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# I. INTRODUCTION

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## OVERVIEW OF THE CEQA PROCESS

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code (P.R.C.) Division 13, § 21000 et seq.) was enacted in 1970 with the main objective of providing public disclosure to inform decision makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of proposed activities and to require agencies to avoid or reduce the environmental effects by implementing feasible alternatives or mitigation measures.

CEQA applies to all discretionary activities proposed to be carried out or approved by California public agencies, including state, regional, county, and local agencies. The proposed project requires discretionary approval from the City of Los Angeles and, therefore, is subject to CEQA. For purposes of complying with CEQA, the City of Los Angeles is identified as the Lead Agency for the proposed project.

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations (C.C.R.), Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, § 15000-15387, as amended December 1, 1999).<sup>1</sup> As provided by the State CEQA Guidelines § 15121(a):

*“An EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The public agency shall consider the information in the EIR along with other information which may be presented to the agency.”*

In accordance with CEQA (P.R.C. § 21080.1), the City of Los Angeles determined that the proposed project has the potential to result in significant adverse effects on the environment and required an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) be prepared.<sup>2</sup> As provided by the State CEQA Guidelines (C.C.R. § 15084), the City of Los Angeles contracted with the environmental planning and research firm

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<sup>1</sup> *The State CEQA Guidelines, adopted by the Resources Agency, are the primary rules and source of interpretation of CEQA (P.R.C. § 21083).*

<sup>2</sup> *“Significant effect on the environment” means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.*

Christopher A. Joseph & Associates (CAJA) to prepare the EIR as an independent and third party consultant to the City. As mandated by the Guidelines, the EIR must be subject to the Lead Agency's own review and analysis and reflect the Lead Agency's independent judgment and objectivity with regard to the scope, content, and adequacy.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

In accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines, the City of Los Angeles prepared an Initial Study to determine the scope of the EIR. On the basis of the Initial Study, the City of Los Angeles determined an EIR would be required for the proposed project. On June 12, 2000, the City issued the Notice of Preparation to provide responsible agencies and interested individuals. Based on the Initial Study and the comments received in response to the NOP, the City determined that the following environmental issue areas be included within the scope of the EIR:

- *Aesthetics*
- *Air Quality*
- *Biological Resources*
- *Geotechnical Hazards*
- *Historical Resources*
- *Hydrology/Water Quality*
- *Land Use*
- *Noise*
- *Public Services (Police and Fire Services)*
- *Traffic, Circulation and Parking*
- *Risk of Upset*

The analyses for each of the environmental issue areas identified above are contained in Section IV, Environmental Impact Analysis. For each environmental issue area, the EIR identifies the environmental setting (e.g., the existing baseline conditions at the time of the NOP), defines the methodologies and significance thresholds employed to determine significant environmental impacts, identifies significant environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the project, provides recommended mitigation measures that may reduce or avoid potential significant impacts, and provides a cumulative impact analysis of the project when combined with other known projects which have been recently proposed within the surrounding area.

Section V, General Impact Categories, includes a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes which would be involved in the proposed project, should it be implemented, and addresses the project's potential for growth-inducing impacts.

Additionally, CEQA requires that the Draft EIR include a reasonable range of project alternatives that may reduce the effects of the proposed project. Section VI, Alternative to the Proposed Project, includes an analysis of the following four project alternatives:

- 1) No Project Alternative;
- 2) Reduced Building Size Alternative;
- 3) Residential Development Alternative; and
- 4) Reduced Density Alternative.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

To provide full public disclosure of potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of a proposed project, CEQA requires a Draft EIR be circulated during the public review period to all responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and the general public. This Draft EIR is being circulated for a period of 45 days (in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines § 21091 (a)). The public review period will commence on June 21, 2001 and will end on August 6, 2001. During this review period, all public agencies and interested individuals and organizations are encouraged to provide written comments addressing their concerns with the adequacy and completeness of the EIR. When providing written comments on the subject matter of the EIR, the readers are referred to State CEQA Guidelines, 15204(a), which state:

*“In reviewing Draft EIRs, people persons and public agencies should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects. At the same time, reviewers should be aware that the adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible, in light of factors such as the magnitude of the project at issue, the severity of its likely environmental impacts, and the geographic scope of the project. CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commentors. When responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR.”*

All comments regarding the adequacy of the Draft EIR should be submitted in writing to the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning at either of the following addresses by no later than August 6, 2001:

**City of Los Angeles**  
**Department of City Planning**  
Attn: Jimmy Liao, City Planner  
221 N. Figueroa, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, California, 90012-2601

**City of Los Angeles**  
**Department of City Planning**  
Attn: Jimmy Liao, City Planner  
200 N. Spring Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, California, 90012

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

The Draft EIR will be made available to the general public at the City Planning addresses listed above. In addition, copies of the Draft EIR will be made available to the public at the Central Branch and Granada Hills Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library at the following locations:

**City of Los Angeles Public Library**  
**Central Library**  
630 W. Fifth Street  
Los Angeles, California 90071

**City of Los Angeles Public Library**  
**Granada Hills Branch**  
10640 Petit Avenue  
Granada Hills, CA 91344

The service hours for the Central Library are as follows: 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays; 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. The service hours for the Granada Hills Library are 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; and 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Granada Hills Branch Library is closed on Sundays.

The Draft EIR will also be posted on the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning internet site at the following address: <http://www.lacity.org/Pln>

Notice of availability of the Draft EIR will be made in accordance with CEQA Guidelines and City of Los Angeles policy.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENTS**

Following the public review period, the Lead Agency will prepare a Final EIR. The Final EIR will include additions and corrections to the Draft EIR as appropriate, and written responses addressing the comments submitted by individuals, organizations, and public agencies during the public review period.