of significance.

Mitigation Measures/Policies

This subsection identifies specific measures/policies which will be recommended to reduce significant impacts.

Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts

This subsection identifies the residual effects of the proposed plan which would result even after mitigation measures have been applied.

Cumulative Impacts

“Cumulative impacts” refers to two or more individual effects, which when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. These individual effects may result from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time. Section 5 identifies the effects of the proposed plan which would result after the implementation of other neighboring Community Plans.