

I. INTRODUCTION

This Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) has been prepared to comply with the requirements of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq., and the guidelines promulgated in connection therewith at Title 14 Code of California Regulation (CCR) Section 15000 et seq. (the “CEQA Guidelines”). The Final EIR, together with the Draft EIR published in November 2010, addresses the potential environmental effects resulting from the adoption and implementation of the Jordan Downs Specific Plan, which includes, among other things, the annexation of approximately 41.74 acres of land from unincorporated Los Angeles County to the City of Los Angeles (proposed project).

A. INTENDED USES OF THE FINAL EIR

This Final EIR was prepared at the direction and under the supervision of the City Los Angeles Department of City Planning (DCP). The intended use of this Final EIR is to assist DCP and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in making decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of the Jordan Downs Specific Plan, as well as the annexation of approximately 41.74 acres of land from unincorporated Los Angeles County to the City of Los Angeles. This Final EIR is required under Section 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines to include the Draft EIR; comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR (either verbatim or in summary); a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies who commented on the Draft EIR; responses to those comments; and any other relevant information added by the lead agency. There have been no changes to the proposed project since publication of the Draft EIR. This document summarizes the project information presented in the Draft EIR and contains comments and responses to comments received on the Draft EIR. This Final EIR is comprised of four chapters:

Introduction: This chapter includes an overview of the proposed project, a summary of the alternatives considered, and a summary of the project’s potential environmental impacts.

Comments and Responses: This chapter contains all of the written comments received by the City of Los Angeles during the public review period for the Draft EIR and responses to each of those comments.

Corrections and Additions: This chapter provides a list of changes that were made to the Draft EIR based on comments received from interested parties during the 45-day public review period, as well as some consistency and other non-substantive changes.

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program: This chapter includes a list of the required mitigation measures and identifies the enforcement agency, monitoring agency, monitoring phase, monitoring frequency, and the action indicating compliance with each measure.

B. PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2008, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa launched a five-year, \$5 billion housing plan for the City of Los Angeles called “Housing that Works.” A cornerstone of that plan is the revitalization of the Jordan Downs public housing complex. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), the state-chartered public agency tasked with administering U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing programs in the City, has initiated a program to rebuild Jordan Downs and transform the area into a mixed-use, transit-oriented development with new homes, jobs, schools, parks, and social facilities. Towards this end, on April 1, 2008, HACLA purchased three parcels of land totaling approximately 21.08 acres adjacent to the Jordan Downs public housing complex within unincorporated Los Angeles County. HACLA plans to replace the existing 700 public housing units, one-for-one, and build up to 1,100 additional affordable and market-rate units.

Over the past year, HACLA has engaged community stakeholders and residents of the Jordan Downs public housing complex in a master planning process by conducting workshops and meetings to develop the Jordan Downs Master Plan (Master Plan). This Master Plan was certified by the HACLA Board of Commissioners on January 15, 2010. The DCP has now prepared the Jordan Downs Specific Plan (Specific Plan) to serve as the implementation tool for the Master Plan. In their development of the Specific Plan, DCP has included publicly- and privately-owned properties located within unincorporated Los Angeles County. Before the properties located within unincorporated Los Angeles County can be transferred to the City of Los Angeles and included in the Specific Plan, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for the County of Los Angeles must approve the annexation of these properties.

C. PROJECT LOCATION AND SURROUNDING LAND USES

The Specific Plan area is located approximately eight miles south of downtown Los Angeles, one mile north of the Glenn Anderson Freeway (I-105) in the Watts neighborhood of the City Los Angeles. The Specific Plan area is generally bound by 97th Street to the north, Alameda Street to the east, 103rd Street to the south, and Grape Street to the west. Although the majority of the Specific Plan area is within the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area of the City of Los Angeles, approximately 41.74 acres are within unincorporated Los Angeles County. The Specific Plan area includes the Jordan Downs public housing complex and recreation center, Mudtown Farms (an approximately 2.5-acre community garden), David Starr Jordan High School, and approximately 41.74 acres of land within unincorporated Los Angeles County (Annexation Area). In total, the Specific Plan area encompasses approximately 118.5 acres inclusive of streets.

The Specific Plan area is surrounded by a mostly residential neighborhood consisting primarily of one- or two-story single-family residences with some one-way streets to the north, west, and south. The area to the east of the Specific Plan area, facing Alameda Street, is mainly industrial, and separated from the adjoining communities by the Alameda Corridor railroad trench. Tweedy Avenue, located immediately to the east of the Specific Plan area, is one of the few nearby locations with a road crossing over the railroad trench.

D. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Currently, the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) lacks the appropriate zoning standards to allow for the mixed-use, mixed-income development envisioned in the Master Plan. The adoption of the Specific Plan is required to modify the existing zoning designations and establish design guidelines within the Specific Plan area to accommodate the development envisioned in the Master Plan. The Specific Plan allows the future development to use techniques such as variable setbacks to maximize usable public and private open space, multi-family homes, shared common open space and compact, clustered single-family homes encouraging pedestrian activity, all integrated within the same mixed-use community. By using a Specific Plan, the entire streetscape can be coordinated between all proposed land uses. In some cases, the Specific Plan provides for stringent requirements along Alameda Street so as to be compatible with the residential neighborhood and educational facilities of the redeveloped project. Overall, the cohesiveness and enhanced design created by the Specific Plan is intended to maximize the ability to create a sustainable community.

As previously mentioned, the Specific Plan area includes approximately 41.74 acres of publicly- and privately-owned land within unincorporated Los Angeles County. Before this land can be transferred to the City of Los Angeles and included in the Specific Plan, LAFCO must approve the annexation of this property. **Table I-1** identifies the assessor parcel numbers, owners, and size of the annexation area properties.

TABLE I-1: ANNEXATION AREA PROPERTIES		
Assessor Parcel Number (APN)	Owner	Size (Acres)
6046-019-904	HACLA	4.27
6046-019-905	HACLA	12.81
6046-019-906	HACLA	4.00
6046-020-001	Gary Weisenberg Family Trust/10019 S Alameda	1.57
6046-020-002	Gary Weisenberg Family Trust	0.29
6046-020-003	Gary Weisenberg Family Trust	1.38
6046-020-007	John Hook	1.91
6046-020-008	Robert Moehlman	0.88
6046-020-009	Northern Trust	0.32
6046-020-010	Robert Moehlman	0.59
6046-020-011	Robert Moehlman	0.77
6046-020-901	LAUSD	3.36
6205-031-914	City of Long Beach	0.99
6205-031-915	City of Los Angeles	
6207-036-910	City of Los Angeles	2.89
6207-036-911	City of Long Beach	
N/A	Right-of-Way	5.71
TOTAL		41.74
SOURCE: Hogle-Ireland, 2010.		

Implementation of the Specific Plan would replace the existing 700 Jordan Downs public housing units, one-for-one, and build up to 1,100 additional affordable and market rate units built in a variety of residential building types, including townhouses and stacked flats in multiple and varied configurations. The 1,800 residential units include 700 public housing units, 700 affordable rental units, which include 100 senior housing units, and 400 market rate condominium units. In addition, implementation of the Specific Plan would include up to 522,000 gross square feet (gsf) of employment uses. Specifically, 502,000 gsf of commercial, retail, and light industrial space would be located on approximately seven acres along Alameda Street, and 20,000 gsf of community-serving retail and services would be located in mixed-use buildings along the Century Boulevard extension and at Croesus Avenue at 103rd Street. Up to 230,000 gsf of new commercial and retail space would be developed on HACLA-owned property, and an additional 292,000 gsf of commercial and light industrial uses could also be developed on the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)- and privately-owned parcels along Alameda Street. **Table I-2** provides a breakdown of the existing and proposed land use program for the Specific Plan area.

The Specific Plan also identifies two potential locations for a new elementary school and an expansion to Jordan High School which could accommodate up to 1,400 additional students. Implementation of the proposed project would provide an additional 5.79 acres of parks and public open space to the existing 3.16 acres of parks and open space areas associated with the existing recreation center. Other community facilities include a Family Resource Center, a gymnasium, and pool facility to be jointly used with David Starr Jordan High School. The Family Resource Center would anchor the redeveloped Specific Plan area and would house family-oriented services and activities, provide learning opportunities, and serve as a central gathering place for the neighborhood.

TABLE I-2: SPECIFIC PLAN PROGRAM SUMMARY	
Uses	Quantity
Residential (Multi-Family)	
Existing	
Jordan Downs Public Housing Complex	700 units
Proposed	
Rentals (includes 100 senior units)	1,400 Units
Condominiums	400 Units
Total Proposed Residential Development	1,800 Units
Less Existing Residential Development	(700) units
Net Increase of Residential Development	1,100 Units
Commercial/Retail/Light Industrial (Employment Uses)	
A. HACLA-Owned Properties	
Existing	
Commercial/Light Industrial	138,000 gsf
Proposed	
Commercial/Retail	210,000 gsf
Mixed Use (Community Serving Retail and/or Services)	20,000 gsf
Total Proposed HACLA-Owned Employment Uses	230,000 gsf
B. LAUSD and Privately-Owned Properties	
Existing	
Commercial/Light Industrial	124,000 gsf
Proposed	
Commercial/Light Industrial	292,000 gsf
LAUSD and Privately-Owned Total Proposed Employment Uses	292,000 gsf
Total A+B Proposed Employment Uses	522,000 gsf
Less A+B Existing Employment Uses	(262,000) gsf
Net Increase of Employment Uses	260,000 gsf
Community Facilities	
Existing	
Jordan Downs Recreation Center building	7,000 gsf
Proposed	
Family Resource Center	50,000 gsf
Joint-use Gymnasium	17,000 gsf
Pool	3,000 gsf
Total Proposed Community Facilities	70,000 gsf
Less Existing Community Facilities	(7,000) gsf
Net Increase of Community Facilities	63,000 gsf
Schools	
Existing	
David Starr Jordan High School	1,832 Students
Proposed	
Elementary School	650 Students
High School Expansion	750 Students
Total Proposed Student Population	1,400 Students
Plus Existing Student Population	1,832 students
Total Student Population	3,232 Students
Parks and Public Open Spaces/a/	
Existing	
Jordan Downs Recreation Center	3.16 acres
Proposed	
Central Park	6.38 acres
Other Open Space and Plazas	2.57 acres
Total Proposed Parks and Public Open Spaces	8.95 acres
Less Existing Parks and Public Open Space	(3.16) acres
Net Increase of Parks and Open Space	5.79 acres
/a/ Mudtown farms, a 2.5 acre community garden that would be retained as part of the proposed project is not included in this land area calculation.	
SOURCE: WRT Solomon E.T.C., 2010.	

E. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

In addition to the proposed project, the Draft EIR evaluated four project alternatives. The alternatives considered for the proposed project include:

Alternative 1 – No Project Alternative. The No Project Alternative is required by Section 15126.6 (e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines and assumes that the proposed project would not be implemented. The No Project Alternative allows decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. However, “no project” does not mean that development on the project site will be prohibited. The No Project Alternative includes “what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services” (CEQA Section 15126.6 [e][2]).

Although development within the Specific Plan area could occur based on current plans, no development is reasonably expected as there is no incentive to redevelop the existing public housing complex or the vacant and blighted industrial properties, and the existing zoning limits the ability to increase the density. Section 15126.6(e)(3)(B) of the CEQA Guidelines states that, “in certain instances, the no project alternative means ‘no build’ wherein the existing environmental setting is maintained.” Accordingly, for the purposes of this analysis, the No Project Alternative assumes that no new development would occur within the Specific Plan area, and that physical conditions of the project site would remain as they are today. No new buildings would be constructed, and no existing buildings would be removed. Similarly the adoption of the Specific Plan would not occur and the annexation of land from unincorporated Los Angeles County to the City of Los Angeles would not occur under the No Project Alternative.

Alternative 2 – Reduced Annexation Area Alternative. The Reduced Annexation Area Alternative (Alternative 2) would annex the HACLA-owned 21-acre property adjacent to the Jordan Downs public housing complex but not the 20-acre privately-owned properties, the public rights-of-way along Alameda Street, or the LAUSD-owned property fronting Alameda Street (Figure V-1). Consequently, these properties would not be included within the Specific Plan. Alternative 2 would result in the development of the same number of residential units (up to 1,800 units), and the same amounts of community facilities (70,000 square feet), of new school facilities (a 650-student elementary school and a 750-student high school expansion), and of open space (8.95 acres) as the proposed project. The primary difference between Alternative 2 and the proposed project is that Alternative 2 would result in less commercial development than the proposed project. Specifically, 230,000 square feet of commercial/retail uses would be developed under Alternative 2, as opposed to the 522,000 square feet under the proposed project.

Alternative 3 – Reduced Height Alternative. The Reduced Height Alternative (Alternative 3) would reduce the height of the buildings along 97th Street from 60 feet to 30 feet, and would relocate the 60-foot-tall buildings along 97th Street within the interior of the Specific Plan area such that shadows generated from within the Specific Plan area would not impact residences on 97th Street for a period of more than three hours. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 would result in the development of the same number of residential units (up to 1,800 units), and the same amounts of commercial, retail and light industrial space (up to 520,000 square feet), of community facilities (70,000 square feet), of new school facilities (a 650-student elementary school and a 750-student high school expansion), and of open space (8.95 acres).

Alternative 4 – Industrial Zone Alternative. The Industrial Zone Alternative (Alternative 4) would be similar to the proposed project with the exception that the privately-owned parcels along Alameda Street would be zoned M2 (Light Industrial) upon annexation to the City of Los Angeles. The M2 zoning designation would allow the existing industrial uses to continue operating. Under Alternative 4, commercial uses would not be developed on these properties. However, the same amount of residential and community facilities as the proposed project would be developed under Alternative 4.

Of the three build alternatives, Alternative 3 would be considered the environmentally superior alternative because it avoids one significant impact (shade and shadow) and does not create additional adverse environmental impacts.

F. SUMMARY OF PROJECT IMPACTS

Impacts of the proposed project fall into three categories: impacts which are less than significant or nonexistent when compared to the environmental impact thresholds identified in this report, significant impacts that can be mitigated to less-than-significant levels, and significant and unavoidable adverse impacts.

Less-than-Significant or No Impact

Based on the analysis contained in the Draft EIR, a less-than-significant impact or no impact would occur for the following environmental topics:

- Aesthetics (view and vistas, scenic resources);
- Agricultural Resources;
- Biological Resources (special-status species, sensitive habitats, wetland, and tree preservation);
- Energy (petroleum);
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (hazardous materials database site listing, airport safety, Emergency Response Plan, and wildland fires);
- Hydrology and Water Quality;
- Land Use and Planning (division of a community, consistency with local and regional plans and policies);
- Mineral Resources (State, regional, or local mineral resources);
- Noise (construction and operational vibration);
- Population, Housing and Employment (employment and growth);
- Public Services (schools);
- Recreation (parks and recreation);
- Traffic and Transportation (congestion management plan, neighborhood intrusion, project access, bicycle, pedestrian and vehicular safety, transit, construction traffic, and parking); and
- Utilities and Service Systems (stormwater, wastewater, and solid waste).

Significant Impacts that can be Mitigated to a Less-than-Significant Level

Based on the analysis contained in the Draft EIR, a less-than-significant impact would occur with implementation of mitigation measures for the following environmental topics:

- Aesthetics (visual character and light and glare);
- Biological Resources (migratory fish or wildlife);
- Cultural Resources (historic, archeological, and paleontological);
- Energy (electricity and natural gas);
- Geology and Soils (seismicity and erosion);
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Contaminated Sites and Exposure to Hazardous Emissions);
- Land Use and Planning (land use compatibility);
- Noise (construction related noise and operational noise);
- Population, Housing and Employment (population and housing displacement)
- Public Services (fire, police, and libraries);
- Traffic and transportation (Unsignalized intersections in the City of Los Angeles); and
- Utilities and Service Systems (water).

Significant and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Based on the analysis contained in the Draft EIR, significant and unavoidable adverse impacts would occur for the following environmental topics:

- **Aesthetics (Shade and Shadow)** – During the Winter Solstice, shadows generated from the implementation of the proposed project would impact the single-family residences on 97th Street, north of the Specific Plan area, for a period of more than three hours.
- **Air Quality (Construction, Operational, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions)** – During construction, NO_x and PM₁₀ regional emissions, as well as PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ local concentrations, would exceed regional and local significance thresholds. Operational emissions would also exceed regional significance thresholds for VOC, NO_x, CO, and PM₁₀. Similarly, GHG emissions would exceed the 4.6 metric tons of CO₂e per year per service population significance threshold.
- **Noise (Construction)** – Construction noise levels would exceed the 5-dBA significance threshold at multiple sensitive receptors during all phases of construction.
- **Traffic and Transportation** – The following intersection levels of service would be significantly impacted:
 - #1 Alameda Street (W) and Firestone Boulevard (County of Los Angeles, PM peak hour)
 - #5 Alameda Street (W) and Century Boulevard/Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (City of Lynwood, AM and PM peak hours)
 - #20 Central Avenue and Century Boulevard (City of Los Angeles, AM and PM peak hours)
 - #35 Long Beach Boulevard and Tweedy Boulevard (Cities of South Gate and Lynwood, AM and PM peak hours).

G. NOTICING AND AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT EIR

In compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed project was received and circulated by the State Clearinghouse (SCH) for a period of 30 days beginning February 2, 2010. The comment period was then extended through March 31, 2010 to provide additional opportunity for interested parties to comment on the scope of the EIR. A public scoping meeting was held on February 20, 2010 at the David Starr Jordan High School. The Draft EIR for the proposed project (SCH#2010021007) was prepared pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines. In compliance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15085 and 15087, a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR was circulated for a 45-day period from November 18, 2010 through January 2, 2011. During the same period, the Draft EIR was circulated and made available for public review, in accordance with Section 15087 of the State CEQA Guidelines. During this review period, the Lead Agency received 11 written comments from agencies and the public. These written comments and the corresponding responses to these comments are presented in Chapter II Comments and Responses to the Draft EIR of this Final EIR.