

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the purpose and focus of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), a discussion of the intended use of this Draft EIR, a description of the organization of the Draft EIR, and a discussion of the public review process and potential areas of controversy.

In September 2012, Governor Brown signed into law Assembly Bill (AB) 2245, amending the California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.20.5 to exempt restriping of urban streets (until January 1, 2018) for bicycle lanes. The City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning is required to prepare an assessment of traffic and safety impacts and to hold noticed public hearings in affected areas. The proposed projects analyzed in this Draft EIR fall within this exemption. However, since this Draft EIR was already underway, the City of Los Angeles decided to complete the Draft EIR, and then file a Notice of Exemption once the requirements of PCR Section 21080.20.5 have been met. Comments on this Draft EIR will be responded to in a staff report that will be available to the general public, including all parties that commented on the Draft EIR and attended any of the public hearings.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The City has prepared this Draft EIR in order to inform the general public, the local community, and responsible and interested public agencies of the nature of the proposed projects, their possible environmental effects, possible measures to mitigate those effects, and alternatives to the proposed projects.

The determination that the City of Los Angeles is the “lead agency” is made in accordance with Sections 15051 and 15367 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, which define the lead agency as the public agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project. This Draft EIR reflects the independent judgment of the City regarding the potential environmental impacts, the level of significance of the impacts both before and after mitigation, and the mitigation measures proposed to reduce impacts.

As described in the CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, public agencies are charged with the duty to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental impacts, where feasible. In discharging this duty, a public agency has an obligation to balance the project’s significant impacts on the environment with other conditions, including economic, social, technological, legal, and other benefits. This Draft EIR is an informational document, the purpose of which is to identify the potential impacts of the proposed project on the environment and to indicate the manner in which those significant impacts can be avoided or substantially lessened through mitigation. This Draft EIR also identifies a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed projects that could reduce the impacts as compared to the project.

1.2 AUTHORIZATION AND FOCUS

This document evaluates the environmental effects that could result from implementation of the proposed projects. The following topic areas are addressed in this Draft EIR:

- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gases
- Land Use
- Noise and Vibration
- Transportation and Traffic
- Cumulative Impacts
- Alternatives

1.3 LEAD AGENCY

The lead agency is “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the project.” Contact information for the City is presented below:

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1.4 DRAFT EIR ORGANIZATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION. This chapter contains an overview of the purpose and focus of the Draft EIR, a discussion of the intended use of this Draft EIR, a description of the organization of the Draft EIR, and a discussion of the public review process and potential areas of controversy.

2.0 SUMMARY. This chapter provides a summary of the proposed projects, its potential environmental effects and mitigation measures, and a summary of the alternatives to the proposed projects evaluated in this Draft EIR.

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION. This chapter describes the project location, existing conditions, project objectives, project benefits and a description of the proposed projects.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS. This chapter contains the environmental setting, project analyses, mitigation measures, and conclusions regarding the level of significance after mitigation for each of the following environmental issues:

- 4.1 Air Quality
- 4.2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- 4.3 Land Use
- 4.4 Noise and Vibration
- 4.5 Transportation and Traffic

5.0 ALTERNATIVES. This chapter provides analysis of each of the alternatives to the proposed projects. The alternatives considered for the proposed projects are:

- Alternative 1 (No Build Alternative).
- Alternative 2A (Increased Parking Removal/Alternate Travel Lane Impacts)
- Alternative 2B (Increased Parking Removal/Alternate Travel Lane Impacts Variant)
- Alternative 3 (Alternate Routes)

6.0 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS. This chapter provides a discussion of the (1) significant environmental effects of the proposed projects; (2) significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed projects is implemented; (3) significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed projects; (4) growth-inducing impacts of the proposed projects; and (5) cumulative impacts.

7.0 PERSONS AND SOURCES CONSULTED. This chapter lists all of the persons, public agencies, and organizations that were consulted or contributed and all the references and sources used in the preparation of this Draft EIR.

1.5 PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENTS

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this Draft EIR was issued on June 26, 2012 by the City for a 30-day public comment period. A total of 49 comment letters were received. Information, data, and observations resulting from these letters are included throughout this Draft EIR where relevant. Refer to Appendix A for copies of the NOP and NOP comment letters. Public scoping meetings were held on July 10, 12, and 18, 2012. The purpose of these meetings was to provide early consultation for the public to express their concerns about the proposed projects, and acquire information and make recommendations on issues to be addressed in the Draft EIR.

As discussed above and in Chapter 3.0 Project Description, projects addressed in this Draft EIR are eligible for exemptions under CEQA, nonetheless, this Draft EIR is being circulated for a 45-day public review period. Responsible and trustee agencies and the public are invited to comment in writing on the information contained in this document. Persons and agencies commenting are encouraged to provide information that they believe is missing from the Draft EIR and to identify where the information can be obtained. Comments on this the Draft EIR will be addressed in a staff report prepared by the City for consideration by the General Manager of Department of Transportation (LADOT) and shall be made available to the general public, including all parties that commented on the Draft EIR and attended any of the public hearings.

Comment letters should be sent to:

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1.6 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY/ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Potential areas of controversy and issues to be resolved by the City's decision-makers may include those environmental issue areas where the potential for an unavoidable and significant impact has been identified. These areas may include traffic and transportation. Based on the NOP comment letters, issues known to be of concern in the community include traffic and transportation, and coordination with other future projects that are to be developed in proximity to the proposed projects. There is a great deal of support for bicycle lanes in the City of Los Angeles and preparation of this Draft EIR was controversial because of the time an EIR takes to process. This concern is addressed by AB 2245, which provides that a project is Statutorily Exempt from CEQA that consists of the restriping of streets and highways for bicycle lanes that is consistent with a bicycle plan. This Draft EIR is being published because it was in process at the time the law was signed. The traffic and safety analysis contained herein will serve to address the requirements of AB 2245 (PRC Section 21080.20.5). Refer to Appendix A for copies of the NOP comment letters.