III. RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

1. COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EIR

Section 15088 of the CEQA Guidelines states that "[t]he lead agency shall evaluate comments on environmental issues received from persons who reviewed the Draft EIR and shall prepare a written response. The Lead Agency shall respond to comments received during the noticed comment period and any extensions and may respond to late comments." Specifically, "[t]he written responses shall describe the disposition of significant environmental issues raised (e.g., revisions to the proposed project to mitigate anticipated impacts or objections). In particular, the major environmental issues raised when the lead agency's positions is at variance with recommendations and objections raised in the comments must be addressed in detail giving reasons why specific comments and suggestions were not accepted." The CEQA Guidelines call for responses that contain a "good faith, reasoned analysis" with statements supported by factual information. Some of the comments submitted to the Lead Agency, however, were general in nature, stating opinion either in favor of or in opposition to the Project. In such cases, the comment is made a part of the administrative record and will be forwarded to the City's decision makers for their consideration.

In accordance with these requirements, this Chapter of the Final EIR provides a good faith, reasoned analysis and responds to each of the written comments on environmental issues received regarding the Draft EIR during the comment periods.

The City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning received 26 letters (plus additional duplicative letters) that provided comments on the Draft EIR during the designated comment period (47 days between September 17, 2015 and November 2, 2015). Each comment letter has been assigned a corresponding number, and comments within each comment letter are also numbered.

Written comments made during the public review period for the Draft EIR intermixed points and opinions relevant to Project approval/disapproval with points and opinions relevant to the environmental review presented in the Draft EIR. Section 15204(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines¹ ("CEQA Guidelines") encourages reviewers to examine the sufficiency of the environmental document, particularly in regard to significant effects, and to suggest specific mitigation measures and project alternatives. Based on judicial interpretation of this section, the lead agency is not obligated to undertake every suggestion it is given, provided that the lead agency responds to significant environmental issues and makes a good faith effort at disclosure. Furthermore, Section 15204(c) advises reviewers that comments should be accompanied by factual support. The responses to comments provided in this section of the Final EIR provide detailed responses to all comments related to the environmental review and discuss, as appropriate, the points raised by commenters regarding Project design and opinions relating to Project approval. The latter are usually statements of opinion or preference regarding a project's design or its presence as opposed to points within the purview of an EIR: environmental impact and mitigation.

¹ California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387.

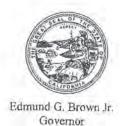
The organizations/persons that provided written comments on the Draft EIR to the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning are listed in Section II (List of Commenters). The summary table below indicates the issue areas on which each organization/person commented.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS The Reef Project	Letter Number	Project Description	Impacts Less than Significant	Aesthetics/Views	Air Quality	Biological Resources	Cultural Resources	Geology and Soils	Greenhouse Emissions	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Hydrology and Water Quality	Land Use and Planning	Noise	Population/Housing/Employment	Public Services	Transportation	Utilities	Alternatives	Other	Explanation of "Other"
State Agencies and Departments																				
State of California, Governor's Office of Planning and Research. State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit	1																		•	The Lead Agency has complied with State Clearinghouse requirements for draft environmental documents.
State of California, Department of Transportation	2															•				
City and County of Los Angeles Officials, Agencies & Departments																				
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority	3															•				
Los Angeles Community College District	4																		•	2009 Master Plan includes projects that are not listed on the Related Project List.
City of Los Angeles South Central Neighborhood Council	5			•	•							•		•		•				
City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	6																•			

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS The Reef Project	Letter Number	Project Description	Impacts Less than Significant	Aesthetics/Views	Air Quality	Biological Resources	Cultural Resources	Geology and Soils	Greenhouse Emissions	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Hydrology and Water Quality	Land Use and Planning	Noise	Population/Housing/Employment	Public Services	Transportation	Utilities	Alternatives	Other	Explanation of "Other"
City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	7																•			
City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation Wastewater Engineering Services Division																	•			
Organiza	ation	s and	Indi	vidua	als	l .						l .	1	1	1	l .			l	
Christina Giorgio and Doug Smith on behalf of the Public Interest Law Office of the Los Angeles County and Beverly Hills Bar Association	9			•								•						•		
Alexander Harnden and Joseph Donlin on behalf of the United Neighbors In Defense Against Displacement	10	•		•	•		•					•	•	•	•	•		•	•	Not enough time for the comment process, lack of Spanish translation. An Environmental Justice Analysis should be prepared.
Ron Gochez on behalf of the Union Del Barrio	11			•	•							•		•		•				

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS The Reef Project	Letter Number	Project Description	Impacts Less than Significant	Aesthetics/Views	Air Quality	Biological Resources	Cultural Resources	Geology and Soils	Greenhouse Emissions	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Hydrology and Water Quality	Land Use and Planning	Noise	Population/Housing/Employment	Public Services	Transportation	Utilities	Alternatives	Other	Explanation of "Other"
Noreen McClendon on behalf of the Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles	12																		•	Support for the Project.
Jim Mangia, MPH, on behalf of the St. John's Well Child and Family Center	13				•															
Martha Sanchez on behalf of the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment	14			•	•							•		•		•				
Dennis Hathaway on behalf of the Coalition to BanBillboardBlight	15			•												•	•	•		
Ron Miller on behalf of the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council	16																		•	Support for the Project.
Joe Bourgeois on behalf of the SoCal Environmental Justice Alliance	17			•	•								•			•				
Timothy Watkins on behalf of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee	18			•	•							•		•		•				

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS The Reef Project	Letter Number	Project Description	Impacts Less than Significant	Aesthetics/Views	Air Quality	Biological Resources	Cultural Resources	Geology and Soils	Greenhouse Emissions	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Hydrology and Water Quality	Land Use and Planning	Noise	Population/Housing/Employment	Public Services	Transportation	Utilities	Alternatives	Other	Explanation of "Other"
Aileen Sanchez	19																		•	Support for the Project.
Evelynn Ramirez	20			•								•			•	•				
Azusena Favela	21			•	•							•		•		•				
Clemente Franco	22			•	•							•		•		•				
Martha Sanchez	23				•								•			•			•	Economic impacts.
George Torres	24			•	•							•		•		•				
Form Letter 1 - Tenants of The Reef	25																		•	Support for the Project.
Form Letter 2 – Support	26																		•	Support for the Project.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Governor's Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit



November 3, 2015

RECEIVED CITY OF LOS ANGELES

NOV 1 6 2015

ENVIRONMENTAL UNIT

Erin Strelich City of Los Angeles 200 N. Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: The Reef (formerly SOLA Village) Project

SCH#: 2014071054

Dear Erin Strelich:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Draft EIR to selected state agencies for review. On the enclosed Document Details Report please note that the Clearinghouse has listed the state agencies that reviewed your document. The review period closed on November 2, 2015, and the comments from the responding agency (ies) is (are) enclosed. If this comment package is not in order, please notify the State Clearinghouse immediately. Please refer to the project's ten-digit State Clearinghouse number in future correspondence so that we may respond promptly.

Please note that Section 21104(c) of the California Public Resources Code states that:

"A responsible or other public agency shall only make substantive comments regarding those activities involved in a project which are within an area of expertise of the agency or which are required to be carried out or approved by the agency. Those comments shall be supported by specific documentation."

These comments are forwarded for use in preparing your final environmental document. Should you need more information or clarification of the enclosed comments, we recommend that you contact the commenting agency directly.

This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Please contact the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan

Director, State Clearinghouse

Enclosures

cc: Resources Agency

Document Details Report State Clearinghouse Data Base

SCH# 2014071054

Project Title The Reef (formerly SOLA Village) Project

Lead Agency Los Angeles, City of

> Type **EIR** Draft EIR

Description

The Project consists of development of a mixed use project containing approximately 2,533,000 sf of development in the [Q]M1-2-O and M1-2-O zones, including modifications to the existing 862,162 sf, approximately 194 foot tall REEF Building, and construction of approximately 1,664,000 sf of new development on the remainder of the Project Site currently occupied by surface parking lots and an 11,150 sf warehouse/storage/distribution building. The REEF would be modified to incorporate a new restaurant and event space on the rooftop, and potentially convert existing whole/showroom space within the REEF to office, retail and restaurant uses. The existing warehouse building and surface parking lots would be demolished and replaced by new construction comprised of an integrated mixed-use development containing residential, hotel, retail/restaurant, grocery store, gallery, and fitness center uses and community spaces which would be accommodated in multiple single- and multi-story buildings ranging in height from up to 85 feet to up to 420 feet, along with public open space areas. The Project would provide at least 2,733 parking spaces in multiple above-ground and subterranean structures.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Erin Strelich

Agency City of Los Angeles

Phone 213 978 1351

email

Address 200 N. Spring Street, Room 750

> City Los Angeles

Fax

State CA Zip 90012

Base

Project Location

Los Angeles County

> City Los Angeles, City of

Region

Lat / Long 34° 1' 49.5" N / 118° 15' 57" W

Cross Streets

Washington Blvd / Hill Street / Broadway / Main Street Parcel No. Range

Township

Proximity to:

Highways SR-110

Airports

Railways Waterways

Schools

Santee Educ Complex

Land Use PLU: Wholesale/Warehouse/Parking

LA CO-Metro Blue Line

Z: [Q]M1-2-O and M1-2-O GPD: Limited Manufacturing

Project Issues

Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Drainage/Absorption; Flood Plain/Flooding; Geologic/Seismic; Noise; Population/Housing Balance; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Schools/Universities; Sewer Capacity; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Solid Waste;

Toxic/Hazardous; Traffic/Circulation; Water Quality; Water Supply; Landuse; Cumulative Effects; Other Issues: Aesthetic/Visual

Section

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.

Document Details Report State Clearinghouse Data Base

Reviewing Agencies

Resources Agency; Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 5; Department of Parks and Recreation; Department of Water Resources; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 7; Air Resources Board; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 4; Department of Toxic Substances Control; Native American Heritage Commission; Public Utilities Commission

Date Received 09/17/2015

Start of Review 09/17/2015

End of Review 11/02/2015

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insulficient information provided by lead agency.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 7-OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING 100 S. MAIN STREET, MS 16 LOS ANGELES, CA 90012 PHONE (213) 897-9140 FAX (213) 897-1337 www.dot.ca.gov

November 2, 2015

01112115



Serious drought. Help save water!

RECEIVED

NOV 02 2015

STATE CLEARING HOUSE

Ms. Erin Strelich City of Los Angeles 20 N. Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, CA 90012

> RE: The Reef (SOLA Village) Project Vic. LA-10/PM 15.306 LA-110/PM 21.24 SCH # 2014071054 Ref. IGR/CEQA No. 140726AL-NOP IGR/CEQA No. 150931AL-DEIR

Dear Ms. Strelich:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The Project consists of development of a mixed use project containing approximately 2,533,000 square feet of development including modifications to the existing 861,162 square foot, approximately 194 foot tall Reef Building, and construction of approximately 1,664,000 square feet of new development on the remainder of the Project Site currently occupied by surface parking lots and an 11,150 square foot warehouse/storage/distribution building.

The new development would consist of approximately 1,450 residential units, a 210 room hotel, 143,000 square feet of commercial/retail uses, 180,000 square feet office uses, 17,500 square feet of gallery museum uses, and 8,000 square feet fitness/yoga studio.

As a reminder, in Caltrans' Guide "The level of service (LOS) for operating State highway facilities is based upon measures of effectiveness (MOEs). Caltrans endeavors to maintain a target LOS at the transition between LOS 'C' and LOS 'D' on State highway facilities. If an existing State highway facility is operating at less than the appropriate target LOS, the existing MOE should be maintained."

Ms. Erin Strelich November 2, 2015 Page 2

For any freeway segment that is near the project vicinity, any additional vehicle trips from the project may contribute significant cumulative traffic impacts to the freeways. On Table 3.2 of the Related Project List and Trip Generations in the Traffic Study prepared on April 15, 2015, there are 82 related projects in the project vicinity. The related projects will generate 248,689 average daily trips, 15,997/23,144 AM/PM peak hour trips and 23,144/20,273 Friday PM Peak/Saturday Midday Peak Hour trips. On Table 4.7 Trip Generation by Land Use, the project will generate a net 942/1,203/1,201/1,189 AM/PM/Friday PM/Saturday Midday Peak Hour Trips. When all of these projects are built, many of the related and project vehicle trips will be utilizing nearby freeways, which is already congested.

Based on the information received, Caltrans concluded that Freeway Segment (FS) #1 (I-10 both directions), FS #2a (I-110 southbound), and FS #3 (I-110 southbound), FS #4 (I-10 both directions), and FS #8 (US-101 both directions) will have significant cumulative traffic impact because the existing freeway conditions are operating at LOS "E" or "F". There are other freeway segments most likely would contribute significant cumulative traffic impact in the future. Caltrans welcomes opportunity to discuss this information further.

The assignment of freeway trips calculated from the peak hour trips from Table 4.7 and % distribution from Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4 did not match the traffic volume in each freeway direction of freeway analysis in Appendix H. An explanation should be provided here.

For Table H-5 Future With Project-Freeway Off-Ramp Analysis-Weekday AM Peak Hour and Table H-6 Future With Project-Freeway Off-Ramp Analysis-Weekday PM Peak Hour, we do not concur with the calculated queue length because it does not accurately assessed the queue length at ramps. Justification of calculating the queue length should be provided in the analysis. We are not able to validate the results of the queue length and the results provided seem to be optimistic.

The capacity of the off-ramp should be calculated by the actual length of the off-ramp between the terminuses to the gore point with some safety factor or referenced to Highway Design Manual at 23' point (Figure 504.2A Single Lane Freeway Entrance) or any other justified methods. The queue length should be calculated from the traffic counts and the percent of truck assignments (data from Caltrans) to the ramp with a passenger car equivalent factor of 3.0 (worst case scenario). The analyzed result may need to be calibrated with actual signal timing when necessary. It is also recommended that the City determine whether the existing, existing plus project, and project-related plus cumulative traffic are expected to cause long queues on the on and off-ramps.

Ms. Erin Strelich November 2, 2015 Page 3

In the spirit of mutual cooperation, we encourage the City to work with Caltrans in an effort to evaluate traffic impacts, identify potential improvements, and establish a funding mechanism that helps mitigate cumulative transportation impacts in the area.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Alan Lin the project coordinator at (213) 897-8391 and refer to IGR/CEQA No. 150931AL-DEIR.

Sincerely,

DIANNA WATSON

Diluna CE

Branch Chief

Community Planning & LD / IGR Review

cc: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse

Comment Letter No. 1

State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit Scott Morgan, Director, State Clearinghouse 1400 10th Street P.O. Box 3044 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

Response to Comment 1-1

This comment is a standard statement from the State Clearinghouse of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research acknowledging the Draft EIR was sent to state agencies for review, and that the Draft EIR is in compliance with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents. The commenter attaches a letter from Caltrans that was provided to the State Clearinghouse during the course of the state agency review process. This letter is included in the Final EIR as Comment Letter No. 2, and the issues raised in this letter are responded to under Comment Letter No. 2 below. The State Clearinghouse does not state any specific concern or question regarding the adequacy of the Draft EIR. No further response is required.

Intentionally blank.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 7-OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING 100 S. MAIN STREET, MS 16 LOS ANGELES, CA 90012 PHONE (213) 897-9140 FAX (213) 897-1337 www.dot.ca.gov



Serious drought. Help save water!

November 2, 2015

Ms. Erin Strelich City of Los Angeles 20 N. Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, CA 90012

> RE: The Reef (SOLA Village) Project Vic. LA-10/PM 15.306 LA-110/PM 21.24 SCH # 2014071054 Ref. IGR/CEQA No. 140726AL-NOP IGR/CEQA No. 150931AL-DEIR

Dear Ms. Strelich:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The Project consists of development of a mixed use project containing approximately 2,533,000 square feet of development including modifications to the existing 861,162 square foot, approximately 194 foot tall Reef Building, and construction of approximately 1,664,000 square feet of new development on the remainder of the Project Site currently occupied by surface parking lots and an 11,150 square foot warehouse/storage/distribution building.

The new development would consist of approximately 1,450 residential units, a 210 room hotel, 143,000 square feet of commercial/retail uses, 180,000 square feet office uses, 17,500 square feet of gallery museum uses, and 8,000 square feet fitness/yoga studio.

As a reminder, in Caltrans' Guide "The level of service (LOS) for operating State highway facilities is based upon measures of effectiveness (MOEs). Caltrans endeavors to maintain a target LOS at the transition between LOS 'C' and LOS 'D' on State highway facilities. If an existing State highway facility is operating at less than the appropriate target LOS, the existing MOE should be maintained."

1

Ms. Erin Strelich November 2, 2015 Page 2

For any freeway segment that is near the project vicinity, any additional vehicle trips from the project may contribute significant cumulative traffic impacts to the freeways. On Table 3.2 of the Related Project List and Trip Generations in the Traffic Study prepared on April 15, 2015, there are 82 related projects in the project vicinity. The related projects will generate 248,689 average daily trips, 15,997/23,144 AM/PM peak hour trips and 23,144/20,273 Friday PM Peak/Saturday Midday Peak Hour trips. On Table 4.7 Trip Generation by Land Use, the project will generate a net 942/1,203/1,201/1,189 AM/PM/Friday PM/Saturday Midday Peak Hour Trips. When all of these projects are built, many of the related and project vehicle trips will be utilizing nearby freeways, which is already congested.

2 cont.

Based on the information received, Caltrans concluded that Freeway Segment (FS) #1 (I-10 both directions), FS #2a (I-110 southbound), and FS #3 (I-110 southbound), FS #4 (I-10 both directions), and FS #8 (US-101 both directions) will have significant cumulative traffic impact because the existing freeway conditions are operating at LOS "E" or "F". There are other freeway segments most likely would contribute significant cumulative traffic impact in the future. Caltrans welcomes opportunity to discuss this information further.

The assignment of freeway trips calculated from the peak hour trips from Table 4.7 and % distribution from Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4 did not match the traffic volume in each freeway direction of freeway analysis in Appendix H. An explanation should be provided here.

3

For Table H-5 Future With Project-Freeway Off-Ramp Analysis-Weekday AM Peak Hour and Table H-6 Future With Project-Freeway Off-Ramp Analysis-Weekday PM Peak Hour, we do not concur with the calculated queue length because it does not accurately assessed the queue length at ramps. Justification of calculating the queue length should be provided in the analysis. We are not able to validate the results of the queue length and the results provided seem to be optimistic.

4

The capacity of the off-ramp should be calculated by the actual length of the off-ramp between the terminuses to the gore point with some safety factor or referenced to Highway Design Manual at 23' point (Figure 504.2A Single Lane Freeway Entrance) or any other justified methods. The queue length should be calculated from the traffic counts and the percent of truck assignments (data from Caltrans) to the ramp with a passenger car equivalent factor of 3.0 (worst case scenario). The analyzed result may need to be calibrated with actual signal timing when necessary. It is also recommended that the City determine whether the existing, existing plus project, and project-related plus cumulative traffic are expected to cause long queues on the on and off-ramps.

Ms. Erin Strelich November 2, 2015 Page 3

In the spirit of mutual cooperation, we encourage the City to work with Caltrans in an effort to evaluate traffic impacts, identify potential improvements, and establish a funding mechanism that helps mitigate cumulative transportation impacts in the area.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Alan Lin the project coordinator at (213) 897-8391 and refer to IGR/CEQA No. 150931AL-DEIR.

Sincerely,

DIANNA WATSON

Jelina Co

Branch Chief

Community Planning & LD / IGR Review

cc: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse

Intentionally blank.

Comment Letter No. 2

State of California, Department of Transportation Dianna Watson, IGR/CEQA Branch Chief District 7 100 S. Main Street, Suite 100 Los Angeles, CA 90012-3606

Response to Comment 2-1

The commenter acknowledges the review process for the Project. The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 2-2 through 2-6.

Response to Comment 2-2

The commenter notes that, in the Caltrans' Guide, the Level of Service for operating State highway facilities is based on Measures of Effectiveness. The commenter contends that any additional vehicle trips from the Project may contribute significant cumulative traffic impacts to the freeways but provides no details of significant impacts at any location nor provides any substantive evidence of significant impacts. The comment correctly identifies the number of related Project trips and the number of Project trips.

The "measures of effectiveness" identified by the commenter endeavor to maintain a target LOS at the transition between LOS C and LOS D on state highway facilities. If an existing state highway facility is operating at less than the target LOS, the existing LOS should be maintained. The Project would be consistent with these measures of effectiveness. The evaluation of potential effects on state highway facilities is provided in Appendix H to the Project Traffic Study (Appendix IV.N to the Draft EIR). This analysis identifies that, although the Project would add traffic to freeway segments, it would be in small incremental amounts with less than a 1% change in total freeway volumes at most all locations and time periods. The Project would not cause a change in the LOS to worsen beyond LOS C at any location, and, where the LOS without the Project would be LOS E or F, the Project would not cause any change in level of service. Specifically, page 5 of Appendix H to the Project Traffic Study identifies the following:

In the AM peak hour, the Project would generally add less than 25 trips to more than half of the freeway segments analyzed and less than 50 trips to more than three-quarters of the segments. The most trips that would be added to any freeway segment would be at one location, SR-110 northbound south of US-101, where the Project would add 82 trips (see Table H-3). The increase in D/C ratios would in many cases be less than 0.004, in most cases less than 0.006, and at two locations would be more than 0.006 but less than 0.010. The level of service would not change at any mainline freeway segment due to the Project with the exception of one location at the I-110 HOV Lanes south of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard where the level of service would change from LOS A to LOS B. In most cases, the increase in trips due to the Project on any freeway segment would be less than 0.5 percent, and in no cases would the increase be more than 1.0 percent.

In the PM peak hour, the Project would generally add less than 25 trips at half of the freeway segments analyzed and less than 50 trips to nearly two-thirds of the segments. It would add between 50 and 75 trips at approximately one-quarter of the segments (see Table H-4) and between 75 – 95 trips at four locations.

The most trips that would be added to any freeway segment would be at two locations where the Project would add 94 trips – SR 110 southbound between James Wood Blvd. & Olympic Blvd., and SR-110 southbound south of US-101 (see Table H-4). The increase in D/C ratios would in many cases be less than 0.003, in one-half the cases would be less than 0.005 and would not exceed 0.009 at any location. In most cases the increase in trips on any freeway segment would be less than 0.5 percent due to the Project, and in only two cases would the increase be 0.5 percent or more with the maximum increase being 1.8% at one location. The level of service would not change at any mainline freeway segment due to the Project.

Accordingly, the Project would be consistent with the measures of effectiveness identified in the comment.

The commenter further contends that significant cumulative impacts will occur at certain locations because the existing freeway conditions are operating at LOS E or F and any traffic added to these locations would be a significant impact. The Lead Agency respectfully disagrees with this contention. The implied threshold of significance in the comment has not been adopted by the commenter, who has adopted no thresholds for significant impacts for any service level. The comment is thus without basis, and provides no substantial evidence of a significant impact due to the Project. As discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.N-17), potential impacts of the Project related to freeway segments were evaluated using the criteria established under the Congestion Management Program (CMP) for Los Angeles County that is mandated by state law. Using these criteria, the Draft EIR concludes (page IV.N-42) that the Project's impacts on freeways would be less than significant.

Although the commenter contends that "There are other freeway segments most likely would contribute significant cumulative traffic impact in the future", no locations are identified, and therefore are too speculative to analyze. Similarly, because the commenter provides no threshold of significance, the comment provides no substantial evidence of a significant impact not addressed in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 2-3

The commenter suggests that the assignment of freeway trips calculated from Project peak hour trips and the distribution of freeway trips identified in the Traffic Study do not match the freeway traffic volumes in Appendix H. The Project trips assigned to the analyzed freeway segments are provided in Table H-3 and Table H-4 in Appendix H to the Traffic Study (Appendix IV.N to the Draft EIR). The calculations take into account the trip generation estimates in Table 4.7 separately for residential and non-residential uses, and apply the trip distribution percentages in Figure 4.3 (residential uses) and Figure 4.4 (non-residential uses) separately to the appropriate uses, to obtain a combined total. For existing trips, the non-residential trip distribution was applied, since there are no residential uses on the Project Site. The Project trips as shown in Tables H-3 and H-4 are correct. No changes are needed.

Response to Comment 2-4

The commenter disagrees with the calculated queue length at the freeway ramps. Queue lengths were calculated using the HCM Operations Method for the ramp terminus intersections. Traffic volumes were obtained from the Existing Conditions, Future Without Project Conditions and Future With Project scenarios in the Traffic Study. The queue lengths were calculated from traffic counts, including adjustments for the percent of trucks (from the traffic counts) and utilizing a PCE factor of 2.0 (per the Highway Capacity Manual), and signal timing information. The commenter's opinion regarding the results of the queue length analysis is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.

Response to Comment 2-5

The commenter suggests a method for calculating the capacity of off-ramps and queue lengths. The capacity was calculated from the intersection stop bar to the gore point², and included the length of storage for each lane where there are multiple lanes on the ramp. The queue lengths were calculated from traffic counts, including adjusts for the percent of trucks (from the traffic counts) and utilizing a PCE factor of 2.0 per the Highway Capacity Manual, and signal timing information. The analysis addressed Existing Conditions, Future Without Project (related projects cumulative) conditions, and Future With Project conditions. As shown in Table H-5 and Table H-6 in Appendix H to the Traffic Study (Appendix IV.N to the Draft EIR), off-ramp queues would not exceed ramp storage capacity at any off-ramp location. Onramp analysis was based on a volume to capacity ratio analysis as shown in Table H-7 and H-8, which showed that ramp volumes would not exceed ramp capacities at any on-ramp location.

Response to Comment 2-6

The commenter requests that the City work with Caltrans to address traffic impacts. The study reviewed potential impacts, and found that the Project would not cause any significant impacts with respect to freeways. As there would be no significant freeway impacts, no mitigation or improvements to the freeway system would be necessary. Funding mechanisms for potential general improvements to the freeway system are the responsibility of Caltrans, and any potential funding contributions from the City of Los Angeles to potential freeway improvements would be an issue for the City, and not for the Project.

² The "gore point" is the point at a freeway exit where the lane marker lines for the freeway mainline and the freeway ramp diverge. Use of this point to represent the point where the off-ramp begins is conservative because the deceleration lane for exiting traffic typically begins prior to the gore point, and provides additional vehicle storage space outside the freeway mainline..

Intentionally blank.

1

2

3

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952 213.922.2000 Tel metro.net

October 15, 2014

Erin Strelich Environmental Analysis Section Department of City Planning 200 N. Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: The Reef at 1900 South Broadway (SOLA Village)-ENV-2014-1773-EIR

Dear Ms. Strelich,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed The Reef Project (SOLA Village Project) at 1900 South Broadway. This letter conveys recommendations from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) concerning issues in relation to our facilities and services that may be affected by the proposed project.

Metro bus lines 40, 45, and 745 operate on South Broadway and South Main Street, adjacent to the proposed project. Two Metro bus stops on the corner of Broadway/Washington and Broadway/21st St are directly adjacent to the proposed project. The following comments relate to bus operations and the bus stops:

- Although the project is not expected to result in any long-term impacts on transit, the developer should be aware of the bus facilities and services that are present. The existing Metro bus stops must be maintained as part of the final project.
- 2. During construction, the stop must be maintained or relocated consistent with the needs of Metro Bus Operations. Metro Bus Operations Control Special Events Coordinator should be contacted at 213-922-4632 regarding construction activities that may Impact Metro bus lines. (For closures that last more than six months, Metro's Stops and Zones Department will also need to be notified at 213-922-5063). Other municipal bus may also be impacted and should be included in construction outreach efforts.
- LACMTA encourages the installation of bus shelters, benches and other amenities that
 improve the transit rider experience. The City should consider requesting the installation of
 such amenities as part of the development of the site.
- Final design of the bus stop and surrounding sidewalk area must be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and allow passengers with disabilities a clear path of travel to the bus stop from the proposed development.

It is noted that the northern boundary of the site of the project is adjacent to Washington Boulevard, along which Metro Blue Line light rail trains operate on a Railroad Right-of-Way (ROW). Additionally, the proposed project is in close proximity to the Grand Station. Existing transportation also includes line 603 (local circulator to LATTC). The following concerns related to the project's proximity to the ROW should be addressed:

- The project sponsor is advised that the Metro Blue Line light rail currently operates
 weekday peak service as often as every five minutes in both directions and that trains may
 operate, in and out of revenue service, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in the ROW
 proximate to the proposed project.
- 2. Considering the proximity of the proposed project to the railroad ROW, the Metro Blue Line will produce noise, vibration and visual impacts. A recorded Noise Easement Deed in favor of LACMTA is required, a form of which is attached. In addition, any noise mitigation required for the project must be borne by the developers of the project and not LACMTA. The easement recorded in the Deed will extend to successors and tenants as well.
- The project sponsor should notify LACMTA of any changes to the construction/building plans that may impact the use of the ROW.
- 4. There shall be no encroachment onto the railroad ROW. If access is necessary for the applicant or its contractor to enter the ROW during construction, a temporary right-of entry agreement must be obtained from LACMTA. Contact Velma Marshall, Deputy Executive Officer of Real Estate, at 213-922-2415 for right-of-entry permits.
- 5. It is noted that there are a number of Overhead Catenary System (OCS) support structures in the public right-of-way immediately adjacent to the project site. Building protrusions into the public right-of-way along Washington Boulevard, including balconies, awnings and other appurtenances, shall maintain a minimum distance of ten feet from the OCS and support structure. Otherwise the building maintenance will be limited to night, or weekend, work only where the track can be closed and powered down. There is long term benefit to the building owner to maintain the building without requiring the closure of a rail track and the associated costs for both the maintenance contractor and for Metro support.
- Considering the proposed project's proximity, the project sponsor should be advised that construction activities will not be allowed to impact LACMTA property and equipment. Construction activities impacting Rail revenue service (e.g., crane movements of equipment/structures, heavy equipment moves, etc) will only be permitted after revenue service hours or on weekends. Rail service should not be impacted during the construction phases for utility relocation, signal movement/relocation, lighting relocation, etc. and will require the same non-revenue service hour requirements. Permits for special operations including the use of a pile driver or any other equipment that could come into close proximity to the OCS or support structure must be obtained at least one week prior to the start of construction. In addition, any future work affecting the north side of the proposed project, including but not limited to signage/advertisement installation, or any other maintenance work within ten feet of the OCS will require a track allocation permit, Permits allowing for single tracking or a power shutdown must be obtained at least two weeks prior to the start of construction. The contractor should contact the following people regarding track allocation and/or special operation permits: Chol Kim, Rail Operations Assistant Manager at 323-563-5010. Or, the On-Duty Rail Operations Control Center Floor Manager at 323-563-5022.
- During construction, a protection barrier of acceptable material shall be constructed to
 cover the full height of the building to prevent objects, material, or debris from falling onto
 the Metro ROW or contacting the electrified OCS and support structures.

3 cont.

- 8. Consistent with Zoning Information No. 1117, prior to the City issuing a building permit within 100 feet of the Metro Rail construction area, clearance shall be obtained from LACMTA. LACMTA will need to review engineering drawings and calculations. Please refer to the attached LACMTA "Design Criteria and Standards, Volume III Adjacent Construction Design Manual" (attached) for more details regarding submitting drawings and calculations to LACMTA for review. Please note that LACMTA requires an Engineering Review Fee for evaluation of any impacts based on adjacency and relationship of the proposed building to the Metro existing structures.
- LACMTA staff shall be permitted to monitor construction activity to ascertain any impact to the ROW.
- 10. The project sponsor should be advised that LACMTA may request reimbursement for costs incurred as a result of project construction/operation issues that cause delay or harm to Metro service delivery or infrastructure.

Beyond impacts to Metro facilities and operations, LACMTA must also notify the applicant of state requirements. A Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA), with roadway and transit components, is required under the State of California Congestion Management Program (CMP) statute. The CMP TIA Guidelines are published in the "2010 Congestion Management Program for Los Angeles County", Appendix D (attached). The geographic area examined in the TIA must include the following, at a minimum:

- 1 All CMP arterial monitoring intersections, including monitored freeway on/off-ramp intersections, where the proposed project will add 50 or more trips during either the a.m. or p.m. weekday peak hour (of adjacent street traffic).
- 2 If CMP arterial segments are being analyzed rather than intersections, the study area must include all segments where the proposed project will add 50 or more peak hour trips (total of both directions). Within the study area, the TIA must analyze at least one segment between monitored CMP intersections.
- 3 Mainline freeway-monitoring locations where the project will add 150 or more trips, in either direction, during either the a.m. or p.m. weekday peak hour.
- 4 Caltrans must also be consulted through the NOP process to identify other specific locations to be analyzed on the state highway system.

The CMP TIA requirement also contains two separate impact studies covering roadways and transit, as outlined in Sections D.8.1 – D.9.4. If the TIA identifies no facilities for study based on the criteria above, no further traffic analysis is required. However, projects must still consider transit impacts. For all CMP TIA requirements please see the attached guidelines.

Metro also has genuine concern on the lane/street closures for construction on Washington and cross streets where traffic patterns would place vehicles in the position to cross the tracks more frequently. The developer should submit a traffic control plan during construction to address these following issues:

3 cont.

SOLA Village– LACMTA COMMENTS August 11, 2014 Page 4

- 1. Ensure Blue Line trains receive signal prioritization to clear the area between Grand and Los Angeles Streets where stopping a 3-car train would leave on rail car stopped in the intersection.
- 2. Mitigate traffic backing up onto the Blue Line tracks.
- 3. Impact the signal prioritization east and west for trains (LRT) signal timing).
- 4. Mitigate the vehicles crossing the tracks which will increase the possibility of train vs. vehicle accidents.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Elizabeth Carvajal at 213-922-3084 or by email at DevReview@metro.net. LACMTA looks forward to reviewing the Final EIR. Please send it to the following address:

LACMTA Development Review One Gateway Plaza MS 99-18-3 Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Carvajal

Transportation Planning Manager

Attachment: Noise Easement Deed

Adjacent Construction Design Manual

CMP Appendix D: Guidelines for CMP Transportation Impact Analysis

5 cont.

Comment Letter No. 3

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Elizabeth Carvajal, Transportation Planning Manager One Gateway Plaza Los Angeles, CA 90012

Response to Comment 3-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 3-2 through 3-6.

Response to Comment 3-2

The commenter lists the local bus lines and bus stops, requests that bus stops be maintained during Project construction activities, encourages installation of bus amenities, and reminds the reader that compliance with the American with Disabilities Act is required. The construction measures identified by the commenter will be included as Conditions of Approval for the Project (see Chapter IV, Corrections and Additions, of this Final EIR). These measures do not change the conclusions of the analysis provided in the Draft EIR, as they merely amplify the regulatory compliance measure provided in the Draft EIR to address construction impacts of the Project related to transportation. The installation of bus shelters and benches is a City issue, as only the authorized City contractor can install these facilities. As identified in the Draft EIR (Mitigation Measure MM-TR-11, page IV.N-54), the Project will provide bus shelters in the area of the Project, in coordination with Metro. As also identified in the Draft EIR (Project Design Feature PDF-TR-1, page IV.N-18, and Mitigation Measures MM-TR-10 and MM-TR-11, page IV.N-54), the developer will implement numerous pedestrian, sidewalk, and transit-related amenities, and transit service enhancements, designed to promote transit use by residents, employees, and patrons of the Project.

Response to Comment 3-3

The commenter notes that the Project Site is near the Metro Blue Line, and identifies measures to address conflicts between Project construction and operation, and operation of the Blue Line. The measures identified by the commenter will be included as Conditions of Approval for the Project (see Chapter IV, Corrections and Additions, of this Final EIR). These measures do not change the conclusions of the analysis provided in the Draft EIR, as they merely amplify the regulatory compliance measure provided in the Draft EIR to address construction impacts of the Project related to transportation.

Response to Comment 3-4

This commenter indicates that a Transportation Impact Analysis is required, lists the requirements for a TIA under the 2010 Congestion Management Program for Los Angeles County (CMP). The Traffic Study prepared for the Project (Appendix IV.N to the Draft EIR) addressed all the requirements of the CMP) in Section 5.3 – Project Impact Analysis. This analysis found that there would be no significant CMP impacts caused by the Project. CMP arterial monitoring intersection locations were addressed on pages 5-22 and 5-23 of the Traffic Study. Analysis of CMP arterial segments was not necessary as CMP intersections were analyzed. Mainline freeway monitoring locations were addressed on page 5-23 of the Traffic Study.

Caltrans was consulted through the NOP process and in a separate meeting, and an analysis of the freeway system was provided in Appendix H of the traffic Study, which found no significant impacts would be caused on the State Highway System by the Project. An analysis of CMP transit impacts was addressed on page 5-24 and Tables 5-6, 5-7, and 5-8, of the Traffic Study. This analysis concluded that no significant transit impacts would be caused by the Project.

Response to Comment 3-5

The commenter expresses concerns regarding roadway access during Project construction activities, and requests that a traffic control plan be submitted. As identified in the Draft EIR (page IV.N-48 and IV.N-49), the Project will prepare a Construction Traffic Control Plan in coordination with LADOT. This plan will also be coordinated with Metro. The criteria listed in the comment have been added to the minimum requirements for the construction traffic control plan (see Chapter IV, Corrections and Additions, of this Final EIR). These measures do not change the conclusions of the analysis provided in the Draft EIR, as they merely amplify the regulatory compliance measure provided in the Draft EIR to address construction impacts of the Project related to transportation.

Response to Comment 3-6

The comment includes closing remarks, and requests review of the Final EIR. The comment is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for notices and documents related to the Project.

FACILITIES PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

November 2, 2015

Via Email Only: erin.strelich@lacity.org

Erin Strelich Los Angeles Department of City Planning 200 N. Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, California 90012

Regarding:

The REEF (formerly SOLA Village)

Case No.:

ENV-2014-1773-EIR

Ms. Strelich:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Community College District ("District") and Los Angeles Trade Technical College ("LATTC" or "College"), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR") for the REEF Project formerly SOLA Village Project ("Project").

LATTC, one of the District's nine colleges, is a 25-acre campus located *one block* west of the Project. The College services over 20,000 students a year and has a staff of over 700. LATTC prides itself in educating and preparing Los Angeles' workforce for careers that fuel the regional economy.

More specifically, the College lies between Washington Boulevard and 23rd Street, and Flower Street and Olive Street. The Southernmost portion of LATTC is located between 23rd Street and 24th Street, between Grand Avenue and Hill Street.

We have reviewed the DEIR and offer the following comments:

The DEIR in Section III, Environmental Setting, Table III-1-Related Projects, Number 6, lists the 2003 College Master Plan as a related project and one that must be considered in analyzing the impacts of the Project. The 2003 College Master Plan is not the most current Master Plan. LATTC's Master Plan is updated every 5 years, 2009 was the year the last College Master Plan was adopted. The updated 2015 Master Plan is currently being prepared.

The 2009 Master Plan depicts an academic building at the site between 21st and 23rd Streets and between Grand Avenue and Olive/Hill Streets. It also depicts the East Campus Parking between 23rd and 24th Streets, between Grand Avenue and Hill Street that will accommodate almost 1,000 vehicles. These structures are yet to be built.

In addition, the 2009 Master Plan depicts the existing Olive Parking structure between Grand and Olive, where Olive provides both ingress and egress. Also, the Child

1

Development Center Building, a pre-school center, on Olive Street and 21st Street is constructed and currently operating.

We request that the Project's impacts raised in our NOP comment letter, dated August 15, 2014, be analyzed in light of the College's most recently adopted 2009 Master Plan. Our NOP comment letter is attached for your convenience.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me directly at 213-891-2119.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Hall

Director of Facilities, Planning & Development

Cc: Laurence Frank, President LATTC

Dr. Mary Gallagher, Vice President Administrative Services LATTC

2 cont.

Comment Letter No. 4

Los Angeles Community College District
Facilities Planning and Development
Thomas L. Hall, Director of Facilities, Planning & Development
770 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Response to Comment 4-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comment 4-2.

Response to Comment 4-2

The commenter states that the Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC) has a more current Master Plan than what is listed in the Draft EIR. The comment describes elements of the current Master Plan, and requests that the EIR address the current Master Plan. The LATTC Master Plan was not mentioned in the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) response letter to the NOP (Appendix I-2 to the Draft EIR). However, numerous attempts were made to contact LATTC to obtain relevant information regarding their Master Plans.

The Draft EIR (Table III-1, Related Projects) lists the 2003 College Master Plan as a related project. To represent the traffic generation associated with this related project, the Project Traffic Study used the number of additional trips estimated in the 2003 EIR prepared for the Los Angeles Trade-Technical College Campus Plan. That document addressed a Five Year Master Plan, and a Thirty Year Master Plan. The Five Year Plan anticipated a growth of student enrollment from 15,000 students in 2002 to 21,300 students at the end of the Five Year Plan. Student enrollment for the Thirty Year Plan was expected to remain unchanged from the enrollment expected for the Five Year plan. Accordingly, the Project Traffic Study used the trips associated with the 21,300 student enrollment level. In 2005, the LACCD certified an EIR for the 30-Year Master Plan. Projections for student enrollment for the Thirty Year Plan did not exceed the 21,300 student enrollment expected for the Five Year Plan.

In 2009, the LACCD prepared an Addendum to the Thirty Year Master Plan. The purpose was to address the potential impacts of the proposed Campus Plan – Facilities Master Plan Review and Update – 2009 – which was defined as an evolution of the Campus Plan 2002, and the Thirty Year Master Plan. It was determined that a subsequent EIR was not necessary and the Addendum focused on changes due to the potential acquisition of five parcels of land within one block of the main campus and the construction of a proposed seven story parking garage. The Addendum considered development on only one parcel – Parcel 1 was the site for the proposed Measure J Parking Structure East Campus Parking Phase 1 (1,100 cars). No development was defined or proposed for the other four parcels for which land acquisition was described as speculative in nature. The Addendum identified that there would be no new significant impacts from the proposed changes to the Project, and that the development of any of the four other parcels would require further detailed environmental analysis at the appropriate time.

The 2009 Addendum concluded that as the new parking structure would replace other parking spaces lost within the Main Campus, no new traffic would be generated, and that the availability of parking at a designated and convenient locations would serve to alleviate circular trips around the campus by students and visitors looking for parking, and that as such the proposed East Campus Parking structure would not generate any new significant traffic impacts nor would it increase the severity of any previously disclosed impacts. The 2009 Addendum also concluded that the acquisition of the remaining parcels included no specific development plans, and therefore would not generate any changes to the current traffic patterns, and would not generate any substantial change to the existing parking patterns.

In 2013, in response to requests for information, LACCD advised that enrollment at LATTC was still at approximately 15,000 students because funding limits prevented increased student enrollment, and that in the next five years LATTC expected to build a culinary arts and multipurpose building, and a second parking structure (the East Campus Parking Structure). The growth projections in the 2003 Master Plan that were used in the related projects analysis for this DEIR included provision for the additional parking garage and the additional academic building referenced in Comment 4-2. Accordingly, the forecasts included in the related projects analysis represent the best available estimates, and also represent the 2009 Master Plan with respect to traffic generation for the reasons described above.

The Olive Parking Structure and the Child Development Building, are also included in the Project Traffic Study as they are already constructed and operating, and were therefore represented in the traffic counts taken for the Project Traffic Study.

In addition, the commenter requested that their comments submitted in an NOP comment letter, dated August 15, 2014, be addressed in light of the most recently adopted LATTC Master Plan (2009). In addition to operational traffic discussed above, the LACCD NOP comment letter identified construction traffic, noise, air quality, and aesthetics as issues of concern to the LACCD. With respect to construction traffic, the Draft EIR evaluated the construction traffic impacts of the Project (pages IV.N-19 and IV.N-20). The potential haul route for the Project was identified to be Hill Street, Broadway, and Main Street to access the Santa Monica Freeway (page IV.N-19). Potential temporary lane closures on Hill Street, Broadway, and Main Street were also identified as a potential effect of the Project (page IV.N-20). All temporary lane closures and construction traffic would be regulated by a construction traffic control plan that would be developed by the Project, and approved by LADOT (Regulatory Compliance Measure RC-TR-1, pages IV.N-48 and IV.N-49). This plan would ensure that access is maintained to the Project Site and surrounding uses throughout the construction period. None of the closures or haul activity would directly affect the LATTC facilities, including the additional buildings identified in the comment. Construction traffic impacts of the Project would be less than significant (Draft EIR, page IV.N-20).

With respect to noise, the Draft EIR identified five sensitive receptors located closer to the Project Site than LATTC (Draft EIR, page IV.K-5). None of these sensitive receptors would be significantly impacted by Project construction activity on the West Block, which is the closest location to the LATTC campus. Accordingly, the buildings on the LATTC campus, including the additional buildings identified in the comment, would not be significantly impacted by noise associated with Project construction. In addition, none of the five sensitive receptor locations would be significantly impacted by on-site activity associated with outdoor spaces (Draft EIR, page IV.K-26). Therefore, similar to the construction activity noise, since the sensitive receptors are closer to the Project than the LATTC campus, the buildings on the LATTC campus, including the additional buildings identified in the comment, would not be significantly impacted by noise associated with on-site outdoor activity at the Project Site.

The Draft EIR also evaluated Project and cumulative traffic noise impacts on streets surrounding the LATTC campus, including Washington Boulevard between Figueroa Street and Hill Street, 23rd Street between

Figueroa Street and Hill Street, Hill Street between Washington Boulevard and 23rd Street, and Flower Street between Washington Boulevard and 23rd Street (Draft EIR, Table IV.K-4, pages IV.K-8 through IV.K-10). None of these street segments would experience either Project-related (Table IV.K-15, pages IV.K-27 through IV.K-29) or cumulative (Table IV.K-17, pages IV.K-37 through IV.K-39) increases in traffic noise levels that exceed the City's threshold of significance. Accordingly, the buildings on the LATTC campus, including the additional buildings identified in the comment, would not be significantly impacted by traffic noise associated with the Project.

With respect to air quality, the Draft EIR identified regional construction and operational emissions that would exceed SCAQMD thresholds for VOC (construction and operations), and NOx (operations) (Draft EIR, pages IV.C-20 and IV.C-21). These would be regional emissions that contribute to regional ozone concentrations, and do not directly affect nearby sensitive receptors. The Draft EIR also evaluated localized concentrations of pollutants resulting from on-site construction activities, which would represent potential impacts on sensitive receptors located in the vicinity of the Project Site. These emissions are evaluated against health-based thresholds identified by SCAQMD. The analysis showed that Project emissions would be below the SCAQMD thresholds and less than significant (Draft EIR, page IV.C-23). Accordingly, Project construction emissions would not affect any sensitive receptors located in the vicinity of the Project Site, including the additional LATTC buildings identified in the comment.

With respect to aesthetics, the Draft EIR evaluated the potential impacts of Project buildings and signage as viewed from all aspects around the Project Site, including the LATTC campus (which was specifically identified with respect to Project signage, see Draft EIR, pages IV.B.1-19, IV.B.1-28 and IV.B.2-19). As suggested in the LACCD NOP response, the Project would include a pedestrian friendly design with open space and landscaping to promote a walkable neighborhood and a new destination for LATTC students and staff to patronize (Draft EIR, page II-18). The Project would represent a new activity center in this area of the City. The Draft EIR also notes that certain signs included in the Project's Supplemental Use District for Signage would be visible from LATTC (Draft EIR, page IV.B.1-28). The Draft EIR concludes that impact from animated signage in Vertical Sign Zone 3 would be significant and unavoidable (Draft EIR, page IV.B.1-35). Impacts of lower level signage as viewed from LATTC would be less than significant because of lower animation and blockage of many view lines from LATTC by the Courthouse building. The Draft EIR (pages IV.B.2-19 and IV.B-20) also identifies that lighted signage from the Project would be visible from LATTC and would be significant with respect to animated Vertical Sign Zone 3 signage and the concentration of signage on The Reef. These impacts take into account the LATTC campus as a whole, and the analysis is not specific to any one building, including the additional buildings identified in the comment. Accordingly, the conclusions presented in the Draft EIR with respect to aesthetics and LATTC would not be affected by the additional information provided in the comment. The Draft EIR evaluated shadow impacts from Project buildings and demonstrates (pages IV.B.3-7 and IV.B.3-8) that Project shadows would not significantly impact any LATTC buildings, including new additional buildings identified in the comment.

Intentionally blank.

South Central Neighborhood Council

Jose Reyes President

Johnny Andrade Vice President

Martha Sanchez Secretary

Clemente Franco Treasurer

Ron Gochez Parliamentarian

City Of Los Angeles



Meeting Location:
All Peoples Community Center
822 East 20th Street Los Angeles, CA 90011

Comment Letter No. 5 South Central Neighborhood Council

Cliff Smith Board Member

John Parker Board Member

Azusena Favela Board Member

> David Solis Board Member

Via Email (erin.strelich@lacity.org)

November 2, 2015

Attn: Major Projects & EIR Section The City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
200 North Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2601

RE: Draft EIR ENV-201401773-EIR The Reef (formerly SOLA Village)

Dear Department of City Planning Staff:

The South Central Neighborhood Council (SCNC) is a City of Los Angeles certified neighborhood council governed by a board of directors elected by stakeholders and residents of the community. The SCNC represents an area of South Central Los Angeles, bounded by Washington Blvd. on the North, Martin Luther King Blvd. on the South, the 110 Freeway on the west and Alameda on the east. As such, the council represents the area that encompasses the SoLA Village Project (Case No. ENV-2014-1773-EIR) ("Project").

On behalf of the SCNC and its over 40,000 constituents, mostly low-income individuals of color, many of whom are mono-lingual Spanish Speakers, we write to convey our comments and concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the Reef Development Project and the many flaws in the current DEIR.

The Project proposes to transform an existing limited industrial property into a massive mixed-use development with 1,444 luxury residential units, 90,000 square feet of high-end retail uses, 46,000 square feet of restaurant/bar uses, a 208-key hotel, 18,000 square foot gallery, an 8,000 square-foot yoga/fitness studio, approximately 2,733 parking spaces and 234,067 square feet of animated signage where virtually none exists, in part, because the City's zoning does not allow it. Despite the profound environmental impacts this Project would have on the surrounding community and the City as a whole, the DEIR is characterized by self-serving assertions, circular logic, and anemic analysis.

The Project, as currently proposed, threatens to destabilize the surrounding low-income community. Not only does the Project fail to offer even one affordable unit, it intensifies the displacement pressures on current local residents with increased rents and escalated gentrification. Yet the DEIR falls far short of evaluating these and the many other negative environmental impacts inherent in the Project, as proposed. For all its deficiencies, however, the DEIR concedes that the Project would result in numerous significant environmental impacts. The DEIR cavalierly concludes that many of these impacts

1

2

cannot be mitigated. It is wrong. Rather the DEIR simply fails to consider mitigation that is both appropriate and at times obvious even to the casual observer. As a result, the DEIR must be revised and recirculated to address its material CEQA shortcomings.

3 cont.

Key among the DEIR's deficiencies are the following:

1. The DEIR fails to adequately evaluate the significant displacement and gentrification pressures the Project, as proposed, foist onto the local community.

The Project proposal and the DEIR fail to acknowledge - let alone adequately address – the threat of displacement and the corresponding negative social and health impacts on the existing community. Citing only the fact that there is no existing housing on-site, the DEIR concludes that no people will be displaced, without further analysis. This is an overly simplistic conclusion which does not take into account the lived experience of residents or the reality of development pressures in Los Angeles, wherein residents are often displaced by the economic effects of development such as the Project independently of whether their housing is displaced. CEQA is clear that in addition to direct impacts, an EIR should also analyze those indirect impacts that are reasonably foreseeable outcomes of the project. This includes the economic effects of a project that will foreseeably lead to physical changes in the environment.

A report on the health impacts of the Project concludes that over 40,000 people have a moderate to very high risk for financial strain and/or displacement intensified by the Project's impacts on housing prices in the surrounding area.³ Many of the residents of South Central have likely experienced serial forced displacement, which can have a cumulative impact resulting in a traumatic condition called "root shock." The tangible human impacts of these pressures include disintegration of health promoting networks of social cohesion, exposure to substandard housing conditions, and a wide variety of chronic stress-related physical and mental illness, including anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and sleep disorders.⁵ The City's own General Plan Health Element acknowledges the negative health impacts of displacement created by major development projects, and explicitly calls for "opportunities for low-income and vulnerable populations to access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhood."

Despite the overwhelming demonstrated potential for significant impacts with regard to displacement, the Project does not include any mechanism to create or preserve affordable housing or to minimize the catalytic impacts on increased housing prices and speculation. The DEIR fails to properly analyze and mitigate these impacts.

2. There are numerous and substantial flaws in the DEIR's Land Use and Planning analysis.

4

¹ 14 CCR 15126.2 ("Direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects.")

² Anderson First Coalition v. City of Anderson (2005) 130 Cal. App. 4th 1173, 1182. ("When there is evidence... that economic and social effects caused by a project... could result in a reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental impact, such as urban decay or deterioration, then the CEQA lead agency is obligated to assess this indirect environmental impact.")

³ [draft, 52-53].

⁴ Id, at 6, 43-44

⁵ Id.

⁶ City of Los Angeles, Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, Policy 1.7, Program 86.

South Central Neighborhood Council Reef Comments November 2, 2015 Page 3 of 4

The Project is seeking at least 15 different discretionary land use entitlements, including General Plan Amendments, a zone change, variances, parking reductions and a significant Supplemental Use District – Sign District. This long list of required departures from adopted plans calls into question the merits of the Project and lays bare the fact that the Project upends existing city policy.

The DEIR must evaluate any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans. The DEIR fails to meet this standard. To start, the DEIR does not evaluate the Project's many conflicts with *existing* zoning requirements. Instead, the DEIR merely assumes that the Project's laundry list of requested zone changes, general plan amendments and other discretionary approvals are a foregone conclusion, thereby failing to evaluate the impacts of the Project based on existing physical conditions. The DEIR grossly errs in concluding that the Project poses no environmental impacts on the City's land use and policy with respect to the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage (SUDS). In fact, the SUDS gravely threatens the City's continued ability to ban such signage along highways – a land use power the City fought tooth and nail to preserve. Further, the DEIR fails to provide any analysis whatsoever of the Project's consistency with a number of highly relevant General Plan Policies. Likewise, the DEIR neglects to evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP), which includes a clear directive that industrial land use conversion projects, like the Reef, should include affordable housing and other community benefits.

The DEIR's Transportation Analysis is flawed.

The Project will significantly increase traffic in the area during both construction and operation. During construction, which will occur over at least 60 months, there will be between 125 and 500 construction workers on site per day. Although the DEIR claims that they will not arrive or depart the site during "peak traffic hours," this cannot be guaranteed, and these workers will still create additional traffic during other hours. In addition, during the first (at least) three months of construction (the excavation phase), 800 - 900 truck trips per day would haul truckloads off the site. This would amount to the equivalent of 360 passenger car trips per hour, which would create substantial congestion on local roads.

During the life of the Project, much more traffic would be created. The Project Site will include over 2,700 parking spaces for patrons, visitors, residents, and employees. The DEIR predicts an increase of about 940 car trips during the morning peak hour and 1200 during the evening peak hour. But in reality, it is likely that this number will be significantly higher. Because of the catalytic nature of the Project, other similar developments may be enticed to build in the area, resulting in significantly more traffic. In addition, the demographic that the Project is likely to attract is wealthier than the current population, and therefore more likely to travel using motor vehicles, despite the close proximity of the Project to public transportation.

5 cont.

6

⁷ CEQA Guidelines, 15125(d) ("The EIR shall discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans.") See also, City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide (calling for an evaluation of "whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans.")

⁸ The relevant General Plan policies that go unanalyzed in the DEIR include, but are not limited to <u>Housing Element</u> Objectives 1.1 and 1.2, Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101; <u>Health Element Policies 1.7</u> and Program 86, <u>Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan</u> Policies 1.5-2 and 11-2.3; <u>Framework Element Policies 3.14.6</u> and 4.2.1.

⁹ Los Angeles Industrial Land Use Policy, Staff Direction Memorandum Regarding Industrial Land Use and Potential Conversion to Residential or Other Uses," 5-8 (2008). http://planning.lacity.org/Code_Studies/LanduseProj/Industrial_Files/StaffDirections.pdf

After mitigation measures are implemented, the Project would still result in 24 significant impacts, an extremely high number, considering the amount of traffic that already exists in the area.

4. The DEIR's Air Quality Mitigation Measures are Inadequate.

The Project will result in significant and unavoidable impacts from Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) during the construction and operation phases, and in and Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions impacts during the operation phase. Both VOCs and NOx are extremely harmful when inhaled, particularly for sensitive receptors, including young children and the elderly. The types of health effects that are associated with these gases/ chemicals are asthma, respiratory illness, cancer and even death. The Site is located within 1000 feet of three schools and at least 264 residences. But the Project's mitigation measures only address the residents, employees and visitors that will be within the Project boundaries. The DEIR should have addressed the need for mitigation measures including air filters, air proof windows, and indoor spaces for the community, in order to counter the negative air quality effects that the Project will cause.

5. The DEIR does not adequately analyze the aesthetic impacts of the Project.

According to the DEIR, signs will be located on each of the Project's four multi-story buildings, totaling 234,067 square feet of permitted signage. Many of the signs will be extremely large, animated, and placed high up on the buildings, where they will be clearly visible from a distance of at least 2.5 miles away. The size, amount, and type of signage that the Project proposes is completely out of character with the current lighting and signage in the area. This type of signage is problematic for several important reasons, including the potential danger to drivers on nearby freeways and local roads, the distraction that the signs will cause for students in nearby schools, and the health effects of artificial lighting on nearby residents. No mitigation measures were proposed for signage, other than limiting the hours when the signs can be operational to hours when most residents will be asleep. Additional mitigation measures must be introduced through a recirculated DEIR – including a plan alternative with signage limited to non-animated onsite signage.

We appreciate your attention to these comments. Among the concerns and flaws in the DEIR listed above, the most pressing is the likely displacement of low-income residents of our community. Pursuant to Pub. Res. Code Section 21092.2 and Gov. Code Section 65092, please notify us in writing of any and all hearing, decisions, notifications or actions related to this project. Should you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at (323) 559-3305.

Sincerely,

Jose Reyes/ President

South Central Neighborhood Council

7 cont.

8

9

¹⁰ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-20.

¹¹ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-22.

Comment Letter No. 5

South Central Neighborhood Council Jose Reyes, President 822 East 20th Street Los Angeles, CA 90011

Response to Comment 5-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 5-2 through 5-10.

Response to Comment 5-2

The commenter states that the City's zoning does not allow animated signage on the Project Site. See Responses to Comments 9-3 and 9-4.

Response to Comment 5-3

The commenter's characterization of the Draft EIR is acknowledged for the record, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not analyze the impact of destabilizing the surrounding community, displacement and gentrification. See Responses to Comments 9-22 and 10-8.

The commenter also states that mitigation measures are available for many of the significant unavoidable impacts identified in the Draft EIR, and requests that the Draft EIR be revised and recirculated. See Responses to Comments 5-4 through 5-10.

Response to Comment 5-4

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not adequately evaluate the indirect displacement of residents, and the impact of gentrification. See Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 5-5

The commenter requests that the land use analysis in the Draft EIR be expanded to include conflicts with existing zoning requirements, the impact of the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage on City Land Use policy, several relevant General Plan policies, and consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy. See the following Responses to Comments:

Comment	Response
Number of discretionary actions	9-3
Conflict with Existing Zoning Requirements	9-21
Conflict with Signage Policy	9-19
Consistency with General Plan Policies	
Housing Element Objective 1.1 and 1.2; Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101	9-22
Health Element Policy 1.7 and Program 86	9-23
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 1.5-2	9-24
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 11-2.3	9-26
Framework Element Policy 3.14.6	9-27
Framework Element Policy 4.2.1	9-29
Consistency with the Industrial Land Use Policy and provision of community benefits	9-31 and 9-32

Response to Comment 5-6

The commenter states that the Project will increase traffic during construction, which would create congestion on local roadways. See Response to Comment 10-19.

Response to Comment 5-7

The comment states that the number of vehicle trips generated by the Project during operation would be higher than what is indicated in the Draft EIR. See Responses to Comments 10-20 and 10-21. With respect to the potential transportation benefits of locating higher income housing near transit stations, see Response to Comment 9-35.

Response to Comment 5-8

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts to nearby sensitive receptors during Project construction and operation from VOCs and NOx, including air filters, air-proof windows, and indoor spaces. See Response to Comment 10-17.

Response to Comment 5-9

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts from the proposed signage, including limiting the signage to non-animated signs. With respect to the impacts of proposed signage as addressed in the Draft EIR, including consistency with the surrounding community, hazards to drivers,

distractions to schools, health effects of lighting, and inclusion of additional mitigation measures, see Responses to Comments 9-3 through 9-7. With respect to an additional alternative with non-animated signage, see Response to Comment 9-53.

Response to Comment 5-10

The comment includes closing remarks, and reiterates concern for displacement of low-income residents. The commenter requests to be notified of all hearings, decisions, notifications and actions related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.

Intentionally blank.

ERIC GARCETTI
Mayor

Commission
MEL LEVINE, President
WILLIAM W. FUNDERBURK JR., Vice President
JILL BANKS BARAD
MICHAEL F. FLEMING
CHRISTINA E. NOONAN
BARBARA E. MOSCHOS, Secretary

MARCIE L. EDWARDS

General Manager

October 27, 2015

Ms. Erin Strelich City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning 200 North Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Strelich:

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Report for The Reef (formerly SOLA Village) Project

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) appreciates the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for The Reef (formerly SOLA Village) Project. The mission of LADWP is to provide clean, reliable water and power to the City of Los Angeles. In reviewing your proposed project description, the LADWP has determined that the project may have impacts to water resources and groundwater. The following comments reflect our review:

Water Resources Comments:

- The last sentence of the first paragraph on p.IV.O.2-1 indicates a date for the project Water Supply Assessment as May 20, 2015. However, correct date is June 2, 2015. Please make same correction to the second paragraph of p.IV.O.2-12 and elsewhere it is mentioned.
- The first paragraph under ii) Urban Water Management Planning Act on p.IV.O.2-2 indicates
 the 2010 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) by LADWP as being approved in year
 2010. However, the correct date of approval is 2011. Please correct in other locations
 throughout DEIR, as needed.
- The first paragraph under 1) LADWP Water Supply Action Plan on p.IV.O.2-3 refers to the Water Supply Action Plan entitled, "Securing L.A.'s Water Supply", dated May 17, 2008. However, the 2010 UWMP has superseded that document. Please consider making reference to this fact or update facts and figures to 2010 UWMP only.
- 4. The sentence of the first paragraph under 2) Shortage Year rates and Water Conservation Ordinance on p.IV.O.2-3 refers to implementation of Phase III of the Water Conservation Ordinance, effective June 1, 2009. In subsequent portions of the same section 2), further mention is made of Phase II. Please be aware that subsequent to an ordinance amendment, Phase II was implemented in August, 2010 (see last paragraph of p. 54 of 2010 UWMP), and has been in effect ever since (date of this comment: October 27, 2015). Please make all corrections to use of Phase III accordingly throughout section and DEIR, as needed.

1

2

3

5. The second sentence of the second paragraph on p.IV.O.2-4 of the DEIR states that water 5 rationing and financial penalties began in March 1991 and remained in place until May 1992. Please provide a footnote and source for this assertion. 6. The last sentence of the third paragraph on p.IV.O.2-4 of the DEIR states that imposing Shortage Year Rates and Phase III (sic) of the Water Conservation Ordinance produced a 6 reduction in average customer water use of approximately 19 percent for the months of June 2009 through February 2010. Please provide a footnote and reference, including page number, for source information relied upon for this assertion. 7. The third sentence of the fourth paragraph on p.IV.O.2-4 of the DEIR states a date of July 7 15, 2015 for adoption of emergency regulations by SWRCB. However, the correct date is July 15, 2014. Please change accordingly. 8. Please include footnotes and references, for all narrative and assertions shown in the fifth and sixth paragraphs on p.IV.O.2-4 of the DEIR. If the project Water Supply Assessment 8 (WSA) was used, please provide page number (p.13 of WSA, for example) in references. Also, please ensure that all quotes are cited accurately. 9. The first paragraph on p.IV.O.2-5 of the DEIR cites an approximate value of 545,000 acrefeet per year as a water demand projection for 2010 and refers to p. 10 of the 2010 UWMP. 9 However, this was an actual value of consumption, not a projection. Please check source and revise accordingly. 10. The second paragraph under 1) Los Angeles Aqueducts on p.IV.O.2-5 of the DEIR appears 10 to be duplicated in the previous paragraph. Please make corrections accordingly. 11. Footnote 23 on p.IV.O.2-7 of the DEIR refers to page 8-1 of the 2010 UWMP. However, no 11 such page number exists. Please change accordingly (see p.163 of UWMP). 12. Please provide a footnote and reference for statistics in the first sentence under viii) Current 12 and Future Water Use on p.IV.O.2-8 of the DEIR. Please add similar footnotes and reference for all other assertions in the same paragraph, as required. 13. A sentence in the middle of the first paragraph under viii) Current and Future Water Use on p.IV.O.2-8 of the DEIR reads: "The City plans to meet all future increases in water demand through water conservation and recycling efforts, thereby decreasing its reliance on 13 imported water." Please review 2010 UWMP, or other reliable source, and include other efforts by LADWP to achieve the same purpose such as groundwater clean-up and stormwater capture. 14. The first paragraph on p.IV.O.2-9 – see excerpt below – implies that 66,275 gallons per day 14 (gpd) equal to 74.10 acre feet per year(af/y); however, the conversion factor from gpd to af/

y is [365 (days/year)/325,851(gal/af)]. Please replace 74.10 af/y with 74.24 af/y.

Excerpt from the first paragraph on p.IV.O.2-9:

As such, the Project Site consumes water in association with commercial uses. As shown in Table IV.O.2-1 (Existing Average Daily Water Consumption), existing uses on the Project Site consume approximately 66,275 gallons per day (gpd) of water, or 74.10 af/y.

15. Table IV.O.2-1, Existing Average Daily Water Consumption—see excerpt below—implies that the Total Existing Water Consumption is 66,275 gpd; however, the value of 66,275 gpd is related only to the Existing Use to be Removed, which is not equal to the Total Existing Water Consumption. Please change the table name to Existing Use to be Removed Average Daily Water Consumption.

Also, Footnote 1 of the same table, reading "Provided by Los Angeles Department of City Planning in the request for Water Supply Assessment letter and Scope Confirmation email" is not related to the Average Daily Flow (ADF) by Type (gpd/unit) column. Footnote 1 is related to the Land Use column of the table. Please remove the superscript for Footnote 1 from the ADF column and assign it to the Land Use Column. Also, please add another footnote and reference citing the source of information for the table, for example, page number and table number for project WSA, etc.

Reproduced Table IV.O.2-1 from p.IV.O.2-9 of DEIR:

Table IV.O.2-1
Existing Average Daily Water Consumption

s Land Use	SIVO 2	Average Daily Flow by Type (god/unit)	Average gally disage by Type (god)
Wholesale/Showroom	210,000 sf	50/1:000	10,500
Surface Parking ²	325,700 sf	0	0
Warehouse/Distribution:	11,150 sf	30/1,000	335
Cooling Tower	1,400 tons	39,600/unit	55,400
COOKING TOTAL		sting Water Consumption	66,275

Notes; sf = square feet; gpd = gallans per day

The second sentence of the first paragraph under A. Methodology on p.IV.O.2-9 of the DEIR mentions "existing water demand" as compared to the "Project's water demand." However, "existing water demand" should read "existing water demand to be removed." Please change accordingly and elsewhere, as required.

 The second paragraph under A. Methodology on p.IV.O.2-9 of the DEIR refers to the approved WSA in Appendix "IV.O-2." However, "IV.O-2" should read "IV.O-2.2." Please make change accordingly. 14 cont.

Provided by Los Angeles Department of City Planning in the Request for Water Supply Assessment letter and Scope Confirmation email.

Surface parking water demand from cleaning is negligible.

Source (table): Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, 2015.

Ms. Strelich Page 4 October 27, 2015

- 17. The first paragraph under i) Water Supply on p.IV.O.2-9 of the DEIR cites project water demand at 366.825 acre-feet per year. However, this is not equal to the "proposed water demand" or the "net additional water demand" shown in Table 1 of the project WSA, the official water demand estimates before and after conservation and existing demand to be removed are subtracted, respectively. Please refer to this table and correct accordingly.
- 18. The third and fourth sentences of the second paragraph on p.IV.O.2-12 see excerpt below implies that the LADWP's growth projections are based on conservation measures and adequate treatment capacity, and therefore there is adequate treatment capacity to meet the project's water demand.

Excerpt from p.IV.O.2-12:

The LADWP's growth projections are based on conservation measures and adequate treatment capacity that is, or will be, available to treat the LADWP's projected water supply, as well as the LADWP's expected water sources. The construction of, as yet, unplanned treatment facilities would not be required to meet the project's water demand.

However, the methodology for determining whether the project's demand is included in supply projections is not based on conservation measures or treatment capacity projections. Instead, it is based on demographic projections included in the Regional Transportation Plan by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Therefore, please replace the excerpt above with the following:

"Proposed Project is consistent with growth projections anticipated by the SCAG. Consistency with the demographic projection for the City from the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is required for Proposed Project. City's water demand projection in the 2010 UWMP was developed based on the 2008 RTP demographic projection by the SCAG using the 2000 U.S. Census for the City. The 2012 RTP demographic projection for the City was based on the 2010 U.S. Census, and is lower than the 2008 RTP demographic projection. The region's economic growth is usually a major factor behind net migration and the consequent population growth. The economic recession of 2007-2009 had a negative impact on the region's population growth, resulting in decrease in population growth from 2000 Census to 2010 Census. Our preliminary analysis shows that the City water demand projection to year 2035 based on demographic projection from 2012 RTP using population, housing and employment, as well as water conservation, and weather will be lower than the City's water demand projection in the 2010 UWMP. As a result, City's water supply projections in the 2010 UWMP are sufficient to meet the City's water demand projections based on the 2012 RTP. Thus, since the proposed project is consistent with the 2012 RTP, the proposed project's projected water demand is accounted for in the 2010 UWMP."

19. The Table IV.O.2-2, Estimated Average Daily Water Demand for the Project—see excerpt below – includes water consumption data for the proposed project from two inconsistent sources, the Request Letter for the WSA and the Table 1 calculations from the WSA, the **17**

Ms. Strelich Page 5 October 27, 2015

20. latter of which was used to estimate the net additional water demand for the project. The net additional water demand for the project is the value presented to the LADWP Board of Commissioners for approval of the WSA, and it is based on data included in the Scope Confirmation E-mail. Please refer to Appendix IV.O-2.2, Water Supply Assessment for the South Los Angeles (SOLA) Village Project, as Table 1, Scope Confirmation E-mail, and Request Letter are all included.

Typically, the preliminary calculations provided by the applicant and included in the Request Letter are not used in a WSA, but rather, after a scope clarification process between the applicant and LADWP, the final calculations are performed by LADWP and shown in Table 1 of the WSA. By including data from these inconsistent sources, including final values that are not shown in Table 1 of the WSA, and including a footnote that states that LADWP is the source of information for the data in the table incorrectly implies that LADWP performed these calculations as shown in Table IV.O.2-2.

Examples of inconsistencies between Table 1 values and those shown in the table below are as follows: The first three rows of the table include data from the Request Letter that are not consistent with Table 1. Footnote 1 implies that the square footage values provided for the Types of Use are from the Scope Confirmation E-mail, but the values for Office, for example, is not as shown in this source, but rather, it is from the Request Letter. The remainder of the values for Consumption Rate and Water Consumption are from Table 1 of the WSA for Commercial uses, but the water consumption value for the total of all Commercial uses does not equal the value from Table 1. The value for required ordinance savings is taken from Table 1 for the total of all Commercial Uses, but the data in rows above this value does not match the source data (from Scope Confirmation E-mail) used for this calculation. Other values not consistent with Table 1 include Proposed Water Demand for Commercial uses, Proposed Water Demand Total, and Total Proposed Net Water Consumption. Additionally, a note at the bottom of the table below indicates LADWP as the source of information included in this table, but this is not the case, as LADWP did not provide data in the Request Letter and did not perform the calculations as shown in the table below.

Please remove any references to LADWP as the source of information for this table, including footnotes, as there are other sources of information that are inconsistent with what LADWP provided. Also, please consider using values and data that are consistent, such as those from the Scope Confirmation E-mail and Table 1 of the WSA.

19 cont.

Excerpt from p.IV.O.2-12:

Table IV.O.2-2 Estimated Average Daily Water Demand for the Project

		Shoot at Live		Copielle C	to to
Office	397,391 sf · ·	126/1,000	21,600		
Who state/show room	369,063 of	60/1,000	22.164		
Marcantile/Event	69,305 vf	30/1,000	2,091		
allery	17,507 55	30/1.000	525		
lestaurani	1.522 Seats	3Q/sest	-5,890		1
inet and	60,045 st	25/1,000	ESOI.		
Brocery Stoke	29.395 st	\$011,000	1,468	C	

Fitness/Gym/Yoga Studio	7,879 st	650/1,000	5,121		
Hotel	208 reams	120/room	24,960		
Harel		Commercial Total	125,070	13,472	111,598
Dve/Work	21 traits	150/unit	3,250		
Apartment/Condominium Studto	536 onits	75/unit	40,200		
Apartment/Condominium 1 Badroom	427 units	110/unit	46,970	14.76	144
Apartment/Condominium 2.	333 units.	250/unit	49/950		
Apartment/Candominium 3 Bedraom	127 units	190\nu9t	24/130	LECT	1 2 8
Residential	1,444 units		164,400	23,974	140,426
Landscaping*	40,710 st	-	5,548	1,663	3,880
Structured/Subterraneum Parkings	1,194,298 sf	20/1,000	785		785
Gooling Tower ²	6,320 ton	36/unit 1	225,245	41,712	183,533
COUNTY TO THE	er - Constant		Proposed Water	r Demond Total	440,222
Enlyling Water Committee Less Additional Conservation				56,275	
				46,420	
Total Proposed Net Water Consumption				327,527	

1 Provided by City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning in the Request for Water Supply Assessment letter and Scape Confirmation

2 Proposed indear water uses are based on 2012 City of Los Angeles Department of Públic Warks, Bureau of Sanitation Sewer Generation

Proposed Indicor water uses are based on 2012 City of Los Angeles Deportment of Public Works, Blacou of Santation Sewer Generation Rotes faille evailable at https://www.locis/stan.org/final/pdf/sigfeerotes.pdf.
The proposed development land uses will conform to Water Efficiency Regularments Ordinance No. 180822; 2013 California Plumbing Code, 2013 California Green Building Code.
Code, 2013 California Green Building Code/Catignesa), 3014 Los Angeles Plumbing Code, and 2014 Los Angeles Green Building Code.
Assumed no more than one showerhead per stall for residential dwelling units.
Baseling tondscriping water use is estimated per Delifaritle Code of Regulations Title 23. Obision 2. Chapter 27. Model Violer Applicant

Landscape Crymance.

6. Auto parking water uses are based on City of Lac Angeles Department of Public Works, Rusenu of Soultation Sower Generation Roles tubble, and 12 Unicelyeer electricity assumption.

7. Operating \$65 days / sair, 6. Stycles of conscientation and 55% of chiller engacity.

8. Represents water sawing from design measures agrees to by the Polect Applicant (PDF-DT-2).

Abbreviations: du . dwelling unit, of Source feet, and guidons per day, and affort see feet per year.

Source: Las Angeles Department of Water and Power, 2015. tandicape Ovalnance.

21. Additionally, footnotes throughout IV.O.2, Water - refer to various documents including the 2010 UWMP and the LADWP website accessed on certain dates. Information from the Water Supply Assessment for the proposed project is also included without being referenced. In many cases, facts and figures from these various sources might not represent consistent time periods and updates. Please consider updating facts and figures to the latest and consistent sources. Also, please include a footnote and source for every reference to a fact or figure related to water resources for the project so they may be verified.

19 cont.

Ms. Strelich Page 7 October 27, 2015

Groundwater Comments:

IV.I. Hydrology and Water Quality; 3. Environmental Impacts; A. Thresholds of Significance; f), h), i), i) (Pg. 6-7/11) – if these thresholds of significance related to groundwater were exceeded, it would be concerning. However, it appears that the project will not have any unavoidable or irreversible impacts related to groundwater since there is no mention of it in section V. General Impact Categories.

21

 IV.O. Utilities; 2. Water; v)City-Controlled Water Supplies; 1) Los Angeles Aqueducts (Pg. 20/75) – the second paragraph in this section is exactly the same as the first paragraph.

22

- IV.O. Utilities; 2. Water; v) City-Controlled Water Supplies; 2) Groundwater (Pg. 20/75) –
 please correct LADWP's Sylmar and Central basin groundwater entitlements in the third &
 fourth paragraphs. Average LADWP basin entitlements are as follows:
 - a. San Fernando Basin 87,000 AFY (ok)

23

- b. Sylmar Basin 3,570 AFY (not 3,405)
- c. Central Basin 16,546 AFY (not 15,000)
- d. West Coast Basin 1,500 AFY (ok)

If you have any questions regarding the above comments, please contact Ms. Stephanie Eatinger, of my staff, at (213) 367-0968. Also, please add Ms. Eatinger to your direct mailing list for any future notices regarding this project and others.

24

Sincerely,

Charles C. Holloway

Manager of Environmental Planning and Assessment

c/enc: Ms. Stephanie Eatinger

Charles C. Hallowing

Intentionally blank.

Comment Letter No. 6

Charles C. Holloway
Manager of Environmental Planning and Assessment
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
111 N. Hope Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Response to Comment 6-1

The comment includes an introduction and indicates that the date for the Project Water Supply Assessment in the Draft EIR is incorrect. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-2

The commenter indicates that the date of approval of the 2010 Urban Water Management Plan in the Draft EIR is incorrect. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-3

This commenter states that the LADWP Water Supply Action Plan entitled, "Securing L.A.'s Water Supply", has been superseded by the 2010 UWMP. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-4

The commenter indicates that Phase II of the Water Conservation Ordinance has been in effect since August 2010. This correction has been included in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-5

The commenter requests that a footnote be added to the Draft EIR regarding water rationing and financial penalties that were in place between March 1991 and May 1992. The LADWP 2005 Urban Water Management Plan references water rationing in 1991 and 1992 (2005 UWMP, pages 2-1 and 2-4, see Appendix A to this Final EIR). However, since this program was superseded by the Shortage Year Rates and Water Conservation Ordinance (Draft EIR, pages IV.O.2-3 and IV.O.2-4), this reference is no longer relevant and has been deleted in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This deletion does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-6

The commenter requests that a footnote be added to the Draft EIR regarding the approximately 19 percent reduction in average customer water use for the months of June 2009 through February 2010. This section of the Draft EIR has been updated to reflect the Project's Water Supply Assessment (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This update does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-7

The commenter indicates that the date of the adoption of emergency regulations by the State Water Resources Control Board is incorrect. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-8

The commenter requests that footnotes and references be added to the Draft EIR regarding the discussion on page IV.O.2-4. These corrections have been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). These corrections do not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as they merely clarify the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-9

The commenter requests that the discussion in the Draft EIR regarding the water demand in 2010 be corrected to indicate that the amount is actual consumption rather than a projection. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-10

The commenter requests that a duplicate paragraph on page IV.O.2-5 in the Draft EIR be corrected. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-11

The commenter indicates that Footnote 23 on page IV.O.2-7 of the Draft EIR refers to an incorrect page number in the 2010 Urban Water Management Plan. This correction has been included in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-12

The commenter requests that a footnote and reference be provided for the information presented on page IV.O.2-8 of the Draft EIR regarding current and future water use. This discussion has been updated

to reflect the 2010 UWMP and the Project WSA (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This update does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-13

The commenter requests that additional sources of water to meet future increases in water demand be identified in the Draft EIR. This correction has been included in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-14

The commenter requests that the calculation regarding the amount of acre-feet per year of water that is currently consumed by existing uses on the Project Site be revised from 74.10 af/year to 74.24 af/year. This correction has been included in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-15

The commenter requests several clarifications in the Draft EIR regarding existing water consumption. These corrections have been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-16

The commenter requests correction to a typo in the Draft EIR regarding the number of the appendix containing the Water Supply Assessment. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-17

The commenter requests clarification to the discussion of water demand on page IV.O.2-9 of the Draft EIR. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-18

The commenter requests that text on page IV.O.2-12 be replaces with suggested text to clarify the analysis. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-19

The commenter requests that the Draft EIR be revised to correct inconsistencies between data from the Request Letter for the Water Supply Assessment and the Water Supply Assessment. Table IV.O.2-2 has been corrected to reflect the information provided in the adopted Water Supply Assessment (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-20

The commenter requests that additional footnotes and references be provided to clarify the sources of data throughout Section IV.O.2 (Water) of the Draft EIR. The comment is acknowledged and footnotes throughout Section IV.O.2 (Water) of the Draft EIR have been revised and added in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). These revisions do not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as they merely clarify the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-21

The commenter indicates that there would be no unavoidable or irreversible impacts related to groundwater resulting from the Project. Impacts related to Thresholds f), h), i) and I) are addressed in the Draft EIR on page IV.I-8. Direct additions or withdrawals of groundwater are not proposed by the Project. Furthermore, the Proposed Project would not increase the amount of impervious surfaces (e.g., structures, concrete, and asphalt), and would actually slightly decrease the amount of impervious surfaces with the inclusion of landscaped areas. The Project would also provide facilities for groundwater recharge. Due the large footprint of the Project buildings and other hardscape areas included in the Project, as well as the underground parking garages, which together substantially limit the potential for surface water infiltration, the Project would include deep infiltration dry wells to filter stormwater runoff from the sites, recharge groundwater, and reduce the quantity of runoff from the sites. Therefore, no adverse change in groundwater recharge capacity is expected with Project implementation. Accordingly, impacts to groundwater associated with the Project would be less than significant. No further analysis is required.

Response to Comment 6-22

The commenter requests that a duplicate paragraph on page IV.O.2-5 in the Draft EIR be corrected. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-23

The commenter requests that the current average Los Angeles basin water entitlements be revised. This correction has been incorporated in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Response to Comment 6-24

The commenter requests to be included in distribution of future notice related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter's point of contact on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.

Intentionally blank.

ERIC GARCETTI Mayor Commission
MEL LEVINE, President
WILLIAM W. FUNDERBURK JR., Vice President
JILL BANKS BARAD
MICHAEL F. FLEMING
CHRISTINA E. NOONAN
BARBARA E. MOSCHOS, Secretary

MARCIE L. EDWARDS General Manager

NOV 2 5 2015

MAJOR PROJECTS UNIT

November 16, 2015

Ms. Erin Strelich
City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning
200 North Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Strelich:

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Report for The Reef (formerly SOLA Village) Project

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) appreciates the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for The Reef (formerly SOLA Village) Project. The mission of LADWP is to provide clean, reliable water and power to the City of Los Angeles. LADWP previously submitted comments on October 27, 2015 (enclosed), regarding matters related to water resources and groundwater. Upon further review, LADWP would like to provide one additional comment on the matter of recycled water.

Recycled Water Comments:

LADWP plans for an extension of the recycled water distribution laterals in the proposed project area by 2020. Applicant might mention in DEIR that, if available, recycled water would be considered for use, where applicable.

If you have any questions regarding the above comments, please contact Ms. Stephanie Eatinger, of my staff, at (213) 367-0968. Also, please add Ms. Eatinger to your direct mailing list for any future notices regarding this project and others.

Sincerely,

Charles C. Holloway

Manager of Environmental Planning and Assessment

SE:srt Enclosure

c/enc: Ms. Stephanie Eatinger

Intentionally blank.

Comment Letter No. 7

Charles C. Holloway
Manager of Environmental Planning and Assessment
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
111 N. Hope Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Response to Comment 7-1

The comment includes an introduction, and requests that the Draft EIR indicate that the Project Applicant would consider using recycled water, if available. If the extension of recycled water laterals into the area of the Project Site occurs in 2020, as suggested by the commenter, recycled water could be used within the Project for landscaping, cooling towers, and other domestic uses as appropriate. However, the use of recycled water is not assumed in the analysis presented in the Draft EIR, and the conclusion presented in the Draft EIR regarding the adequacy of available water supplies does not depend on the availability of recycled water at the Project Site. If recycled water does become available, and is eventually incorporated into the Project, the Project's net demand on available domestic water supplies would decrease. This information has been included in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). The inclusion of this information merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR

Intentionally blank.

Comment Letter No. 8

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

RECEIVED

DATE:

November 23, 2015

DEC 01 2015

TO:

Erin Strelich, Project Coordinator

Department of City Planning

ENVIRONMENTAL

FROM:

Ali Poosti, Division Manager

Wastewater Engineering Services Division

Bureau of Sanitation

SUBJECT:

THE REEF (FORMERLY SOLA VILLAGE) PROJECT - NOTICE OF

COMPLETION OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This is in response to your September 17, 2015 letter requesting a review of your proposed mixed-use project located at 1900 South Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90007. The Bureau of Sanitation has conducted a preliminary evaluation of the potential impacts to the wastewater and stormwater systems for the proposed project.

WASTEWATER REQUIREMENT

LA Sanitation, Wastewater Engineering Services Division (WESD) is charged with the task of evaluating the local sewer conditions and to determine if available wastewater capacity exists for future developments. The evaluation will determine cumulative sewer impacts and guide the planning process for any future sewer improvements projects needed to provide future capacity as the City grows and develops.

Projected Wastewater Discharges for the Proposed Project:

Type Description	Average Daily Flow per Type Description (GPD/UNIT)	Proposed No. of Units	Average Daily Flow (GPD)
	WEST BLOCK	ζ.	
Existing			
Wholesale/Showroom	30 GPD/1000 SQ.FT	217,000 SQ.FT	(6,510)
Warehouse/Distribution	30 GPD/1000 SQ.FT	11,150 SQ.FT	(335)
Proposed			
Hotel	120 GPD/Room	208 Rooms	24,960
Retail	25 GPD/1000 SQ. FT	20,000 SQ. FT	500
Restaurant	300 GPD/1000 SQ. FT	18,000 SQ. FT	5,400
Mercantile/Event	30 GPD/1000 SQ.FT	7,000 SQ. FT	210
Live/Work Apartments	190 GPD/DU	21 DU	3,990
Office	120 GPD/1000 SQ. FT	180,000 SQ. FT	21,600
West Block Total			49,815
	EAST BLOCK		
Proposed			
Apartment: Studio	75 GPD/DU	536 DU	40,200
Apartment: 1-Bedroom	110 GPD/DU	427 DU	46,970
Apartment: 2-Bedroom	150 GPD/DU	333 DU	49,950

File Location: \Div Files\SCAR\CEQA Review\FINAL CEQA Response LTRs\The Reef (formerly SOLA Village) Project-NOC of Draft EIR.doc

Page 2 of 4

Apartment: 3-Bedroom	190 GPD/DU	127 DU	24,130
Grocery Store	80 GPD/1000 SQ. FT	29,355 SQ. FT	2,348
Retail	25 GPD/1000 SQ. FT	40,045 SQ. FT	1,001
Restaurant	300 GPD/1000 SQ. FT	27,657 SQ. FT	8,297
Gallery	30 GPD/1000 SQ.FT	17,507 SQ. FT	525
Fitness/Yoga Studio	200 GPD/1000 SQ.FT	7,879 SQ. FT	1,576
East Block Total	174,997		
Total			224,812

SEWER AVAILABILITY

The sewer infrastructure in the vicinity of the proposed project is divided into the West and East Blocks with each system having three route options.

West Block

The West Block system is made up of an existing 8-inch line on Hill St (Route #1), an existing 12-inch line on Broadway (Route #2), and an existing 8-inch line on the 21st St (Route #3). The existing 8-inch line on Hill St.(Route #1) joins the 8-inch line on 21st St (Route #3) and feed into a 50-inch line on Grand Ave before discharging into a 52-inch line on Jefferson Blvd. The 12-inch line on Broadway (Route #2) feeds into a 24-inch line on Jefferson Blvd and ultimately discharges to the 52-inch line on Jefferson Blvd.

East Block

The East Block system is made of an existing 10-inch line on Main St (Route #1), an existing 12-inch line on Broadway (Route #2), and an existing 8-inch line on 21st St (Route #3). The flow from the 10-inch line on Main St (Route #1) flows through a series of 8-inch, 10-inch 12-inch, and 14-inch pipes before discharging into a 24-inch line on Jefferson Blvd. The sewage from the existing 12-inch line on Broadway (Route #2) joins the sewage from the 8-inch line on 21st St (Route #3) and feed into an existing 12-inch line on Broadway before discharging into a 24-inch line on Jefferson Blvd. The flow from the 24-inch line ultimately discharges into the 52-inch sewer line on Jefferson Blvd. Figure 1 shows the details of the sewer system within the vicinity of the project. The current flow level (d/D) in some of the lines cannot be determined at this time without additional gauging.

The current approximate flow level (d/D) and the design capacities at d/D of 50% in the sewer system are as follows:

Pipe Diameter (in)	Pipe Location	Current Gauging d/D (%)	50% Design Capacity
	WES	ST BLOCK	
Route #1			
8	S. Hill St.	*	232,172 GPD
8	E. 21st St.	*	256,391 GPD
50	S. Grand Ave.	37	19.81 MGD
Route #2			
12	S. Broadway	*	676,120 GPD
12	S. Broadway	15	604,740 GPD
Route #3			
8	E. 21 st .	*	256,391 GPD

1 cont.

	EAST	BLOCK	
Route #1			
10	S. Main St.	*	496,342 GPD
10	S. Main St.	*	354,032 GPD
12	S. Main St.	53	614,116 GPD
24	E. Jefferson Blvd.	29	2.88 MGD
52	E. Jefferson Blvd.	24	22.0 MGD
Route #2			
12	S. Broadway	*	676,120 GPD
Route #3			
8	E. 21st St.	*	256,391 GPD

^{*} No gauging available

Based on the estimated flows, it appears the sewer system might be able to accommodate the total flow for your proposed project. Further detailed gauging and evaluation will be needed as part of the permit process to identify a specific sewer connection point. If the public sewer has insufficient capacity then the developer will be required to build sewer lines to a point in the sewer system with sufficient capacity. A final approval for sewer capacity and connection permit will be made at that time. Ultimately, this sewage flow will be conveyed to the Hyperion Treatment Plant, which has sufficient capacity for the project.

If you have any questions, please call Kwasi Berko of my staff at (323) 342-1562.

STORMWATER REQUIREMENTS

LA Sanitation, Watershed Protection Division (WPD) is charged with the task of ensuring the implementation of the Municipal Stormwater Permit requirements within the City of Los Angeles. We anticipate the following requirements would apply for this project.

POST-CONSTRUCTION MITIGATION REQUIREMENTS

The project requires implementation of stormwater mitigation measures. These requirements are based on Stormwater Low Impact Development (LID) requirements. The projects that are subject to LID are required to incorporate measures to mitigate the impact of stormwater runoff. The requirements are outlined in the guidance manual titled "Development Best Management Practices Handbook – Part B: Planning Activities". Current regulations prioritize infiltration, capture/use, and then biofiltration as the preferred stormwater control measures. The relevant documents can be found at: www.lastormwater.org. It is advised that input regarding LID requirements be received in the early phases of the project from WPD's plan-checking staff.

GREEN STREETS

The City is developing a Green Street Initiative that will require projects to implement Green Street elements in the parkway areas between the roadway and sidewalk of the public right-of-away to capture and retain stormwater and urban runoff to mitigate the impact of stormwater runoff and other environmental concerns. The goals of the Green Street elements are to improve the water quality of stormwater runoff, recharge local ground water basins, improve air quality, reduce the heat island effect of street pavement, enhance pedestrian use of sidewalks, and encourage alternate means of transportation. The Green Street elements may include infiltration systems, biofiltration swales, and

1 cont.

2

The Reef (Formerly SOLA Village) Project – Notice of Completion of Draft Environmental Impact Report October 14, 2015
Page 4 of 4

permeable pavements where stormwater can be easily directed from the streets into the parkways and can be implemented in conjunction with the LID requirements.

3 cont.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

The project is required to implement stormwater control measures during its construction phase. All projects are subject to a set of minimum control measures to lessen the impact of stormwater pollution. In addition for projects that involve construction during the rainy season that is between October 1 and April 15, a Wet Weather Erosion Control Plan is required to be prepared. Also projects that disturb more than one-acre of land are subject to the California General Construction Stormwater Permit. As part of this requirement a Notice of Intent (NOI) needs to be filed with the State of California and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) needs to be prepared. The SWPPP must be maintained on-site during the duration of construction.

If there are questions regarding the stormwater requirements, please call Kosta Kaporis at (213) 485-0586, or WPD's plan-checking counter at (213) 482-7066. WPD's plan-checking counter can also be visited at 201 N. Figueroa, 3rd Fl, Station 18.

SOLID RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

The City has a standard requirement that applies to all proposed residential developments of four or more units or where the addition of floor areas is 25 percent or more, and all other development projects where the addition of floor area is 30 percent or more. Such developments must set aside a recycling area or room for onsite recycling activities. For more details of this requirement, please contact Daniel Hackney of the Special Project Division at (213)485-3684.

KB/AP:as

Attachment: Figure 1 - Sewer Map

c: Kosta Kaporis, LASAN Daniel Hackney, LASAN Eduardo Perez, LASAN 4

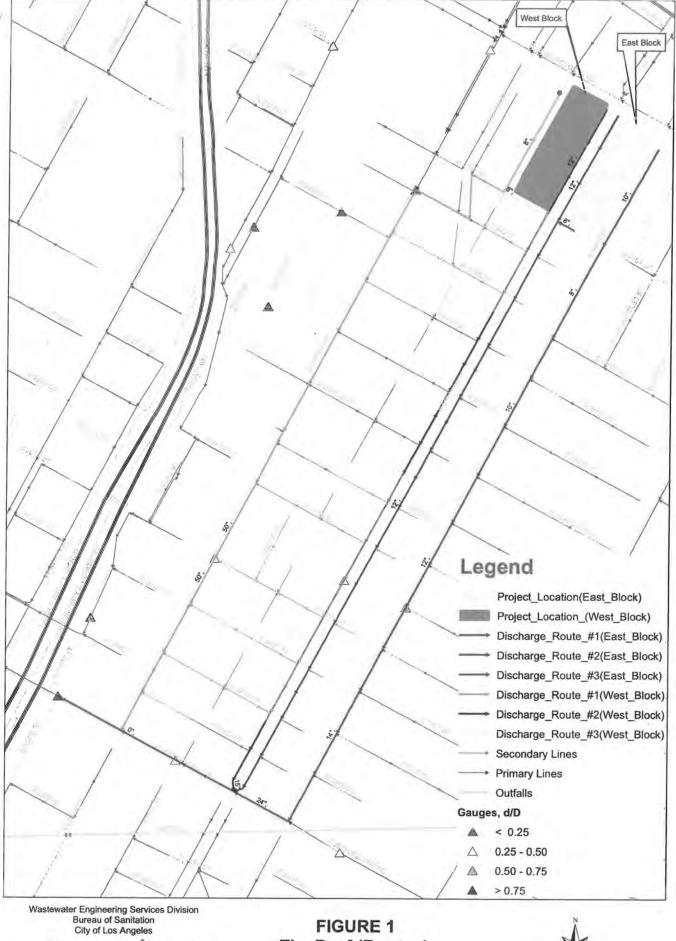






FIGURE 1
The Reef (Formerly
SOLA Village) Project



0 330 660 990 1,320

Intentionally blank.

Comment Letter No. 8

Ali Poosti, Division Manager, Wastewater Engineering Services Division Bureau of Sanitation Los Angeles Department of Public Works [no address]

Response to Comment 8-1

The comment includes an introduction, and lists the projected wastewater discharges for the Project, sewer availability, and current approximate flow level and design capacities of the local sewer system. The commenter indicated that the sewer system might be able to accommodate the total flow of the Project, and that further detailed gauging and evaluation will be needed as part of the permit process. The commenter also indicates that the sewage from the Project will be conveyed to the Hyperion Treatment Plant, which has sufficient capacity to accommodate the Project. The comment includes a table outlining projected wastewater discharges for the Project, which corresponds with the generation rates provided in the column labeled (Sewage Generation Rate [gpd]) on Table IV.O.1-3 on page IV.O.1-7 of the Draft EIR. The EIR also includes water efficiency requirement rates as agreed upon in coordination with Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). The comment validates the information provided in the Draft EIR. No additional analysis is necessary.

Response to Comment 8-2

The commenter states that the Bureau of Sanitation Watershed Protection Division reviewed the potential stormwater impacts associated with the Project, and that this Division is responsible for ensuring implementation of the Municipal Stormwater Permit requirements within the City of Los Angeles. The comment includes construction mitigation requirements based on the Standard Urban Mitigation Plan (SUSMP), the recently adopted Low Impact Development (LID) requirements, and stormwater control measures, which are discussed in Section IV.I., Hydrology and Water Quality, of the Draft EIR. The comment validates the information provided in the Draft EIR. No additional analysis is necessary.

Response to Comment 8-3

This comment discusses the Green Street Initiative that the City is developing, which will require projects to implement Green Street elements to capture and retain stormwater and urban runoff. The comment includes a discussion of the City's new Green Street Initiative that requires projects to implement Green Street elements. As discussed in Section II., Project Description, on page II-19, the Project shall incorporate green building measures, including the CALGreen Building Code, Los Angeles Green Building Code, and the United States Green Building Council LEED checklist. As indicated in the comment, Green Street elements can be implemented in conjunction with SUSMP/LID requirements. No additional analysis is necessary.

Response to Comment 8-4

The commenter indicates that the Project is required to implement stormwater control measures during construction. The comment includes construction mitigation requirements based on the Standard Urban Mitigation Plan (SUSMP), Low Impact Development (LID) requirements, and stormwater control

measures, which are discussed in Section IV.I., Hydrology and Water Quality, of the Draft EIR. The comment validates the information provided in the Draft EIR. No additional analysis is necessary.

Response to Comment 8-5

The commenter states that the City has standard recycling requirements that apply to developments. The comment is consistent with Mitigation Measure RC-UT-5 of the Draft EIR (page IV.O.3-15), which ensures compliance with AB341, which states recycling bins shall be provided at appropriate locations to promote recycling of paper, metal, glass and other recyclable material. The comment validates the information provided in the Draft EIR. No additional analysis is necessary.



THE PUBLIC INTEREST LAW OFFICE OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND BEVERLY HILLS BAR ASSOCIATIONS
610 SOUTH ARDMORE AVENUE - LOS ANGELES, CA 90005 - TEL: 213.385.2977 FAX: 213.385.9089 - WWW.PUBLICCOUNSEL.ORG

November 2, 2015

Attn: Erin Strelich
Major Projects & EIR Section
The City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
200 North Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2601
Via Email (erin.strelich@lacity.org)

Re: Public Comment on The Reef Project DEIR

Dear Ms. Strelich:

We write to register our concerns with respect to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) submitted for The Reef Project in September 2015. Although insufficient time was given for public comment, the DEIR's perfunctory, inaccurate and conclusory nature is, nevertheless, obvious and alarming. So deficient and substandard is the DEIR, only a revised and recirculated DEIR will satisfy California Environmental Quality Act's (CEQA) mandate. We support and adopt the comments submitted by our clients and colleagues of the UNIDAD coalition. We tender this separate letter, however, to focus our comments on the DEIR's signage and land use & planning review, which we found particularly troubling.

Founded in 1970, Public Counsel is the public interest law firm of the Los Angeles County and Beverly Hills Bar Associations and the Southern California affiliate of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law. For 30 years, our Community Development Project has worked to confront a wide range of economic, social and environmental challenges faced by low-income communities in Los Angeles County. As part of our work, we represent and partner with nonprofit affordable housing developers to provide housing equity and prevent homelessness. At the same time, the communities we serve routinely bear the brunt of environmental burdens and have the greatest need for robust environmental review. As such, our work frequently balances the need to streamline affordable housing development and the need to ensure meaningful environmental review and community engagement.

1

I. A RECIRCULATED DEIR MUST CORRECT THE DEIR'S DANGEROUS DEFICIENCIES WITH RESPECT TO ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED SIGNAGE.

The proposed Reef Project (The Reef or the Project) is a behemoth development by any standard. So out of step and inconsistent with the neighborhood it seeks to "transform", the Project cannot be erected without General Plan Amendments, zone changes, variances from the existing Code, FAR averaging, parking reductions and other significant departures from the City's General Plan and other adopted plans and policies. Nowhere is the Project's community incongruence more disturbing than its request for a Supplemental Use District for Signage (SUD) seeking to install 234,067 square feet of electronic billboards in a community where virtually none exist.

3

4

5

The signage proposed is a dizzying array of offsite advertising stacked 400 feet high, like a massive vertical outdoor TV showroom. Not only would these proposed signs negatively impact, in the most profound ways, the quality of life for the residents living, working and studying just feet away, the signage would also pull the attention of every driver along the I-10 and I-110 freeways away from the road and toward the animated advertising, creating untold hazards for every person obliged to drive in the Project's vicinity.

The DEIR utterly fails to evaluate the environmental impacts of the proposed billboards. Rather than acknowledging the devastating environmental impact its electronic billboards would have on both the immediate community and the City as a whole, the DEIR either underestimates the impacts or fails to evaluate them entirely. Below we have outlined key deficiencies with respect to signage, any one of which requires a recirculated DEIR.

A. DEIR Fails to Acknowledge and Evaluate Significant Environmental Impacts Resulting from the Proposed Signage.

CEQA mandates that an EIR evaluate the health and safety problems caused by the physical changes resulting from a project. Here, the DEIR does not comply with this requirement in many respects - especially so with regard to the proposed 234,067 square feet of electronic and animated billboards.

(i) The DEIR fails to address the public safety hazard caused by billboards.

Due to their severe threat to public safety, the City of Los Angles has banned billboards within 2000 feet of freeways.² It is well established that billboards increase the risk of injury and death for drivers, passengers and pedestrians, as outdoor advertising draws drivers' attention away from the road. This danger is heightened when, as here, the

¹ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15126.2.

² Sign Ordinance, Los Angeles, Chapter 62 § 91.6205.5.

signage includes electronic animation. The Project and its proposed electronic billboards would tower over the I-110 and I-10 freeways – distracting the attention of every driver. So close is the Project to I-10, its towers would cast "far-reaching" shadows over the freeway for most of the day. And yet the DEIR fails to evaluate the environmental impact the proposed signage would have on the safety of our roadways. As such, the DEIR fails to acknowledge and evaluate one of the most significant environmental impacts created by the Project, an evaluation gap that must be corrected with a recirculated DEIR.

5 cont.

(ii) The DEIR fails to acknowledge and evaluate the known harm to human health caused by electronic billboards.

The science is well settled - exposure to nighttime lighting is harmful to both human and plant life. Nighttime lighting disrupts the circadian rhythm, which in turns impairs the production of melatonin. Suppression of melatonin is linked to numerous serious chronic diseases, such as cancer (especially breast cancer), obesity, diabetes, depression and reproductive problems. So serious and universally accepted is this risk, the American Medical Association adopted a policy recognizing that exposure to light at night disrupts sleep, exacerbates sleep disorders and creates unsafe driving conditions. These threats to human health are even more pronounced when considering LEDs, the type of lighting proposed by this Project, given that light from blue LEDs in electronic billboards is even more dramatically damaging to human health and to the natural environment due to its peak spectral output falling within the sensitivity range of melanopsin.

The proposed Project would be the single largest concentration of electrified signage in Los Angeles – dwarfing anything even contemplated in Hollywood or by LAX. The DEIR acknowledges that the animated advertising extravaganza would be viewed by sensitive receptors – including apartment dwellers living under its shadows. And yet the DEIR declines even the most modest evaluation of the health impacts the signage would undoubtedly have on existing community members and residents of the Project. This is a profound and alarming deficiency in the DEIR that must be corrected to comply with CEQA.

³ The DEIR's passing reference to compliance with the California Motor Vehicle Code does not constitute an analysis of the traffic hazards created by the freeway adjacent billboards proposed here. See DEIR, IV 8.2.17.

⁴ Department of Neurology, Thomas Jefferson University, "Adverse Health Effects of Nighttime Lighting: Comments on American Medical Association Policy Statement," 9-1-2013; Ron Chepesiuk, "Missing the Dark, Health Effects of Light Pollution," Environmental Health Perspective, 2009 January, 117(1) ⁵ "Missing the Dark," at 5; Council on Science and Public Health Report 4, "Light Pollution: Adverse Health Effects of Nighttime lighting, American Medical Association House of Delegates Annual Meeting, June 2012, Chicago, IL.

⁶ American Medical Association, h-135.932, Light Pollution: Adverse Health Effects of Nighttime Lighting

Lighting.

⁷ Council on Science and Public Health Report 4, "Light Pollution: Adverse Health Effects of Nighttime lighting, American Medical Association House of Delegates Annual Meeting, June 2012, Chicago, IL; Roland Deschesne, "Electronic Digital Billboards as a Health Hazard," 2013-07011.

(iii) The DEIR fails to evaluate the health and safety risks, particularly for lower income communities, posed by outdoor advertising.

7

8

9

Although the DEIR favors describing the electronic billboards as "improvements" and "adding visual interest" to the area, in fact, they are outdoor advertising, the content of which would likely have negative health and environmental impacts on their viewers. In fact, a study of such signage in Los Angeles showed that outdoor advertising adversely impacts public health and targets lower income communities at a higher percentage for advertising of unhealthy foods and life choices. ⁸ Moreover, the images commonly promote the use of guns and objectify women. ⁹ Again, the DEIR fails to acknowledge, much less evaluate, these health and safety impacts the proposed signage would have on the surrounding community. This deficiency must be corrected in the recirculated DEIR.

B. The Sign District Criteria contained in the DEIR's Project Description Inaccurately Describes the Environmental Impacts of the Signage.

A recirculated DEIR must correct the proposed Sign District Criteria. ¹⁰ First, with respect to Vertical Sign Levels 1 and 2, the proposed criteria guidelines describe certain proposed "unrestricted animation" and "light color animation" signs as "Digital Display signs and Integral Electronic Display Signs that are in encapsulated areas that are no more than incidentally visible from the public right of way." According to the Project design, however, very little of the signage at Levels 1 and 2 would be "in encapsulated areas that are no more than incidentally visible from the public right of way." The DEIR repeatedly touts the Project's open design with all sides visible from a public right of way. In fact, the only differences between the signs proposed at these levels versus "integral electronic display signs" proposed at Level 3 are that they are lower and would run 24 hours a day. The recirculated DEIR must correct the mischaracterization of the signage proposed for Levels 1 and 2.

Additionally, the Signage District Criteria would allow the animated signage in Zone 3 to operate from dawn until 2 a.m. – nearly 24 hours a day. As a mitigation measure, the DEIR proposes to shorten the time of operation from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. It is suspect to offer the shortened time as a mitigation measure rather than simply embedding the shorter period within the proposed signage district regulation. Notwithstanding the inadequacy of this particular mitigation measure, the Signage District Criteria should be modified to reduce the hours of operation to the shorter period, as suggested by the DEIR, rather than being offered as a mitigation measure.

⁸ Bryce C. Lowry and David Sloane, "The Prevalence of Harmful Content in Outdoor Advertising in Los Angeles: Land Use, Community Characteristics, and the Spatial Inequality of a Public Health Nuisance," American Journal of Public Health, February 13, 2014.

⁹ Id.

¹⁰ DEIR, Figures II-15 and 16.

C. The DEIR Aesthetics mischaracterizes significant environmental impacts from signage as less than significant.

(i) The DEIR engages in impermissible segmentation with respect to its signage and the SUD analysis.

As noted above, the DEIR breaks the proposed electronic signage onslaught into five sign zones (Zone A- E) and then further breaks each of these zones into three vertical signage subzones (Zones 1-3). Inexplicably, the DEIR proceeds to address the environmental impacts of each separately – as if the visual and environmental disturbance of one can be isolated from the others. And in doing so, the DEIR attempts to minimize the environmental impacts of the signage through impermissible segmentation. Even the causal-observer understands that individual zones do not stand-alone and in fact have a cumulative environmental impact. The DEIR's impermissible segmentation results in the flawed conclusion that signage in Vertical Zones 1 and 2 pose "less than significant" environmental impacts. 11 Although individually each zone presents significant impacts, the impact of these signs as a whole - as humans perceive them - is undoubtedly even more severe. Yet, the DEIR fails to acknowledge and analyze this. As such, the Aesthetic section is built on a faulty foundation that invalidates all its conclusions, requiring a revised and recirculated DEIR.

The DEIR's test for assessing aesthetic impacts is fatally flawed. (ii)

The DEIR self-selects a test for significant impacts with respect to the signage that fails to account for the reality of the visual quality/aesthetic impacts. Specifically, the DEIR asserts:

Project signage would result in a significant impact with regard to visual quality/aesthetics, if it is: (1) prominent and visible at a distance from the Project Site, and provides a visual appearance that is not consistent with or complimentary [sic] to the effects of Project development on the visual environment of the Project Site and surrounding areas, as previously discussed; or (2) if the operation of one or more specific signs would adversely impact the visual environment as experienced at a particular sensitive receptor, such as a residence or school." ¹²

This criterion wrongly prioritizes aesthetic impacts experienced by communities at a distance and inappropriately disregards the aesthetic experience of the local community members – the very persons most impacted by the Project and its electronic signage. But even under this flawed test, the DEIR's characterization of signage in Zones 1 and 2 as less than significant is clearly wrong for several reasons and must be revised. First, the signage in Zone 2 projecting 75 feet into the air would be visible from a distance,

10

¹¹ It is well established California law that CEOA is violated when a DEIR piecemeals a project to minimize environmental impacts. See Laurel Heights Improvement Assn. v. Regents of University of California, (1988) 47 Cal. 3d. 376. DEIR, IV.B.1-27.

11 cont.

12

including from the I-10. Thus, even under the DEIR's faulty test, their impacts should have be classified and evaluated as significant. Moreover, with respect to both Zones 1 and 2, the electronic signage would be visible and adversely impact the visual environment of every person living, working, and studying in this area. The signage in Zones 1 and 2 would have a significant impact and the DEIR must be revised to account for these zones.

(a) Views of Project Signage from the West

Although conceding that the signs in Zone 3 would have a significant impact, the DEIR erred in basing this conclusion solely on the impacts Zone 3 signs would have from a distance. The surrounding community would be negatively impacted from the existence of the proposed signage and, as such, the DEIR must be revised to account for the local impact of Zone 3 in all directions, not just from the far west.

Additionally, the DEIR incorrectly concludes that the signage in Zone 2 would be "less than significant because the signage would be visible and prominent only in the immediate vicinity of the Project, where it would reinforce and contribute to the aesthetic image of an urban center that would result from the Project by providing contrast and color that promotes the identity of the areas as a center of activity." ¹³

This conclusion is ludicrous. The billboard proponent may choose to euphemize the blighting impact of their signage, but the reality is that these billboards would profoundly impact the environmental experience of the surrounding community. The DEIR goes on to contend, "[i]n addition, the proposed Reef Project SUD would not place west-facing highly animated signage in the Vertical Zone 2 immediately adjacent to sensitive receptors, where it could adversely affect the visual environment as observed from these receptors." (Emphasis added.) Such obfuscation must be addressed. Any signage, whether "highly animated" or not, will negatively impact the visual experience and quality of life of the sensitive receptors within the area. In fact, the DEIR acknowledges that a residential apartment would bear the blunt of the Zone 2 signage impacts given that the apartment would visually shield other local buildings from seeing the Zone 2 signage. ¹⁴ Moreover, the DEIR notes in the glare discussion that the residents of the Rutland Apartments and Southland Apartments and the students at LA Trade Tech would see the signs in Vertical Zones 1 and 2, and still asserts a less than significant environmental impact.

The DEIR makes the same conclusion as to Zone 1, asserting that since the signage would only be viewed by the "immediate vicinity," it would not have a significant environmental impact. Again, this is wrong and must be corrected.

¹³ DEIR, IV B.1-28.

¹⁴ DEIR, IV.B.1-28.

(b) Views of the Project Signage from the North

Likewise, the DEIR acknowledges that the environmental impacts from Zone 3 would be significant, but insignificant as to Zones 2 and 1. Again, the DEIR's conclusions are wrong and in this case, even more so given that animated signage in Zone 2 would face directly into the sensitive receptor of the Rutland Apartments. The DEIR callously states that by limiting the animated signage invading the Rutland Apartment to 2,550 square feet, the impacts would be less than significant. This suggestion is as insulting and it is injurious to the residents who would be forced to live not only with the signage pointed directly at them, but also with all the other billboards in all the zones. There is a cumulative effect of the proposed signage that the DEIR completely ignores.

The DEIR makes the same conclusion as to Zone 1, asserting that since the signage would only be viewed by the "immediate vicinity," it would not have a significant environmental impact. Again, this is wrong and must be corrected.

(c) Views of the Project Signage from the East

Here again DEIR relies on the same faulty and self-serving assessments of the signage in this region with respect to Zones 2 and 1 to conclude they are less than significant. The proposed signage undoubtedly would have a significant environmental impact and must be analyzed and mitigated.

(d) Views of the Project Signage from the South

The DEIR makes the same conclusion as to Zone 1, asserting that since the signage would only be viewed by the "immediate vicinity," it would not have a significant environmental impact. Again, this is wrong and must be corrected.

II. THE DEIR PROJECT'S LAND USE AND PLANNING EVALUATION IS INADEQUATE AND INACCURATE.

As proposed, the Project seeks a laundry list of General Plan Amendments, zone changes, variances from the existing Code, FAR averaging, and other significant departures from the City's General Plan and adopted policies. This long list of required departures from adopted plans lays bare the fact that the Project upends existing city policy. In order for the development to proceed as proposed, the Project must show consistency with relevant General Plan policies and objectives. ¹⁵ Moreover, the EIR must

14

15

¹⁵ Government Code § 65860(a)(2) (land uses authorized by zoning ordinance must be "compatible with the objectives, policies, general land uses, and programs specified in the [general] plan."); see also *Neighborhood Action Group v. County of Calaveras* (1984) 156 Cal.App.3d 1176, 1184.) (A project cannot be found consistent with a general plan if it conflicts with a general plan policy that is "fundamental, mandatory, and clear," regardless of whether it is consistent with other general plan policies.) Even in the absence of a direct conflict, an ordinance or development project may not be approved if it interferes with

evaluate "any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans." As detailed below, the DEIR fails to evaluate the Project's many conflicts with existing zoning requirements and applicable general and regional plans. And where the DEIR does discuss applicable plans, the analysis is often flatly inaccurate and self-serving. A recirculated DEIR must resolve this inadequate analysis and provide meaningful mitigation measures relating to the significant impacts associated with land use (in)consistency.

16 cont.

A. The DEIR's Dangerously Deficient Supplemental Use District for Signage Land Use Assessment Leads to False Conclusions and Risks Invalidating the City's Signage Ordinance.

Despite having devoted nearly half its Project Description to describing the proposed SUD, the DEIR mustered an anemic paragraph for the same topic in its Land Use & Planning analysis, of which two sentences address the Project's impacts on signage regulations and policies. Specifically, the DEIR's Land Use & Planning analysis on the SUD obliquely reads:

17

The potential environmental impacts of The Reef Project SUD are evaluated in this EIR. Therefore, the Project would have less than significant impacts with regards to signage regulations and policies.

This circular assessment gives new meaning to the phrase "environmental window dressing." The DEIR's assessment is as wrong as it is inadequate for the following reasons.

(i) The DEIR fails to account for the land use regulations and policies upon which it based its erroneous conclusions.

The history and status of our City's signage regulations play a controlling role in the Project's request for a SUD for Signage. Yet the DEIR is silent on both. This is a glaring obfuscation given that the ordinance on the books is currently being revised and, for all intents and purposes, no longer controls the City's evaluation of new Supplemental Use Districts for Signage applications and the signs a project proposes.

18

The DEIR fails to acknowledge that the City is in the process of establishing new sign regulations and that sign district applications are being viewed through the lens of the proposed new regulations. This shortcoming is all the more troubling given that the DEIR incorrectly asserts that it "would have less than significant impacts with regard to signage regulations and policies." This statement holds no water under either the

or frustrates the general plan's policies and objectives. *Napa Citizens for Honest Gov't v. County of Napa*, (2001) 91Cal. App. 4th 342, 378-79.

¹⁶ CEQA Guidelines, 15125(d); see also, City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, calling for an evaluation of "whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans."
¹⁷ DEIR, IV J-72.

current sign ordinance or the revised ordinance under consideration. Further, under the revised ordinance approved by the City Planning Commission on October 22, 2015, the Project would not qualify for a signage district even with the proposed rezoning given that it falls outside one of the regional centers in which signage districts would be allowed. Additionally, under the same revised ordinance, the Project would be required to acquire and remove 10 square feet of existing billboards for every 1 square foot of signage planned for the Project. And yet the Project does not discuss any of the numerous environmental impacts associated with removing 2,340,670 square feet of billboards.

18 cont.

(ii) The Project would have significant environmental impacts on the City's signage regulations and policies.

Regardless of which signage ordinance its conclusions are based, the DEIR ignores significant signage restrictions that form the bedrock of the City's signage policy with respect to aesthetics and public safety. Specifically, the DEIR fails to address the fact that the Project violates the City's ban on signage within 2000 feet of a freeway that would be viewed primarily from a main traveled roadway of a freeway or an on-ramp/off-ramp. Not only does this gaping oversight stand as a powerful indictment of its inadequacy, the DEIR fails to account for how its Project's signage threatens to invalidate the City's hard fought ban of freeway facing signage — an environmental impact of monumental significance. Although emerging victorious in World Wide Rush LLC et al v. City of Los Angeles, the Ninth Circuit cautioned the City that although the Staples Center and the Fifteenth Street SUD exemptions to the freeway ban did not invalidate the ordinance, additional exceptions could "break the link between Freeway Facing Sign Ban and the City's objectives in traffic and aesthetics." 19

19

The Project has all the elements of a sign district that would invalidate the City's ban of freeway facing signs ordinance. Its fully animated billboards would be highly visible from multiple freeways. The City's arguments of blight and improving traffic safety available for the Staple Center and Fifteenth Street SUD are absent. Thus, the Project threatens the City's continued ability to ban freeway facing signs, and opens up the entire length of every freeway to signage the City has fought so hard to ban. The environmental impacts of such a risk are immensely significant. Yet the DEIR fails to acknowledge and analyze this environmental impact. Accordingly the DEIR is inadequate and must be recirculated.

(iii) Environmental Review of the Project's proposed SUD and Sign District Criteria is premature given that the City is actively overhauling it Signage Ordinance.

20

As noted above, the City is actively overhauling its signage ordinance, with a recent vote by the City Planning Commission to approve a reworked ordinance on

¹⁸ Article 4.4, Section 14.4.6 and Section 14.4.5 of draft Signage Ordinance under CPC consideration.

20 cont.

21

October 22, 2015. Although the DEIR fails to mention the overhaul, the truth of the matter is the Project, for several reasons, would not qualify for a SUD under the new ordinance moving through the approval process. Of note, of course, is the fact that the Project is not within one of the designated regional centers in which sign districts would be permitted under the revised ordinance. In addition to the DEIR's numerous material deficiencies, the Project's attempt to end-run the City's land use approval process by securing an environmental review on a SUD that is fundamentally incongruous with City's proposed signage ordinance is inappropriate and must be rejected.

B. The DEIR Fails to Acknowledge and Evaluate the Project's Conflicts with Existing Zoning Regulations.

The DEIR's land use analysis unjustifiably assumes that the Project will be constructed in a manner that is patently inconsistent with existing zoning requirements and numerous current land use plans and policies that apply to the Project Site. Specifically, the Project involves the construction of a mixed use development with 1,444 housing units on a site that is currently zoned for limited manufacturing. The DEIR briefly notes that as proposed, the Project "would not be consistent with the existing General Plan land use designation and zoning of the Project site." However, this is presented not as an issue to be analyzed, but merely as the explanation behind the Project's request for an extensive list of discretionary land use approvals. Rather than evaluating the existing land use inconsistency and analyzing the on-the-ground environmental impacts that the proposed land use changes will have on the community, the DEIR simply concludes "the zone change would result in the entire parcel being singularly zoned for the mix of uses that [sic] proposed for the mixed-use development." This circular logic undermines environmental review.

The DEIR's approach completely removes Project's proposed land use changes from any meaningful scrutiny. It implies that existing land use regulations are inappropriate and suggests that once the current regulations are amended to permit the Project, then all of the Project's land use impacts are somehow resolved. In other words, the DEIR proceeds from the flawed assumption that the Project should dictate land use laws, not the other way around. By assuming that the approval of the Project's numerous discretionary land use entitlement requests are a foregone conclusion, ²² the DEIR fails to comply with the CEQA requirement that the EIR identify the significant environmental effects of the project based on "the existing physical conditions in the affected area." ²³

²⁰ DEIR, IV.J-70.

²¹ DEIR IV.J-70.

²² Moreover, the Los Angeles Municipal Code clearly states that General Plan Amendments – including those limited to a specific property – must be initiated by the City Council, the City Planning Commission, or the Director of Planning; not the applicant. LAMC 11.5.6.B; Los Angeles City Charter Section 555). It appears that this process was initiated in May, 2014, by a motion from Councilmember Curren Price. However, this motion is still pending in the Planning and Land Use management Committee, and has not been approved by the Council as required by the Code and Charter. See Council File 14-0620. Without such approval, the DEIR analysis of land use consistency is premature.

C. The DEIR Fails, Altogether, to Evaluate Consistency with Numerous Relevant General Plan policies.

The CEQA Guidelines require an analysis of "any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans." The City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide provides five factors for consideration in determining significant impacts related to land use consistency. These factors include, "whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans."

Despite these clear directives, the DEIR completely neglects to evaluate consistency with many relevant General Plan policies, goals and objectives. While DEIR Tables IV.J-3, IV.J-4, IV.J-5, and IV.J-7 selectively and inadequately consider some policies, they inexplicably ignore numerous General Plan policies essential to the understanding the Project's environmental impacts. The following table outlines just some of the important and relevant policies the DEIR fails to evaluate. Moreover, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the Project as proposed is inconsistent with many of these General Plan policies that go unanalyzed in the DEIR. As a result, a recirculated DEIR should include a full analysis of General Plan consistency, as well as mitigation measures to address potential significant impacts relating to land use inconsistency.

General Plan Policy missing from DEIR analysis	Comment			
General Plan Housing Element				
Policy 1.1.2 Expand affordable rental housing for all income groups that need assistance.	As proposed, the Project would provide 449 market rate rental units and 895 market rate condominium units and zero affordable units. This does nothing to meet the current need for (never mind expand the supply of) housing for lower income populations that currently live in the neighborhood. A recirculated DEIR should acknowledge and evaluate the Project's inconsistency with this Objective and Policy, and should include mitigation measures to address the impacts of the further loss of affordable housing in the community.			
Objective 1.2 Preserve quality rental and ownership housing for households of all income levels and special needs.	As proposed, the Project threatens to contribute to displacement pressures experienced by lower income rent burdened households. According to a recent study, over 40,000 people have a moderate to very high risk for financial strain and/or displacement as a			

²⁴ CEQA Guidelines, 15125(d).

Policy 1.2.2 Encourage and incentivize the preservation of affordable housing, including non-subsidized affordable units, to ensure that demolitions and conversions do not result in the net loss of the City's stock of decent, safe, healthy or affordable housing

result of the Project's impacts on housing prices in the surrounding area. Within the South Central community that would be impacted by the Project, thousands of households are already rent burdened, and a large number of subsidized affordable housing units are at risk of converting to market rate in the near future. 26

Policy 1.2.8 Preserve the existing stock of affordable housing near transit stations and transit corridors. Encourage one-to-one replacement of demolished units.

The current DEIR fails to evaluate consistency with these relevant policies concerning the preservation of affordable housing, and neglects to acknowledge evidence that the Project would undermine these goals to preserve and protect affordable housing.

Policy 1.3.5 Provide sufficient land use and density to accommodate an adequate supply of housing units by type and cost within the City to meet the projections of housing needs, according to the policies and objectives of the City's Framework Element of the General Plan.

The DEIR does not evaluate inconsistency with these relevant policies. The Project seeks numerous legislative decisions to change existing land use regulations in order to allow an increase in residential density. However, of the proposed 1,444 residential units, none are affordable. As proposed, the Project does not contribute at all to meeting the City's projected housing needs for lower-income households.

Policy 1.4.1 Streamline the land use entitlement, environmental review, and building permit processes, while maintaining incentives to create and preserve affordable housing.

The DEIR does not evaluate inconsistency with this relevant policy. The Project, as proposed, is seeking numerous significant discretionary land use changes, including a General Plan Amendment and zone change. This would dramatically increase development intensity on the site, effectively going from zero residential units to 1,444 units, with a floor area ratio approaching 6:1. If the requests for zone changes, parking reductions and a General Plan Amendment are granted without affordability, as currently proposed, then the existing incentives (e.g. density bonus and Downtown Housing Incentive Ordinance) would be circumvented, not maintained.

²⁵ Human Impact Partners, Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Proposed Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles, 19-20 (October, 2015) (hereafter, "Health Impact Report," or "HIR"), available at http://www.humanimpact.org/news/reefdevelopmentproject/

²⁶ Id., at 20.

Policy 2.2.3 Promote and facilitate a jobs/housing balance at a citywide level.	The DEIR suggests that the Project will create new jobs and 1,444 new residential units. The DEIR does not evaluate or compare the wages of the new jobs with the rents and housing prices of the exclusively market rate units. Therefore, the DEIR has failed to adequately evaluate consistency with this relevant policy. The Project, as proposed, is a mixed-use development in proximity to transit, but proposes to provide no affordable housing. The DEIR fails to evaluate this effect of the Project, directly contradicting the spirit and intent of these policies.	
Policy 2.5.1 Target housing resources, policies and incentives to include affordable housing in residential development, particularly in mixed use development, Transit Oriented Districts and designated Centers. Policy 2.5.2 Foster the development of new affordable housing units citywide and within each Community Plan Area		
Objective 4.2 Promote outreach and education to: homeless populations; residents; community stakeholders; health, social service and housing providers and funders; criminal justice system agencies; and, communities in which facilities and services may be located.	A number of homeless individuals and families currently live in close proximity to the Project, and Council District 9 has the second largest homeless population in the City. ²⁷ The Reef Project Health Impact Report notes that local residents and focus group participants fear becoming homeless as a result of increasing displacement pressures. ²⁸ But the DEIR fails to address or evaluate opportunities for the Project to contribute to outreach efforts and support community stakeholders, health, social service and	
Policy 4.2.3 Strengthen the capacity of the development community to locate, construct and manage housing facilities for the homeless.	housing providers and funders to provide crucial services to the homeless population and to construct and manage housing facilities for the homeless. The DEIR's silence on the issue of homelessness when the City has declared a state of emergency on the same reflects the depths of its deficiency in disclosing environmental impacts.	
Program 8. Land Use Program to Increase the Production of Affordable Housing. Explore the feasibility and	As proposed, the Project is seeking significant benefits from the City – notably zone changes that result in considerably more housing units than otherwise permitted (effectively going from zero	

²⁷ Id., at 17. ²⁸ Id., at 4, 21.

appropriateness of creating affordable housing requirements for projects that receive benefits from the City, including projects that receive City subsidies or City land, projects receiving zone changes that result in significantly more units than otherwise permitted, as well as projects that obtain a Development Agreement.

residential units currently, to the 1,444 residential units proposed). But the Project is not planning to include any affordable units. This is profoundly inconsistent with the spirit and intent of Housing Element Program 8, and the DEIR fails to evaluate the effects of this inconsistency.

Program 41. Preservation of **Affordable Housing Preserve** and/or extend the affordability of approximately 500 units annually currently part of the City of Los Angeles affordable housing stock. Do this through recapitalizing existing projects and/or facilitating the execution of project-based Section 8 (or similar) contract renewals.

The current DEIR neglects to evaluate the Project's impact on the City's affordable housing stock, and therefore fails to evaluate consistency with this important and relevant General Plan Housing Element Program. The Health Impact Report for this Project identifies over 1,000 units in the South Central area that are currently subsidized by federal or state programs (this number excludes additional units funded exclusively through local programs). Of these, the Health Impact Report identifies 152 units that are at risk of converting to market rate within the next 10 years.²⁹ The Health Impact Report forecasts increasing housing costs as a result of the Project. which increases the likelihood of these units converting to market rate. As a result, the Health Impact Report concludes that the people currently living in these currently deed-restricted units are vulnerable to displacement.³⁰ Despite this, the DEIR fails to even mention Housing Element Program 41.

A recirculated DEIR should incorporate and address the Health Impact Report's findings and analysis regarding the potential loss of deed-restricted units in the area.

Program 54. Monitor and **Update the Density Bonus Program**. Track the production of affordable housing units produced as a result of density bonus requests, including the

As proposed, the Project is seeking a general plan amendment and zone change that would dramatically increase the number of residential units permitted on site. Yet, the Project is requesting this increase in allowable residential density without utilizing either the city's Density Bonus Ordinance or the Downtown

²⁹ Id., at 20. ³⁰ Id.

location and income levels served. Track affordable housing units created through the granting of parking reductions, including: the number of affordable housing units exchanged for the concession; the location; and, income levels served. Track and assess the granting of other incentives in conjunction with density bonus requests. Assess the need to make adjustments to incentives and to the Affordable Housing Incentives Program Guidelines. In particular, examine strategies to increase the production of affordable housing units, facilitate the use of density bonus at Transit Stops/Major Employment Centers, encourage more large family and senior units, and transfer unused density bonus rights.

Housing Incentive Floor Area Bonus. Moreover, the project will almost exclusively consist of studio and one-bedroom units, despite the Housing Element policy to encourage more large family units and the significant need for affordable housing for families in the neighborhood. As proposed, the Project threatens to undermine the stated objectives of Housing Element Program 54, and the DEIR fails to evaluate the effects of this inconsistency.

22 cont.

Program 73. Targeting Growth in Community Plan Areas ... When building envelopes are increased, take care not to undermine the density bonus program. Aim to attach community benefits, including affordable housing, to significant bonuses in floor area and density.

Program 99 Downtown
Affordable Housing Bonus ...
Explore ways to improve affordable housing production under the program, including how the incentives under this program relate to those provided under the Downtown TFAR program (#17) and whether the

The Project is relying on a zone change and general plan amendment to convert the site from Limited Industrial to Community Commercial in order to significantly increase the number of residential units permitted on site. The Project also seeks a general plan amendment to exempt the development from Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Footnote 1, which restricts all Community Commercial properties to Height District 1 and a base FAR of 1.5.

While the DEIR describes why allowing residential use at higher densities is appropriate at this location, the Project seeks to circumvent several of the City's established affordable housing incentive programs, which are intended as the appropriate mechanisms to achieve increased residential density.

Granting the zone change and general plan amendment, as proposed, will permit the Project to achieve the incentives contained in the density bonus parks fee in lieu of required open space constrains affordable housing development.

Program 101 Community
Level Affordable Housing
Programs ... Take care to not
undermine the density bonus
program by providing significant
land-use incentives without an
affordable housing provision...

ordinance and the Downtown Housing Incentive Ordinance without actually meeting the minimum requirements to qualify for these incentives. This undermines the entire incentive structure, thereby rendering the project inconsistent with Housing Element Programs 73, 99, and 101.

General Plan Health Element - Plan for a Healthy LA

Introduction. The real and perceived threat of displacement and gentrification cause stress and other serious health consequences for families and can move them away from key resources and social networks, which is a particular concern in areas undergoing rapid change due to new transit infrastructure and catalytic development...The Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles acknowledges the negative health consequences of displacement, elevates community stability as a fundamental public health goal, and reaffirms the policy connections between housing and good health in the City's Housing Element.

Policy 1.7 Displacement and Health Reduce the harmful health impacts of displacement on individuals, families, and communities by pursuing strategies to create opportunities for existing residents to benefit from local revitalization efforts by: creating local employment

The DEIR nominally mentions the City's new General Plan Health Element ("Plan for a Healthy LA"), and cherrypicks five Policies from that plan to evaluate. ³¹ However, the DEIR completely neglects to evaluate the Project's consistency with those Policies and Programs aimed and addressing and mitigating the health impacts of displacement.

Policy 1.7 and Implementation Program 86 of the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles are undeniably relevant to the Project. Policy 1.7 notes the impacts of local revitalization efforts and calls for evaluation and mitigation of "major revitalization efforts that have the potential to cause displacement," while Program 86 calls for "opportunities for low-income and vulnerable populations to access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhoods." As proposed, the Project would clearly fall within the intended scope of these provisions.

The recently released Health Impact Report for the Project outlines a number of serious concerns and potential health impacts, including tens of thousands of residents being at heightened risk for financial strain and/or displacement. The Health Impact Report reinforces many of the conclusions in the Plan for a Healthy LA, including that "housing instability, living in substandard housing, overcrowding, and homelessness are all determinants of poor health that can be caused by the financial strain of gentrification.

³¹ DEIR Table IV.J-5, pp. IV.J-59-60.

and economic opportunities for low-income residents and local small businesses; expanding and preserving existing housing opportunities available to lowincome residents; preserving cultural and social resources; and creating and implementing tools to evaluate and mitigate the potential displacement caused by large-scale investment and development.

L. I

While communities naturally change over time, major revitalization efforts that have the potential to cause displacement should be evaluated and mitigated.

Program 86 Displacement: To mitigate displacement, leverage government resources (including land) to preserve the social, cultural and economic diversity of the city. Evaluate best practices to develop criteria to assess the displacement potential of low-income and vulnerable populations; identify and implement an array of mitigation tools that can preserve existing small businesses and affordable housing for low-income households; and create opportunities for low-income and vulnerable populations to access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhoods.

These health determinants can have negative impacts on mental and physical health for adults, and can also specifically impact children... There are significant associations between high housing costs and hunger, inadequate childhood nutrition, and poor childhood growth. "32 The Health Impact Report also notes that "[d]isruption of social networks through forced serial displacement and root shock can lead to additional health challenges including exposure to fragmented social environments that have higher rates of violence and sexually transmitted diseases. Multi-generational traumas of this nature can potentially influence the genetic makeup of future generations, leaving them more physiologically susceptible to the impacts of stress." 33

A recirculated DEIR should acknowledge the health impacts of displacement, consistent with the City's General Plan Health Element, and should evaluate the Project's consistency with programs and policies aimed at addressing these impacts. The DEIR should evaluate, and as appropriate, incorporate the findings of the Health Impact Report into this analysis.

Consistent with Program 86, the DEIR should also evaluate an "array of mitigation tools that can preserve existing small businesses and affordable housing for low-income households; and create opportunities for low-income and vulnerable populations to access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhoods." The Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles identifies potential measures such as "creating local employment and economic opportunities for low-income residents and local small businesses; expanding and preserving existing housing opportunities available to low-income residents; preserving cultural and social resources" [Policy 1.7].

Adopted Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan

Policy 1-5.2 Ensure that new housing opportunities minimizes

The Land Use and Planning Chapter of the DEIR fails to evaluate whether the Project is consistent with

23 cont.

³² Health Impact Report, 25.

³³ Id., 21.

displacement of the residents. Program: Require that a decision-maker adopt a finding which addresses any potential displacement of residents as part of any decision relating to the construction of new housing.

this highly relevant Policy to minimize the displacement associated with new development. In fact, the Land Use and Planning Chapter of the DEIR does not provide any consideration of potential displacement.

According to the Health Impact Report, over 40,000 people have a moderate to very high risk for financial strain and/or displacement as a result of the Project's impacts on housing prices in the surrounding area.³⁴ Within the South Central community that would be impacted by the Project, thousands of households are already rent burdened, and a large number of subsidized affordable housing units are at risk of converting to market rate in the near future. 35

A recirculated DEIR should evaluate the Project's potential for displacement and its consistency with General Plan policies to mitigate and minimize displacement impacts.

Policy 2-1.4 Ensure the viability of existing neighborhood stores (i.e., mom-and pop) which support the needs of local residents and are compatible with the neighborhood.

The Health Impact Study provides a wealth of data on the risk of commercial displacement associated with large scale development projects and the potential for construction to contribute to disruption and destabilization for small local businesses. The Health Impact Report also notes one example of a local business that had operated in the neighborhood for 20 years experiencing a rent increase of over 100%, forcing the business to close down immediately. Other businesses in the vicinity of the Project are only being offered short term leases, despite owners' efforts to negotiate longer terms.36

Given this, Policy 2-1.4 is highly relevant, and a recirculated DEIR should evaluate the Project's consistency with this policy, as well as any mitigation measures available to help stabilize and promote local community serving small businesses.

Policy 11-2.3 Maximize opportunities for affordable housing and pedestrian access The Land Use and Planning Chapter of the DEIR neglects to evaluate whether the Project is consistent with this policy. If such an evaluation had been

24 cont.

25

³⁴ Id., at 19-20. ³⁵ Id., 20.

³⁶ Id., 34-35.

provided, it would conclude that the Project – with 1,444 market rate housing units and zero affordable units – is clearly inconsistent with a policy to maximize affordable housing near transit.

26 cont.

General Plan Framework Element

Policy 3.14.6: Consider the potential re-designation of marginal industrial lands for alternative uses by amending the community plans based on the following criteria:

- a. Where it can be demonstrated that the existing parcelization precludes effective use for industrial or supporting functions and where there is no available method to assemble parcels into a unified site that will support viable industrial development;
- b. Where the size and/or the configuration of assembled parcels are insufficient to accommodate viable industrial development;
- c. Where the size, use, and/or configuration of the industrial parcels adversely impact adjacent residential neighborhoods;
- d. Where available infrastructure is inadequate and improvements are economically infeasible to support the needs of industrial uses;
- e. Where the conversion of industrial lands to an alternative use will not create a fragmented pattern of development and reduce the

The Project is currently zoned "M1-2-0." The site has a General Plan land use designation of "Limited Manufacturing" with Oil District Overlay.

To facilitate the proposed development of 1,444 residential units, 90,000 square feet of retail uses, 46,000 square feet of restaurant/bar uses, a 208-key hotel; 18,000 square-foot gallery, and 8,000 square-foot yoga/fitness studio and approximately 2,733 parking spaces, the Applicant is requesting a General Plan Amendment to change the designation to Community Commercial, and a corresponding zone change from M1-2 to C4-2.

Building the Project as proposed would effectuate a transition or redesignation of a large swath of industrial land. The City has enacted a number of policies intended to ensure that industrial land use conversion is carefully evaluated and considered. In addition to the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP, discussed in detail below), Framework Policy 3.14.6 provides criteria for evaluating whether it is appropriate to redesignate industrial land, as requested by this Project.

It is important to carefully evaluate and consider land use changes that would forever remove properties from the City's inventory of industrial land. Industrial zoned land is vital for the City's long-term economic sustainability.

The DEIR includes shockingly very little analysis of the Project's impact on the conversion of industrial zoned land. The DEIR only provides vague references to the Project Site being located in a portion of the City undergoing transition.³⁷ The DEIR does not even mention the City's ILUP or Framework Policy 3.14.6, let alone provide an

³⁷ DEIR, p. IV.J-34.

integrity and viability of existing industrial areas; f. Where the conversion of industrial lands to an alternative use will not result in an adverse impact on adjacent residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, or other land uses; g. Where it can be demonstrated that the reduction of industrial lands will not adversely impact the City's ability to accommodate sufficient industrial uses to provide jobs for the City's residents or incur adverse fiscal impacts; and/or h. Where existing industrial uses constitute a hazard to adjacent residential or natural areas.

Policy 7.2.9 Limit the redesignation of existing industrial land to other land uses except in cases where such redesignation serves to mitigate existing land use conflicts, and where it meets the criteria spelled out in Policy 3.14.6

adequate analysis of the criteria listed therein.

Although the City may reasonably determine that it is appropriate to allow mixed-use commercial and residential development on this site, the DEIR cannot simply ignore that this transition is being proposed and that such a transition invokes several important land use policies.

A recirculated DEIR must provide an analysis of the land use consistency impacts of the transition of existing industrial zoned land to support mixed use commercial and residential uses as proposed by the Project.

27 cont.

Policy 3.1.9: Assure that fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, incomes and education levels with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, including affirmative efforts to inform and involve environmental groups, especially environmental justice groups, in early planning stages through notification and two-way

As described throughout this letter, there are numerous significant environmental impacts associated with the Project, and many instances in which the DEIR's evaluation of environmental impacts is inadequate. Despite the known community concern relating to these impacts, the City repeatedly refused requests – including requests from environmental justice groups – for an extension of the 45 day comment period, to allow local residents appropriate opportunity to review the enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. This, along with the refusal of requests for Spanish language translation, is inconsistent with the

communication.	environmental justice objectives of Framework Policy 3.1.9.
Policy 4.1.6 Create incentives and give priorities in permit processing for low- and very-low income housing developments throughout the City.	As proposed, the Project is seeking a general plan amendment, zone change and parking reductions that would dramatically increase the number of residential units permitted on site. Yet, the Project is requesting this increase in allowable residential density without utilizing either the city's Density Bonus Ordinance or
Policy 4.2.1 Offer incentives to include housing for very lowand low-income households in mixed-use developments.	the Downtown Housing Incentive Floor Area Bonus. Granting the zone change and general plan amendment, as proposed, will permit the Project to achieve the benefits contained in the density bonus ordinance and the Downtown Housing Incentive Ordinance without the Project actually meeting the minimum requirements to qualify for these incentives. Effectively circumventing existing incentives, this procedure undermines the City's entire affordable housing incentive structure, thereby rendering the Project inconsistent with Framework Policy 4.1.6 and 4.2.1.
Policy 7.3.2 Retain existing neighborhood commercial activities within walking distance of residential areas.	The DEIR includes numerous descriptions of the new commercial uses at the Project. But the DEIR neglects to evaluate the potential impacts that the project will have on existing neighborhood commercial activities, including the potential to drive up commercial rents in the surrounding area, threatening the displacement of existing community serving small businesses. ³⁸

cont.

31

D. The DEIR fails to evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Preservation Policy (ILUP).

The Project site is located in the M1-2-0 zone and has a General Plan land use designation of Limited Manufacturing with Oil District Overlay and Height District 2, While Height District 2 permits an FAR of 6:1, the M1 zone does not permit the uses proposed by the Project. To aid the proposed development of 1,444 residential units, 90,000 square feet of retail uses, 46,000 square feet of restaurant/bar uses, a 208-key hotel; 18,000 square-foot gallery, and 8,000 square-foot yoga/fitness studio and approximately 2,733 parking spaces, the Applicant is requesting a General Plan

³⁸ See Health Impact Report, 33-35.

Amendment to change the designation to Community Commercial, and a corresponding zone change from M1-2 to C4-2.

Ten years ago, an onslaught of industrial-to-residential conversions — just like the one requested here — caused a rapid loss of job-supporting industrial land throughout the city. In response, the Department of City Planning (DCP) and Community Redevelopment Agency embarked on the Industrial Land Use Policy project (the "ILUP"). Consequently, a comprehensive study evaluated the viability of the City's industrial districts and created four distinct typologies of existing industrial zoned land, ranging from districts that should be preserved to parcels that are appropriate for conversion. The ILUP project culminated in a 2008 memorandum to DCP staff ("Staff Directive"). This policy document includes very specific direction and guidance regarding the evaluation of entitlement applications for proposed developments on industrial zoned land. The ILUP, and this Staff Directive in particular, outline the process and procedures that DCP staff must now follow when evaluating the general plan amendment and zone change requested for this Project.

The ILUP is a touchstone of city land use policy, and unquestionably applies to this Project. And yet, the DEIR Land Use and Planning chapter fails to even mention this policy, let alone adequately evaluate the Project's consistency. Given the dramatic transformation of industrial land to support residential use that is being proposed for this Project, the DEIR must evaluate the project's consistency with the city's ILUP. Without this analysis, the DEIR fails to meet the standards of thorough review of consistency with City plans and policies.⁴¹

E. Although the ILUP may support transition to residential and commercial use on the Project Site, the Project as proposed is inconsistent with ILUP Community Benefits Requirements.

The Project Site was designated by the ILUP as a "transition district," where transition from industrial uses to other commercial or residential uses may be continued. While certainly instructive, this designation is not the end of the story. The ILUP unequivocally calls for the inclusion of certain meaningful community benefits as part of any land use change on this property.

Although omitted entirely from the DEIR analysis of land use policy, this requirement for meaningful community benefits is actually reiterated throughout the City's Industrial Land Use Policy. For example, the ILUP Report outlined a series of "Guiding Principles," which included the following:

³⁹ Department of City Planning and Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, "Los Angeles' Industrial Land: Sustaining a Dynamic City Economy."

31 cont.

Los Angeles Industrial Land Use Policy, Staff Direction Memorandum Regarding Industrial Land Use and Potential Conversion to Residential or Other Uses [hereafter, "Staff Directive."]
 http://planning.lacity.org/Code_Studies/LanduseProj/Industrial_Files/StaffDirections.pdf
 See, e.g., City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, H.1

⁴² http://planning.lacity.org/Code_Studies/LanduseProj/Industrial_Files/SoutheastLA.pdf

"When zone changes and/or other actions increase land value, ensure that community benefits are appropriately identified and provided. Whenever possible, provide mechanisms to mitigate the business and job-loss impacts whenever zones are changed." 43

In the "Preliminary Southeast Los Angeles Industrial Area Data and Recommendations Report," the recommendations for the Project Site included the following:

"If residential development is studied and recommended to replace industrial uses, an affordable housing component and/or other public benefits should be incorporated. Develop strategies and programs to mitigate potential loss of industrial jobs." 44

More specifically, the ILUP Staff Directive calls for DCP staff to "recommend approval of applications for changes of use or zone provided Community Benefits are incorporated..." The Staff Directive then instructs: "[w]hen considering approval of projects within "Industrial Mixed Use" and "Transition" Districts, staff recommendations should include Community Benefits set forth below." The Staff Directive then outlines specific Community Benefits, including: the provision of Affordable Housing, Relocation Consultation for Displaced Business, the creation of a Job Training Assistance Fund, Minimum Job-Producing Space, Open Space, and Infrastructure Improvements.

Because it lacks any acknowledgment of the ILUP's clear directive for Community Benefits, the DEIR is incomplete. ⁴⁷ This failure to adequately evaluate the Project's inconsistency with the ILUP must be corrected. In considering mitigation measures, the DEIR should refer to the ILUP Community Benefits requirements and recommend proper mechanisms to effectuate these requirements. In addition, it is important to recognize that the requested zone change causes a permanent loss of land that would support good industrial jobs with family-supporting wages. This loss would

⁴³ Department of City Planning and Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, "Los Angeles' Industrial Land: Sustaining a Dynamic City Economy," 32.

⁴⁴ Preliminary Southeast Los Angeles Industrial Area Data and Recommendations, http://cityplanning.lacity.org/Code_Studies/LanduseProj/Recommendations/sela.pdf. These preliminary recommendations were converted to "Geographically Specific Staff Directions." In the preliminary recommendations, the project site is located in Analysis Area 2. In the Geographically Specific Staff Directions, the project site is located in Analysis Area 3. The Geographically Specific Staff Directions do not include the reference to community benefits that is in the preliminary recommendations, presumably because it was included as an appendix to the Staff Directive Memo, which includes several very specific directives and guidance concerning community benefits.

⁴⁵ Staff Directive, 5.

⁴⁶ Id., at 8.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, H.1. A determination of significance regarding land use consistency should be made considering the following factors: "Whether the proposal is inconsistent with the adopted land use/density designation in the Community Plan, redevelopment plan or specific plan for the site; and "Whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans." Here, the Project is clearly inconsistent with the Site's existing industrial zoning and use regulations, and is also inconsistent with the City's existing policy framework that is intended to inform land use planning for industrial zoned property.

occur in an area that is starving for good jobs. The recirculated DEIR must contain adequate mitigation measures to address this loss.

F. The DEIR includes only a perfunctory listing of relevant General Plan policies and provides an incomplete analysis of the Project's consistency.

Notwithstanding the glaring absence of numerous relevant General Plan policies (as described above), The DEIR does include several "consistency tables," as if to suggest an analysis of the Project's relationship to applicable development guidelines and standards. Unfortunately however, where relevant General Plan policies are actually identified in the DEIR, the consistency analysis is often cursory, leading only to conclusory statements of consistency without adequate evidence to support. The table below provides just some of the examples of General Plan policies where the DEIR's analysis is incomplete or inadequate.

General Plan Policy	Comment	
General Plan Framework Element		
Objective 3.1 accommodate a diversity of uses that support the needs of the City's existing and future residents, businesses, and visitors.	The DEIR contends that the Project is consistent with this objective, in part, because it in the developer's opinion will "provide a service that is essential and beneficial to the community." Yet the DEIR provides no support for these claims and specifically declines to identify, as required, how the proposed uses will support the needs of existing residents and community serving small businesses in the area.	
Policy 3.1.5: Allow amendments to the community plans and coastal plan to further refine General Plan Framework Element land use boundaries and categories to reflect local conditions, parcel characteristics, existing land uses, and public input. These changes shall be allowed provided (a) that the basic differentiation and relationships among land use districts are maintained, (b) there is no reduction in overall housing capacity, and (c) additional	The DEIR acknowledges that the project is inconsistent with existing General Plan land use designation and zoning. The DEIR merely concludes, however, that once the General Plan is amended and the zone designation is changed to match the project description, then the parcel will be singularly zoned for the mix of uses that would be included in the project. This circular logic fails to adequately address the impacts of a General Plan amendment and zone change that will not only dramatically increase the allowable development scale and intensity on-site, but also permanently remove a large area of industrial zoned land from the City's rapidly shrinking inventory.	
environmental review is conducted in accordance with the	In addition, the DEIR suggests that the Project would be consistent with the land use designation	

⁴⁸ DEIR, Table IV.J-3.

33

⁴⁹ Id

California Environmental
Quality Act should the impacts
of the changes exceed the levels
of significance defined and
modify the conclusion of the
Framework Element's
Environmental Impact Report.

contemplated by the New Draft Southeast LA Community Plan. Tellingly, the DEIR fails to mention that the Draft Community Plan bars the proposed level of residential density in the absence of significant affordable housing on-site. ⁵⁰ As the Project fails to propose any affordable units, it is in fact inconsistent the new Community Plan.

34 cont.

Objective 3.2: To provide for the spatial distribution of development that promotes an improved quality of life by facilitating a reduction of vehicle trips, vehicle miles traveled, and air pollution

The DEIR claims that the Project is consistent with this objective because it will provide opportunities to live, work and visit the area, given the site's proximity to public transportation options.⁵¹ However, this analysis fails to evaluate whether the project – particularly with the lack of affordable housing and catalytic impacts on surrounding land prices – may actually increase VMT through the displacement of Metro core ridership, which consists of transit dependent households making less than \$25,000 per year. For example, in California, higher income households drive more than twice as many miles and own more than twice as many vehicles as extremely low-income households living near transit.⁵² One recent study found that increasing affordable housing near transit would be "a powerful and durable GHG reduction strategy" and would significantly improve our air quality standards. 53 The DEIR fails to analyze this highly relevant information in considering the Project's impact on vehicle miles traveled and air pollution.

Objective 3.4: Encourage new multi-family residential, retail commercial, and office development in the City's neighborhood districts, community, regional and downtown centers as well as The DEIR charges that the Project is consistent with this objective, in part, because it "would not encroach upon or cause the removal or relocation of uses in [nearby commercial, educational, institutional, industrial and residential districts]." This statement is not supported by any analysis concerning the potential for economic displacement of surrounding

36

⁵⁰ Draft Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Implementation Overlay, 8, 38.

⁵¹ DEIR, Table IV.J-3

⁵² California Housing Partnership Strategy & Transform. Why Creating and Preserving Affordable Homes Near Transit Is a Highly Effective Climate Protection Strategy, 3, 2014. http://www.transformca.org/transform-report/why-creating-and-preserving-affordable-homes-near-transit-highly-effective-climate. See also, Stephanie Pollack et.al., Dukakis Ctr. For Urban and Reg'l Policy, Maintaining Diversity in America's Transit-Rich Neighborhoods: Tools for Equitable Neighborhood Change, 24-29 (2010).

⁵³ Id. 54 DEIR, Table IV.J-3.

along primary transit corridors/boulevards, while at the same time conserving existing neighborhoods and related districts residential or business uses, many of which may encounter increasing rental rates as land prices are driven up. ⁵⁵ The DEIR also fails to adequately analyze the Project's role in eliminating the industrial uses that currently characterize this portion of Washington Blvd. By focusing only on the Project's creation of new multi-family residential, retail and commercial uses, the DEIR fails to evaluate how the project will impact the goal of "conserving existing neighborhoods and related districts."

36 cont.

Objective 3.8 Reinforce existing and establish new neighborhood districts which accommodate a broad range of uses that serve the needs of adjacent residents, promote neighborhood activity, are compatible with adjacent neighborhoods, and are developed as desirable places to work and visit

The DEIR contends that the Project is consistent with this objective because it will "introduce residential uses," and "add new retail, restaurants, and cultural opportunities that would generate employment as well as serve employees/patrons of the existing educational, commercial, and institutional uses surrounding the project site as well as nearby residents."56 The DEIR does not analyze how these uses will actually serve the needs of adjacent residents, especially low-income residents who may be unable to afford the exclusively market rate housing units. The DEIR fails to evaluate whether these new uses will contribute to displacement of low-income residents, and whether any measures are available to mitigate or prevent residential and commercial displacement in the nearby neighborhoods.

Policy 3.15.2 Work with developers and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to incorporate public and neighborhoods serving uses and services in structures located in proximity to transit stations, as appropriate.

The Project will create new retail, grocery and commercial space near transit. However, as proposed, the Project misses a critical opportunity to contribute to affordable housing near transit, which has shown to be a key strategy for increasing transit use and reducing GHGs. In California, people in high income households living in close proximity to transit own more vehicles and drive more than low income people living near transit, while lower income households use transit more - especially those with the lowest incomes, If the Reef only provides housing for high income households, new residents are likely

37

38

⁵⁶ Id.

⁵⁵ See, Health Impact Report, at 33-35.

	to drive more and use transit less than current lower income residents." ⁵⁷ The DEIR should consider the lack of any affordable housing in evaluating consistency with this Policy.
Goal 5A: A livable City for existing and future residents and one that is attractive to future investment. A City of interconnected, diverse neighborhoods that builds on the strengths of those neighborhoods and functions at both the neighborhood and citywide scales.	The DEIR claims that the Project is consistent with this goal, in part, because it would "result in increased housing opportunities for employees working in and near the area." The DEIR draws this conclusion without any supporting analysis of the jobs-housing fit at the Project. As proposed, the Project would not include any affordable housing. The DEIR offers no analysis of how the Project's high-end market-rate housing meets the needs of and/or matches the incomes of employees working in or near the area.
Objective 5.5 Enhance the livability of all neighborhoods by upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm	The recently released Health Impact Report indicates that "An estimated 4,445 people who live within ½ mile of the proposed Reef development project are already experiencing housing cost burdens and could be at high or very high risk of financial strain or displacement as a result. An additional 39,311 could be at moderate risk. Some anticipate they will become homeless." The Health Impact Report also identifies a large number of subsidized affordable housing units are at risk of converting to market rate in the near future. Such impacts will clearly affect the livability of this neighborhood for many residents. Yet, the DEIR does not acknowledge or evaluate this potential impact. Without this analysis, the DEIR cannot fully evaluate the Project's impacts on livability and quality of the public realm.
Gene	ral Plan Housing Element
Goal 1 Housing Production and Preservation: A City where housing production and	The DEIR alleges that the Project is consistent with this goal, citing only the proposed unit mix and the existence of bicycle facilities. ⁶¹ There is no analysis,

⁵⁷ Health Impact Report, 15,41; California Housing Partnership Strategy & Transform. Why Creating and Preserving Affordable Homes Near Transit Is a Highly Effective Climate Protection Strategy, 3, 2014. http://www.transformca.org/transform-report/why-creating-and-preserving-affordable-homes-near-transithighly-effective-climate

whatsoever, of the Project's contribution to a supply

preservations result in an

38 cont.

39

40

⁵⁸ DEIR, Table IV.J-3.
59 Health Impact Report, 4, 19-20.
60 Id, at 20.

⁶¹ DEIR, Table IV.J-7.

adequate supply of ownership and rental housing that is safe, healthy and *affordable to people* of all income levels, races, ages, and suitable for their various needs.

Objective 1.1 Produce an adequate supply of rental and ownership housing in order to meet current and projected needs.

Policy 1.1.3: Facilitate new construction and preservation of a range of different housing types that address the particular needs of the city's households

of housing that is affordable to people of all income levels and suitable for their various needs. It is unsurprising that this part of the Goal is not evaluated, as the Project currently proposes to build zero affordable housing units out of a total of 1,444 units. But however unsurprising, this omission is inappropriate for meaningful environmental review.

Los Angeles is the most unaffordable city in the country, and we are undoubtedly in the midst of a severe affordable housing crisis. The need for new affordable housing and the environmental impacts of this crisis have been well-documented. The area around the Project is a low income neighborhood suffering from a loss of affordable housing. The DEIR provides no evidence to support its claim that the Project is consistent with a policy goal to produce housing that meets the needs of lower income households. The DEIR simply assumes that Project will satisfy certain needs without evaluating whether these needs actually exist in the community.

In evaluating consistency with these General Plan Goals, Objectives and Policies, the DEIR plainly ignores the real community needs and income levels. The DEIR's analysis must be impartial and thorough; otherwise the analysis does not represent a "good faith effort at full disclosure," as required by CEQA. 62

Objective 2.2: Promote sustainable neighborhoods that have mixed-income housing, jobs, amenities services and transit

The DEIR alleges that the Project is consistent with this goal, citing only the unit mix and the "range of different housing types." But housing type is irrelevant to this Objective, which calls for the promotion of "mixed-*income* housing." Of the 1,444 new residential units proposed in the Project, none are affordable.

General Plan Health Element - Plan for a Healthy LA

Policy 2.6 Repurpose underutilized spaces for health: Work proactively with residents to identify and remove barriers to

The DEIR claims that the Project is consistent with this goal, citing only the provision of open space. ⁶⁴ But the DEIR fails to evaluate the Project's potential impacts on the economic displacement of lower-

⁶² CEQA Guidelines, 15151.

41 cont.

42

⁶³ DEIR, Table IV.J-7.

⁶⁴ DEIR, Table IV.J-5.

leverage and repurpose vacant and underutilized spaces as a strategy to improve community health. income households and community serving small businesses.

The Health Impact Report for the Project indicates that "[a]n estimated 4,445 people who live within ½ mile of the proposed Reef development project are already experiencing housing cost burdens and could be at high or very high risk of financial strain or displacement as a result. An additional 39,311 could be at moderate risk." Some anticipate they will become homeless. ⁶⁵ The Health Impact Report also identifies a large number of subsidized affordable housing units are at risk of converting to market rate in the near future. ⁶⁶

There are severe negative health consequences associated with this displacement threat. The Health Impact Report found that "housing instability, living in substandard housing, overcrowding, and homelessness are all determinants of poor health that can be caused by the financial strain of gentrification. These health determinants can have negative impacts on mental and physical health for adults, and can also specifically impact children... There are significant associations between high housing costs and hunger, inadequate childhood nutrition, and poor childhood growth. "67 The Health Impact Report also notes that "[d]isruption of social networks through forced serial displacement and root shock can lead to additional health challenges including exposure to fragmented social environments that have higher rates of violence and sexually transmitted diseases. Multi-generational traumas of this nature can potentially influence the genetic makeup of future generations, leaving them more physiologically susceptible to the impacts of stress.",68

The DEIR's analysis of the health impacts of the Project is incomplete without an evaluation of the Project's potential to contribute to displacement and/or financial strain experienced by low income households in the neighborhood.

⁶⁵ Health Impact Report, 19-20.

⁶⁶ Id.

⁶⁷ Id., at 21.

⁶⁸ Id.

Policy 5.7 Land Use Planning for Public Health and GHG Emission Reduction: Promote land use policies that reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions, result in improved air quality and decreased air pollution, especially for children, seniors and other susceptible to respiratory diseases.

The DEIR alleges that the Project is consistent with this Policy by noting its proximity to a rail station and the proposal for bike facilities. ⁶⁹ The DEIR fails to analyze the important and relevant relationship between public health and GHG reduction and the Project's lack of affordable housing.

As proposed, the Project will create 1,444 new housing units exclusively at or above market rate. In California, higher income households drive more than twice as many miles and own more than twice as many vehicles as extremely low-income households living near transit. One recent study found that increasing affordable housing near transit would be "a powerful and durable GHG reduction strategy" and would significantly improve our air quality standards. The second strategy is a significantly improve our air quality standards.

A recirculated DEIR must analyze this highly relevant information in considering the Project's impact on GHG emission reduction goals.

Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan

Objective 1-2: To locate new housing in a manner which reduces vehicular trips and make it accessible to services and facilities

The DEIR asserts the Project is consistent with this objective based solely on the fact that it will create new housing units in proximity to public transit. The High-end housing in proximity to transit, alone, does not guarantee a reduction in vehicular trips. The DEIR should evaluate what effect the influx of new market rate units, combined with potential indirect displacement and relocation of low-income residents, will have on ridership and vehicle trips. For example, the DEIR should assess whether the occupants of the market rate apartments and condominiums will bring new vehicles into the area, and whether the potential displacement of low-income households from the surrounding area will result in those households increasing vehicle trips.

44

⁶⁹ DEIR, Table IV.J-5,

⁷⁰ California Housing Partnership Strategy & Transform. Why Creating and Preserving Affordable Homes Near Transit Is a Highly Effective Climate Protection Strategy, 3, 2014. http://www.transformca.org/transform-report/why-creating-and-preserving-affordable-homes-near-transit-highly-effective-climate.

⁷² DEIR, Table IV.J-4.

The Reef Project Health Impact Report notes: "[c]ensus data confirms that residents of South Central are much more likely to take transit and less likely to drive alone when community to work than residents of Los Angeles as a whole."73 A growing body of research concerning the nexus between affordable housing and transit supports this conclusion. According to one recent study, "[i]n California, people in high income households living in close proximity to transit own more vehicles and drive more than low income people living near transit, while lower income households use transit more - especially those with the lowest incomes." If the Reef only provides housing for high income households, new residents are likely to drive more and use transit less than current lower income residents.",74

The DEIR should take this information into account when evaluating the impacts on vehicular trips.

Policy 1-3.2 Consider factors such as neighborhood character and identity, compatibility of land uses, impact on livability, impacts on services and public facilities, and impacts on traffic levels when changes in residential density are proposed.

The DEIR fails to evaluate the potential for indirect displacement of low-income residents and community serving small businesses in the surrounding community. The recently released Health Impact Report of the Project indicates that "An estimated 4,445 people who live within ½ mile of the proposed Reef development project are already experiencing housing cost burdens and could be at high or very high risk of financial strain or displacement as a result of the development. An additional 39,311... could be at moderate risk. Some focus group participants from the area anticipate they will become homeless."

Such an impact will clearly affect neighborhood character, identity, and livability. Yet, the DEIR does not acknowledge or evaluate this potential impact. Without this analysis, the DEIR fails to evaluate the

45 cont.

⁷³ Health Impact Report, at 15.

⁷⁴ Health Impact Report, 15, 41; California Housing Partnership Strategy & Transform. Why Creating and Preserving Affordable Homes Near Transit Is a Highly Effective Climate Protection Strategy, 3, 2014. http://www.transformca.org/transform-report/why-creating-and-preserving-affordable-homes-near-transit-highly-effective-climate

⁷⁵ Health Impact Report, at 4.

	Project's impacts on livability, impacts on services and public facilities, and impacts on traffic levels.	46 cont.
Policy 2.1-3 Commercial areas should be consolidated and deepened to stimulate existing businesses, create opportunities for new development and offstreet parking, expand the variety of goods and services, and improve shopping convenience as well as offer local employment	The DEIR asserts that the Project is consistent with this Policy based only on a description of the <i>new</i> commercial, retail and employment opportunities. The DEIR does not evaluate, at all, the impacts on <i>existing</i> businesses. As a result, the DEIR's evaluation of consistency with this policy is incomplete.	47
Policy 2.4-3: Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development	In evaluating the "harmony with the best of existing development," the DEIR does not evaluate the dramatic <i>disharmony</i> between the anticipated housing prices in the Project and the incomes of local residents.	48
Objective 2-6 To maintain and increase the commercial employment base for community residents whenever possible	The DEIR claims consistency with this Objective merely by listing the proposed uses and claiming that they will strengthen the economic base and expand market opportunities for existing and new businesses and increase the employment base for community residents. The DEIR does not provide any information regarding how this will occur. The DEIR fails to outline the specific policies or programmatic details that will result in local residents accessing the new jobs. It is insufficient to simply assert that jobs will be created in the Project. To properly evaluate consistency with this objective, the DEIR needs to explain how those jobs will be made available to and occupied by community residents.	49

The DEIR fails to evaluate inconsistency with the Draft Southeast LA Community Plan.

50

The Department of City Planning is currently in the process of updating the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan. The most recent draft of the plan was revised and released in October, 2014, with a corresponding draft of the Community Plan Implementation Overlay (CPIO).⁷⁸

⁷⁶ DEIR, Table IV.J=5.
77 DEIR, Table IV.j-4.
78 Available at, https://sites.google.com/site/seastlancp/

The DEIR highlights that under the current draft of the Community Plan, the Project Site would be designated for Community Commercial Use. While claiming consistency with the Plan's vision for a mixed-use TOD district along the Blue Line, the DEIR only briefly acknowledges the Project's inconsistency with the Draft Plan's density provisions. The DEIR neglects to mention that the Project as proposed is also fundamentally inconsistent with many of the Draft Plan's policies and objectives.

The DEIR indicates the Project will have a floor area ratio (FAR) of at or just below 6:1. It is the intent of the CPIO to allow density above 1.5 FAR on the Project Site for projects that provide affordable housing. In addition, the Draft CPIO provides a mechanism to achieve the type of parking reduction that the Project is currently seeking. Consistent with the structure of the City's Density Bonus Ordinance and the Downtown Housing Incentive, and in keeping with Housing Element policy, the Draft CPIO would allow a parking reduction only for residential projects that include affordable housing. Because the Project as proposed would have a floor area ratio at 6:1 and enjoy parking reductions without including any affordable housing, it is inconsistent with the provisions of the Draft Southeast Los Angeles CPIO.

In addition to the affordable housing provisions in the CPIO, the Draft Community Plan also contains a number of broader goals and policies that are potentially inconsistent with the Project and go unaddressed in the DEIR. For example:

- Policy LU5.6 "Prioritize housing that is affordable to a broad cross-section of income levels and that provides the ability to live near work."
- Policy LU13.3 "Prioritize new housing for the transit-dependent community and discourage upscale luxury housing at TODs in Southeast Los Angeles, which has a large transit-user and low income population."
- Policy LU13.4 "Promote and incentivize mixed income and/or affordable housing in TODs"
- Policy LU16.3 "Encourage job training and local hiring for community residents."
- **Program 34** "Consistent with the goals and policies of the City's Housing Element, the Plan supports the maintenance and enhancement of the existing affordable housing stock for existing residents."
- **Program 63** "Encourage businesses to hire locally, and require local hiring for discretionary projects with Development Agreements to the extent feasible."

These policies and programs call for the City to do more than just indiscriminately green-light any project that creates mixed-use development in the general vicinity of transit. Rather, the Draft Plan clearly contemplates and advances a more comprehensive vision for transit-oriented development in the Southeast LA

⁷⁹ DEIR IV.J-58-59.

⁸⁰ Draft Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Implementation Overlay, 38. In addition to mixed income housing incentives, parking reductions are offered as incentives for sit-down restaurants, full service grocery stores and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

Community Plan Area. The Draft Plan calls for TOD projects that include housing opportunities for low-income core riders and contribute economic opportunities to local residents. Lacking an affordability component or detailed programs to ensure jobs for local residents, the Project is inconsistent with the vision laid out in the Draft Community Plan. It also threatens the kind of community destabilization that directly contradicts the goals and objectives outlined above.

Although the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan and CPIO have not yet been enacted, the DEIR makes selective use of it. For example, in the Population/Housing/Employment chapter, the DEIR notes that "the most recent draft of the plan was revised in April 2014 through the collaborative effort between the City, the Community Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), residents, businesses, developers, design professionals and property owners." That chapter of the DEIR concludes that, although not adopted, "the data used in the development of the plan are valid for purposes of evaluating impacts of growth associated with the project." But in the context of land use and planning, where it is much more apparent that the Project is inconsistent with forthcoming Community Plan policies, the DEIR abruptly concludes "the Plan has not been adopted and is not yet applicable to the development of the Project Site." The DEIR cannot promote the Draft Community Plan to shape its narrative in one Chapter and then disavow its relevance in another.

A recirculated DEIR Land Use & Planning Chapter should acknowledge that the Draft Community Plan and CPIO reflect a current visioning process for the community, and evaluate the Project for alignment with this vision.

H. The DEIR fails to evaluate whether the individual buildings comprising the Project meet current planning and zoning requirements.

In addition to several mid-rise buildings, the Project includes a 35-story residential tower, a 32 story residential tower, and another 19 story hotel tower, each of which are completely out of scale with the surrounding uses. The DEIR fails to disclose or evaluate the full extent of these buildings' inconsistency with current zoning regulations. Although the Project consists of multiple buildings, the DEIR's Land Use & Planning analysis treats the Project as a single unit when evaluating compliance. In doing so, the DEIR presents a misleading analysis of potential impacts and concludes that the Project will be consistent with the proposed density restrictions, even though the 3 towers, if considered independently, would likely violate both current and the requested new zoning provisions.

The Project Site is currently zoned [Q]M1-2-O. The Applicant is seeking a zone change to C4-2-O and a corresponding General Plan Amendment to change the use from Limited Manufacturing to Community Commercial. However, the Community

50 cont.

⁸¹ DEIR, IV.L-6.

⁸² Ld

⁸³ DEIR, IV.J-59.

51 cont.

52

Commercial use designation is subject to Community Plan Footnote 1, which limits FAR to 1.5:1. As a result, the Applicant is seeking *another* General Plan Amendment to exempt the Project from this requirement and allow the Project to be developed under Height District No. 2 (which allows 6:1 FAR). Even after all this maneuvering, the Project seeks *yet another* discretionary deviation from existing zoning by requesting a separate conditional use permit (CUP) to allow averaging of floor area ratio.

Presuming that the CUP and other entitlements will be granted, the DEIR computes a single floor area ratio value for the entire project and neglects to provide the separate floor area ratios for each tower in the Project. All told, the averaged floor area ratio for the Project (approximately 6:1) exceeds what is currently permitted on site. It exceeds what would be permitted even with the requested zone change and general plan amendment to change the use. And even with another General Plan Amendment to avoid Footnote No. 1, the individual towers may *still* exceed the floor area ratio allowed in Height District 2. In failing to present the floor area ratio of each building, the DEIR provides insufficient information and analysis regarding the Project's significant impacts. Even with a contemplated CUP to average the floor area ratio, a recirculated DEIR should acknowledge and address the impacts of individual towers potentially exceeding height and density limitations.

I. The DEIR fails to evaluate Secondary Impacts of the Project's proposed zone change and General Plan Amendment.

The Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide requires an analysis of "the number, degree, and type of secondary impacts on surrounding land uses that could result from implementation of the project." The DEIR attempts to bundle this factor into its evaluation of "community division and land use compatibility." This analysis however, includes only broad references to the Project's proposed uses and pedestrian access. In contravention of the LA CEQA Thresholds, there is absolutely no mention or analysis of potential secondary impacts on surrounding land uses.

The Project may, in fact, result in secondary land use impacts on surrounding land uses. As demonstrated in DEIR Figure IV.J-4, most of the surrounding properties are zoned M1 or M2. Pursuant to the City of Los Angeles Zoning Code, certain allowable uses on M1 and M2 parcels may be limited when a more restrictive use is in the vicinity. As well, a significant mixed use project with 1,444 new residential units in the immediate vicinity of industrial zoned property will likely result in those nearby locations no longer being marketable as industrial sites. The Project as proposed is likely to catalyze the transformation of not just the Project Site, but the adjacent and surrounding industrial sites to commercial and residential oriented development patterns. Regardless

84 CEQA Thresholds, H.2-3

⁸⁶ See, e.g., LAMC 12.19A4(b)(3); LAMC 12.17.6A.8; LAMC 12.17.6A.10; LAMC 12.17.6A.11;

⁸⁵ DEIR, IV.J-33 "The criteria identified above under "thresholds of significance" are used to evaluate the Project's potential impacts in respect to two general categories: *regulatory* impacts (criteria a and b of the City of Los Angeles L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide) and *physical impacts* (criteria c through e of the City of Los Angeles L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide)." The secondary land use impacts factor is listed as criteria e in the DEIR (IV.J-27).

of whether the City ultimately supports such a transition for this area, the DEIR neither discloses nor evaluates this potential impact, thereby impeding informed decision-making and thorough environmental review. A recirculated DEIR should evaluate the Project's potential secondary impacts on the industrial land uses that characterize many of the parcels in the vicinity.

52 cont.

III. THE DEIR FAILS TO CONSIDER A PROJECT ALTERNATIVE WITHOUT OFFSITE SIGNAGE.

CEQA requires an EIR to describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen its significant environmental impacts. 87 Here, the DEIR again fails to comply with CEOA given its failure to evaluate a "no offsite signage" alternative. Although deficient in its evaluation of the billboard's environmental impacts, as noted above, even under its impermissibly segmented analysis, the proposed signage lodges a significant environmental impact resulting from the signage in Vertical Zone 3. As an alternative to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental impacts from the Project's signage, the DEIR offers "Alternative 3: Reduced Height/Reduced Signage". However, "Alternative 3, Reduced Height/Reduce Signage" fails to avoid or substantially lessen these environmental impacts. In fact, under "Alternative 3: Reduced Height/Reduced Signage," environmental impacts from the Project signage remain significant and unavoidable due to the Project's inclusion of offsite electronic signage. 88 Although clearly a source of lucrative revenue for the developer, the offsite signage is not essential to the basic objectives of the Project. And yet, elimination of the offsite signage appears necessary to avoid many of the significant environmental impacts associated with Project as proposed. Accordingly, to comply with CEQA, the recirculated DEIR must include an evaluation of a project alternative without offsite signage.

53

Given its numerous deficiencies and unaccounted for environmental impacts, the DEIR falls far short of complying with CEQA. Its deficiencies and inaccuracies deprive the public their legal right to meaningful disclosure and evaluation of the Project's true environmental impacts. A CEQA compliant DEIR must contain substantial new information and analysis of the currently unaddressed impacts and faulty analysis. Accordingly, a recirculated DEIR must be prepared.

54

We thank you for your time and consideration. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us at (213) 385-2977 or email us at cgiorgio@publiccounsel.org or dsmith@publiccounsel.org.

⁸⁷ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15126.6.

⁸⁸ DEIR, VI 17.

Regards,

/s/ Christina Giorgio /s/ Doug Smith

Christina Giorgio Doug Smith
Staff Attorney Staff Attorney

City of Los Angeles June 2016

Intentionally blank.

City of Los Angeles June 2016

Comment Letter No. 9

Christina Giorgio/Doug Smith Public Counsel 610 South Ardmore Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90005

Response to Comment 9-1

The commenter expresses concerns over the insufficient time given for public comment, and expresses the opinion that the DEIR is deficient and substandard and requires substantial revision and recirculation to meet the requirements of CEQA. With respect to the time provided for public comment, the Draft EIR was circulated for public review from September 17, 2015, to November 2, 2015, a period of 47 days. CEQA Guidelines Section 15105 provides that, when a draft EIR is submitted to the State Clearinghouse for review by state agencies, as was done in this case, the public review period shall not be less than 45 days. Accordingly, the public review period for the Draft EIR met the requirement set forth by Guidelines Section 15105. With respect to the adequacy of the Draft EIR, the commenter provides specific comments in Comments 9-2 through 9-54, which are responded to individually in the sections below.

Response to Comment 9-2

The commenter states that Public Counsel is the public interest law firm of the Los Angeles County and Beverly Hills Bar Associations, and addresses economic, social and environmental challenges faced by low-income communities in Los Angeles County. The comment is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.

Response to Comment 9-3

The commenter states that the Project is out of step and inconsistent with the neighborhood, and would require several discretionary actions and approvals to make the Project consistent with the neighborhood. For example, the comment refers to the Project's proposed signage as incongruent in a community that does not presently contain such signage. The commenter's opinion regarding the project's inconsistency is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. With respect to the commenter's observation that the Project would require numerous discretionary actions and approvals, the Draft EIR includes a list of all of the approvals required for the Project on Pages II-40 and II-41, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15124(d)(1)(B). With respect to the commenter's contention that the proposed signage included in the Project is incongruent with the community, see Response to Comment 9-4.

Response to Comment 9-4

The commenter characterizes the proposed Project signage as "a dizzying array of offsite signage stacked 400 feet high" that would impact the quality of life for residents, and would create a hazard by distracting drivers on the I-10 and I-110 freeways. The commenter further states that the DEIR does not adequately evaluate the environmental impacts of the proposed signage. The comment about the "dizzying array of offsite signage" is qualitative in nature and does not accurately identify the proposed height of the signage. Specifically, the Supplemental Use District for Signage (Signage SUD) that has been proposed to the City for approval would permit a total of 234,067 square feet of signage (Draft EIR, Table II-6, page II-30). Approximately 42 percent (97,514 square feet) of this signage would be provided in one location, on

City of Los Angeles June 2016

the north, east and west facades of The Reef building, to a height of no more than 194 feet. An additional band of signage, which would be limited to hotel identification signage, would be provided at the top of the hotel tower that would be no more than 22 feet wide (within a 240 foot high building), constituting a total of 14,520 square feet. Together, these two sources would include approximately 48% of the total signage included in the Project. As shown in Figures II-9 through II-14 of the Draft EIR, large signs on the remainder of the buildings would be limited to specified signage in specified locations, and would occupy limited portions of specific building facades, as shown in Figures IV.B-9 though IV.B-11 of the Draft EIR. These signs, which include single signs on the north and west facades of the North Tower, and the north and west facades of the South Tower, and two signs on the east façade of the North Tower, encompass 44.5 percent of the total signage. The signs on the west facades of the North and South Towers would be separated horizontally by at least 275 feet. The remainder of the Project signage would consist of small tenant identification and directional signs located throughout the Project Site. As such, the proposed signage, would be distributed throughout the 9.2 acre Project Site, and the commenter's characterization of this signage as "stacked 400 feet high" is not accurate. With respect to the comment about the lack of environmental analysis of the signage, the following Responses to Comments provides a detailed account of how the Draft EIR evaluated the impacts of Project. These impacts are also discussed in Sections IV.B-1 (Visual Quality/Views) and IV.B-2 (Light and Glare) of the Draft EIR.

With respect to the potential effects of Project signage on drivers on the I-10 and I-110 freeways, see Response to Comment 9-5.

Response to Comment 9-5

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR fails to address a potential environmental impact caused by Project billboards alongside freeways. .

Freeway Views

The commenter cites "Sign Ordinance, Los Angeles, Chapter 62" as prohibiting billboards within 2,000 feet of freeway. However, this this citation fails to state the full extent of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 14.4.6, which prohibits construction of signs within 2,000 feet of a freeway, "unless the Department of Building and Safety has first determined that the sign will not be viewed primarily from a main travelled roadway of a freeway, or an on-ramp/off-ramp." (emphasis added) As discussed below, the proposed signage of the project would not be viewed primarily from the adjacent freeways, and would not pose a hazard to driver safety as defined by state law.

The commenter contends that the proposed Project signage would be distracting to drivers on the I-110 and I-10 freeways.

With respect to the I-110 freeway, the Project Site would only be visible from this roadway from very limited locations, and for a limited time frame, because of the configuration of the freeway and the blockage of views of the Project Site by existing development adjacent to the freeway. Views to the Project Site must also be considered within the context of other development, and the visual qualities of the existing environment. When considered within this context, as more fully discussed below, the proposed signage would not represent a distraction to drivers, and would not pose a hazard to driving in this area.

Southbound I-110

For vehicles travelling southbound on the I-110 freeway through Downtown Los Angeles, the proposed development on the Project Site would not be visible until the driver passes LA Live because the existing buildings immediately adjacent to the freeway block views of the Project Site. Once past LA Live, the tops of Project high rise buildings may be visible over the Convention Center at a distance of approximately 5,000 feet, for a length of approximately 3,200 feet, at which point the I-110 freeway crosses under the I-10 freeway. This travel path would include a brief view of the two signs on the north facades of the North and South Towers, and the hotel identification signage on the top of the hotel building. After this underpass, intermittent views of the Project Site are available for approximately 800 feet, which would include the signage at the top of the hotel building, followed by clearer views of the Project Site for an additional approximately 800 feet, which would encompass the hotel building signage and the signage on the west façade at a distance of approximately 2,200 feet. After this, the freeway alignment goes below the ground level, and the Project Site is not visible. The views to the Project Site from the southbound I-110, in addition to traffic, would also encompass other buildings, trees, freeway structures, and roadway signs. Accordingly, the views of Project signage from this freeway would be intermittent, distant, and, therefore, not prominent, and would only be available for a duration of approximately two minutes for traffic travelling at 30 miles per hour. As such, Project signage is assessed to not represent a safety hazard for southbound traffic on the I-110 freeway.

Northbound I-110

For vehicles travelling northbound on the I-110 freeway from south of Downtown Los Angeles, the Project Site becomes discernible at a point approximately 1,200 feet south of the Adams Boulevard off-ramp. Prior to this point, the Project Site would, at most, be viewed as part of the Downtown Los Angeles skyline, as the view traveling northbound is affected by sound walls located on the eastern edge of the freeway. From this point, the Project Site would be visible for no more than 800 feet, and traffic, other buildings and freeway sound walls would also be located within this field of view. The only signage that would be visible from this location would be the hotel identification signage at the top of the hotel building. After this point, the freeway alignment goes below ground level, and the Project Site would not be visible. Accordingly, the views of Project signage from this freeway would be limited, both in duration and in visible signage, and would not represent a safety hazard for northbound traffic on the I-110 freeway.

With respect to the I-10 freeway, the Project Site would be visible from various locations along this freeway.

Westbound I-10

From the westbound I-10 freeway, the high rise buildings within the Project would first become visible at a distance of approximately 1.5 miles. The view of the Project Site would be to the driver's left, across the eastbound traffic lanes. This view would continue to be available up to the point where the freeway passes by the Project Site, except for a brief period where the view would be partially blocked by a 6-story concrete building located immediately adjacent to the eastbound freeway lanes at San Pedro Street. As shown in the Draft EIR (Figure IV.B-15, page IV.B.2-18), no direct, head-on views of the Project Site are available from the westbound I-10 freeway after the freeway turns to the west approximately 1.5 miles east of the Project Site (i.e., the view of the Project Site for westbound traffic on the I-10 would always be oblique). Moreover, as discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.B.2-18), driver safety on highways is governed by the California Motor Vehicle Code (CMVC), which identifies when lighting can become distracting to drivers. As shown in Section IV.B.2, Aesthetics/Light & Glare, of the Draft EIR, the lighting impacts of Project signage would comply with Section 21466.5 of the CMVC, and would not pose a safety hazard to

motorists because the proposed signage does not fall within a 10 degree cone of view within one mile of the Project Site, which is the screening threshold for light distraction established in CMVC 21466.5. Moreover, the Draft EIR (page IV.B.2-17) identifies that, at over one mile from the site, lighting levels from building signage would be reduced to a level far below the 1,000:1 ratio of source lighting to minimum measured brightness in the driver's field of view allowed by the CMVC. Accordingly, the Draft EIR concludes (page IV.B.2-17) that the lighting impacts of Project signage would comply with Section 21466.6, and would not impair motorists along surrounding freeways.

Eastbound I-10

From the eastbound I-10 freeway, the high rise buildings within the Project would first become visible at approximately Hoover Street, at a distance of approximately 5,500 feet from the Project Site. At this distance, the Project Site would be seen among the landscaping that is located adjacent to the freeway. A view of the Project Site would continue to be available until the freeway passes the Project Site, for a distance of approximately 6,200 feet (approximately 1.2 miles). Throughout this distance, the view to the Project site would always be at an oblique angle to the driver's right. Similar to views of the Project Site from the westbound direction, the effect of Project buildings and signage on driver safety was evaluated in the Draft EIR in accordance with the governing requirements provided in the CVMC, and the Project was determined to not impair motorists on surrounding freeways. As stated in the Draft EIR, page IV.B.2-17, the proposed signage does not fall within a 10 degree cone of view within one mile of the Project Site, which is the screening threshold for light distraction established in CMVC 21466.5. Accordingly, the Draft EIR concludes (page IV.B.2-17) that the lighting impacts of Project signage would comply with Section 21466.6, and would not impair motorists along surrounding freeways.

Electronic Signage

The commenter states without citing a source that it is "well established that billboards increase the risk of injury and death for drivers...as outdoor advertising draws drivers' attention away from the road." Notwithstanding that the proposed Signage SUD does not include electronic billboards, the potential for electronic signs in general (referred to as Commercial Electronic Variable Message Signs (CEVMS)) to affect the visual behavior of drivers, and increase potential for accidents was examined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in a study published in September, 2012. The study measured the eye behavior of drivers operating in the vicinity of both CEVMS and standard billboards. On average, the drivers in this study devoted between 73 and 85 percent of their visual attention to the road ahead for both CEVMS and standard billboards. Therefore, the presence of CEVMS did not appear to be related to a decrease in looking toward the road ahead. In addition, the average fixation duration to CEVMS was 379 milliseconds (ms) and to standard billboards it was 335 ms. The longest fixation to a CEVMS was 1,335 ms and to a standard billboard it was 1,284 ms. The current widely accepted threshold for durations of glances away from the road ahead that result in higher crash risk is 2,000 ms. Thus, glances at standard billboards or electronic signs do not exceed this threshold and there would not be a greater risk for crashes. The FHWA study concludes:

The present data suggest that the drivers in this study directed the majority of their visual attention to areas of the roadway that were relevant to the task at hand (i.e., the driving task). Furthermore, it is possible, and likely, that in the time that the drivers looked away from the

-

[&]quot;Driver Visual Behavior in the Presence of Commercial Electronic Variable Message Signs (CEVMS)", U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, September, 2012. This report is included in its entirety in Appendix B to this Final EIR.

forward roadway, they may have elected to glance at other objects in the surrounding environment (in the absence of billboards) that were not relevant to the driving task. When billboards were present, the drivers in this study sometimes looked at them, but not such that overall attention to the forward roadway decreased.

This conclusion contradicts the commenter's unsupported assertion that the presence of the proposed Project billboards represents a safety hazard to drivers in the vicinity of the Project Site.

Shadows

The commenter also contends that the Project would "cast 'far reaching' shadows over the I-10 freeway for most of the day". This contention is incorrect. As shown in the Draft EIR (Figures, IV.B-16, IV.B-17, and IV.B-18, pages IV.B.3-4 through IV.B.3-6), and discussed in the Draft EIR (pages IV.B.3-7 through IV.B.3-8), shadows from Project buildings would not reach the I-10 freeway during the summer solstice, and Project shadows reaching the I-10 freeway during the equinox and winter solstice would consist of a narrow shadow from the North Tower that would extend across the freeway, moving from west to east, that would only reach the edge of the freeway and cover the travel lanes of the freeway for maximum of two and one-half hours. This level of shading would only affect vehicles travelling on the freeway for a matter of seconds, and, therefore, would not pose a hazard to driver safety.

California Motor Vehicle Code

The commenter's contention that a "passing reference" to the California Motor Vehicle Code in the Draft EIR does not constitute an analysis of the traffic hazards is not accurate. As noted above, these regulations constitute the applicable state law with respect to controlling hazards to motorists. Moreover, the discussion of CMVC Section 21466.5 presented in the Draft EIR (summarized on Draft EIR pages IV.B.2-6, IV.B.2-17, and IV.B.2-18, and presented in full in Appendix IV.B, page 37) provides a complete analysis addressing all requirements identified in CMVC Section 21466.5 with respect to vehicle safety. Specifically, because the proposed signage does not fall within a 10 degree cone of view within one mile of the Project Site, which is the screening threshold for light distraction established in CMVC 21466.5, it would not constitute a hazard to motorists as defined in State law. Accordingly, proposed Project signage would not create hazards for vehicles travelling on freeways in the Project vicinity.

Response to Comment 9-6

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR fails to address harm to human health that would be caused by lighting of the Project signage at night. The commenter cites several sources regarding the effects of nighttime lighting on human and plant life. However, these studies (included as Appendices C through F to this Final EIR) are primarily focused on the effects of exposure to *indoor* lighting at night, and its effect on human physiology and health. While these sources conclude that too much indoor light is not healthy when one is trying to sleep, they do not evaluate the effects when one is screened from outdoor sources by being inside with the blinds drawn (i.e., how most people sleep). One of the studies (the AMA study) cited by the commenter puts it as follows:

After lights out for bedtime, it is not yet clear whether the ambient background light from weak sources in the bedroom or outside light coming through the window could influence the circadian system; a brief exposure at these levels may not have a detectable impact in a laboratory setting, although long-term chronic exposure might. Four case-control studies have now reported an association of some aspect of nighttime light level in the bedroom with breast cancer risk. The elevated risk estimate was statistically significant in two of them. As case-control designs, in

addition to the limitation of recall error, there is also the potentially significant limitation of recall bias.

Despite the difficulty of gathering reliable information on bedroom light level at night, the possibility that even a very low luminance over a long period of time might have an impact is important. The lower limit of light intensity that could, over a long time period, affect the circadian system is not established. In the modern world few people sleep in total darkness. When eyelids are shut during sleep, only very bright light can penetrate to lower melatonin and only in some individuals. Frequent awakenings with low level light exposure in the bedroom and certain nighttime activities (e.g., bathroom visits) may disrupt the circadian system, but any related health effects are unknown (emphasis added).

While there is evidence to suggest that exposure to lighting during nighttime hours has health effects, the nighttime lighting to which these studies refer is from indoor sources (e.g., light bulbs) that occur in conjunction with normal patterns of human activity in a modern urban environment. Although this source theorizes that long-term outdoor lighting might influence the circadian system, this specific topic has not been studied and, as such, there is no evidence that establishes that an increase in outdoor lighting levels affects persons sleeping indoors, let alone human physiology. Without research on the effect of outdoor lighting, this contention by the commenter is speculative.

The commenter contends that the Project would represent the largest concentration of signage in the City and that the DEIR did not analyze potential impacts on community members. While the Draft EIR acknowledges (page IV.B.2-11) that the Project would substantially increase lighting levels over the existing levels, the signage at LA Live, although smaller in signage area, occurs within a considerably smaller site area, and is substantially more concentrated than the proposed signage at the Project (Draft EIR, Appendix IV.B, pages 50 and 51). In addition, the City of Los Angeles sets limits for permissible offsite increases in lighting levels from new development in the City. That limit, according to LAMC Section 93.0117, is 2.0 footcandles at an adjacent residential use. The Draft EIR provides an analysis that included all Project light sources, including buildings and signage (pages IV.B.2-12 through IV.B.2-18). In determining that City regulations would be followed in the case of Project signage, this analysis also took into account nearby community members, as it documented that the increase in lighting levels experienced at all residential receptors around the Project Site would not exceed 2.0 footcandles (Draft Therefore, the Draft EIR concluded, while there would be a EIR, pages IV.B.2-12 through IV.B.2-17). significant impact from the concentration of signage on the north, west, and east facades of The Reef Building, the light increase would not exceed City standards. Finally, the Draft EIR also identified the allowable sign luminance for each Project sign that would prevent the exceedance of the 2.0 footcandle threshold at sensitive receptor locations (Draft EIR, Table IV.B-2, page IV.B.2-10). These allowable luminence levels are incorporated as a Project Design Feature (PDF-AES-3, page IV.B.2-9). Accordingly, the increase in light levels around the Project Site would not exceed the LAMC limit of 2.0 footcandles.

In summary, the Draft EIR evaluates the specific characteristics of the Signage SUD, and concludes, based upon established standards related to lighting within the City of Los Angeles, that the Project would not have the impacts suggested by the commenter. Specifically, as discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.B.2-12), Project signage has been designed to result in lighting levels that do not exceed 2.0 footcandles at adjacent offsite light sensitive receptors.

Response to Comment 9-7

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR fails to evaluate the health and safety risks posed by the content of outdoor advertising on lower income communities. However, the commenter mischaracterizes the proposed signage that would be included in the Project as "electronic billboards." The proposed visual displays of the Project are not electronic billboards. Project signage would instead consist of visual displays integrated into the buildings with imagery that changes at different rates varying from fast to very slow. The article referenced by the commenter examined outdoor advertising, specifically "off-site signs" that consist of conventional and digital billboards that advertise goods or services that are not made or sold at the location of the sign.⁴ As such, the study does not apply to the Project as the Project does not include conventional billboards. In addition, given the that the actual content of signage included in the Project is not known, and cannot be known at this time, any conclusions based upon the content of Project signage would be speculative. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15384, "... speculation ... does not constitute substantial evidence." Moreover, the aforementioned study is limited in its scope, as its authors note, because of its small sample size and focused geographic scope. The authors also state that the study relies on the proximity of the outdoor advertising and that a "key difficulty was isolating the range of locations from which each outdoor advertisement is visible." Accordingly, the comment presents no substantial evidence of a potential environmental impact from the content of Project signage.

Response to Comment 9-8

The commenter contends that the Project's "open design" conflicts with the Draft EIR's characterization of Sign Levels 1 and 2 as being located "in encapsulated areas that are no more than incidentally visible from the public rights of way." However, as can be seen in the Draft EIR, Figure II-7, page II-13, these signs would mostly be located within the internal public and commercial areas of the Project Site, such as the mid-block paseo. These signs would be directed at pedestrians and patrons within the mid-block paseo, and would therefore not have aesthetic or lighting impacts that extend beyond the Project Site. Therefore, the analysis of aesthetic and lighting impacts of Vertical Sign Zone 1 and 2 signs did not assume that any of these signs would be located on the external edges of the Project Site. Nevertheless, the Draft EIR included an analysis which measured the light levels of the most impactful of the permitted signs (see Table II-6 of the Draft EIR), and the highest permitted levels of animation that could be included in these signs, including Controlled Refresh II, which cannot change more often than every six hours, and Limited Animation II, which cannot change more often than every three hours (Draft EIR, pages IV.B.1-28 though IV.B.1-32). Vertical Zone 1 signage would consist of building and tenant identification signs, and scroll animation, not exceeding 10 feet in height. The analysis concludes that signage located within Vertical Sign Zones 1 and 2 would not represent a significant impact because of the limited nature of the animation and their limited height. As such, the Draft EIR does not mischaracterize the proposed location or the effect of the signage at Vertical Sign Levels 1 and 2.

Response to Comment 9-9

The commenter claims that the shortened hours of operation for the Signage SUD are inadequate. However, the commenter mentions this in passing and does not substantiate this claim. The commenter

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4025710/ "The Prevalence of Harmful Content on Outdoor Advertising in Los Angeles Land Use Community Characteristics and the Spatial Inequality of a Public Health Nuisance", abstract, see Appendix G to this Final EIR.

also suggests that a proposed mitigation measure to limit the operating hours of animated signage in Zone 3 to 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. be included as part of the Signage District Criteria instead of kept as a mitigation measure. Any mitigation measures identified in the Draft EIR pertaining to signage will automatically become conditions of approval of the Sign District Ordinance for the Project.

Response to Comment 9-10

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR minimizes the impacts from signage by impermissibly segmenting analysis of the sign zones and vertical sign zones and not measuring the overall impact. The Draft EIR identifies five Sign Zones (Draft EIR, pages II-21 and II-22), and three Vertical Sign Zones (Draft EIR, page II-22) that are identified in the proposed Signage SUD. The Draft EIR then identifies the permitted signs that would be included under the proposed Signage SUD (Draft EIR, Table II-6, page II-30). To assess the potential visual impacts of the proposed signage, the Draft EIR evaluates the signage and type as viewed from different perspectives around the entirety of the Project Site. Contrary to the commenter's unsubstantiated claim that segmentation is impermissible, this analytical construct is appropriate because not all signs can be seen from all locations around the Project Site, and the view of the Project signage varies depending upon the viewing location. A summary of the permitted signs on each Project building, by Vertical Sign Zone, is provided on pages II-30 and II-31, and a summary of the Project signage as could be seen from different viewpoints around the Project Site is provided on pages IV.B.1-19 and IV.B.1-20. The Draft EIR also identifies a significance threshold (page IV.B.1-27) that is used to evaluate the potential effects of Project signage. This threshold states that Project signage would result in a significant impact with regard to visual quality/aesthetics if it is: (1) prominent and visible at a distance from the Project site or from the surrounding area, and provides a visual appearance that is not consistent with, or complimentary to, the effects of Project development in creating a visual environment of an urban-scale, transit-oriented activity center; or 2) if the operation of one or more specific signs would adversely impact the visual environment as experienced at a particular sensitive receptor. Although analysis of aesthetic impacts is inherently subjective and can vary from viewer to viewer, these criteria were developed based on an assessment of how signage is viewed in an urban environment, within the context of large scale buildings, and taking into account the factors set forth in the L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, as discussed in the Draft EIR on page IV.B.1-27. Accordingly, the analysis of the significance of Project signage is based on the characteristics of the signs that would be permitted by the proposed Signage SUD. As discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.B-28), the prominence of Vertical Sign Zone 2 signage would be limited by low animation and its location at a lower height, which would limit its visibility to viewers in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site. Moreover, this signage would contribute to the development of the desired aesthetic image of an urban center for the Project site. Accordingly, the Draft EIR assesses that Vertical Sign Zone 2 signage would have less than significant impacts related to visual character. The higher animation allowed in Vertical Sign Zone 3, on the other hand, would result in signage that is visible and prominent, but would not contribute to the desired aesthetic image of an urban center, and thus would be significant. Therefore, the Draft EIR appropriately analyzes the different sign types separately based on their individual characteristics for a more accurate measure of their potential impacts, but also considers the entire proposed signage program in the analysis by evaluating all signs that can be seen from the representative vantage points around the Project Site. The commenter also mentions in footnote 11 of this comment that CEQA does not allow piecemealing. However, the commenter's claim that the Draft EIR piecemeals the signage analysis is incorrect, as piecemealing refers to separating analyses of different projects from each other, not separating the analysis of individual parts of a project. In addition, as noted above, the analysis considers all of the signs that can be seen from the representative vantage points. Finally, the commenter's claim that the Project fails to analyze the overall impact of the signage is not correct as the Draft EIR acknowledges that even though some individual signs

could result in less than significant impacts, the overall impact of the proposed Signage SUD would be considered significant (Draft EIR pages, IV.B.1-35, and IV.B.2-27).

Response to Comment 9-11

The commenter contends that the significance threshold used in the Draft EIR to evaluate signage impacts is flawed. Although the commenter refers to this process as a "self-selected test for significant impacts", CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(b) notes that determining whether a project may have a significant effect on the environment requires careful judgment on the part of the Lead Agency and may vary with the setting. As discussed in the Draft EIR, (Page IV.B.1-27), the significance threshold used to evaluate the visual quality impacts of the proposed Signage SUD was based on criteria included in the City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide (Draft EIR, pages IV.B.1-15 and IV.B.1-16), that are applicable to the Project Site and surrounding area (see also Response to Comment 9-10, which discusses the methodology of the aesthetics/visual quality analysis as it relates to signage).

The comment also claims that the impact on the local community is disregarded. The analysis provided in the Draft EIR takes into account the views of the Project signage available to all persons located in the surrounding area, both nearby and at longer distances, and applies the significance criteria to all signs that would be located within the proposed Signage SUD, basing the determination of significance on the characteristics and location of proposed signs. It was implicitly understood in the Draft EIR that, if a sign were to have a significant n impact on a viewer at a distance from the Project Site, it would have a similar significant impact on a viewer located closer to the Project Site. This point has been clarified in the Final EIR (see Section IV, Corrections and Additions, to this Final EIR). Therefore, the commenter incorrectly interprets the significance threshold as disregarding the local community. For example, the Draft EIR disclosed that Vertical Sign Zone 3 signage would be significant not only from long distances, but also on local viewers, due to the height and animation of the signs.

The commenter contends that the impact from Vertical Sign Zone 1 and 2 signage should have been determined to be significant in the Draft EIR instead of less than significant. However, a significant impact per the stated threshold related to visual quality/aesthetics requires prominence and visibility, where the sign does not contribute to the Project's desired aesthetic image of an urban center. The commenter suggests that the Vertical Sign Zone 2 signage would be visible from the I-10 freeway and would thus be significant, but the Draft EIR concludes, based on the significance threshold discussed in Response to Comment 9-10, that this signage would not achieve prominence because of its limited animation, and would promote the desired aesthetic image of an urban center. Accordingly, the Draft EIR correctly concludes that the impacts of Vertical Sign Zone 2 signage would be less than significant. Similarly, the Draft EIR concludes that Vertical Sign Zone 1 signage would be less than significant due to limited prominence and limited visibility resulting from their small size, and the limited height (below 25 feet) at which these signs would be located. Therefore, the commenter's claim that the impacts from Vertical Sign Zone 1 and 2 should have been significant is not accurate as it fails to look both the prominence and visibility of the signs. In conclusion, the potential impacts of Zones 1 and 2 were accurately analyzed and revision of that analysis is not required.

Response to Comment 9-12

The commenter questions the analysis of the significant impact identified from Vertical Zone 3 signage because they argue it only analyzes views from the far west of the Project Site and does not reflect the effects on the local community. However, the evaluation of significance of Vertical Sign Zone 3 does take into account how the high level of animation would affect all observers, both near and far. As such, the

conclusion also reflects the potential effects of this signage on the local community. The Final EIR has been revised to clarify this point (see Chapter IV, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). With respect to the contention that the analysis should consider the effects of Vertical Sign Zone 3 from all directions, not just the far west, see Response to Comment 9-10, which states that the Draft EIR analyzed views from the all vantage points around the Project Site.

The commenter also disputes the less-than-significant conclusion with respect to Vertical Sign Zone 2 signage. However, page IV B.1-28 of the Draft EIR clearly notes that the Vertical Sign Zone 2 signage was determined to be less than significant because it would be less prominent due to lower height and lower permitted animation, and because this signage would reinforce and contribute to the desired aesthetic image of an urban center that is appropriate for the Project. In addition, the Draft EIR states that the Reef Project SUD would not place west-facing, highly animated signage immediately adjacent to sensitive receptors. To support its conclusion, the Lead Agency used methodology to evaluate the significance of proposed signage based on the type of sign, and the level of animation (Draft EIR, page IV.B.1-27). Taking all these factors into account, the Draft EIR appropriately concludes that the impacts of the proposed Vertical Sign Zone 2 signage would be less than significant. The commenter also disputes the less-than-significant impact related to Zone 1. Like Vertical Sign Zone 2, the limited visibility and lack of prominence associated with the Vertical Sign Zone 1 signage, which would consist of small signs for building and tenant identification, and directional signage, with only limited animation that would be visible from the public right-of-way, supports the Draft EIR's assessment that the impacts of this signage would be less than significant.

The commenter's also contends that "a residential apartment would bear the blunt (sic) of the Zone 2 signage impacts given that the apartment would visually shield other local buildings from seeing the Zone 2 signage." This assertion is incorrect. Page IV.B.1-28 of the Draft EIR refers to the residential buildings located within the Project Site on the southeastern corner of the West Block, and not to an off-site receptor. This clarification is included in the Final EIR (see Section IV, Corrections and Additions). Under the City's guidelines for assessing environmental impacts, impacts of the Project on itself do not need to be addressed⁵.

In addition, the commenter appears to dispute the "glare" discussion and its less-than-significant impact conclusion relative to the Rutland Apartments, Southland Apartments, or LA Trade Tech students identified by the commenter. Glare impacts are separate and distinct from lighting impacts (Draft EIR, page IV.B.2-1), however. The Glare analysis provided in the Draft EIR (page IV.B.2-24) evaluates the potential for proposed signage to create glare effects due to reflective materials in construction and during operation of the Project, and concludes that impacts related to glare from signage would be less than significant at all off-site receptor locations, which would include the three cited by the commenter. Lighting impacts of Project signage are discussed in the Draft EIR on pages IV.B.2-17 through IV.B.2-24. These lighting impacts would not constitute glare (i.e., a lighting condition that causes an observer to experience visual discomfort as a result of high brightness) because the signage would comply with the City's limits on brightness (LAMC Section 93.0117).

-

⁵ LAMC Section 93.0117 establishes the maximum 2.0 footcandle increase standard for "any <u>other</u> property containing a residential unit or units (emphasis added)."

Response to Comment 9-13

The commenter disputes the Draft EIR conclusion that Project signage in Vertical Zones 1 and 2 would be less than significant from the north. Specifically, the commenter disagrees with the conclusion that Vertical Sign Zone 2 signage facing the Rutland Apartments would be less than significant due to the sign size of 2,550 square feet. The comment mischaracterizes this analysis, however, by failing to mention that the Draft EIR determines (page IV.B.1-30) that the combination of the limited size and limited animation of this sign (i.e., the appearance of the sign can change no more frequently than once every three hours) is why there would be a less than significant impact on the Rutland Apartments. Notwithstanding this omission, the Draft EIR (page IV.B.1-30) nevertheless determines that the large animated signs in Vertical Sign Zone 3 would have a significant impact on the Rutland Apartments. Therefore, the Draft EIR has disclosed the impact on the Rutland Apartments. The commenter also disputes the less-than-significant conclusion for the Zone 1. However, the limited visibility and lack of prominence associated with the Vertical Sign Zone 1 signage, which would consist of small signs for building and tenant identification, and directional signage, with limited animation, supports the Draft EIR's assessment that the impacts of this signage would be less than significant. Finally, the commenter asserts that there would be cumulative effects of the proposed signage in combination with billboards in the zones. See Response to Comment 9-10, which discusses the methodology for assessing aesthetic/visual quality impacts of the Project's proposed signage.

Response to Comment 9-14

The commenter suggests that Project signage as viewed from east of the Project Site would have significant impacts from Zone 1 and Zone 2 signage. However, the commenter provides no information regarding specific impacts that would result from Project signage as viewed from the east, only a vague assertion that "the proposed signage would undoubtedly have a significant environmental impact". See Response to Comment 9-13.

Response to Comment 9-15

The commenter suggests that Project signage as viewed from the south of the Project Site would have significant impacts from Zone 1 signage. However, the commenter provides no information regarding specific impacts that would result from Project signage as viewed from the south. See Response to Comment 9-13.

Response to Comment 9-16

The commenter contends that in order to be granted the requested General Plan Amendments, zone changes and other land use approvals, the Project must be consistent with the relevant City General Plan policies and objectives and evaluate inconsistencies. The commenter claims that the Draft EIR does not provide adequate analysis of such consistency. The commenter provides specific comments related to these issues in Comments 9-17 through 9-52. These comments are responded to below.

Response to Comment 9-17

The commenter contends that the land use and planning analysis of the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage is inadequate. The Lead Agency acknowledges this comment and the following clarification will be included in the Final EIR. The Project would be consistent with LAMC Section 14.4.6, which permits signs within 2,000 feet of a freeway if the Department of Building and Safety determines

that the sign will not be viewed primarily from the freeway. As discussed in Response to Comment 9-5 above, the proposed signage of the Project would not be viewed primarily from the adjacent freeways, and would not pose a hazard to driver safety as defined by state law.

In addition, as noted in the Draft EIR (page II-40), the proposed Signage SUD would be adopted in accordance with Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Sections 12.32S, which allows the creation of "SN" (Signage) Supplemental Use Districts. LAMC Section 13.11 allows for the establishment of "SN" Districts in areas of the City, the unique characteristics of which can be enhanced by the imposition of special sign regulations designed to enhance the theme or unique qualities of that district. LAMC Section 13.11 allows for development of SN Districts in "C" zones, to which the Project Site would be redesignated if the proposed Zone Change is approved. LAMC Section 13.11.B requires that no SN District shall contain less than one block, or three acres in area, whichever is smaller. At two City blocks and 9.7 acres in area, the Project Site would be consistent with this requirement. The proposed Signage SUD would also establish regulations addressing the location, number, square footage, height, light illumination, hours of illumination, and design and type of signs permitted, as required by LAMC Section 13.11.C. Since the proposed Signage SUD would be adopted under the provisions of LAMC Sections 12.32S and 13.11, the provisions of the City's general sign regulations (LAMC Sections 14.4.1 et seq.) would not be applicable to the Project. Therefore, the Project's proposed Signage SUD would be consistent with the requirements and procedures set forth in the applicable City regulations (LAMC Sections 12.32S and 13.11).

Response to Comment 9-18

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not provide an adequate analysis of the proposed signage district with respect to the City's existing signage or proposed signage regulations. As discussed in Response to Comment 9-17, the Project would be consistent with the requirements for the establishment of a Signage (SN) Supplemental use District, which would regulate the Project's signage. With respect to the commenter's contention that the Draft EIR does not take into account proposed changes to the City's signage regulations, the most recent changes in the Citywide sign regulations were considered, but not adopted, by the City Planning Commission on October 22, 2015. Since no changes to the existing regulations have been adopted by the City Council, only the existing regulations would be applicable to the Project. Therefore, future stipulations of the revised ordinance, including the removal of existing billboards, do not apply to the Project. Furthermore, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, the baseline for project analysis shall be the conditions that exist at the time the Notice of Preparation is published, which, in this instance, means that Project would fall under the existing sign regulations.

The commenter also contends that the Project is not eligible to qualify for a signage district because the Project falls outside a Regional Center. Limitation of future signage districts to areas with General Plan land use designation of Regional Commercial is one of the provisions of the revised draft sign ordinance, which, as noted above, has not been adopted, and is not applicable to the proposed Signage SUD. Accordingly, the fact that the proposed Signage SUD would not be located in a Regional Center would be irrelevant to consideration of its approval by the City.

Response to Comment 9-19

The commenter contends that the Project signage would have significant impacts related to existing signage regulations and policies, in particular the City's ban of signs facing freeways. See Responses to Comment 9-5, 9-13, 9-17 and 9-18.

Response to Comment 9-20

The commenter contends that the Project's proposed signage program is incongruous with the revised sign ordinance. However, as noted in Response to Comments 9-17 and 9-18, the proposed Signage SUD would be adopted in accordance with the applicable requirements and regulations of the City, which, in this case, are the existing sign regulations. The unapproved revised draft ordinance does not apply to the Project. Furthermore, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, the baseline for project analysis shall be the conditions that exist at the time the Notice of Preparation is published, which, in this instance, means that Project would fall under the existing sign regulations.

Response to Comment 9-21

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not evaluate the Project's land use conflicts with the City's zoning regulations and applicable land use policies and plans, in particular because the Project requires discretionary land use approvals that would conflict with the existing General Plan land use designation and the zoning of the Project Site. The Draft EIR identifies the relevant requirements of the City of Los Angeles Planning Code that are applicable to the Project (pages IV.J-20 and IV.J-21), and provides an evaluation of the Project's consistency with those requirements (pages IV.J-70 through IV.J-72). This evaluation identifies inconsistencies with some of these requirements, which include inconsistency between the Project's proposed commercial and residential uses and the existing Limited Manufacturing land use designation in the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan (Draft EIR, page IV.J-50), and inconsistency between the Project's proposed commercial and residential uses and the existing M1 zoning classification of the Project Site (Draft EIR, page IV.J-71). These inconsistencies would be corrected in the event that the City provides the Project's requested land use approvals. In the event the Project's requested land use approvals are not provided by the City, the No Project Alternative or the Existing Zoning Alternative could be developed at the Project Site.

Moreover, the Draft EIR analysis of Project consistency with applicable state, regional, and local plans that promote concentration of development in transit station areas (Draft EIR, pages IV.J-36 through IV.J-70) demonstrates that the Project would be consistent with these plans. Without such approvals, the Project would not be able to achieve these goals, as the existing Limited Manufacturing designation and M1 zoning classification would not permit the uses proposed under the Project. Accordingly, the Draft EIR provides substantial evidence that the proposed land use designations included in the Project would be consistent with applicable state, local and regional plans.

Response to Comment 9-22

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not evaluate the Project's consistency with all relevant General Plan policies. The commenter then proceeds to list a series of General Plan policies, objectives, and programs related to the production, preservation and protection of affordable housing in the City, and contends that the Project would not be consistent with these General Plan provisions.

Nothwithstanding that CEQA does not require that the Project be completely consistent with all plan policies, the policies listed by the commenter are policies that apply to the City's agencies, policy makers and decision makers, and generally to the provision of affordable housing throughout the City. These policies promote the development of affordable housing in the City, but do not mandate the inclusion of affordable units in individual development projects. As such, the following do not apply to the Project: Policy 1.1.2; Objective 1.2; Policy 1.2.2; Policy 1.2.8; Policy 2.5.1; and Policy 2.5.2. In the absence of such

a mandate for development projects, individual development projects may choose to voluntarily undertake affordable housing components.

Policy 1.3.5 addresses the need to provide a sufficient supply of appropriately zoned land to accommodate the City's housing needs. This is a Citywide policy that is addressed through community planning and zoning, and therefore does not apply to the Project.. Similarly, Policy 1.4.1, which promotes streamlining the City's development review processes while maintaining affordable housing incentives, applies to the City's policy makers and not individual development projects. Policy 2.2.3 related to jobs/housing balance is not applicable to the Project as it specifically states that such balance is to be achieved at a Citywide level.

Objective 4.2 and Policy 4.2.3 as identified by the commenter relate to the homeless population in the City and in Council District 9 specifically. While it is the policy and commitment of the City of Los Angeles to actively seek solutions for homelessness in the City, the Project Applicant is not a City agency or a social services agency, and the cited policies would not be applicable to the Project.

The commenter also cites several programs identified in the City's Housing Element to promote the production of affordable housing in the City that relate changes in land use designations and zoning to the provision of affordable housing (Program 8), support the City's Density Bonus and Downtown Affordable Housing Bonus programs (Program 54, Program 73, Program 99, and Program 101), and support the preservation of existing affordable housing (Program 41).

The Project does not propose to use the Density Bonus Program, or the Downtown Housing Incentive Program, in its land use entitlements. The Project has applied for land use approvals from the City in accordance with the requirements established in the LAMC, which does not require use of these programs. Nonetheless, the Project Applicant is negotiating a Development Agreement with the City that will include an affordable housing component as one of the community benefits offered as consideration for the Development Agreement. As noted in the Draft EIR (page IV.L-9), the Project would not result in the direct displacement of any housing units, as no housing units presently exist within the Project Site, and therefore would have no effect on the preservation of existing affordable housing. The Project would be consistent with the Housing Element programs cited by the commenter.

Response to Comment 9-23

The commenter states that the DEIR neglected to evaluate the Project's consistency with The Plan for Healthy Los Angeles' Policy 1.7 (Displacement and Health) and Program 86 (Displacement) which addresses health impacts of displacement on individuals, families and benefits from local revitalization efforts by creating local employment and economic opportunities for low-income residents and small businesses.

The commenter refers to a "Health Impact Report". This study, entitled "Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development in South Central Los Angeles" (the "Study"), was prepared by Human Impact Partners. Human Impact Partners is an advocacy organization that "help(s) organizations and public agencies who work with low-income communities and communities of color understand the effects of current or proposed projects and policies on community health." The Study was not prepared by or

-

⁶ http://www.humanimpact.org/about-us/, accessed February 6, 2016.

for the City of Los Angeles. The Study is provided in its entirety as an attachment to Comment Letter 10 (see Response to Comment 10-43).

The Study purports to establish that the Project would have indirect impacts related to poverty and economic uncertainty as a result of gentrification. Notwithstanding the contentions contained in the Study, after evaluation of the data and analysis presented in the Study, the Lead Agency concludes that the conclusions presented in the Study are not relevant to the Project because: (1) the Project would not directly displace any housing units and population; (2) the study area used in the Report, which includes neighborhoods located well to the south of the Project Site that include markedly different population and housing characteristics than the Project Site, does not accurately represent the persons who would be potentially affected by the Project; (3) the potential effects of the Project on the indirect displacement of population and housing units outside the Project Site as presented in the Report are speculative since they represent a hypothetical, future scenario; and (4) the economic and social effects identified in the Report, which include financial strain, physical and mental illness, and health and equity impacts, do not represent significant effects on the environment as defined by CEQA, as set forth in Response to Comment 10-8, which provides a detailed analysis of the inapplicability of the Report and its findings with regard to the Project. Accordingly, the commenter's use of the conclusions provided in the Report to support a contention that the Project is inconsistent with Policy 1.7 and Program 86 of the General Plan Health Element is not supported by substantial evidence.

Response to Comment 9-24

The commenter states that the Draft EIR failed to evaluate the Project with Policy 1-5.2 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan, which addresses displacement of residents by new housing opportunities. With respect to Project impacts related to indirect displacement, see Response to Comment 10-8, which concludes that any impact of the Project related to indirect displacement would be speculative. More importantly, the policy cited by the commenter is not intended to preclude the development of market-rate housing in the Southeast Community Plan area, but rather to minimize displacement of residents. In this sense, the Project would be fully consistent with Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 1.5-2 because it would be constructed in a location that would not result in the direct displacement of housing units and population, since there currently are no housing units on the Project Site.

Response to Comment 9-25

The commenter states that the Draft EIR should evaluate the Project with Policy 2-1.4 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan, which addresses the viability of existing neighborhood stores supporting the needs of local residents.

The policy was intended to ensure that existing commercial properties (and businesses), in commercial zones, be maintained to ensure their viability. The Project would not affect any commercially zoned property. Therefore, the policy does not apply to the Project.

Notwithstanding, as stated in the Draft EIR, Project Description, the Project's new development would include a pharmacy, grocery store, and other community-serving uses, in addition to restaurant and specialty retail uses, available to the general public. In addition, the new residents of the Project could presumably support existing commercial businesses in the Project vicinity. The increase in economic activity in the area should benefit all businesses, old and new, in the area.

With respect to the commenter's claim about rent increases, commercial rents in the City are a function of multiple factors, including the location, size, configuration, and availability of space, the needs of the business and its customers, and the needs of the propertyowner. Therefore, any contention that the Project would increase rent is speculative and would be a social and economic effect that is not considered an environmental impact under CEQA.

Response to Comment 9-26

The commenter states that the Draft EIR should have evaluated Policy 11-2.3 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan, which addresses the City's opportunities to maximize affordable housing and pedestrian access to adjacent rail stations. While this policy encourages location of affordable housing near transit stations, it does not mandate that all development projects within the City comply with that policy. Accordingly, Policy 11-2.3 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan would not apply to the Project.

Response to Comment 9-27

The commenter states that the Draft EIR did not adequately analyze the Project's impact on conversion of industrial zoned land per General Plan Framework Element Policy 3.14.6 (Consideration of potential redesignation of marginal industrial land for alternative uses) and Policy 7.2.9 (Limit redesignation of existing industrial land to other uses except where it serves to mitigate existing land use conflicts). To this end, the commenter contends that the Draft EIR should have evaluated the Project in light of the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP). With respect to the Project's consistency with the ILUP, see Response to Comment 9-31.

With respect to General Plan Element Framework Policies 3.14.6 and 7.29, implementation of the Project would convert approximately 9.1 acres from industrially zoned to commercial use, with a nominal 0.2 acres from light industrial use to commercial use. The Project complies with the overall intent of the ILUP to continue to allow transition of the area from industrial zoning to other uses. Though the Project Site is zoned MI (light industrial), the majority of the site has been used since the 1950s for commercial wholesale and parking lot use, and would not be removing any substantial industrial uses from the City's economic base. The Project Site is also located on the northern edge of an identified industrial area in the ILUP and would not affect the remaining area, which would continue to be occupied by industrial uses. In addition, even with the proposed redesignation, the Project would retain the existing industrial and employment-related functions within The Reef. These functions, which include research, product creation, and employee development, are functionally consistent with industrial land use policies in the General Plan, including the general focus of the ILUP to support the adopted City policy to retain industrial land for job producing purposes wherever possible. Accordingly, the proposed redesignation of the Project Site from industrial to commercial use would be consistent with criteria e. and g. of General Plan Framework Element Policy 3.14.6, and Policy 7.29.

Response to Comment 9-28

The commenter asserts that the City ignored requests for an extension of the 45-day comment period and of requests for Spanish language translation, and states that the refusal by the City is inconsistent with the General Plan Framework Policy 3.19 (Fair Treatment of all People). See Response to Comment 9-1, which states that the public review period for the Draft EIR met the requirement set forth by CEQA Guidelines Section 15105. With respect to providing a Spanish translation of the EIR, such translations are not required under CEQA. The commenter's concerns in this regard will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.

Response to Comment 9-29

The commenter asserts that the Project circumvented the City's density bonus and housing incentive ordinances, rendering the Project inconsistent with the General Plan Framework Element Policies 4.1.6 (Low and Very Low Income Housing Incentives) and 4.2.1 (Incentives for Very Low and Low-Income Households in Mixed Use Developments). These policies are applicable to the City as a whole, and are meant as policy statements, not as mandates on individual development projects. The land use approvals for the Project are being applied for and processed in accordance with the requirements established in the LAMC. The Project is applying for the appropriate land use changes to change the land use designation of the Project Site from industrial to commercial, which would be consistent with state, regional, and local land use policies that promote the concentration of development in transit station areas, and which will result in an increase in housing in the City. The Project is not proposing to use the City's Density Bonus Ordinance or incentives made available by the Greater Downtown Housing Incentive Ordinance for projects that provide affordable housing, which are not required in this case to provide land use approvals for the Project. Therefore, the Project does not have to be consistent with the City's Density Bonus or Downtown Housing Incentive Ordinance, nor does it have to meet the requirements for the incentives.

Response to Comment 9-30

The commenter states that the Draft EIR lacks evaluation on the Project's potential to drive up commercial rents in surrounding area, threatening the displacement of existing community serving small businesses. The Project does not propose the removal of existing neighborhood commercial activities. Therefore, it would not result in the removal of commercial activities within walking distance of residential areas. See also Responses to Comments 9-23 and 9-24.

Response to Comment 9-31

The commenter states that the Draft EIR failed to evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP). The commenter notes that the Draft EIR Land Use and Planning Chapter failed to address this policy directed at the conversion of industrially-zoned land in the City to other uses. As noted in the Draft EIR, the Project Site is presently designated in the General Plan for Limited Manufacturing use, and is zoned for industrial (M1) use (Draft EIR, page II-4). However, the commenter does not provide substantial evidence that the Project Site is protected under the ILUP. Notwithstanding, the following discussion will be provided as a correction to the FEIR to explain how the Project is consistent with the ILUP directive.

In January, 2008, the Director of City Planning and the Chief Executive Officer of the then-Community Redevelopment Agency issued a memorandum culminating a 24-month long Industrial Land Use Policy project that provided direction to staff of both agencies regarding industrial land use, and potential conversion to residential and other uses. The direction cited the City's adopted policy to retain industrial land for job-producing uses, and acknowledged that industrially zoned lands in the City of Los Angeles are occupied by active and productive businesses that provide employment and services to City residents that are essential to the City's diversified economic base. The ILUP evaluated the viability of the City's industrial districts, particularly those areas experiencing pressure to convert to other uses. The ILUP contained guidance to staff of the Department of City Planning in processing individual applications for land use changes, and for development of future Community Plan updates, and implementation guidelines that included identification of "areas where industrial uses and zoning should be retained pursuant to existing Plans, along with industrial areas that, for a variety of reasons, may no longer be viable or appropriate industrial/employment use and should be considered for conversion to other uses."

The ILUP studied industrial districts citywide, which included the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area. The studied lands were categorized into four types: Employment Protection Districts; Industrial Mixed Use Districts; Transition Districts; and Correction Areas. These categories were defined as follows:

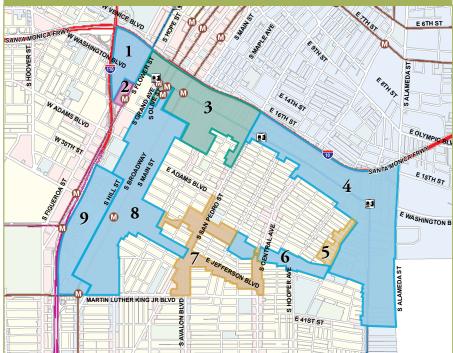
- Employment Protection District (EMP): Areas where industrial zoning should be maintained, i.e., where adopted General Plan, Community Plan and Redevelopment Plan industrial land use designations should continue to be implemented. Residential uses in these Districts are not appropriate.
- Industrial Mixed Use District (IMU): Areas that should remain as predominantly industrial/employment districts, but which may support a limited amount of residential uses.
- Transition District (TD): Areas where the viability of industrial use has been compromised by significant conversions and where this transition to other uses should be continued. Transition Districts have been identified in areas where "Alternate Policies" (AP) such as specific plans, Transit Oriented Districts (TOD) and other planning efforts are anticipated or in process. Unlike "Industrial Mixed Use Districts," stand-alone housing or mixed use developments containing housing and commercial uses may be appropriate in "Transition Districts."
- Correction Area (CA): Areas where earlier land use decisions resulted in inappropriate land use conflicts. A change in zoning and land use designations to correct existing land use conflicts is deemed appropriate and should be encouraged.

The ILUP identified 678 acres of industrial land within Southeast Los Angeles, containing 1,905 businesses and 19,693 employees (Figure III-1). The ILUP divided Southeast Los Angeles' industrial land into nine subareas, and applied the four categories to each. The Project Site is located within Subarea 3, which was the only subarea within Southeast Los Angeles designated as a transition district. Subarea 3 is 92 acres and contains 495 businesses providing 3,790 jobs (see Figure III-2).⁷

Existing development within the Project Site includes The Reef building (approximately 861,162 square feet), located at the northwest corner of the Project Site on the West Block, and an approximately 11,500 square foot warehouse building located at the southeast corner of the Project Site on the East Block. The remainder of the Project Site is occupied by surface parking lots containing approximately 1,100 parking spaces. The ILUP identified the majority of the Project Site as being used for commercial/service/office use, except for the southeast corner of the East Block, which is presently occupied by the warehouse building, and is identified in the ILUP as being used for light industrial purposes.

⁷ All of the subareas were surveyed in 2007.

SOUTHEAST LOS ANGELESINDUSTRIAL AREA DIRECTIONS



■ EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION DISTRICT (EMP):

Areas where industrial zoning should be maintained, i.e., where adopted General Plan, Community Plan and Redevelopment Plan industrial land use designations should continue to be implemented. Residential uses in these Districts are not appropriate.

■ INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE DISTRICT (IMU):

Areas that should remain as predominantly industrial/employment districts, but which may support a limited amount of residential uses.

■ TRANSITION DISTRICT (TD):

Areas where the viability of industrial use has been compromised by significant conversions and where this transition to other uses should be continued. Transition Districts have been identified in areas where "Alternate Policies" (AP) such as specific plans, Transit Oriented Districts (TOD) and other planning efforts are anticipated or in process. Unlike "Industrial Mixed Use Districts," stand-alone housing or mixed use developments containing housing and commercial uses may be appropriate in "Transition Districts."

CORRECTION AREA (CA):

Areas where earlier land use decisions resulted in inappropriate land use conflicts. A change in zoning and land use designations to correct existing land use conflicts is deemed appropriate and should be encouraged.

SUMMARY STATISTICS

AREA TOTALS ACRES BUSINESSES JOBS	678 1,905 19,693
ANALYSIS AREA 1 (EMP) Acres Businesses Jobs	24 40 903
ANALYSIS AREA 2 (IMU) Acres Businesses Jobs	6 31 316
ANALYSIS AREA 3 (TD) Acres Businesses Jobs	92 495 3,790
ANALYSIS AREA 4 (EMP) Acres Businesses Jobs	232 403 5,596
ANALYSIS AREA 5 (CA) Acres Businesses Jobs	11 18 44
ANALYSIS AREA 6 (EMP) Acres Businesses Jobs	34 184 1,877
ANALYSIS AREA 7 (CA) Acres Businesses Jobs	58 61 685
ANALYSIS AREA 8 (EMP) Acres Businesses Jobs	157 547 5,235
Analysis Area 9 (EMP) Acres Businesses	64 126

Source: Department of City Planning & Community Redevelopment Agency, 2008.



1,247

Jobs



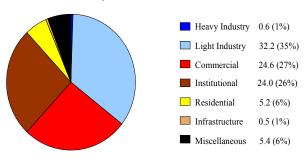
STAFF DIRECTIONS:

Preserve industrial zoning pending completion of Specific Plan. As part of the Specific Plan, develop a Transit Oriented District (TOD) Plan(s) to establish appropriate zoning and land use designations to allow commercial, residential, mixed use and live/work uses. Recommend development of design guidelines to enhance pedestrian activity along Washington Blvd. as a component of the Specific Plan. Residential uses in proximity to freeways should be further evaluated.



Existing Land Use 2006

(Acres & Percent of Analysis Area)



PLAN OVERLAYS & SPECIAL DISTRICTS

- Enterprise Zone
- ☐ Specific Plan
- ✗ Empowerment Zone
- Redevelopment
 Project Area
- Overlay (TOD, Master Plan, etc.)
- Design for Development

Source: Department of City Planning & Community Redevelopment Agency, 2008.



The 2008 memorandum direction to City staff for Subarea 3 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan area was to establish appropriate zoning and land use designations through a Transit Oriented District Plan to allow commercial, residential, mixed use and live/work uses. Though still a work-in-progress, the Draft/Proposed Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan identifies the Project Site for Community Commercial use, and its accompanying Community Plan Implementation Overlay (CPIO) identifies the Project Site as Transit Oriented District - Regional use (Draft EIR, page IV.J-58). Although not yet adopted, and subject to additional changes as the Community Plan Update process progresses, the Draft/Proposed Community Plan and CPIO designations would be consistent with the direction of the ILUP to establish appropriate land use designations and zoning for the Project Site within the Transition District identified in the ILUP.

Therefore, the Project would be consistent with the intent of the ILUP to allow transition of the area from industrial zoning to other uses. Though the Project Site is zoned M1 (industrial), the majority of the Project Site, other than The Reef building, has been used since the 1950s as surface parking lots. The Project would not be directly removing industrial use from the City's economic base. By retaining and enhancing The Reef, an 861,162 square foot facility containing creative office, product development, and employment-generating uses, it would include characteristics of the Employment Protection and Industrial Mixed Use Districts on part of the Project Site, in addition to accommodating the projected transition of the area under the Transition District designated in the ILUP. Overall, implementation of the Project would be consistent with the staff guidance provided in the ILUP related to preservation of industrial lands in the City.

Transition of the Site to a mixed use development would not result in a substantial loss of industrial jobs. As discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.L-1), the warehouse building is estimated to accommodate 39 jobs, based on building square footage. These jobs represent approximately 1.4% of the existing jobs on the Project Site, and would be replaced by the 1,161 net new jobs on the Project Site that would be generated by the Project (Draft EIR, page IV.L-8). The 2,608 existing office/wholesale/showroom jobs on the Project Site would be retained under the Project. Therefore, transition of the Project Site from industrial land use designation to a mixed use development would not have a significant impact on the City's industrial job base. The Project would be consistent with the guidance to City staff set forth in the ILUP.

Response to Comment 9-32

The commenter contends that the Project is inconsistent with the ILUP or its community benefits requirements, and that the EIR should contain adequate mitigation to address loss of industrial jobs with family supporting wages. Regarding consistency with the community benefits guidelines, CEQA requires an analysis of consistency with adopted land use plans. Since the ILUP staff directive relative to community benefits is not a land use plan, it does not need to be analyzed under CEQA. For the same reason, mitigation measures only apply to impact categories defined by CEQA when they are found to be significant. For an explanation of why the Project is consistent with the ILUP in general, see Response to Comment 9-31. Notwithstanding, the following explanation is provided to demonstrate how the Project would provide community benefits per the ILUP.

The ILUP project addressed industrially zoned land with the City of Los Angeles, and provided direction to staff when processing project applications and developing long range plans. The project study included a staff direction memorandum and geographically specific directions related to studied areas, including Southeast Los Angeles. The memorandum included a discussion with recommendations or guidelines regarding "community benefits", which are intended to address the loss of employment lands and the need to provide amenities in areas that have not previously been planned for non-industrial use. The

memorandum includes a Community Benefits list (Section B) that should be used for guidance in identifying conditions that could be considered. The following were listed as potential community benefits for consideration on development projects within Transition Districts and Industrial Mixed Use areas:

- Relocation Consultation for Displaced Businesses
- Job Training Assistance Fund
- Minimum Job-Producing Space
- Affordable Housing
- Open Space
- Infrastructure Improvements

As previously discussed, implementation of the Project will not remove housing, and would create new housing and employment opportunities. The Project includes job-producing space, which would be provided by allowing conversion of wholesale space within The Reef to creative office, product development, and training space. Additionally, the Project Applicant is negotiating a Development Agreement with the City that will include an affordable housing component as one of the community benefits offered as consideration for the Development Agreement. The Project would also add open space and infrastructure improvements as a community benefit. Specifically, the Project will include a public mid-block paseo which would provide full pedestrian access through the Project Site from Hill Street to Main Street, along with café and outdoor seating, event space, and a seating island. A gallery space of 17,507 square feet, open to the public, would be designed to host local, national, and international exhibitions and expositions, adding a new cultural amenity to the area. Signalized pedestrian crossings would be provided on Broadway to facilitate pedestrian circulation between the West Block and the East Block, within the Project Site. In addition, the Project will be providing infrastructure improvements that would include approximately 289 new trees; pedestrian amenities, including minimum 15-foot sidewalks along Washington Boulevard, Broadway, and Main Street, and 20-foot wide sidewalks on Hill Street, Washington Boulevard and Broadway adjacent to The Reef. Both sides of Broadway through the Project Site would be designed to provide for an enhanced pedestrian experience with particular emphasis on the mid-block crossing located at the center of the East and West blocks. With this design, the Project would provide a nearly seamless crossing from the Courthouse on the west (Hill Street) to the Sports Museum on the east (Main Street), which would serve to activate the entire Project Site, and avoid dangerous and unproductive pedestrian dead zones. As demonstrated, the Project would support job creation, and would be consistent with the provisions of the ILUP with respect to community benefits.

Response to Comment 9-33

The commenter asserts that the consistency discussion for General Plan Framework Objective 3.1 is lacking sufficient support for the conclusion that the Project supports the needs of the existing residents, visitors and businesses. As discussed in detail in the Draft EIR, the Project will include new retail uses that will be available for all residents of the Project and immediate residential neighborhoods. The Project would create new and additional local employment and economic opportunities for local residents. The Project provides new housing, which will bring new population to the area requiring goods and services that can be accommodated by existing businesses in the Project area, in addition to the Project's own proposed retail uses. In addition, the open space amenities of the Project would also accommodate outdoor entertainment uses, as well as special events, that would be available to the existing community. Contrary to the commenter's assertion that no support was given, all of these reasons were cited in Table IV.J-3 of the Draft EIR for Objective 3.1. The analysis in the table says that "restaurant, retail, hotel, grocery

store, live-work units, apartments and condominiums as well as the pedestrian environment would contribute to the diversity of uses in [the] area of the Project Site...[and the] conversion of...surface parking lots...with significant open space and communities amenities would enhance the built environment in the surrounding neighborhood." Accordingly, the Draft EIR provides extensive support for its conclusion that the Project would be consistent with General Plan Framework Element 3.1.

Response to Comment 9-34

The commenter asserts that the consistency discussion of General Plan Framework Policy 3.1.5 did not adequately address that the rezoning of the Site would be removing industrially zoned land, and that the Draft Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan requires affordable housing with the amount of density proposed for the site. With respect to the proposed conversion of the land use designation of the Project Site from industrial to commercial, see Response to Comment 9-31, which shows that this conversion for this transition district is consistent with guidance under the ILUP.

The commenter also claims that the impact of the General Plan Amendment is not adequately addressed. However, per Policy 3.1.5, the General Plan Framework allows amendments to community plans to reflect local conditions, parcel characteristics, existing land uses and public input provided that the basic differentiation and relationships among land use districts are maintained, there is no reduction in housing capacity, and additional environmental review is conducted. With respect to these criteria, the Project is proposing to change the land use designation of the Project Site from industrial to commercial, which would be consistent with state, regional, and local land use policies (SB375, SCAG Regional Comprehensive Plan, SCAG Compass Blueprint Growth Vision, SCAG Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, General Plan Framework, Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan, see Draft EIR, pages IV.J-36 through IV.J-70) that promote the concentration of development in transit station areas, as well as with the ILUP. Although the Draft Plan is not approved, the Project would be consistent with Draft/Proposed Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan's designation of this area as Transit-Oriented District - Regional. The Project will increase, not decrease, housing capacity in the City, and is undergoing an environmental review as required by CEQA. This explanation will be included in the FEIR as a correction. Accordingly, contrary to the commenter's assertion, the Project would be consistent with General Plan Framework Policy 3.1.5 which allows amendments.

With respect to the Draft/Proposed Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan, the commenter fails to acknowledge that the Draft EIR on pages IV.J-58 through IV.J-59 does compare the Project to the Draft/Proposed Community Plan, and discloses that the Draft/Proposed Community Plan has not been adopted. Accordingly, the Draft EIR recognizes that this is only a draft plan and, like the draft revised signage ordinance discussed in Response to Comment 9-20, is not applicable to the Project. and is therefore inapplicable to the Project. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(d), a Project should be measured against applicable land use plans, which do not include plans that are not adopted. However, to demonstrate the Project's compliance with the City's goal of situating high-density residential uses within transit areas, the Draft EIR (page IV.J-58), shows how, if the draft plan were approved, the Project would be consistent with the Community Commercial land use designation for the Project Site that would be established under the Draft/Proposed Community Plan, due to the Project's location within a Transit Oriented District.

Response to Comment 9-35

The commenter asserts that the consistency discussion of General Plan Framework Objective 3.2 did not adequately address vehicle miles travelled (VMT) caused by the Project's lack of affordable housing, which

the comment contends may increase VMT through the displacement of Metro ridership for households making less than \$25,000 per year. The commenter cites a study (California Housing Partnership Strategy & Transform, included as Appendix H to this Final EIR) that promotes the placement of affordable housing near transit as an effective GHG reduction strategy. However, the commenter fails to mention that this study shows that the location of housing in transit areas results in reduction of VMT, vehicle ownership, and household vehicle trips per day, and increase in household transit trips per day, compared to non-transit areas, over all income groups (see Figure III-3).

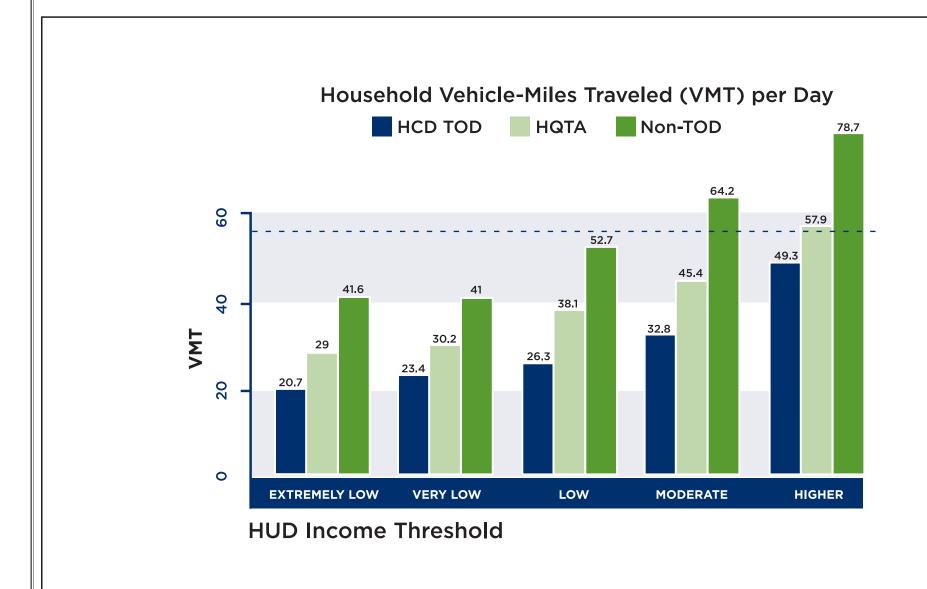
While the benefits may increase for lower income groups, higher income groups demonstrate a 37% reduction in VMT compared to non–transit areas. Accordingly, the study demonstrates that location of any housing in a transit station area has benefits with respect to GHG reduction, not just low income housing as the commenter contends. As shown in the Draft EIR (pages IV.G-23 through IV.G-25), the GHG analysis conservatively reflects a 10% VMT reduction associated with locating housing near transit. Accordingly, the Project would be consistent with General Plan Framework Objective 3.2, which calls for spatial distribution of development that facilitates a reduction of vehicle trips.

Response to Comment 9-36

The commenter asserts that the consistency discussion of General Plan Framework Objective 3.4 lacked analysis concerning the potential for economic displacement of surrounding residential and business uses and the Project's impact on nearby industrial uses on Washington Boulevard. However, as discussed in the Draft EIR, the Project will not eliminate industrial uses on the Project Site, other than a small 11,500 square foot warehouse facility, or on Washington Boulevard. In addition, "economic development" is not an impact category as defined by CEQA and, moreover, would be speculative. With respect to indirect displacement, see Response to Comment 10-8. The Project will be consistent with Objective 3.4 for the following reasons. The Project's new development will include 1,444 residential units accommodating an estimated population of at least 2,224 residents. The new development will include a pharmacy, grocery store, and other community-serving uses, in addition to restaurant and specialty retail uses. The new residents to the area may support existing commercial businesses in the Project vicinity. In addition, as stated in the Draft EIR on page IV.J-47, the Project would not encroach upon or cause the removal or relocation of uses. Therefore, as stated in the consistency discussion, the Project will not encroach into nearby neighborhoods or districts and will provide new retail for the area. The Project is therefore consistent with General Plan Framework Objective 3.4.

Response to Comment 9-37

The commenter asserts that the consistency discussion for General Plan Framework Objective 3.8 does not analyze how the Project's uses will serve the needs of adjacent residents, especially low-income residents. The commenter incorrectly states that this objective requires an analysis of impacts on low-income residents, when the Objective specifically refers to the establishment of new neighborhood districts that serve the needs of residents in general. As such, as discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.J-47), and included in the analysis of the Project consistency with this Objective, the Project will not only provide additional housing and retail but will contain open space with amenities that can be enjoyed by the general public such as open air entertainment areas. Further, the Project will generate approximately 1,161 new jobs that would be available to local residents. Therefore, the Project will meet this Objective to create new neighborhood districts that accommodate a broad range of uses. With respect to indirect displacement, CEQA does not require analysis of potential indirect displacement impacts in this case, as explained in Response to Comment 10-8. As such, mitigation measures would not be required for economic displacement.



 $Source: TransForm \& \ California \ Housing \ Partnership \ Corporation, 2014.$



Response to Comment 9-38

The commenter asserts that the consistency discussion for Policy 3.15.2 does not take into account how the Project's creation of housing near transit would benefit low-income residents. However, this Policy specifically refers to incorporating public- and neighborhood-service uses for developments near transit stations. As detailed on page IV.J-47 of the Draft EIR, the Project would be designed as an urban center with supporting services, entertainment venues, public spaces, community rooms, open space, grocery store, and a pharmacy. Therefore, this Project does comply with this Objective. For an explanation of the effects of housing near transit as it relates to income levels of residents, see Response to Comment 9-35.

Response to Comment 9-39

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not support the conclusion of consistency with Goal 5A of the General Plan Framework Element because it does not evaluate how the Project's housing matches the incomes of employees working in the area. However, this Goal promotes a livable city of interconnected diverse neighborhoods that function at the neighborhood and Citywide levels. As such, this Goal does not require a jobs-housing fit for individual development projects. As indicated in the Draft EIR (page IV.J-48), the Project would support this Goal by providing housing opportunities and commercial development to serve the existing community, and adding new retail uses, restaurants, entertainment spaces, recreational and cultural opportunities that would promote neighborhood cohesion and investment.

Response to Comment 9-40

The commenter contends that the Project is not consistent with Objective 5.5 of the General Plan Framework Element because it does not consider indirect displacement. The commenter incorrectly references Objective 5.5, as it explicitly refers to improving the livability of neighborhoods by upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm. As indicated in the Draft EIR (page IV.J-49), the Project would convert a large area of surface parking lot into a mixed use project containing housing opportunities, job opportunities, and public spaces and amenities in a pedestrian-accessible development located two blocks from a rail transit station. The Project would improve the quality of development in the area, and provide a location for housing, shopping and entertainment uses that would serve the surrounding community. The Project would enhance the public realm by providing public open space, gathering areas, and open space within the development, and pedestrian amenities and bicycle facilities that promote access to the Project from the surrounding community. With respect to indirect displacement, see Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 9-41

The commenter contends that the Project is not consistent with Goal 1, Objective 1.1, and Policy 1.1.3 of the General Plan Housing Element because it does not address the affordable housing needs of the City. These policies promote the development of ownership and rental housing, and facilitation of new housing construction to address the needs of the City's residents. As indicated in the Draft EIR, the Project would add to the City's housing supply and would meet a variety of housing needs. Moreover, this Goal is a general policy goal for the entire city and does not mandate that affordable housing be integrated into new, private developments. Therefore, it is not necessary for every project in the City to include affordable housing to be consistent with this policy. With respect to how the Project relates to affordable housing, see Response to Comment 9-22.

Response to Comment 9-42

The commenter contends that the Project is not consistent with Objective 2.2 of the General Plan Housing Element because it does not include affordable housing. As indicated in the Draft EIR, the Project would provide housing opportunities, retail, restaurant, open space, and other services near a transit station that would serve the community, and work with existing and future development to promote a sustainable neighborhood in this area of the City. This Goal is a general policy goal for the entire city and does not mandate that affordable housing be integrated into new, private developments. Therefore, it is not necessary for every project in the City to include affordable housing to be consistent with this policy. With respect to how the Project relates to affordable housing, see also Response to Comments 9-22 and 10-8. In addition, this specific Objective calls for the promotion of sustainable neighborhoods in general and is not exclusively about the provision of mixed-income housing.

Response to Comment 9-43

The commenter contends that the Project is not consistent with Policy 2.6 of the General Plan Health Element because it does not evaluate the health impacts of indirect displacement. However, this Policy calls for the repurposing of underutilized spaces to promote health, and not for an analysis of health risks resulting from displacement. As such, the consistency analysis demonstrates how the Project would provide spaces for health. Specifically, as indicated in the Draft EIR (page IV.J-59), the Project would convert existing surface parking lots to a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development, with public open spaces designed to serve the community. The design of the Project would encourage nearby residents to walk to the Project, and would also accommodate access to the Project by bicycle through the provision of adequate roadway and sidewalk facilities, and bicycle parking facilities. While not required in the analysis for this specific Policy, see Response to Comment 10-8 for an explanation of the health impacts associated with indirect displacement.

Response to Comment 9-44

The commenter contends that the Project is not consistent with Policy 5.7 of the General Plan Health Element because the Project does not provide affordable housing near transit which, they claim, reduces greenhouse gas emissions. However, this Policy is a general citywide policy that does not mandate affordable housing in new, private developments. The Policy promotes "land use *policies* that reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions, result in improved air quality and decreased air pollution" (emphasis added). Notwithstanding, see Response to Comment 9-35 for an explanation of how housing near transit reduces vehicle miles traveled across all income levels, not just for low-income households. The Project would therefore be consistent with Policy 5.7 of the General Plan Health Element.

Response to Comment 9-45

The commenter contends that the Project is not consistent with Objective 1-2 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan because it does not include affordable housing units that would help reduce vehicular trips more than market-rate housing. However, Objective 1-2 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan promotes the location of housing in a manner which reduces vehicular trips, and makes it accessible to services and facilities, and does not isolate individual income levels for meeting this Objective. As discussed in the Draft EIR, the Project would be consistent with this objective by providing housing units, and mixed use development near transit. The commenter contends "high-end housing in proximity to transit alone, does not guarantee a reduction in vehicle trips." As discussed in Response to Comment 9-44, this assertion is incorrect. This study shows that the location of housing in transit station

areas results in reduction of vehicle-miles travelled (VMT), vehicle ownership, and household vehicle trips per day, and increase in household transit trips per day, compared to non-transit areas, over all income groups. Accordingly, the analyses presented in the Draft EIR accurately reflect the transit-adjacent location of the Project, and the Project would be consistent with Objective 1-2 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan to reduce vehicle trips.

Response to Comment 9-46

The commenter contends that the Project is not consistent with Policy 1-3.2 because it does not take into account indirect displacement effects of the Project. However, Policy 1.3-2 states that factors such as neighborhood identity, compatibility of land uses, impacts on services and public facilities, and impacts on traffic levels should be taken into account when changes in residential density are proposed. The Policy does not mention displacement. Nevertheless, see Response to Comment 10-8 for an analysis of indirect displacement. The Project achieves this Policy because, as discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.B.1-22), the Project would establish an identity for the otherwise non-descript Project Site as a transit-oriented development that would also provide services to the surrounding community. In addition, the Project would be consistent with multiple state, regional and local land use policies that encourage concentration of development around transit station areas (SB375, SCAG Regional Comprehensive Plan, SCAG Compass Blueprint Growth Vision, SCAG Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, General Plan Framework, Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan, see Draft EIR, pages IV.J-36 through IV.J-70). The Draft EIR evaluates the compatibility of the proposed land uses with the surrounding area, impacts on public services and utilities, and impacts on traffic levels for consideration by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project (see Draft EIR, Sections IV.J, Land Use; IVM, Public Services; IV.O, Utilities, and IV.M, Transportation). The Project would therefore be consistent with Policy 1.3-2 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan. With respect to,

Response to Comment 9-47

The commenter contends that the Project is not consistent with Policy 2.1-3 of the Southeast Community Plan because it does not consider impacts to existing businesses. However, Policy 2.1-3 states that "commercial areas should be consolidated and deepened to simulate existing businesses, create opportunities for new development and off-street parking, expand the variety of goods and services, and improve shopping convenience, as well as offer local employment" (emphasis added). This Policy is not exclusively about existing businesses. Even if it were, as discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.J-53 through IV.J-55), the Project would bring new customers into the area, who would be able patronize existing businesses as well as the new ones contained in the Project, by consolidating commercial uses into the Project Site, in compliance with this Policy. In addition, the Project would provide new off-street parking spaces, and new businesses, as well as the enhancement of the existing uses in The Reef, and would provide employment opportunities for local residents. The Project would therefore be consistent with Policy 2.1-3 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan.

Response to Comment 9-48

The commenter contends that the Project is not consistent with Policy 2.4-3 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan because it does not provide a match between housing prices and local incomes. However, Policy 2.4-3 provides that commercial infill projects should be in harmony with existing development and does not require an analysis of housing prices vis-à-vis incomes. Notwithstanding, as noted in the Draft EIR (page II-40), the Project would convert an underutilized site consisting mainly of surface parking lots to a productive use, and would provide new uses, including a grocery store and

pharmacy, to serve the existing community. The Project would provide new residents who would patronize existing businesses in addition to new business that would be included in the Project. The Project would promote the identity of the Project Site as a transit-oriented, mixed-use community that would complement and enhance the surrounding neighborhood per the Project Site's identification as a Transition District in the ILUP. See Response to Comment 9-31. The Project would therefore be consistent with Policy 2.4-3 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan.

Response to Comment 9-49

The commenter contends that the Project is inconsistent with Objective 2-6 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan because it does not specify how jobs created by the Project will be occupied by community residents. However, the Objective is a policy meant to promote the maintenance and increase of the commercial employment base for community residents wherever feasible. The Objective does not require a job plan for requiring local hires. Furthermore, the extent to which these jobs match the needs and desires of community residents is speculative, and would constitute a social and economic impact that is not an impact on the environment under CEQA. Nevertheless, the Project would expand the economic base of the community by creating jobs from the activities in The Reef and the new commercial development, which would be available to community residents. Therefore, the Project would be consistent with Objective 2-6 of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan.

Response to Comment 9-50

The commenter contends that the Project is inconsistent with the Draft Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan and its accompanying Community Plan Implementation Ordinance (CPIO). However, this Plan has not yet been adopted and is not yet applicable to the development of the Project Site. For information purposes only, however, the Draft EIR notes (page IV.J-59) that the Project, as proposed, would not be consistent with the Draft/Proposed Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan, as presently written. The commenter notes that the Draft EIR uses data from the Draft/Proposed Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan in the analysis of population, housing and employment (Draft EIR, page IV.L-6), but determines that the Draft Plan is not applicable to the Project, as it has not been adopted. These statements merely reflect the differences between factual data, and Plan policies that are subject to potentially wide variation during the process of Plan development and adoption. There is no inconsistency between using factual data in one part of the EIR, while noting in another that Plan policies are not applicable until the Plan is adopted.

Response to Comment 9-51

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not evaluate the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of individual buildings and that individual buildings would exceed height and density limitations of the LAMC. As discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.J-20), the Project Site is located in Height District 2 which permits a maximum FAR of 6.0 with no height limit. The commenter correctly notes that a number of modifications to the General Plan, and approval of Conditional Use Permit for Floor Area Averaging, would be needed to permit development of the Project. This Conditional Use Permit would allow the FAR of the Project to be calculated on a site-wide basis, rather than considering the FAR of each individual building. The same amount of development would be permitted on the Project Site under FAR averaging as would be allowed if the permitted 6.0 FAR were applied to the Project Site as a whole. FAR averaging provides benefits in cases where some buildings in a project are permitted to exceed a specified FAR, which allows for articulation in design, and the provision of public open space and amenities in locations that might otherwise be occupied by buildings if each building were limited to the permitted FAR and occupied the

entire site. For instance, Alternative 5, Existing Zoning, in the Draft EIR (page VI-87) shows an example of a site plan where FAR is applied uniformly through the Project Site. Accordingly, the implication of the Project's proposed CUP for FAR averaging would be to permit greater height in individual buildings, which would then be offset by providing lower density development and open space elsewhere on the Project Site. If the proposed CUP for FAR averaging were to be approved, the Project would includes a number of high rise buildings, the impacts of which (primarily Aesthetics and Shade/Shadow) are evaluated in the Draft EIR on the basis of height, not FAR. The physical characteristics of the Project buildings were used throughout the Draft EIR as the basis for determining the Project's potential environmental impacts. The Project's requested land use approvals will have to be granted by the City's decision-making bodies. These approvals, if granted, would have no environmental impacts beyond those associated with the Project.

Response to Comment 9-52

The commenter contends that the Project's proposed zone change and General Plan amendment could have secondary impacts that are not evaluated in the Draft EIR. The commenter, however, incorrectly states that a "secondary impacts" analysis was required. The Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide mentions "secondary impacts" as a factor to consider (emphasis added) in the overall analysis of potential land use impacts. In addition, the comment's citation of "CEQA Thresholds, H.2-3" in footnote 84 and 85 is inaccurate because this reference is to the Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, not the official State CEQA Guidelines. The comment's assertion that that the "DEIR attempts to bundle this factor into its evaluation of "community division and land use compatibility"" is also inaccurate. The Draft EIR on page IV.J-33 states that "any analysis of physical impacts is presented under "Community Division and Land Use Compatibility" and potential regulatory impacts are evaluated under "Consistency with Land Use Plans and Policies". As such, the analysis was not bundled into one category.

The commenter also contends that the proposed zone change and General Plan Amendment will result in the conversion of industrially-zoned sites in the vicinity of the Project Site to other uses. Such a change in this area of the City would be speculative, and would be addressed as individual projects are proposed at these locations. Therefore, this issue does not constitute a significant impact category under CEQA. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15384, "argument, speculation, unsubstantiated opinion or narrative" do not constitute substantial evidence under CEQA. Moreover, as noted in Response to Comment 9-31, the Project Site and surrounding area are identified as a Transition District in the City's Industrial Land Use Policy such that conversion of surrounding areas to commercial uses would not be inconsistent with City policy. The commenter also mentions that uses on M1 and M2 parcels surrounding the Project Site may be limited with a more restrictive use. The Project itself will not limit these surrounding properties to restrictive uses; therefore, this is not a substantive comment on the Project.

Response to Comment 9-53

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR fails to consider a project alternative that does not include signage. However, the analysis of Alternatives provided in the Draft EIR (pages VI-1 through VI-110) evaluated a range of alternatives to the Project that would achieve the objectives of the Project, and have the potential to reduce the significant environmental impacts of the Project, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6. These included two alternatives that evaluated reduced signage compared to the Project – Alternative 1 (No Project) and Alternative 3 (Reduced Height/Reduced Signage). Contrary to the commenter's assertion, the evaluation of Alternative 1 provided in the Draft EIR demonstrates the reduction in Project impacts that would occur if no signage were provided on the Project Site. This Alternative would avoid all of the significant and unavoidable impacts of the Project. Alternative 3 demonstrates the changes in the signage program that would be needed to avoid the significant and

unavoidable impacts of the Project related to signage, which would include reducing the signage on The Reef by 50% and removing highly animated signage in Vertical Sign Zone 3. Contrary to the commenter's assertions, with these reductions in signage, Alternative 3 would avoid the significant and unavoidable impacts of the Project related to signage (Draft EIR, page VI-38). The page reference provided by the commenter (Draft EIR, page VI-17) is incorrect as it relates to the Alternate Use Alternative (Alternative 2), which included the same signage as the Project (Draft EIR, page VI-16). The evaluations provided for Alternatives 1 and 3 provide information to the decision-making bodies as to how changes in the Project signage program would affect the impacts of the Project related to aesthetics and light/glare. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a), an EIR is not required to consider every conceivable alternative to a project, rather a reasonable range of alternatives that would promoted informed decision making. Accordingly, the Draft EIR analysis of alternatives is adequate because it provides information regarding the implications of potential changes to the Project's signage program, including an alternative without signage.

Response to Comment 9-54

The commenter contends that, based on the previous comments, which identify the commenter's perceived deficiencies and unaccounted-for environmental impacts, the Draft EIR does not comply with CEQA, and should be revised and recirculated for additional public review. The commenter's opinion is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5 (Recirculation of an EIR Prior to Certification) defines issues associated with re-circulation which include disclosure of a "new significant information" that involves "a new significant impact", "substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact", or "feasible project alternatives or mitigation measures that the project proponent declines to adopt." As described in Responses 9-1 through 9-53 above, no new significant information as defined by CEQA nor requirement for analysis of another no-signage alternative has been identified. Accordingly, recirculation of the Draft EIR is not required.

Intentionally blank.

November 2, 2015

Attn: Erin Strelich Major Projects & EIR Section City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning 200 North Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, CA 90012-2601

Via email (erin.strelich@lacity.org)

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Reef Project (City Case No. ENV-2014-1773-EIR; SCH No. 2014071054)

Dear Ms. Strelich:

On behalf of the United Neighbors in Defense Against Displacement Coalition (UNIDAD), and the undersigned, we submit these comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for The Reef Project (Project). We have identified significant flaws in the DEIR for the proposed development, in violation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and have serious concerns regarding the development as a whole. The DEIR fails to properly describe the Project, fails to adequately analyze a range of potential impacts, fails to mitigate these impacts to the level required by CEQA, and fails to select the environmentally superior alternative. Further, the DEIR's analysis is brimming with conclusory statements which do not give an opportunity for review of the methodology employed. Because these flaws have precluded meaningful public review of the Project and its potential impacts, the DEIR for the Project should be revised and recirculated in compliance with CEQA¹.

Furthermore, the DEIR comment process has not provided local residents an opportunity to fully review and respond to the Project's potential impacts on their community. The UNIDAD coalition – along with other groups, including the local neighborhood council – requested an extension of the comment period from 47 days to 90 days. These multiple requests were made well in advance and were accompanied by substantial rationale for an extension, including the scale of the project, the length and technical nature of the DEIR and the lack of a Spanish translation for the majority Spanish-speaking local population. Despite being well within the law and preceded by numerous other instances where extensions have been granted, these requests were denied. It is gravely disappointing that such a relatively small request was denied in light of the massive size of the proposed

1

2

Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15088.5.

project and its anticipated impacts on local residents and businesses.² We submit our comments on the DEIR here, but fear the lack of flexibility on the part of the City to work with community members requesting additional time to provide input has meant many other comments will not make it under the short timeline. This is contrary to the spirit of CEQA, which prioritizes fully-informed public review.

2 cont.

3

4

I. The DEIR's Project Description is Inaccurate

The DEIR contains an inaccurate Project Description. The Project Description section of the DEIR describes the location of the Project as "in downtown Los Angeles." As explained in these comments, this is particularly misleading, as the Project is actually located in South LA, an area with a different population, demographic, and character than downtown LA. The recirculated DEIR should include an accurate description of the geographic area in which the Project will be built, which will allow for meaningful public comment. An accurate project description is critical to proper environmental review of the Project; CEQA requires that a project description provide sufficient detail about a project for evaluation and environmental review, including the precise boundaries and location of the project. Despite this requirement, the DEIR states numerous times the Project may utilize the Design Guidelines, which "allow for, among other things, the relocation of buildings within the site..." The DEIR simultaneously relies on the specific proposed configuration of Project buildings to conclude there will be no significant impacts in various categories, while going on to state that the Project will have flexibility in the ultimate location of these buildings. Similarly, the DEIR repeatedly states that the Project includes a Land Use Equivalency Program which allows for the planned land uses within the Project to change. However, the accurate evaluation of many Project impacts depends on the precise location of the various Project buildings and their associated land uses. The DEIR's preservation of "flexibility" for the project does not ensure that all potential impacts have been included in the EIR and mitigated to the maximum feasible extent, and for that reason, the Project Description is flawed. The DEIR should be recirculated with a corrected, accurate project description.

Additionally, a recirculated DEIR must correct the inaccurate and self-serving characterization of the proposed SUD. Notwithstanding the project proponent's interest in glamorizing the proposed 234,000 plus square feet of illuminated and animated signage, the proposed signage not only threatens the City's ability to preserve its ban on off-site billboards, but the SUD presents numerous public health threats. These include

² In addition to these requests being well within CEQA law, Los Angeles General Plan Framework Element Policy 3.1.9 calls on the City to "[a]ssure that [sic] fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, incomes and education levels with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, including affirmative efforts to inform and involved environmental groups, especially environmental justice groups, in early planning stages through notification and two-way communication."

³ DEIR, p. II-1.

⁴ See sections III and V.

⁵ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15124.

⁶ DEIR, p. II-9.

severe traffic hazards associated with electronic billboards visible from highways - in this case the I-10 and I-110. Moreover, it is well established that electronic billboards pose a serious threat to human health, with their nighttime lighting linked to increase risk of cancer, obesity, diabetes, depression and sleep disorders. No doubt the prospect of an electrified community would appeal to those who stand to financially benefit from such excessive outdoor advertising, but for the local residents, freeway travelers and the entire City of Los Angeles, the proposed signage constitutes billboard blight. Accordingly, in the recirculated DEIR, a revised description of the proposed SUD reflecting the reality of the proposal must replace the inaccurate SUD description contained in the DEIR. Additionally, the recirculated DEIR must contain a traffic study that analyzes the health and safety impacts of the proposed SUD and signage.

Furthermore, correction must be made to the proposed Sign District Criteria Figures II-15 and 16. First, with respect to Vertical Sign Levels I and 2, the proposed criteria guidelines describe certain proposed "unrestricted animation" and "light color animation" signs as "Digital Display signs and Integral Electronic Display Signs that are in encapsulated areas that are no more than incidentally visible from the public right of way." However, according to the project design, none of the signage in Level 1 and 2 would be "in encapsulated areas that are no more than incidentally visible from the public right of way." The DEIR repeatedly touts the Project's open design with all sides visible from a public right of way. In fact, the only differences between the signs proposed at these levels verses "integral electronic display signs" proposed at Level 3 is that they are lower and would run 24 hours a day. The recirculated DEIR must correct the mischaracterization of the signage proposed for Levels 1 and 2.

- II. The DEIR Fails to Account for the Indirect Displacement and Growth-Inducing Impacts of the Project, and to Incorporate Corresponding Mitigation Measures, In Violation of CEQA
- a. A Proper Analysis of the Growth-Inducing Impacts of the Project Should Have Been Included in the DEIR

The Reef Project is a 1,664,000 square foot, 9.7 acre mixed use development in South Los Angeles (LA), which will contain residences, a hotel, retail stores and restaurants, a gallery, event space, grocery store, and fitness center. The Project's objectives indicate that growth is forecasted in the region, and the Project is planned to foster and facilitate that growth; at least eight of the eleven objectives stated in the DEIR refer to population growth and the creation of an urban center. Consequently, according to CEQA, the DEIR was required to include an analysis of the growth-inducing impacts of the Project, including an analysis of the indirect displacement that the Project will cause. The

4 cont.

5

6

⁷ See, e.g., Ron Chepesiuk, Jan. 2009, "Missing the Dark: Health Effects of Light Pollution," Environmental Health Perspectives, 117(1): A20-A27.

⁸ DEIR, p. II-11.

⁹ DEIR, II-40.

¹⁰ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15126.2.

DEIR's minimal discussion of the Project's growth-inducing impacts, which merely reiterates the description of employee growth from the Population, Housing and Employment section, falls short of the full analysis of growth-inducing impacts required under CEQA. ¹¹

CEQA requires that "in evaluating the significance of the environmental effect of the project the lead agency shall consider...reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes in the environment." An indirect physical change is defined as "a physical change in the environment which is not immediately related to the project but which is caused indirectly by the project." An example of an indirect physical change provided in the text of the statute includes the construction of a new sewage plant, which may facilitate population growth and thereby cause an increase in air pollution. CEQA directs that a growth-inducing impacts analysis must be conducted, and should include a discussion of "the ways in which the project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment."

The project has been variously described as a "catalytic" and "transformative" project, and there is evidence that its growth-inducing impacts will be significant. For example, the DEIR notes that the buildings in the Project area range from one to fourteen stories in height; the Project proposes to construct buildings of twenty, thirty-two, and thirty-five stories in height, among others. This could drastically alter the development landscape in the Project area, facilitating the approval and construction of taller and denser buildings in the Project area in the future. Similarly, the Project proposes various street improvements, which could facilitate increased traffic and development in the Project area. The growth-inducing impacts section also lacks a discussion of the Project's potential to impact community service facilities, as required by CEQA. Despite these and other possibilities, no substantial analysis of these potential impacts is provided. As stated in the CEQA Guidelines, "[i]t must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment." Therefore, the DEIR for the Project must be recirculated and disclose and analyze the Project's potential growth-inducing impacts in compliance with CEQA.

b. The DEIR Should Analyze and Mitigate The Project's Indirect Displacement Impacts, a Significant Effect According to CEQA

The Reef Project DEIR did not include a section on indirect displacement or the true growth-inducing impacts of the Project. The DEIR did not include an explanation of these effects in the Population, Housing and Employment section; rather, the DEIR came

6 cont.

7

¹¹ DEIR, p. V-2.

¹² Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14§ 15064(d).

¹³ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15064(d)(2).

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15126.2(d).

¹⁶ Id.

¹⁷ Id.

to the faulty conclusion that "because no residential units currently exist on site, development of the Project would not remove existing housing; thus, no housing would be displaced." However, the DEIR fails to adequately address the question of whether housing will be displaced, as opposed to demolished, by the Project. The DEIR, without analysis, simply reaches the conclusion that because no housing exists on-site, no housing will be demolished by the construction of the project, and so no housing will be displaced. This analysis ignores the real possibility that the Project could indirectly displace existing housing through its operation, and this potential should be examined in the DEIR.

7 cont.

8

Further, the CEQA guidelines provide two distinct questions for determining displacement impacts; one addresses displacement of housing and the other addresses displacement of people. 19 However, the DEIR conflates the two, and concludes that because no on-site residences will be displaced by the Project, no people will be displaced, without further analysis. This violates CEQA. The relevant measure of these impacts is whether displacement, regardless of whether it occurs on-site or off-site, would be a result of the Project. CEQA is clear that not only direct impacts of a proposed project should be analyzed in an EIR, but also those indirect impacts which are reasonably foreseeable outcomes of the project. "Direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects." This includes the economic effects of a project that will foreseeably lead to physical changes in the environment. "When there is evidence... that economic and social effects caused by a project... could result in a reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental impact, such as urban decay or deterioration, then the CEQA lead agency is obligated to assess this indirect environmental impact."21

In reality, the Project potentially threatens to displace over 43,000 South LA residents. ²² Currently, the South LA community is comprised mainly of low-income renters, many of whom relocated to South LA after experiencing discrimination, violence, and displacement in other areas. The recently published health impact report on the Reef Project evaluated the economics and vulnerability of South LA residents. ²³ This report is included as an appendix to this letter, and fully incorporated herein. The health impact report shows that the median rent in South LA is significantly lower than median rents in the City or County (\$852/month versus \$1,830/month), but most South LA residents are already living in overcrowded and substandard rental units. ²⁴ Apartment units in the

18 DEIR, p. IV.L-8.

¹⁹ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, Appendix G, XIII(c).

²⁰ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15126.2.

²¹ Anderson First Coalition v. City of Anderson (2005) 130 Cal. App. 4th 1173, 1182.

²² Human Impact Partners, "Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles" (October, 2015), p. 19-20.

Human Impact Partners, "Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles" (October, 2015).

²⁴ Human Impact Partners, "Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles" (October, 2015), p. 16-17.

Project are estimated to cost at least \$2,000 per month, a rate that is entirely unaffordable for residents of the community, who are already struggling to pay their relatively low rents.

The potential for higher-income development such as the Project to influence property values and displacement in surrounding neighborhoods, particularly where such development abuts relatively low-income areas, has been documented. ²⁵ As the DEIR indicates repeatedly, the Project is being built to foster and accommodate growth in South LA. The type of demographic that the Project will attract, as implied by the price of a residence, will be of a significantly higher income level and level of education than current South LA residents. This will lead to upward pressure on property values and housing costs throughout the Project area. As a result of the Project, low-income residents of South LA may not be able to afford housing in the area, and may be forcibly displaced as a direct result.

Los Angeles has a well-documented shortage of housing affordable to lower-income families and individuals. For example, covenants for many affordable units in the Project area and across the City are set to expire in the coming years; in 2015 alone, there are approximately 128 properties with CRA/LA covenants set to expire, many of which are situated in the Project area. 26 Given the extreme lack of affordable housing in Los Angeles, there is a reasonable likelihood that the Project's potential displacement effects will spur the development of housing and other resources for displaced individuals in surrounding areas, a factor that indicates a significant impact according to CEQA.²⁷ In addition, such displacement could result in increased homelessness in the Project area, resulting in increased demand on social services agencies, community organizations providing services to homeless individuals, and public resources. Despite the overwhelming demonstrated need, the Project does not include any mechanism to create or preserve affordable housing or to minimize its catalytic impacts on increased housing prices and speculation, and the DEIR requires no mitigation in this area. The DEIR specifically includes the goal of creating an urban center that is compatible with and complementary to currently ongoing growth. In order to truly achieve this goal, the Project must include strategies and mitigation measures that take into account the local community. Without an analysis of the indirect displacement that is likely to occur as a result of the Project, as well as corresponding mitigation measures that address such displacement, the DEIR fails to comply with CEOA.

There are several measures that the Project can incorporate to address potential displacement and avoid contributing to the City's affordable housing crisis. For example, the Project should include a strong affordable housing component, as part of the Project design, to counter the Project's displacement impacts by allowing current residents to remain part of the South LA community. Other feasible measures to mitigate

²⁷ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15126.2(d).

8 cont.

9

10

²⁵ See, e.g., Guerrieri, Hartley, & Hurst, 2013. "Endogenous gentrification and housing price dynamics," Journal of Public Economics, Elsevier, vol. 100(C), pp. 45-60.

²⁶ See "All Expiring 2015 CRA/LA Properties: Citywide," HCIDLA Public Policy and Research Unit, 2014. Available at: http://hcidla.lacity.org/expiring-cra-properties-2015.

displacement include zoning and other land use controls to limit drivers of displacement in the Project area, tools to address threatened housing stock such as increased code enforcement, local and targeted hiring for low-income Project area residents, measures to ease pressures on local small businesses, and neighborhood-based programs which marshal community resources such as local nonprofit organizations to provide comprehensive solutions for residents at risk of displacement.

10 cont.

11

III. The DEIR Fails to Properly Analyze Potential Urban Decay Caused by the Project, In Violation of CEQA

Similarly, the Project's numerous new retail stores and restaurants may predictably result in the displacement of local commercial tenants and small businesses, but the DEIR fails to include any analysis of the Project's potential impacts with regard to urban decay. "Under CEQA, a lead agency must address the issue of urban decay in an EIR when a fair argument can be made that the proposed project will adversely affect the physical environment." Here, the health impact report analyzing the Project has documented the relative vulnerability of commercial tenants and small businesses in the area that may be placed at risk of displacement by the Project. ²⁹ This represents a potential for the Project to have significant urban decay impacts, and this potential should be evaluated in the EIR. As drafted, the DEIR contains no discussion of urban decay impacts, nor has any type of study been included in the appendices to demonstrate that these impacts have been examined. The urban decay impacts of the Project must be discussed and mitigated in compliance with CEQA.

IV. The DEIR did not Adequately Analyze or Mitigate the Aesthetic Impacts of the Project, In Violation of CEQA

a. Visual Appearance and Character

South Los Angeles is currently composed of residents who have lived in the neighborhood for many years and established a unique culture and cherished community. The overwhelming majority of buildings in the area are several-story, older residential and commercial buildings, inhabited for lengthy periods of time by the same tenants. The tallest building in the Project area currently is 14 stories tall. In contrast, the Project, as proposed, will cover two full city blocks, totaling 9.7 acres, and 1,664,000 square feet. It will include four high rise buildings, each with between 12 and 35 stories, and two parking structures with over 2,500 parking spaces. ³⁰ It would be visible from the freeways, as well as most parts of the existing South LA community.

CEQA Guidelines explain that an aesthetic impact would be considered significant if the Project would "substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site

12

³⁰ DEIR, pp. II-11, 14, 17.

California Clean Energy Committee v. City of Woodland (2014) 225 Cal. App. 4th 173, 188.
 Human Impact Partners, "Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles" (October, 2015), p. 34-35.

and its surroundings."³¹ The Reef Project would be drastically out of scale with other development in the surrounding community, and would substantially alter the character of the current community by transforming the area into an upscale urban center. Although the DEIR clearly points out that the Project Site is located within the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan and the Council District 9 Redevelopment Project area, ³² the DEIR repeatedly suggests that the Project Site is part of greater Downtown Los Angeles, and that the Project, therefore, fits in with the aesthetics of "the area."³³ This assertion is false and misleading. Downtown Los Angeles is a separate district, which contains several of the tallest buildings in the region, thousands of businesses, and a completely different demographic, cultural and visual character from South LA. In an effort to minimize the negative aesthetic and other impacts of the Project, the DEIR inaccurately characterizes South LA as part of Downtown, rendering the analysis deficient.³⁴

12 cont.

In outlining the Project objectives, the DEIR identifies the need to take the current population of South LA and its goals into account. The objectives reference serving the needs of the community and ensuring compatibility with the resident population, but the Project, as proposed, does not take the current population into account at all; the size, height, and style of the Project will be discordant with the current aesthetic of South LA. 35 A development of this size and magnitude would be larger and more prominent than any other building or development in South Los Angeles. 36 The volume of visitors, level of traffic, and scale of development that the Project would bring would change the nature of the community and degrade the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings in the eyes of many of the current residents and stakeholders. As the DEIR states, "the totality of the development would establish a new visual identity for the otherwise non-descript Project Site and surrounding area, and would serve as a visual focal point for the area." Despite this, the DEIR still inaccurately concludes that impacts would be less than significant. Aesthetic impacts from height, mass, and character changes should be reanalyzed and properly mitigated in conformance with CEQA.

13

b. Signage

14

The amount, size, and type of signage proposed for the Project is unprecedented in the Project area. According to the DEIR, signs will be located on each of the four multi-story buildings, totaling 234,067 square feet of signage. Many of the signs will be massive, animated, and placed high up on the buildings, where they will be clearly visible from a

³¹ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, Appendix G, I(c).

³² DEIR, p. IV.B.1-10.

³³ e.g., DEIR, p. IV.B.1-1.

³⁴ In the Aesthetics section alone, the word downtown is mentioned 31 times.

³⁵ DEIR, p. II-40.

³⁶ See Figure IV.B-11, (depicting Southeast LA with the proposed Project, without views of Downtown in the background.)

³⁷ DEIR, p. IV.B.1-22.

³⁸ DEIR, p. IV.B.1-20.

14 cont.

distance of at least 2.5 miles away.³⁹ In addition, signs, including animated signs, will be in operation throughout the day and evening, from dawn until 2 a.m.

The DEIR identifies several factors that would indicate significant impacts in terms of lighting, including whether Project lighting would interfere with the performance of an off-site activity, and whether the Project would result in substantial changes to existing artificial light conditions. Although the lighting may not be bright enough to impair drivers' vision (as the DEIR suggests), animated lighting and large signs are extremely distracting for a number of groups and activities, most notably local and regional drivers, families and individuals who live near the Project site, and students who will be in classes within feet of the Project. Light pollution at night can cause sleep disruption in children and adults, and can lead to other health problems, including issues with behavioral and cognitive function. Studies have shown that even small changes in ordinary light exposure during the late evening hours can have significant effects on sleep and the biological clock. Several studies have also linked excessive use of artificial light at night to health problems including cancer.

15

The substantial changes to existing artificial light conditions are obvious, as the current site and area contains virtually no signage. Wiews of the Project signage will be visible at a distance from the Project site, and could extend up to 420 feet vertically. The impacts of the proposed signage on the surrounding environment are extremely significant and potentially harmful. Even areas incorrectly deemed by the DEIR to have less than significant impacts would still be visible and prominent in the immediate vicinity of the Project, areas in which schools and residences are located. The DEIR explicitly points out that the effects and impacts of the signage are "dependent primarily upon the size, concentration, and animation associated with the proposed signs," yet instead of reducing the size, concentration, and animation of the signage, the Project proponents chose to retain and ignore the significant impacts. The aesthetics analysis is deficient and inaccurate with regards to signage, and must be revised to fully study all impacts and include appropriate mitigation measures in order to comply with CEQA.

c. Light

The impacts of light from the Project in several zones and from a number of directions would be significant. ⁴⁴ Light and glare from digital billboards have been shown to significantly increase the risk of driving accidents, in addition to the other distractions

³⁹ DEIR, p. IV.B.1-22.

⁴⁰ James M. Zeitzer, Derk-Jan Dijk, et. al., "Sensitivity of the Human Circadian Pacemaker to Nocturnal Light: Melatonin Phase Resetting and Suppression," *Journal of Physiology*, 2000, pp. 695-702.

⁴¹ Kevin J. Gaston, Marcel E. Visser, and Franz Holker, "The Biological Impacts of Light at Night: From Molecules to Communities," *Philosophical Transactions B*, May 5, 2015.

⁴² DEIR, p. IV.B.1-27.

⁴³ DEIR, p. IV.B.2-19.

⁴⁴ DEIR, pp. IV.B.2-27-31.

and health risks discussed above. 45 The single mitigation measure provided, which only slightly limits the signage operating hours to hours when most people are asleep, is not sufficient to address this impact. Additional mitigation measures should be incorporated to reduce the effects of the lighting from the signage on the surrounding environment. These may include, but are not limited to, fewer signs, smaller signs, locating signs in only specific areas, limiting the intensity of sign illumination, and limited hours of operation.

16 cont.

V. The Proposed Air Quality Mitigation Measures are Inadequate and Must Be Strengthened

Los Angeles air quality is already extremely poor as a result of the geography of the region, a legacy of non-attainment of air quality standards, and the high number of vehicle trips and resultant exhaust emissions. The majority of Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) and Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions that the DEIR reports will be significant and unavoidable are generated by exhaust from mobile sources, in addition to industrial and point sources. The Reef Project will be located in close proximity to four major freeways, including "heavily trafficked segments" of the Santa Monica Freeway (the I-10), which runs only one block from the Project site, and the I-110 freeway, which is 2.5 miles from the Project site. The Project will also attract visitors, during both the construction and operational phases, which will increase traffic and emissions, further impacting the air quality in the area. A range of diesel-fueled construction machinery and vehicles will be utilized during Project construction.

VOCs and NOx are particularly harmful pollutants, each of which can produce devastating health effects, both in the short term and after chronic exposure. Inhalation of VOCs and NOx can cause severe health problems including asthma, skin irritation, respiratory illness, aggravation of respiratory illness, increased susceptibility to infections, cancer, and death. Sensitive receptors, including young children and the elderly, are more susceptible to the effects of these pollutants, and there is increased risk for asthma and other pulmonary diseases in these populations. The Reef site is located within 305 feet of three schools and in close proximity to hundreds of residential units, where the impacts of the Project will be felt most strongly. In addition, the community in which the Project is proposed is made up mostly of low-income residents of color. Many of these residents already face poor health, high levels of stress, and limited access to adequate, affordable health services. It is critical that the Project incorporates mitigation measures to address the increased pollution and emissions at the sensitive receptors surrounding the Project, and in the community at large.

Although the DEIR repeatedly refers to the building phase of the Project as "short-term," construction will take at least 60 months, or five years, a period of time that for air quality and health risk purposes is long enough to cause severe pollution-related health

⁴⁵ Tania Dukic, et al., "Effects of Electronic Billboards on Driver Distraction," *Traffic Injury Prevention*, July 8, 2012.

⁴⁶ DEIR, p. II-4, p. IV.C-9.

problems. Further, the DEIR states that Project development is expected to occur between 2016 and 2035. The mitigation measures proposed for the construction phase of the Project are entirely inadequate and fail to address the impacts of the Project on the surrounding population, and the characterization of impacts as temporary is misleading. While the Project does incorporate building features that protect the projected residents, employees, and visitors to the development, all of the mitigation measures focus solely on the future Reef population and there is not a single measure dedicated to protecting residents of the surrounding area from the increase in pollutants that the Project will directly cause.

17 cont.

The mitigation measures for air quality and health risk in the DEIR do not address the impacts to the community and area surrounding the Project, in violation of CEQA. The DEIR must fully mitigate potential air quality impacts for both future Project residents and current residents of the surrounding community, who will bear the brunt of the air quality and health risks during construction and the life of the Project. This is particularly important given the sensitive receptors in the area, which are located in extremely close proximity to the Project.

VI. The DEIR's Analysis of Impacts to Cultural Resources is Flawed and the DEIR Improperly Defers Study and Mitigation of Project Impacts

The DEIR's analysis of the Project's potential impacts on cultural resources contains several flaws, including improper deferral of mitigation and a failure to analyze impacts with sufficient specificity. For example, the DEIR concludes that the height of the two towers proposed as part of the Project are "considerably taller than surrounding development," but that potential impacts to historic resources derived from the scale of the Project are mitigated by "the open space on the site, the variety of size and massing proposed for the new construction, and the isolation of the tower elements to the north and south of the Project Site." However, the DEIR goes on to explain that the Project may utilize the Design Guidelines, which "allow for, among other things, the relocation of buildings within the site..." The DEIR simultaneously relies on the specific proposed configuration of Project buildings to conclude there will be no significant impacts to historic resources due to the scale of the Project, while going on to state that the Project will have flexibility in the ultimate location of these buildings. This does not ensure that all potential impacts have been included in the EIR and mitigated to the maximum feasible extent.

Similarly, the DEIR improperly defers study and mitigation of potential impacts to historic resources from the proposed signage for the Project. The DEIR concludes that the proposed signage "would not constitute an impact with respect to the immediate surroundings of potential historic resources in the Project vicinity," because all signage

⁴⁷ DEIR, p. IV.L-10.

⁴⁸ DEIR, p. IV.E-18.

⁴⁹ DEIR, p. IV.E-19.

will be subject to the proposed Reef Project Sign District.⁵⁰ However, the proposed sign district for the Project has not yet been approved, let alone finalized, and must go through a separate public hearing process, where specific aspects of the sign district will be decided. As stated in the DEIR, "the Reef Project Sign District would establish the maximum square footage of signs, provide for commercial advertising standards, and establish illumination and animation standards to properly limit and regulate the proposed integral electronic displays."⁵¹ However, none of these aspects of the sign district have been finalized, and therefore the DEIR's reliance on these limitations to conclude that Project signage will not constitute an impact to historic resources is an inappropriate deferral. Under CEQA, the City must require "that measures to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other measures;"⁵² this is not the case with the proposed Reef Project Sign District, which has not been finalized, let alone adopted.

18 cont.

VII. The DEIR's Transportation Analysis is Flawed and Lacks Adequate Mitigation Measures

Traffic in Los Angeles is particularly severe, and creates substantial stress and difficulties for commuters and travelers throughout the region. The Project, as proposed, will create 1,428 residential units, 21 live-work units, a 208 room hotel, as well as retail stores, swimming pools, a fitness center, a grocery store, restaurants, and a gallery. The current Reef building will be altered to include a new restaurant and event space. Over 5,000 parking spots will be provided for residents, employees and visitors. In addition, the Project objectives clearly indicate that the Project is being built in order to "attract top notch events," "create an urban center...complimentary to...ongoing growth," "promote[] the creation of a vibrant and dynamic 24-hour activity center," "provide site access and sufficient parking," "provide an integrated mixed-use project," and "to provide flexibility to respond to changes in demand and urban growth patterns." Impacts caused by the Project's increased traffic must be adequately mitigated.

19

Construction of the Project would take place over at least 60 months. On average, there would be 125 construction workers at the site each day, and up to 500 workers at peak construction times. ⁵⁴ For the first three months of construction, the equivalent of 360 car trips **per hour** would enter and exit the Site. During this time, no mitigation measures would be implemented, as the DEIR indicates that mitigation measures would be phased in later in the Project life. This is wholly inappropriate, as CEQA requires all feasible mitigation measures to be included in order to mitigate a project's impacts to a less than significant level, regardless of whether those impacts are short-term or long-term. ⁵⁵ As a

⁵⁰ DEIR, p. IV.E-18.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Cal. Pub. Res. Code § 21081.6(b); see also California Clean Energy Committee v. City of Woodland (2014), 225 Cal. App. 4th 173.

DEIR, p. II-40.
 DEIR, p. IV.N-19.

⁵⁵ Cal. Pub. Res. Code § 21081

result, current South LA residents will face significant unmitigated traffic increases, and consequent longer commutes, as well as encumbrances to walking in their neighborhood.

19 cont.

The DEIR predicts that the Project will increase traffic to and from the Site during peak hours by more than 1200%. More than 900 trips will be generated during the morning peak hour and over 1,200 will be generated during the evening peak hour. However, it is likely that these figures underestimate the true increase in traffic that the Project will cause. The DEIR based part of its transportation analysis on a "recent Downtown Los Angeles Demographic Study," which indicated that 56% of Downtown residents work in downtown and that downtown residents desired more stores and restaurants to which they could walk. Again, this statement and basis for analysis is flawed and misleading. Downtown is a separate area, which houses an entirely different demographic than South LA.

20

Because the Project will increase traffic and congestion dramatically, the implementation of adequate mitigation measures is critical. The mitigation measures proposed in the DEIR are inadequate. The first four measures are merely compliance measures, required by City standards. Improvement measures are appreciated, but considering the increase in traffic that the Project will bring, both directly and indirectly, they are insufficient to reduce Project impacts to a less than significant level. Similarly, vehicle trip reduction measures do not guarantee a reduction in motor vehicle travel, particularly because of the lifestyle of the demographic which is expected to inhabit the Development. The Project should include measures to fully mitigate its impacts on transportation, including traffic relief measures and measures to provide increased access to transit and additional transportation options for residents.

21

In California, extremely low-income households living near transit are less than half as likely as higher income households to own a car, and drive less than half as many miles as higher-income households. Low-income households living near transit are also more likely than their higher-income neighbors to utilize such transit. ⁵⁸ Locally, approximately 75% of Metro's transit ridership is composed of households dependent on transit whose income is less than \$25,000 per year ⁵⁹. Despite this reality, the DEIR does not include a proper analysis of the effects of the Project's demographics on the Project's transportation impacts, and fails to include related mitigation measures such as incorporating an affordable housing component into the Project.

⁵⁶ DEIR, p. IV.N-23.

http://www.downtownla.com/survey/2013/results/DTLA-Demo-Study-2013.pdf).

⁵⁷ DCBID Downtown LA Demographic Study (2013) (available at:

⁵⁸ California Housing Partnership Strategy & Transform, "Why Creating and Preserving Affordable Homes Near Transit Is a Highly Effective Climate Protection Strategy" (2014), p. 3. Available at: http://www.transformca.org/transform-report/why-creating-and-preserving-affordable-homes-near-transit-highly-effective-climate.

⁵⁹ L.A. Hous. Dep't & Reconnecting Am., "Preservation in Transit-Oriented Districts: A Study on the Need, Priorities, and Tools in Protecting Assisted and Unassisted Housing in the City of Los Angeles" (2012). Available at:

http://reconnectingamerica.org/assets/PDFs/20120524LAHDTODPreservationFinal.pdf.

VIII. The DEIR's Noise Analysis is Flawed and Fails to Incorporate Adequate Mitigation Measures for Noise Impacts

Project construction is expected to last at least five years. Although the DEIR repeatedly refers to this time period as "temporary," at least five years of construction noise can result in severe impacts, particularly for nearby sensitive receptors; furthermore, the DEIR states that Project development is expected to occur between 2016 and 2035. The DEIR identified five sensitive receptors, four of which are within less than 310 feet of the Project site. In addition, three of the sensitive receptors are schools, all of which will be in session throughout the construction and operation of the Project.

Further, the DEIR ignores evidence that noise impacts may be more extensive than it concludes. The DEIR contains information, for example, regarding the potential noise generation of equipment to be utilized during Project construction, but chooses to estimate that generation at a lower level which it contends is more representative of average construction activity, due to the fact that construction equipment does not always run at full power. However, this creative calculus runs afoul of CEQA, which requires analysis of both short-term and long-term impacts, including "spikes" in noise generation from construction equipment which may be operating at full power, however temporarily.

IX. The Land Use and Planning Section Is Severely Inadequate, In Violation of CEQA, and Must Be Recirculated

CEQA requires that a DEIR "discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans." In order to determine whether there are inconsistencies, the CEQA Guidelines provide questions that should be analyzed, including whether the project would conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The Project DEIR fails to account for significant inconsistencies and discrepancies between the Project and current land use plans and policies, and requested zoning permits.

The DEIR does not evaluate the Project's many conflicts with existing zoning requirements and fails to provide any analysis whatsoever of the Project's consistency (or lack thereof) with a number of highly relevant General Plan policies. Likewise, the DEIR does not evaluate the Project's compatibility with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP), and fails to identify significant inconsistencies with the ILUP's Community Benefits requirements. Where the DEIR does purport to discuss the Project's consistency with General Plan policies and programs, much of the analysis is circular, conclusory and wholly inadequate for a meaningful review. The DEIR also fails to include an adequate

22 cont.

⁶⁰ DEIR, p. IV.L-10.

⁶¹ DEIR, p. IV.K-18.

⁶² Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15125(d).

⁶³ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, Appendix G, X(b).

evaluation of the Project's consistency with the Draft Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan and Community Plan Implementation Overlay (CPIO). Further, the DEIR fails to address the SUD Sign District's inconsistency with the Southeast Los Angeles's Community Plan's goals and objectives. This inadequate analysis must be corrected along with meaningful mitigation measures relating to the significant impacts associated with land use consistency in order to satisfy CEQA.

23 cont.

a. The DEIR Fails to Address the Project's Consistency with Existing Zoning Requirements and City Plans and Regulations

The DEIR's land use analysis unjustifiably assumes that the Project will be constructed in a manner that is patently inconsistent with existing zoning requirements and numerous current land use plans and policies that apply to the Project Site. Specifically, the Project involves the construction of a mixed-use development with 1,444 housing units on a site that is currently zoned for limited manufacturing. The DEIR briefly acknowledges that as proposed, the Project "would not be consistent with the existing General Plan land use designation and zoning of the Project site." However, this is presented merely as the explanation behind the Project's request for an extensive list of discretionary land use approvals. Rather than evaluating the existing land use inconsistency and analyzing the on-the-ground impacts that the proposed land use changes will have on the community, the DEIR simply concludes "the zone change would result in the entire parcel being singularly zoned for the mix of uses that [sic] proposed for the mixed-use development." This circular logic severely undermines environmental review.

24

The DEIR completely removes Project's proposed land use changes from any meaningful scrutiny. The DEIR repeatedly implies that existing land use regulations are inappropriate and suggests that once the current regulations are amended to permit the Project, then all of the Project's land use impacts will somehow be resolved. In other words, the DEIR proceeds from the flawed assumption that the Project should dictate land use laws, not the other way around. By assuming that the approval of the Project's numerous discretionary land use entitlement requests are a foregone conclusion, ⁶⁶ the DEIR fails to comply with the CEQA requirement that the EIR identify the significant environmental effects of the project based on "the existing physical conditions in the affected area."

⁶⁴ DEIR, p. IV.J-70.

⁶⁵ Id.

The Los Angeles Municipal Code clearly states the General Plan Amendments – including those limited to a specific property – must be initiated by the City Council, the City Planning Commission, or the Director of Planning; not the applicant. LAMC 11.5.6.B; Los Angeles City Charter Section 555. It appears that this process was initiated in May, 2014, by Councilmember Price. However this motion is still pending in Planning and Land Use Management Committee, and has not been approved by Council as required by the Code and Charter. See Council File 14-0620. Without such approval, the DEIR analysis is premature. ⁶⁷ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, § 15125(e); § 15126.2.

b. The DEIR Fails to Evaluate the Project's Inconsistency with Relevant General Plan Policies

The City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide provides five factors for consideration in determining significant impacts related to land use consistency including "whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans." Despite these clear directives, the DEIR fails to adequately evaluate consistency with many relevant General Plan policies, goals and objectives.

While DEIR Tables IV.J-3, IV.J-4, IV.J-5, and IV.J-7 selectively consider *some* policies, the corresponding "evaluation" provides only a perfunctory analysis and includes many conclusory statements of consistency without providing adequate evidence or analysis to support. Moreover the DEIR inexplicably *neglects altogether* to evaluate numerous other General Plan policies that are essential to understanding the Project's environmental impacts. ⁶⁸ Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Project as proposed is in fact inconsistent with many of these General Plan policies that go unanalyzed in the DEIR. As a result, a complete and accurate analysis of consistency with the General Plan, as well as mitigation measures to address potential significant impacts relating to land use inconsistency, should be conducted.

c. The DEIR fails to evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Preservation Policy (ILUP) and the ILUP Community Benefits Requirements

The Project site is located in the M1-2-O zone and has a General Plan land use designation of Limited Manufacturing with Oil District Overlay and Height District 2. While Height District 2 permits an FAR of 6:1, the M1 zone does not permit the uses proposed by the Project. To aid the proposed development of 1,444 residential units, 90,000 square feet of retail uses, 46,000 square feet of restaurant/bar uses, a 208-key hotel; 18,000 square-foot gallery, and 8,000 square-foot yoga/fitness studio and approximately 2,733 parking spaces, the Applicant is requesting a General Plan Amendment to change the designation to Community Commercial, and a corresponding zone change from M1-2 to C4-2.

Ten years ago, an onslaught of industrial-to-residential conversions -- just like the one requested here -- caused a rapid loss of job-supporting industrial land throughout the city. In response, the Department of City Planning (DCP) and Community Redevelopment Agency embarked on the Industrial Land Use Policy project (the "ILUP"). Consequently, a comprehensive study evaluated the viability of the City's industrial districts and created four distinct typologies of existing industrial zoned land, ranging from districts that

68 The relevant General Plan policies that go unanalyzed in the DEIR include, but are not limited to Housing Element Objective 1.2, Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99

Housing Element Objective 1.2, Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101; Health Element Policy 1.7 and Program 86, Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policies 1.5-2 and 11-2.3; Framework Element Policies 3.14.6 and 4.2.1.

25

should be preserved to parcels that are appropriate for conversion. ⁶⁹ The ILUP project culminated in a 2008 memorandum to DCP staff ("Staff Directive"). ⁷⁰ This policy document includes very specific direction and guidance regarding the evaluation of entitlement applications for proposed developments on industrial zoned land. <u>The ILUP</u>, and this Staff Directive in particular, outline the process and procedures that DCP staff must now follow when evaluating the general plan amendment and zone change requested for this Project.

The ILUP is a touchstone of city land use policy and unquestionably applies to this Project. And yet, the DEIR Land Use and Planning section fails to even mention this policy, let alone adequately evaluate the Project's consistency with it. This is a significant oversight. Given the dramatic transformation of industrial land to support residential use that is being proposed for this Project, the DEIR must evaluate the project's consistency with the city's ILUP. Without this analysis, the DEIR fails to meet CEQA's requirement of consistency with City plans and policies. 71

The ILUP also calls for the inclusion of certain meaningful Community Benefits as part of any land use change on this property. Although omitted entirely from the DEIR analysis, this requirement for meaningful community benefits is actually reiterated throughout the City's Industrial Land Use Policy. For example, the ILUP Staff Directive calls for City Planning staff to "recommend approval of applications for changes of use or zone provided Community Benefits are incorporated ..." The Staff Directive then instructs: "[w]hen considering approval of projects within "Industrial Mixed Use" and "Transition" Districts, staff recommendations should include Community Benefits set forth below." The ILUP Staff Directive outlines specific Community Benefits, including the provision of Affordable Housing.

Because it lacks any acknowledgment of the ILUP's clear directive for community benefits, the DEIR is incomplete. This failure to adequately evaluate the Project's inconsistency with the ILUP should be corrected through a recirculated DEIR. In considering mitigation measures, the DEIR should refer to the ILUP Community Benefits

26 cont.

⁶⁹ Department of City Planning and Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, "Los Angeles' Industrial Land: Sustaining a Dynamic City Economy,"

Tos Angeles Industrial Land Use Policy, Staff Direction Memorandum Regarding Industrial Land Use and Potential Conversion to Residential or Other Uses [hereafter, "Staff Directive."] http://planning.lacity.org/Code_Studies/LanduseProj/Industrial_Files/StaffDirections.pdf

⁷¹ See, e.g., City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, H.1.

⁷² Staff Directive, 5.

⁷³ Id. at 8.

⁷⁴ *Id*.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, H.1. A determination of significance regarding land use consistency should be made considering the following factors: "Whether the proposal is inconsistent with the adopted land use/density designation in the Community Plan, redevelopment plan or specific plan for the site; and "Whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans." Here, the Project is clearly inconsistent with the Site's existing industrial zoning and use regulations, and is also inconsistent with the City's existing policy framework that is intended to inform land use planning for industrial zoned property.

requirements and recommend proper mechanisms to effectuate appropriate community benefits.

26 cont.

d. The DEIR Does Not Adequately Evaluate the Project's Consistency with the Draft Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan

The Department of City Planning is currently in the process of updating the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan. The most recent draft of the plan was revised and released in October 2014, with a corresponding draft of the Community Plan Implementation Overlay (CPIO).⁷⁶

The DEIR highlights that under the current draft of the Community Plan, the Project Site would be designated for Community Commercial Use. While claiming consistency with the Plan's vision for a mixed-use TOD district along the Blue Line, the DEIR only briefly acknowledges the Project's inconsistency with the Draft Plan's density provisions. The DEIR neglects to mention that the Project as proposed is also fundamentally inconsistent with many of the Draft Plan's policies and objectives.

The DEIR indicates that the project will have a FAR of at or just below 6:1. It is the intent of the CPIO to allow density above 1.5 FAR on the Project Site for projects that provide affordable housing. ⁷⁸ In addition, consistent with the structure of the City's Density Bonus Ordinance and the Downtown Housing Incentive (and in keeping with Housing Element policy), the Draft CPIO would allow a parking reduction only for residential projects that include affordable housing. ⁷⁹ Because the Project as proposed would have a floor area ratio at 6:1 and enjoy parking reductions without including any affordable housing, it is inconsistent with the provisions of the Draft Southeast Los Angeles CPIO.

In addition to the affordable housing provisions in the CPIO, the Draft Community Plan also contains a number of broader goals and policies that are potentially inconsistent with the Project and go unaddressed in the DEIR. For example:

- Policy LU5.6 "Prioritize housing that is affordable to a broad cross-section of income levels and that provides the ability to live near work."
- Policy LU13.3 "Prioritize new housing for the transit-dependent community and discourage upscale luxury housing at TODs in Southeast Los Angeles, which has a large transit-user and low income population."
- Policy LU13.4 "Promote and incentivize mixed income and/or affordable housing in TODs"

78 Draft Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Implementation Overlay, p. 8.

⁷⁶ Available at: https://sites.google.com/site/seastlancp/.

⁷⁷ DEIR, p. IV.J-58-59.

⁷⁹ Draft Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Implementation Overlay, p. 38. In addition to mixed income housing incentives, parking reductions are offered as incentives for sit-down restaurants, full service grocery stores and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

- Policy LU16.3 "Encourage job training and local hiring for community residents."
- **Program 34** "Consistent with the goals and policies of the City's Housing Element, the Plan supports the maintenance and enhancement of the existing affordable housing stock for existing residents."
- **Program 63** "Encourage businesses to hire locally, and require local hiring for discretionary projects with Development Agreements to the extent feasible."

These policies and programs call for the City to do more than just indiscriminately greenlight any project that creates mixed-use development in the general vicinity of transit. Rather, the Draft Plan clearly contemplates and advances a more comprehensive vision for transit-oriented development in the Southeast LA Community Plan Area. The Draft Plan calls for TOD projects that include housing opportunities for low-income core riders and contribute economic opportunities to local residents. Lacking an affordability component or detailed programs to ensure jobs for local residents, the Project is inconsistent with the vision laid out in the Draft Community Plan. It also threatens the kind of community destabilization that directly contradicts the goals and objectives outlined above.

The DEIR Land Use & Planning section should acknowledge that the Draft Community Plan and CPIO reflect a current visioning process for the community, and should be evaluated for alignment with the Project. Since inconsistencies are significant, a recirculated Land Use & Planning section should evaluate possible mitigation measures like affordable housing.

e. <u>The DEIR's Dangerously Deficient Supplemental Use District for Signage Land Use Assessment Leads to False Conclusions and Risks Invalidating the City's Signage Ordinance</u>

According to the DEIR's Project Description, the REEF looks to introduce 234,067 square feet of electronic signage into an area where virtually none exists. So dominate and overwhelming are the sought environmental alternations, the Project must break the proposed electronic signage onslaught into five sign zones, each broken into three vertical signage subzones. The signage proposed is a dizzying array of offsite advertising stacked 500 feet high, like a massive vertical TV showroom. Not only would these proposed signs negatively impact in the most profound way the quality of life for the residents living, working and going to school just feet away, the signage would pull the attention of every driver along the 10 and 110 freeways away from the road and toward the animated advertising, creating untold hazards for every person obliged to drive in the Project's vicinity.

Despite having devoted nearly half its Project Description (Section II) to describing the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage, the DEIR mustered an anemic paragraph for the same topic in its Land Use & Planning analysis, of which two sentences address the Project's impacts on signage regulations and policies. Specifically, the

27 cont.

DEIR's Land Use & Planning analysis on the Supplemental Use District (SUD)for Signage obliquely reads:

The potential environmental impacts of The Reef Project SUD are evaluated in this EIR. Therefore, the Project would have less than significant impacts with regards to signage regulations and policies.

This circular assessment gives new meaning to the phrase "environmental window dressing." The DEIR's assessment is as wrong as it is inadequate for the following reasons.

The history and status of our City's signage regulations play a controlling role in the Project's request for a SUD for Signage. Yet the DEIR is utterly silent on both. In fact, the DEIR Land Use & Planning analysis does not even mention which signage ordinance it believes applies to its Project. The DEIR fails to acknowledge that the City is in the process of establishing new sign regulations and that SUD Sign District's applications are, for all intents and purposes, on hold until the new regulations are adopted. This shortcoming is all the more troubling given that the DEIR incorrectly asserts that it "would have less than significant impacts with regard to signage regulations and policies." This statement holds no water under either the current sign ordinance or the revised ordinance recently approved by the City Planning Commission. The public should not be left to guess what sign ordinance the DEIR reviewed, if any.

Additionally, the DEIR ignores significant signage restrictions that form the bedrock of the City's signage policy with respect to aesthetic and public safety. Specifically, the DEIR fails to address the fact that the Project violates the City's ban on signage within 2000 feet of a freeway that would be viewed primarily from a main traveled roadway of a freeway or an on-ramp/off-ramp. So Not only does this gaping oversight stand as a powerful indictment of its inadequacy, the DEIR fails to account for how its Project's signage threatens to invalidate the City's hard fought ban of freeway facing signage — an environmental impact of monumental significance. Although emerging victorious in World Wide Rush, LLC et al v. City of Los Angeles, the Ninth Circuit cautioned the City that although the Staples Center and the Fifteenth Street SUD exemptions to the freeway ban did not invalidate the ordinance, additional exceptions could "break the link between Freeway Facing Sign Ban and the City's objectives in traffic and aesthetics." Se

The Project has all the elements of a sign district that would invalidate the City's ban of freeway facing signs ordinance. Its fully animated billboards would be highly visible from multiple freeways. Thus, the Project threatens the City's continued ability to ban freeway-facing signs, and opens up the entire length of every freeway to signage the City has fought so hard to ban. The City's arguments of blight and improving traffic safety

28 cont.

⁸⁰ DEIR, p. IV J-72.

⁸¹ Article 4.4, Section 14.4.6 and Section 14.4.5 of draft Signage Ordinance approved by the City Planning Commission

⁸² World Wide Rush et al., v. City of Los Angeles (9th Cir. 2010) 606 F.3d 676.

available for the Staple Center and Fifteenth Street SUD are absent. Thus, the Project threatens the City's continued ability to ban freeway facing signs, and opens up the entire length of every freeway to signage the City has fought so hard to ban. The environmental impacts of such a risk are immensely significant. Yet the DEIR fails to acknowledge and analyze this environmental impact. Accordingly the DEIR is inadequate and must be recirculated.

29 cont.

Moreover, the City's current sign ordinance clearly prohibits signage that constitutes a hazard to safe and efficient operation of vehicles upon a street or a freeway.⁸³ With its proposed over-200,000 square feet of animated signage pulsing over the 10 and 110 freeways, the proposed Project undoubtedly poses a serious hazard to traffic safety. The environmental impacts of such a risk are immensely significant. Consequently, the DEIR's land use analysis is deficient and this chapter must be recirculated to account for all discrepancies, and include all relevant regulations and policies.

30

X. The DEIR Should Have Included An Environmental Justice Analysis with Corresponding Mitigation Measures

Projects that are likely to have a significant and disproportionate effect on surrounding low-income communities are encouraged to include an environmental justice analysis in their environmental impact reports; further, "specific provisions of CEQA and its Guidelines require that local lead agencies consider how the environmental and public health burdens of a project might specially affect certain communities."84 The Reef Project is proposed to be built in a particularly low-income community of color⁸⁵, where many residents are rent-burdened, work multiple jobs, and have limited access to adequate, affordable health services. The DEIR acknowledges that even after mitigation measures, there will be significant impacts to air quality, noise, traffic and transportation, aesthetics; there are further impacts, such as indirect impacts from gentrification and consequent displacement, which are not analyzed in the DEIR. These Project-related impacts will seriously affect the lives of current South LA residents, a population that is already overburdened with stress, mental and physical health problems, poor air quality, and a lack of means. A Project's particular social and economic effects, while not considered environmental impacts themselves, may be a determining factor in whether a particular physical change cause by the project is considered significant. 86 Therefore, the DEIR should have analyzed the environmental justice impacts of the proposed Project and implemented mitigation measures to reduce the potential harm that may disproportionately result from Project impacts.

31

http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/neighborhood/historic-south-central/.

⁸³ Sign Ordinance, Los Angeles, Chapter 62 § 91.6205.5.

⁸⁴ Office of the California Attorney General, "Environmental Justice at the Local and Regional Level" (2012), p. 3. Available at http://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/environment/ej_fact_sheet.pdf.

85 For example, LA Times reports the Historic South Central median income is \$30,882. See

Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15131; Office of the California Attorney General, "Environmental Justice at the Local and Regional Level" (2012), p. 4. Available at

XI. The DEIR's Population, Housing and Employment Analysis is Flawed

The DEIR's analysis of potential impacts to Population, Housing and Employment is riddled with inappropriate conclusory and speculative statements. For example, the DEIR states regarding Project construction-related employment that "[i]t is likely that the skilled workers anticipated to work on the Project already reside within the Los Angeles region and would not need to relocate as a result of employment."87 However, the DEIR does not include a listing (or even examples) of what type of skilled positions would be offered in connection with the Project, what other local projects may require the same type of skilled workers, or the number or residence of existing skilled workers located in and around the Project area able to fill Project positions. Similarly, the DEIR's analysis of the projects employment impacts contains minimal analysis of the types of positions generated by the Project's operation and how these compare to the skill level and educational attainment of Project area residents, despite the fact that the health impact report has found a potential imbalance between existing residents and the jobs which may be produced as a result of the Project. 88 "The environmental impact report (EIR) must contain facts and analysis, not just the bare conclusions of the agency. An EIR must include detail sufficient to enable those who did not participate in its preparation to understand and to consider meaningfully the issues raised by the proposed project."89 Despite this, the DEIR does not include such detail, nor does it include any appendices to support its conclusions with regard to Population, Housing, and Employment impacts.

With respect to Project-related housing impacts, the DEIR concludes that because the number of additional units to be constructed as part of the Project "would be within the projections for housing unit growth Citywide and within the Community Plan area," impacts related to housing growth would be less than significant. However, the DEIR relies on a simplistic analysis and inappropriate sources of information in reaching this conclusion. The DEIR notes that the current Housing Element for the City of Los Angeles projects that while Los Angeles is on track to exceed its need for new construction of market rate housing units, it is projected to fall short of its need for the construction of affordable units. Despite this, no consideration is given to the unit mix of the Project or the income levels they would potentially serve. The Project has proposed to build exclusively market-rate or luxury housing, with no affordable housing units or other contributions to affordable housing in the City or the Project area.

The development of housing may have different impacts due to the income levels it proposes to serve. Here, the Project would serve higher-income individuals and households, despite the fact that there is a desperate need citywide for affordable housing and despite the fact that the City is on track to exceed its need for higher-income housing. This could result in a situation where increasing numbers of higher-income individuals

32

⁸⁷ DEIR, p. IV.L-7.

⁸⁸ Human Impact Partners, "Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles" (October, 2015), p. 34.

⁸⁹ Bakersfield Citizens for Local Control v. City of Bakersfield (2004) 124 Cal. App. 4th 1184, 1197.

DEIR, p. IV.L-10.
 DEIR, p. IV.L-5.

are attracted to the Project area, while existing lower-income Project area residents are left without adequate housing supply. It is crucial that the DEIR include a discussion of the effect of housing price, as well as the number of units, proposed for the Project. This is consistent with CEQA's mandate to examine the economic effects of a project where such effects may produce a corresponding physical impact on the environment ⁹².

33 cont.

In addition, the DEIR partly bases its analysis of Project-related housing growth and population impacts on the Draft Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan (Draft Community Plan), because the adopted Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan is outdated and does not cover the period of Project development. However, reliance on the Draft Community Plan is inappropriate, and does not ensure an accurate account of potential Project impacts. The Draft Community Plan has yet to be finalized, and has not gone through the CEQA review and public comment process. Therefore, it is possible that the Draft Community Plan will be revised, and that an analysis based on the current draft could be rendered inaccurate. Further, because the Draft Community Plan's potential environmental impacts have not yet been assessed and mitigated, the Project's impacts falling within the Draft Community Plan's projections does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that Project impacts will be less than significant. Because the Draft Community Plan may be revised, and its impacts have not been mitigated, basing the conclusion that Project impacts would be less than significant on the Draft Community Plan improperly defers mitigation of the Project's potential impacts.

34

Finally, the DEIR fails to take into account the share of projected Project area growth which would be facilitated by the Project. It is noted that the Project-related population growth represents up to 28.4 percent of projected population growth in the Southeast Community Plan Area through 2035. No consideration is given to what potential impacts may occur from consolidating almost one-third of Community Plan Area growth into a single project, despite the fact that the addition of other projects in the future could push population growth beyond what is projected as a direct result of the Project's absorption of a large share of projected growth. A more robust analysis is required to properly identify, evaluate, and mitigate the Project's potential impacts in the areas of Population, Housing, and Employment.

35

XII. The DEIR's Cumulative Impacts Analyses are Flawed, in Violation of CEQA

36

The discussion of "related projects" within the Environmental Setting is inadequate and inappropriately limited. CEQA requires analysis of cumulative impacts, and these are defined as "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." A list of "related projects" is used in the EIR's analysis of cumulative impacts under each impact category.

⁹² Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15126.2.

⁹³ DEIR, p. IV.L-11.

⁹⁴ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15355.

to determine whether the Project will have a cumulatively considerable impact in each of those categories.

The "related projects" which are analyzed together with the Project in order to determine cumulative impacts under each impact category should include all projects which, taken together with the Project, would have the potential for a cumulative impact in *that* category. "A cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts." For example, in determining the Project's potential for cumulative air quality impacts, the EIR should analyze the project together with any projects which may be related by virtue of their potential impacts on Project area air quality.

Despite this, the list of "related projects" developed for the DEIR and utilized to determine cumulative impacts under every impact category was developed solely in consideration of traffic impacts. As stated in the EIR, "[a] list of proposed development projects (the 'related projects') that could affect traffic conditions in the Project area by adding traffic volumes to study area intersections was prepared... [The] related projects are included in the analyses of cumulative impacts provided under each impact category in Section IV (Environmental Impact Analysis) of this EIR."96 It is conceivable that a proposed project that would not affect traffic in the study area would nonetheless produce a cumulative impact on, for example, water quality, when taken together with the Project. The fact that only projects determined to be related to the Project with respect to traffic were analyzed for the purposes of determining the Project's cumulative impacts under each environmental impact category renders the cumulative impacts analyses in every impact category flawed. Cumulative impacts in each environmental impact category should be analyzed in light of the Project's incremental impacts which, when combined with other projects which may have related impacts in that category, may be cumulatively considerable.

XIII. The DEIR Fails to Account for and Mitigate the Project's Impacts to Public Services

a. Fire Protection and Police Protection

Regarding the Project's potential construction-related impacts to fire protection services, the DEIR concludes that Project impacts would be less than significant. This conclusion is partly based on the assertion that "construction impacts are temporary in nature and do not cause lasting effects to impact LAFD fire protection services." However temporary, the EIR is still require to study such impacts and determine their significance. Under CEQA, "effects of [a] project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects." The

95 Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15130.

36 cont.

⁹⁶ DEIR, pp. III-3-4.

⁹⁷ DEIR, p. IV.M.1-5.

⁹⁸ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15126.2.

fact that construction impacts may be temporary, therefore, does not justify a conclusion that they will therefore be less than significant. Even a fleeting impact may have great significance. Furthermore, the DEIR's characterization of construction impacts as "temporary"; construction of the Project is expected to last five years, and the DEIR states that Project development is expected to occur between 2016 and 2035. 99 Justifying a conclusion that construction-related impacts to fire protection services will be less than significant based on those impacts "temporary" nature is wholly inappropriate where those impacts will potentially be ongoing for 19 years.

As a basis for its conclusion that impacts to police and fire protection services would be less than significant with respect to both Project construction and operation, the DEIR states in multiple places that lane closures and traffic generated by the Project "would not greatly affect emergency vehicles, the drivers of which normally have a variety of options for avoiding traffic, such as using their sirens to clear a path of travel or driving in the lanes of opposing traffic." This speculation falls short of the level of analysis required by CEQA; an EIR must include sufficient detail to allow the reviewing public an opportunity to examine the methodology used to arrive at such a conclusion. The DEIR contains no discussion of the possibility that the traffic and lane closures generated by the Project could render, for example, "using their sirens to clear a path" a less viable option. The DEIR also fails to consider feasible mitigation measures such as restricting partial lane closures to certain times, restricting construction-related trips to non-peak hours, and limiting the frequency of construction-related trips.

With respect to police protection services specifically, the DEIR fails to sufficiently examine potential impacts to crime and demand for police services. The DEIR states that "the scale of the Project could potentially result in increased demand for police protection services... and impacts would be potentially significant... However, such calls are typical in the existing neighborhoods in the Project area and do not represent unique law enforcement issues specific to the Project." The fact that such calls are typical for local law enforcement, however, does not necessarily imply that an increase in the amount of such calls would not result in significant impacts to police services. The DEIR relies on similar speculative statements about the nature of the Project area for its conclusions, noting that "[c]urrently, the Project site is covered with dark surface parking lots that could attract crime," that the Project's "increase in population and nighttime activity could lower street crime," and pointing out crime-reducing features which the Project "could include." Such speculation could easily be replaced with actual analysis, but the DEIR fails to discuss, for example, actual current numbers of police calls to the Project site as compared with anticipated calls after Project construction, and fails to incorporate specific crime-reducing Project design features as mitigation measures, Furthermore, those mitigation measures which are included should be more specific in order to ensure proper mitigation; for example, while on-site security personnel are required, no mention is made of the number of guards required or at what hours they are required to be present. 37 cont.

38

⁹⁹ DEIR, p. IV.L-10.

¹⁰⁰ DEIR, pp. IV.M.1-5-7, IV.M.2-6

¹⁰¹ DEIR, p. IV.M.2-4.

¹⁰² DEIR, p. IV.M.2-4-5,

b. Parks and Recreation

The community surrounding the Project area has 0.42 acres of neighborhood and community park acreage per 1,000 people, which is dramatically lower than the City's standard ratio of four acres per 1,000 people. The DEIR should require measures such as additional open space and recreation opportunities for current residents, given the already limited resources in the area, in order to ensure Project impacts to parks and recreation do not exacerbate the current situation.

The DEIR concludes the Project will not have significant impacts to parks and recreation, but this conclusion is partly based on the fact that the Project's common open space "includes areas that would be fully open to the public." No attempt is made, however, to guarantee that the public will actually access and use the facilities provided, and the majority of Project open spaces are comprised of "passive" open space. Project design features should be included which advertise the availability of Project open space to the public, direct the public to resources available to them, and which foster an environment of open and inclusive use of the open space by all members of the community. Further, such open spaces should accommodate the specific open space and recreational needs of the local community, such as including active recreation opportunities.

XIV. The DEIR Should Have Chosen the Environmentally Superior Alternative to the Project, As Required by CEQA

CEQA clearly indicates that "public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures which would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of such projects." The DEIR analyzed five alternative projects, and found that the Reduced Height/Reduced Signage alternative would be environmentally superior to the Project, and "would meet most of the objectives of the Project, to the same degree as the Project." The DEIR concludes that the Reduced Height/Reduced Signage alternative would avoid the significant and unavoidable impacts of the Project with regard to visual quality, light and glare, and cumulative traffic noise, and it would decrease the air quality, freeway health risk, and transportation impacts. Because this alternative is feasible and would substantially lessen the environmental effects of the Project, CEQA requires that it be adopted instead of the proposed project. Public agencies are prohibited by CEQA from approving the Project as currently proposed.

XV. Conclusion

In conclusion, we believe that the DEIR is flawed, and fails to account for a number of significant impacts and corresponding mitigation measures. The DEIR must be revised to fully correct the deficiencies outlined herein, and must be recirculated with an extended public comment period to provide for meaningful public review of the Project. Incorporated into these comments by reference are the health impact study for the Project

40

41

¹⁰³ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15021(a)(2).

prepared by Human Impact Partners and attached to this letter¹⁰⁴, and the entire record for the Project, including the written and oral record of all hearings and submissions.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Alexander Harnden (Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles) at (213) 640-3851, or Joseph Donlin (Strategic Actions for a Just Economy), at (213) 745-9961, with any questions or requests.

42 cont.

Sincerely,

The Blazers **PVJOBS** CDTech St. Agnes Church Esperanza Community Housing St. Francis Center Corporation St. John's Well Child & Family Center LA Black Worker Center St. Mark's Lutheran Church Natural Resources Defense Council Strategic Actions for a Just Economy Physicians for Social Responsibility -T.R.U.S.T. South LA Los Angeles United University Church

 $^{^{104}}$ Human Impact Partners, "Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles" (October, 2015).

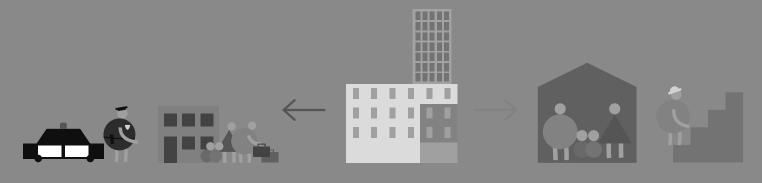
ATTACHMENT

Human Impact Partners

"Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles"

October, 2015

Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Proposed Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles











ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was authored by:

Human Impact Partners

Holly Avey Logan Harris Gus Alexander Fabiola Santiago

In partnership with:

Ashley Kissinger, Esperanza Community Housing Corp. Joe Donlin, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy

We wish to acknowledge and thank additional members of our Advisory Committee, many of whom represent participating organizations in the UNIDAD Coalition. Our Advisory Committee contributed to the guidance, direction, content, and framing of this report:

Nancy Halpern Ibrahim, Esperanza Community Housing Corp.

Yadira Arévalo, Esperanza Community Housing Corp. Cynthia Strathmann, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy

Gabriela García , Strategic Actions for a Just

Economy

Benjamin (Benny) Torres, CDTech

William Flores, CDTech

Sophia Kandell, CDTech

Malcolm Harris, T.R.U.S.T. South LA

Monika Shankar, Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles

Danielle Leben, Natural Resources Defense Council

Doug Smith, Public Counsel

José Ramírez, St. Francis Center

Jonathan Nomachi, Advancement Project

Saundra Bryant , All People's Community

Center

Nadiya Juma, Los Angeles County Public Health Department

Martha Matsuoka, Occidental College

Larry Aubry, South Los Angeles Community Advocate and Column Writer

We also deeply appreciate the expertise and time of those who contributed to the findings of this study, including focus group participants:

Esperanza Moisés Amparo Amir Flavia Natividad Francisco Oscar Ana Anayetzy Georgina Pat Josefina Patricia Antonia Ruth **Aramiss** Juana Angélica Julia Salvador Berenice Julio Sylvia Teresa Brinam Kelly Carthon Lourdes Verónica Victor Concepción Margarita Cynthia María Wallace María Elena Yolanda Earl Erendira María R.

And subject matter experts:

Robert, small business owner

Mama Petra, small business owner

María, small business owner

Manuel Pastor, Professor of Sociology and American Studies & Ethnicity, University of Southern California Martín Gómez, Principal, Santee Education Complex Pastor Epps, Second Baptist Church

Suggested citation:

Human Impact Partners. October 2015. Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles; Oakland, CA.

For more information, contact:

Holly Avey, Research Director Human Impact Partners havey@humanimpact.org www.humanimpact.org 510-452-9442 ext 108

This report was supported by funding from The California Endowment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2	UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP:	
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3	GENTRIFICATION, DISPLACEMENT, AND HEALTH	28
INTRODUCTION	4	GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT	28
FINDINGS	4	DISPLACEMENT IMPACTS ON THE	
WHY THIS MATTERS TO HEALTH	4	SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT	29
THE CONTEXT	4	SOCIAL COHESION	29
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	5	PLACE ATTACHMENT	30
		SERIAL FORCED DISPLACEMENT	30
ABOUT THIS STUDY	10	ROOT SHOCK	31
GOALS AND PURPOSE	10	HEALTH AND EQUITY IMPACTS OF	
FRAMEWORK	10	DISPLACEMENT	31
METHODS	10	HEALTH IMPACTS	31
OUR PERSPECTIVE ON HEALTH	10	IMPACTS ON SCHOOLS	32
HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF SOUTH CENTRAL		THE SMALL BUSINESSES OF SOUTH CENTRAL	
LOS ANGELES	11	LOS ANGELES: A SIMILAR STORY	33
THE REEF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN THE		LONGEVITY OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN	
CONTEXT OF SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES		SOUTH CENTRAL	33
TODAY	13	SOCIAL COHESION AMONG SMALL	
DEMOGRAPHICS	14	BUSINESSES AND THE SOUTH CENTRAL	
HEALTH STATUS	14	COMMUNITY	33
TRANSIT AND COMMUTING	15	IMPACTS OF GENTRIFICATION AND	
HOUSING	16	DISPLACEMENT ON SMALL BUSINESSES	34
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY	16	THE EFFECTS OF GENTRIFICATION ARE	
HOMELESSNESS	17	ALREADY HAPPENING FOR MANY SMALL	
PROLONGED CIVIC DISINVESTMENT	17	BUSINESSES IN SOUTH CENTRAL	35
POLICING/SECURITY	18	SMALL BUSINESSES IN SOUTH CENTRAL	
THE EFFECTS OF THE REEF DEVELOPMENT		HAVE EXPERIENCED SERIAL FORCED	
PROJECT ON GENTRIFICATION, FINANCIAL		DISPLACEMENT	35
STRAIN, AND DISPLACEMENT	19	HEALTH IMPACTS ON SMALL BUSINESSES	
INCREASE IN FINANCIAL STRAIN AND	.0	IN SOUTH CENTRAL	35
DISPLACEMENT OF CURRENT RESIDENTS	19	RECOMMENDATIONS	36
INCREASES IN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL	.0	TRAUMA-INFORMED AND ASSET-BASED	
ILLNESS	21	COMMUNITY BUILDING	36
UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP:		PRODUCE AND PROTECT AFFORDABLE	
GENTRIFICATION, FINANCIAL STRAIN,		HOUSING	37
AND HEALTH	22	PREVENT DISPLACEMENT	37
GENTRIFICATION	22	HOUSE AND PROTECT THE HOMELESS	38
GENTRIFICATION AND FINANCIAL STRAIN	22	CREATE GOOD JOBS AND CAREER	
FINANCIAL STRAIN AND AFFORDABILITY	22	PATHWAYS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS	39
OF HOUSEHOLD NECESSITIES	23	SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES	40
FINANCIAL STRAIN AND HOUSING	20	MAINTAIN PUBLIC TRANSIT USE BY	
INSTABILITY	23	LOCAL RESIDENTS	41
FINANCIAL STRAIN AND SUBSTANDARD	20	PROTECT THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF	
HOUSING	23	THE COMMUNITY	41
FINANCIAL STRAIN AND OVERCROWDING	24	PROVIDE GREEN SPACE FOR	
FINANCIAL STRAIN AND HOMELESSNESS	25	NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS	42
HEALTH AND EQUITY IMPACTS OF	20	REFERENCES	43
FINANCIAL STRAIN	25		
MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS	25		
PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPACTS	25		
IMPACTS ON CHILDREN	26		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Reef Development Project plans for the total renovation and expansion of a commercial area in South Central Los Angeles – an area that is located in the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area and the City's 9th Council District. The project would cover 9.7 acres, and would include a 208-room hotel, two high-rise condominium towers, 528 mid-rise residential units, and 21 low-rise live/work residential units.

This research project, informed by a Health Impact Assessment framework, was conducted to provide empirical data on the potential health and equity impacts that the proposed Reef Development Project could have on the South Central Los Angeles community, and to propose recommendations to the developers and the City. The study was conducted with the additional goal to engage and empower community members, including neighborhood residents and stakeholders, to participate in the development process.

Key Finding: The Reef Development Project will place thousands of South Central Los Angeles residents at high or very high risk of financial strain or displacement.

FINDINGS

Gentrification often results when developments like the Reef Development Project occur in neighborhoods like South Central. Gentrification can lead to financial strain and **indirect displacement** – a kind of displacement that occurs when residents and businesses are gradually priced out of the area and must involuntarily leave.

An estimated 4,445 renters who live within ½ mile of the proposed Reef Development Project are already experiencing housing cost burdens and could be at high or very high risk of financial strain or displacement as a result of the development. An additional 39,311 renters who live between ½ mile and 2 miles of the project could be at moderate risk. Overall, 52% of the nearly 84,000 residents living within 2 miles of the project could be at risk of financial strain or displacement as a result of the Reef Development Project.

Some focus group participants from the area anticipate they may become homeless.

"I keep thinking, 'What am I going to do if this doesn't work out? Where am I going to go? Am I going to see my neighbors again? Where am I going to find this kind of community again? Going to have to start over. Going to be homeless, without a family."

— Anayetzy

WHY THIS MATTERS TO HEALTH

Community residents who experience financial strain and/or displacement may experience a wide variety of chronic stress-related physical and mental illnesses, including anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and sleep disorders. Additional constraints on health-protecting resources and exposures to health-damaging environments such as substandard and overcrowded housing could further contribute to a variety of negative health outcomes. Disruption of social networks can lead to additional health challenges, including exposure to fragmented social environments that have higher rates of violence and sexually transmitted diseases.

Multi-generational traumas can result from serial forced displacement resulting in a condition called "root shock". Black and Latin@ residents who located to South Central Los Angeles to escape racial and political discrimination and violence brought with them the memories and traumas of previous displacements, which could be exacerbated by this project.

THE CONTEXT

Displacement and financial pressures from the Reef Development Project will happen within the context of ongoing challenges with housing affordability and homelessness that are happening in the area.

- Los Angeles lost 65% of state and federal funding for affordable housing between 2009 and 2014
- Over half a million affordable rental homes are needed in the city
- Lack of affordable housing is the main cause of homelessness in the U.S.
- Los Angeles has the largest homeless population of any urban area in the U.S.

Most South Central Los Angeles households are occupied by renters and nearly half of residents are in poverty. On average, neighborhood residents earn half the household income as the City as a whole. Many businesses do not have leases for their business spaces, or have leases that will expire soon.

	South Central	City of Los Angeles
Average household income*	\$36,830	\$77,000
Residents in poverty*	45%	22%
Renters*	79%	62%
Median monthly rent for 1 bdrm apt**	\$1000	\$1830
> 1 person per room (overcrowded)*	41%	14%
Workers who took transit to work*	26%	11%
Workers who drove alone to work*	49%	67%

^{* 2009-2013} American Community Survey

Residents are already struggling intensely to afford housing, and are engaging in a variety of methods to address this problem: by making difficult choices on what necessities to do without, by living in overcrowded and substandard housing, and by looking for additional sources of income.

Despite these challenges, residents and small business owners in the neighborhood have developed strong social ties and a sense of attachment to the area, and they want to stay. Many of the residents and businesses in South Central have been in the neighborhood for 10-20 years or more.

Residents of the neighborhood came to South Central seeking economic opportunity, and built a thriving community. Over time, however, the city began to engage in a variety of different policies that led to increased segregation, concentrated poverty, and limited opportunity. This was followed by prolonged civic disinvestment that has perpetuated poverty and segregation to this day.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The developers of the Reef Development Project and the City of Los Angeles have a unique opportunity to develop this property in a way that reduces the potential to further traumatize and harm the physical and mental health of current residents through increased financial strain and displacement.

Rather than continuing the legacy of racism and segregation through the replacement of current residents with those who hold more economic and political power, the developers and the City have an opportunity to engage in a cutting-edge trauma-informed approach to community development. Trauma Informed Community Building (TICB) is a new innovative approach to development that recognizes the existing community as assets and uses these assets as the building blocks for the future. Developers and the City of Los Angeles should work together to ensure that the Reef Development Project is developed using the four guiding principles of TICB: 1) Do no harm, 2) Acceptance, 3) Community empowerment, and 4) Reflective process. Findings from this study show that the community already has assets such as social cohesion among community members and among small business owners and the community. The development should be structured in a way that honors and enhances these assets.

The project should be developed in collaboration with community members to ensure that economic opportunities and affordable housing options are incorporated into the plan. As Benjamin Torres, President and CEO of CDTech states, "South LA residents aren't trying to keep outsiders out of their backyards; they just want a fair opportunity to be able to stay." In addition to these overarching recommendations to take a TICB approach and to develop the project with community members, we also recommend a number of specific actions for the developers to implement directly and/or though a community benefits agreement, and also for the City to consider.

^{**} Zumper.com, Sept. 2015



"If they're going to go forward with [the Reef development], ... take us into account and [have] opportunities for us. Don't leave us out. Don't discriminate against us. We're human beings and we have needs. We are not living for free. We are paying our rent with the sweat from our brows. Right now, we aren't making it. We aren't even living day-to-day. I want this to be considered. But they're not going to take us into account. They're pushing us to the brink." — Natividad



"We gotta remember that this used to be a healthy community. We gotta work on rebuilding up what we used to have." — Cynthia

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This study is based on a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) framework. HIA is a public engagement and decision-support tool that can be used to assess project plans and make recommendations to improve health outcomes associated with those plans. The fundamental goal of HIA is to ensure that health and health inequities are considered in decision-making processes using an objective and scientific approach, and engaging stakeholders in the process.

The following methods were employed in this project:

- Review of the scientific (peer-reviewed) and grey (non peer-reviewed) literature;
- Analysis of existing data sources, such as the American Community Survey and from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health;
- Focus groups with residents of South Central Los Angeles; and
- Interviews with small business owners, the principal of a local school, a researcher from the University of Southern California, and a pastor from a local church.

This project was conducted by Human Impact Partners of Oakland, CA in partnership with Esperanza Community Housing Corporation and Strategic Actions for a Just Economy. Further guidance, direction, content, and framing was provided by advisory committee members from: Community Development Technologies, TRUST South LA, Physicians for Social Responsibility – Los Angeles, Natural Resources Defense Council, Public Counsel, St. Francis Center, Advancement Project, All People's Community Center, Los Angeles County Public Health Department, Occidental College, and a community advocate/column writer.

This project was supported by funding from The California Endowment.

Human Impact Partners works to transform the policies and places people need to live healthy lives by increasing the consideration of health and equity in decision-making.

For more about Human Impact Partners or to access the full report and sources cited in this summary, visit: www.humanimpact.org.



Produce and Protect Affordable Housing:

Affordable housing should be provided, with a diverse strategy of both producing new on- and off-site units and preserving old units. An emphasis should be put on providing housing for families, and a significant portion of housing should be set aside for extremely low income people.



Through Developer

New on-site units at levels of affordability that reach very low income and extremely low income residents.

Example: On-site housing: 25% of units affordable to very low income households.

Total rental apartments for renters: 15% for residents with very low incomes (those who make less than 50% of the area median income) and 10% for residents with extremely low incomes (those who make less than 30% of the area median income).



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funds for acquiring land and building new off-site units.

Funds to preserve and rehab existing units.

Example: \$20,000,000 paid to City Affordable Housing Trust Fund or community benefits fund for affordable housing.



City

Target new investments and policies to achieve new off-site affordable units.

Preserve old/existing affordable units.



Prevent Displacement:

Programs should be put in place to prevent the displacement of local residents from their homes. Measures should include staffing for renter advocacy and organizing initiatives, funds for tenant associations and emergency rental assistance, enforcement of existing renter protections,

and the establishment of new renter protections in the surrounding neighborhoods.

To achieve neighborhood stabilization goals, resources should prioritize residents who are most vulnerable to displacement in the areas closest to the project site.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funds for staffing tenant organizing/advocacy and legal services initiatives.

Funds for tenant associations and emergency rental assistance.



City

Funds for tenant associations and emergency rent relief.

Enforcement of existing renter protections.

Establish enforceable "anti-displacement/no net loss" zones within a 1-mile radius of the project site. Create a community-City partnership to monitor and collaborate around anti-displacement efforts.



House and Protect the Homeless:

Funding should be provided to house and protect the homeless in the area. In addition to producing/financing permanent supportive housing, their rights to rest and to maintain possessions in encampments must be protected and they should be provided with facilities and case management services.



Through Developer

Provide on-site rent-free facilities for case management services. Maintain rent-free status for 20 years.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funds for permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless residents.

Funds for case management services.



City

Provide facilities and case management services.

Enforce/enact policies to protect the rights of the homeless.



Create Good Jobs and Career Pathways for Local Residents:

A Community Jobs Training and Placement program should be created to provide jobs for local residents, including construction jobs created by the development and permanent jobs with the businesses located on site after construction.

Funding should be provided for workforce development and job pipelines. Local high schools should be partners in developing career pathways for students, and the community should have an ongoing role in monitoring jobs programs.



Through Developer

Examples:

Construction jobs for the development: 40% local hiring, with 20% for disadvantaged residents including those who are homeless or aged-out foster youth.

Future retail jobs: 50% local hiring, with 30% for disadvantaged residents.

Maintenance jobs: 100% local residents and require a living wage.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Establish a policy through the CBA for community-based monitoring and enforcement of local and targeted hiring policies. Provide funding to support this activity.

Funds for workforce development and job pipelines, including community-based training and placement programs.

Example: \$300,000 to community benefits fund to support Jobs Coordinator and the creation of a Community Jobs Training and Placement program.



City

Funds for workforce development and job pipelines to supplement project-related funds.

Leverage existing City services to bolster Community Jobs Training and Placement program.



Support Small Businesses:

Small businesses, both on- and off-site, should be supported with funding, support, and technical assistance. Care should be taken to support existing community-serving small businesses in the neighborhood. Innovative models that enhance economic security for residents vulnerable to displacement – such as cooperative businesses run by local residents – should be supported.



Through Developer

Example: Create incubator space for local and community-based small businesses.

Provide a percentage of retail space at discounted rent levels for community-serving businesses that are culturally and economically accessible to local residents.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funds for support and technical assistance for both on-site and off-site small businesses.

Example: 10% of retail space for communityserving businesses at discounted rent.

\$300,000 for small business support fund.



City

Support and technical assistance for both on-site and off-site small businesses.

Establish programs/policies to protect off-site businesses from displacement due to rising rents.



Maintain Public Transit Use by Local Residents:

Access to public transit should be maintained for those who most utilize it and depend upon it – the current residents of the neighborhood. Utilize actions listed above for housing and economic development to avoid replacing current transit-users living in a transit-oriented neighborhood with new residents who will be less likely to use transit.



Through Developer

Provide monthly transit passes to tenants living in affordable housing units on site.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funds to provide monthly transit passes to tenants living in affordable housing units off site.



City

Maximize City, County and transit agency services for low-income transit riders in the area.



Protect the Safety and Security of the Community:

The safety and security of the community should be protected. Police should be available to protect the residents of the area, but at the same time, programs should be put in place to make sure that neighborhood residents, including homeless residents, are not criminalized or targeted by police or other security staff.



Through Developer

Create event programming on site to raise awareness and build capacity among community members and security professionals around anti-criminalization practices.

Rules and regulations should be put in place so that low-income residents are not discriminated against, by management or other residents, within the development.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Programs should be put in place to make sure that neighborhood residents are not criminalized or targeted by security staff.

Establish a community board overseeing the policies and practices of on-site and off-site security.



City

Work in collaboration with the on-site community oversight board to extend the anti-criminalization policies and practices to include City and County police forces.

Police should be available to protect the residents of the area, but at the same time, programs should be put in place to make sure that neighborhood residents are not criminalized or targeted by police or other security staff.



Provide Green Space for Neighborhood Residents:

Green space created by new development should be made public and open to neighborhood residents, with space planned for community gardens and local produce sales. Funding should be provided to create and improve off site parks and to carry on active programming for children and families.



Through Developer

Green space created by the development should be made public and open to neighborhood residents, with space planned for community gardens and local produce sales.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funding should be provided to create and improve off site parks and to carry on active programming for children and families.



City

Funding should be provided to create and improve off site parks and to carry on active programming for children and families.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

GOALS AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide empirical data on the potential health and equity impacts that the proposed Reef Development Project (also called the "Reef Project") could have on the South Central Los Angeles community and to propose recommendations to developers and the City to address those impacts. An additional goal is to engage and empower community members, including neighborhood residents, and stakeholders to participate in the development process.

FRAMEWORK

This study is based on a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) framework. HIA is a public engagement and decision-support tool that can be used to assess policy proposals and make recommendations to improve health outcomes associated with those proposals. The fundamental goal of an HIA is to ensure that health and health inequities are considered in decision-making processes using an objective and scientific approach, and engaging stakeholders in the process.

METHODS

This report focuses on understanding the effects of the proposed development on gentrification, financial strain, and displacement. We employed the following methods:

- Review of the scientific (peer-reviewed) and grey (non peer-reviewed) literature;
- Analysis of existing data sources, such as the American Community Survey (2009-2013) and data from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (2011);
- Focus groups with 41 residents of the South Central Los Angeles neighborhood; and
- Interviews with six subject matter experts, including small business owners, the principal of a local school, a researcher from the University of Southern California, and a pastor from a local church.

The data collection area for what is referred to as South Central for this study was established through consultation with community partners that work in the area. Partners from Esperanza and SAJE identified census tracts to use, and a contact from the Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health identified the community planning area most closely aligned with the collection of their health data.

Additional data was obtained, analyzed, and utilized from a survey of South Central neighborhood residents conducted by SAJE in 2015 and a survey of small business owners conducted by CDTech in 2015.

See Appendices A-C for more information on the HIA, stakeholder engagement, and methods used.

The report will be submitted in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Report that was released on September 17, 2015.

OUR PERSPECTIVE ON HEALTH

This project brings a public health and equity perspective to the decisions about the Reef Development Project in South Central. Given this, it is important to understand what is meant by "health" in this report. We use the World Health Organization's definition: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

While health is influenced by our genes and the personal choices we make, over 50% of our health and well-being is determined by social and environmental conditions, such as where we live, whether we have a job, and larger social and political forces like racism and sexism.² The public health community calls these the social determinants of health, or the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, learn, work, and age and the systems in place to deal with illness. These circumstances are shaped by a wider set of economic and social policies, and there are many opportunities for such policies to promote health and build healthy communities.³

In this context, we recognize that the social and economic factors that influence housing conditions, gentrification and displacement could also influence the health and equity impacts of new development on the residents currently residing in the community. Therefore, this report includes a discussion of the social and economic factors that determine our health.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES

The City of Los Angeles, which was once a part of Mexico, has always included Latin@i residents. In more recent history, the neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles has reflected changing demographics and city landscapes. For at least the last 80 years, residents of South Central have primarily been people of color who relocated to the neighborhood to seek economic opportunity and to escape discrimination and violence in other areas.

Los Angeles became a major destination for African Americans during the 1940s, with the increase in demand for wartime manufacturing jobs drawing people away from areas of discrimination and violence in other parts of the U.S.4 The African American population in Los Angeles leaped from 75,000 in 1940 to 650,000 in 1965.5 Leading up to WWII, South Central developed into the most predominant of several concentrated African American regions in Los Angeles, home to primarily middleclass homeowners. South Central was one of the only parts of Los Angeles where African Americans could own property, owing to the existence of racially restrictive covenants on property in most of the city.6 After race-based zoning was found unconstitutional in 1917, these covenants, enforced by law, became one of the primary mechanisms to produce segregation.4

African American residents developed South Central into an active community, with thriving businesses, including many jazz and R&B clubs. Pastor Epps, who leads the Second Baptist Church, located in South Central Los Angeles approximately one mile southeast of the Reef project area, describes the context of when his church was built and what the African American community was like at the time, and for the decades to follow.

Latin@ is used throughout this report to represent Latino/ Latina "[Second Baptist Church was] organized in 1885 — it is the oldest black Baptist church in LA, uninterrupted for the last 130 years.... [The current] location was built in 1926 by noted black architect Paul Williams... It is a cultural landmark and it is designated by the Department of the Interior as a historic site... When the property was purchased and the building was erected, this was the hub of the black community. The only hotel where black entertainers could stay when they came to the City was nearby, there was a black newspaper in the area... People would walk to church... there was involvement in civil rights, and MLK spoke here..." — Pastor Epps, Second Baptist Church

White residents, fueled by fears about declining property values and enticed by public subsidies available for suburban homeownership, began to move to suburban areas farther away from the urban core in a migration pattern that became known as "white flight".7,4 The shift in population resulted in a further concentration of low-income people of color in increasingly disinvested urban centers, with African American residents making up the majority population of South Los Angelesii, and Latin@s concentrating primarily throughout East Los Angeles cities.8 As a result, inner-cities like South Central came to represent areas of isolation for low-income communities of color in neighborhoods that lacked viable economic and social opportunities and services that are "critical for full participation" in society.9

Though the U.S. Supreme Court struck the right to enact restrictive covenants on real estate based on race in 1948, allowing African Americans some movement into the more suburban areas of Los Angeles, public and private entities continued to segregate people of color in the inner cities of South and East Los Angeles.8 The U.S. postwar period and the decades to follow were infused with programs that relied on practices such as redlining and slum clearance to 'clean up' disinvested urban neighborhoods.¹⁰ These urban renewal programs were and are widely criticized for being fundamentally discriminatory against low-income people and people of color, as so many of these programs revolved around the razing of low-income residential areas to construct residential, retail, entertainment, and office spaces that were unaffordable to existing residents.¹⁰ These

For the purposes of this report, the terms South Central Los Angeles and South Los Angeles are considered to reflect the same general area, though South Los Angeles may incorporate more area than the study area defined as South Central.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES

unaffordable amenities were developed amidst inner city public housing dwellings that were not maintained and did not meet the housing demand that was left as a result of slum clearance and the razing of blighted areas. This "persistent civic neglect, compounded by the postwar outmigration of much of the community's middle and upper middle classes" further developed South Central into an area of concentrated poverty and social isolation for its predominantly African American population.¹¹

The 1965 Watts uprising occurred in South Central over a span of nearly one week. The uprising was in response to an incident of police brutality that took place in the Watts neighborhood on the night of August 11. The McCone Commission, however, released a report that focused on other factors that led to the uprising such as the "spiral of failure" that Los Angeles and other urban zones in the U.S. were producing.5 The report referred to the lack of adequate education and employment opportunities in neighborhoods like Watts and other areas in South Central that led to a spiral of frustrations, stress, violent outbreaks, and a lack of social success or mobility for those who lived in such disinvested and disadvantaged areas. The report addressed the "de facto segregation in the urban core," and the difference in life outcomes that segregation produces for low-income people of color in relation to their wealthier White counterparts. 5 Another response to the Watts uprising was the outmigration of some African Americans to more eastern parts of the county like Compton, which was at the time a suburban, middle class area.4 This then sparked the migration of Latin@ residents into South Central, which took place gradually over the next couple of decades.8

Nearly thirty years later, the pattern repeated. The area experienced continued extreme economic inequality and racial tension due to persistent civic disinvestment. Another act of police brutality – this time the beating of Rodney King and the complete acquittal of all LAPD officers involved in the incident – was met with the 1992 Los Angeles uprising. 12 Author Joy DeGruy explained that these actions could be a manifestation of "post traumatic slave syndrome" when people experience hopelessness, depression, and anger as a result of multigenerational trauma and oppression, coupled with a lack of opportunity to heal or access resources available in society. 13

In the 1980s, South Central once again became a neighborhood where people of color relocated to seek economic opportunity and to escape discrimination and violence in other areas. As African Americans moved away from the inner cities to developing suburban areas like Riverside and Palmdale,14 South Central became a primary destination for incoming Latin@ immigrants seeking refuge from domestic political violence that was largely a result of U.S. intervention.¹⁵ South Central transformed from a demographic comprised of 20% Latin@ in 1980 to nearly 40% Latin@ in 1990.12 These migrants were in search of affordable housing and work, which they could only find in manufacturing and low-wage service jobs—the two industries most accessible in South Central. Therefore, Latin@ residents came to represent the majority of the working poor in South Central and other inner cities of Los Angeles.¹¹ Today, South Central is home to a resident population that is over 80% Latin@,16 primarily representing families originating from México and Central America. Los Angeles' history of discriminatory zoning that led to segregation, along with prolonged civic disinvestment in its urban core, has had deep and sustained impacts on the current state of poverty and social isolation in South Central Los Angeles.11 Consequently, the City of Los Angeles—and the South Central neighborhood, in particular—continues to be an area of racial and ethnic tension and inequality, that perpetuates residential segregation and poverty concentration, specifically for low-income people of color.7,9,17

THE REEF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES TODAY

The Reef Project plans for the total renovation and expansion of the existing Reef building which is located in the City's 9th Council District in a commercial area in South Central Los Angeles. Currently the Reef is a 12-story building with 860,000 square feet of space located at 1933 S. Broadway (see Figure 1). It houses LA Mart, a showroom for premium "gift, home furniture, and lifestyle lines," Maker City LA, a co-working space with access to shared media and design tools, and the Magic Box, an event venue.¹⁸

Figure 1: Location of proposed Reef Development Project



The expanded Reef Project proposes modifications to the existing Reef building, along with construction of 1.7 million square feet of new development on space currently occupied by surface parking lots and a warehouse, which would be demolished.¹⁹ As described in the Initial Study for environmental review, the proposed mixed-use development would contain multiple buildings ranging from 85 to 420 feet in height, and a wide variety of uses, including residential, commercial, retail/restaurant, hotel, grocery store, public open space, and at least 2,733 off-street parking spaces.¹⁹ In total the Project would cover 9.7 acres, and would include a 208-room hotel, two highrise condominium towers, 528 mid-rise residential

units, and 21 low-rise live/work residential units.¹⁹ According to a local real estate blog, the development of the Reef Project has the potential to bring an "Arts-District-style reboot" to the neighborhood.²⁰

Figure 2: Location of the proposed Reef Development Project. Currently zoned industrial, the project will require numerous public entitlements, including a general plan amendment and zone change.



To help understand the larger social context that the Reef project is taking place in — and the needs of the immediate community — in this section we describe who lives in the area and their health status; transit and housing characteristics of residents; and homelessness, disinvestment, and policing.

Figure 3: A rendering of the proposed Reef Development Project, showing a mix of low-rise and high-rise buildings.

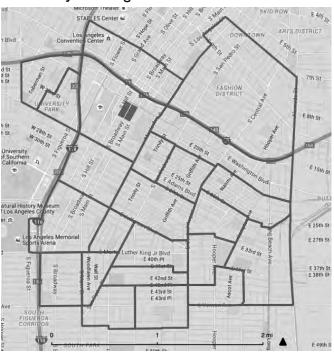


THE REEF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES TODAY

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics for the area surrounding the project are based on the census tracts shown in Figure 4. Collectively, these census Tracts comprise the area know as South Central.

Figure 4: Project area census tracts and Southeast Community Planning Area

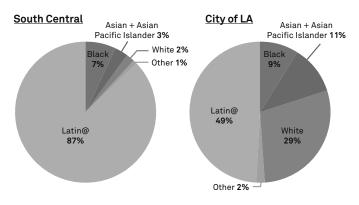


Reef Development Project

South Central Study Area Census Tracts

South Central has a significantly higher population of Latin@ residents (87%) as compared to Los Angeles as a whole (49%) (Figure 5).

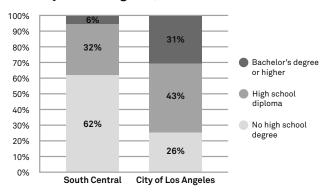
Figure 5: Race/Ethnicity in South Central and City of Los Angeles, 2009-2013



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2009-2013

Educational attainment is lower in South Central than in Los Angeles, with 62% of residents having no high school diploma and only 6% with a Bachelor's degree (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Educational Attainment in South Central and City of Los Angeles, 2009-2013



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2009-2013

South Central residents also earn less than half of their Los Angeles counterparts. From 2009-2013 the mean household income in South Central was about \$36,830 as compared to \$77,000 in Los Angeles. Respondents to the survey conducted by SAJE reported very low incomes, with 45% of the 131 respondents reporting making under \$10,000 a year (Table 1).

Table 1: Incomes Reported by Respondents to SAJE survey (N = 131)

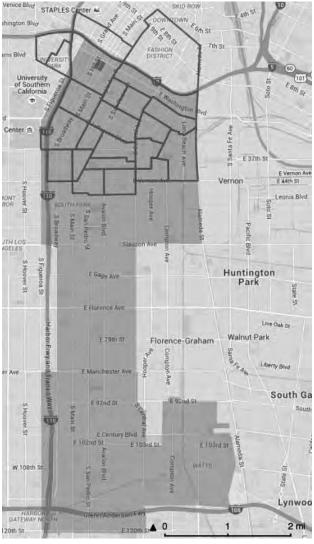
Annual income	Percent of responses	
Less than \$10,000	45%	
\$10,001-\$20,000	40%	
\$20,000-\$30,000	15%	

Poverty rates are also high in the South Central: 45% of residents were in poverty compared to 22% in Los Angeles from 2009-2013.

HEALTH STATUS

The Los Angeles County Health Survey, conducted in 2011 by the County Department of Public Health, provides data on the health status of South Central residents. Health outcomes are reported for the Southeast Community Planning Area (CPA) and compared to the County of Los Angeles (rather than the City.) The Southeast CPA covers a considerably larger area than the census tracts used to report demographic data, and also does not include several of the northern tracts, as shown below in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Southeast Community Planning Area (CPA) in relation to South Central census tracts



Reef Development Project
Project Area Census Tracts

Southeast CPA

Table 2 describes the health of residents in the Southeast CPA and the County for several common measures of well-being. While there are little differences for chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, a much higher percentage of adults report that their health is "fair" or "poor" (rather than "excellent," "very good," or "good") in the Southeast CPA than in the County as a whole. Self rated health status is widely considered to be a good predictor of illness and death.²²

Indeed the death rate is also significantly higher for the Southeast CPA than in the County, with 698 deaths per 100,000 people as compared to 581 deaths.

Table 2: Health Indicators for the Southeast Community Planning Area and Los Angeles County

	9.5%	2011
10%	2/1 00/2	0011
770	Z4.U /0	2011
5% 2	20.7%	2011
5	581	2012
		581 y unstable

TRANSIT AND COMMUTING

The 2014 Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan states that mixed-use areas, especially those developed in public transit rich neighborhoods, are designed to produce a "community where people can shop, live and work with reduced reliance on the automobile."²³ The neighborhood is served by the Metro Blue Line, the most heavily used light rail line in Los Angeles,²⁴ with the Line station located one block from the site.



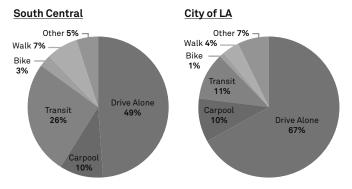
"I like that everything is accessible and everything is around me. Laundromat, stores... I don't need a car, I can walk everywhere... the buses are accessible."

— Verónica

"I don't even have a car. I walk everywhere. Fortunately things are close by." **– Flavia**

Census data confirms that residents of South Central are much more likely to take transit, and less likely to drive alone when commuting to work than residents of Los Angeles as a whole. As shown in Figure 8, 26% of workers in South Central took transit to work, as compared to 11% in the City as a whole. These data do not capture how residents travel for other purposes, such as running errands, although residents in focus groups discussed their reliance on walking and transit for a variety of trip types.

Figure 8: Commute Mode in South Central and the City of Los Angeles, 2009-2013



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2009-2013

HOUSING

Renter households dominate South Central, to a much greater extent than the City of Los Angeles. From 2009-2013, 79% of occupied housing units in South Central were home to renters, compared to 62% in Los Angeles. Among the households surveyed by SAJE, 93% rented their homes, and many respondents reported having lived in their homes for many years.

Table 3 shows that of the 104 respondents, more than half have lived in their homes for over 10 years. The average length of residency in the neighborhood for focus group participants was 21 years.

Table 3: Years Living in Home Reported by Respondents to SAJE survey (N = 104)

, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,				
Years living in home	Percent of respondents			
<2 years	17%			
5-10 years	34%			
10-15 years	14%			
15-20 years	14%			
>20 years	21%			

Zumper, a rental real estate market trend and real estate listing company, reports that rents in the City of Los Angeles reached an all time high in September of 2015. Median asking rent for one-bedroom apartments in Los Angeles was \$1,830.²⁵ In comparison, median rent for a one-bedroom in South Central was \$1,000, one of the lowest neighborhood rents in the City. Respondents to the SAJE survey reported lower rents: an average monthly rent of \$852, for a variety of apartment sizes. This is likely a reflection of the fact that many respondents live in rent stabilized apartments, and have been living in these apartments for many years.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability is generally defined by how much income a household pays towards their housing costs (e.g. rent or mortgage, utilities, etc.) According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), households are considered housing "cost burdened" if over 30% of their income is used to pay for housing, and extremely cost burdened if over 50% of income goes to housing.26 Generally housing is referred to as affordable if a household pays under 30% of their income towards housing costs, whether they live in market rate or subsidized housing. While these definitions are used in public policy contexts, they have serious limitations. This definition does not account for differences in household composition (e.g. single adults vs. families with children) and also does not consider how much money a household has left over after paying for housing.²⁷ For a wealthy household, paying 30% or more of income towards housing could leave them with plenty of money to cover other needs, while a very low income household is likely to have trouble making ends meet.27

In early 2015, the Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing estimated that a family would need to earn \$34 an hour, or almost \$72,000 per year, to rent the average apartment in Los Angeles County and pay no more than 30% of their income. While the city of Los Angeles recently voted to bring its minimum wage up to \$15 over the next five years, the current minimum wage is \$9 an hour. At this rate, it would require about 3.75 full-time minimum wage jobs to pay for the average Los Angeles County apartment.

Los Angeles is the 9th most expensive rental market in the country.²⁹ As rents have been rising, renter household income has been declining: after adjusting for inflation, rents in Los Angeles County increased 27% from 2000 to 2013, while median renter incomes declined by 7%.30 In order to meet the needs of the lowest income households, over half a million affordable rental homes are needed. Due to cuts in state and federal funds, Los Angeles lost 65% of funding for affordable housing between 2009 and 2014.30 In South Central the majority of households experience housing cost burdens, and many face extreme cost burdens, a reflection of both low incomes and rising housing costs. Figure 9 shows that 38% of households pay over half their income towards housing costs in South Central, compared with 19% in Los Angeles.

Figure 9: Percent of Cost-Burdened Households in South Central and the City of Los Angeles, 2009-2013



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2009-2013

Focus group participants report that people in the neighborhood are already struggling to pay for housing.



"I regularly have to ask to borrow money to cover rent, otherwise I don't pay other bills ... I usually ask friends, relatives, acquaintances." — Ana

"Rent is totally out of this world... The rent for a single is \$800. When you're only bringing home ... minimum wage, it's a rat race. Constantly chasing our tails." — Yolanda

"I look at what home costs are now, even rental prices, its nearly impossible for a person to work in the community and purchase a home, especially for young people. And a lot of the homes are ... so expensive." — Angélica



"Sometimes it takes two or three months to pay rent, but they know that the income isn't stable. They don't come knocking on our door or anything because they know that when we have money we will pay it. We're not not paying because we don't want to. But either way, the worry is there. I feel terrible. Sometimes, when I see them I rush inside because I'm embarrassed. But I've been here for 35 years and they know I'll pay." – Antonia

HOMELESSNESS

Los Angeles County has the largest homeless population of all urban areas in the U.S., with a disproportionately large percentage of the population remaining unsheltered. The City of Los Angeles estimated that 52% of their City's recorded need for shelter went unmet in 2014. Though Los Angeles officials state that they expect the overall homeless population to "decrease moderately" in the next year, they also expect that the emergency resources that they have to provide shelter to homeless individuals and families will "decrease substantially." 22

In 2015, 25,686 people were counted as homeless in the City of Los Angeles, which represents a 12% increase since 2013.³³ Council District 9 has the second largest Council District homeless population in the City, counted at 2,395 people. Council District 9 includes both the Reef Development Project area and Skid Row (an area said to contain nearly 3% of the County's homeless population, while only making up .0001% of its land area).³⁴ Seventy percent of those who are homeless in Los Angeles County remain unsheltered and makeshift shelters (e.g. tents and vehicles) have increased by 85% in the past four years.³³ The standard monthly public cost for homeless individuals is \$2,879, a cost five-times greater than their counterparts who have received housing.³¹

PROLONGED CIVIC DISINVESTMENT

People who live in the neighborhood report experiences that represent prolonged and sustained civic disinvestment in South Central, indicating that the historical context is still relevant today.



"The city's out there giving out all these parking tickets. As long as they're getting their ticket money out of South Central, it's alright. The City's perpetuating the whole thing. They don't make sure that people are doing their jobs and picking up the trash. Its institutional racism, and its directed at South Central." – Wallace

"They need to sweep the streets, especially around the commercial places, for there to be more lights, more security. They need to paint all the tagged streets. Our neighborhood looks terrible... We do pay our taxes, but they don't do anything." – Georgina

"They tell us that we can call a phone number and they'll come pick that old sofa you don't need, but if 2-3 weeks pass and no one picks up the sofa? We need an answer to our calls, we need to make sure those services are there." — Patricia

POLICING/SECURITY

The issue of policing and security in the neighborhood is complex, with many residents mentioning that they would like a greater sense of security in the neighborhood, and at the same time acknowledging that sometimes the greatest threat they feel in the neighborhood comes from the police. Some reflect on how they have seen a greater police presence in the neighborhood now that higher income groups have started to move in.

"They don't police these streets enough."

- Carthon

"I do like to see that other people are moving in here in the neighborhood because you do see more protection, safety, more police patrolling."

- Salvador

"I'm worried about getting harassed and shot. And that's by the police. Every time I pass the corner store, I'm thinking, 'Don't shoot.'" — Wallace



"If we recall how downtown LA looked 20-30 years ago... now it's completely different... there's more security, perhaps because the capitalists have the funds to improve security and we don't have that." – Julio

THE EFFECTS OF THE REEF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ON GENTRIFICATION, FINANCIAL STRAIN, AND DISPLACEMENT

Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles

Gentrification

- Financial strain and displacement of current residents
- Increases in physical and mental illness

Based on the current Reef Development Project proposal, data about the current context of South Central where the development is proposed to occur, and the research on the relationships between gentrification, financial strain, and displacement that is detailed in the chapters that follow, we predict that the Reef Development Project would have the effects that are described below.

INCREASE IN FINANCIAL STRAIN AND DISPLACEMENT OF CURRENT RESIDENTS

Large developments like the Reef project in neighborhoods like South Central often result in gentrification, which can drive housing costs up, and add to the financial strain of those in the area. Residents are already struggling immensely to afford housing, and are engaging in a variety of methods to address this problem, by making difficult choices about what necessities to do without, by living in overcrowded and substandard housing, and by looking for additional sources of income.

Despite these challenges, people in the neighborhood have developed strong social ties and a sense of attachment to the area. Business owners have also developed strong ties to their customers. Gentrification driven by the Reef Project could lead residents and businesses to be displaced as they are priced out of the area. Many of the residents of South Central have likely experienced serial forced displacement, perhaps even through multiple generations. This experience can have a cumulative impact resulting in a condition called root shock that is a source of trauma. Recent research indicates that intergenerational trauma can have such significant health impacts that it can alter genes to make them more susceptible to stress in subsequent generations.

When focus group participants were asked what they thought about developments like the Reef Project, some reflected on the context discussed above.



"There has to be an impact, whatever it is. Of course there's gonna be a lot of changes. And it would be great if those changes happened in a way that was going to help the neighborhood, like creating jobs for example. But it doesn't usually happen that way... makes you feel like they don't care." — Francisco



"It's frustrating when you see people move in and just drop the cash. It's privilege." – Anayetzy

In order to assess vulnerability to rising housing costs and displacement, we calculated the number of cost-burdened renter households living in proximity to the Reef Project. Specifically, we looked at households located within ½ mile, ½ mile, 1 mile and 2 miles of the development, in South Central, as shown in Figure 10.

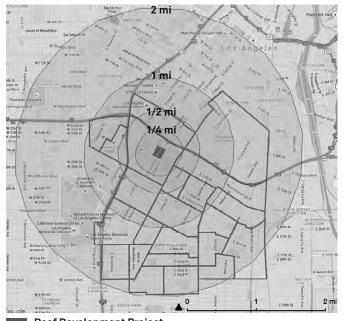
We found that an estimated 4,445 renters who live within ½ mile of the proposed Reef Development Project are already experiencing housing cost burdens and could be at high or very high risk of financial strain or displacement as a result of the development. An additional 39,311 renters who live between ½ mile and 2 miles of the project could be at moderate risk. Overall, 52% of the nearly 84,000 residents living within 2 miles of the project could be at risk of financial strain or displacement as a result of the Reef Development Project. (See Table 4).

THE EFFECTS OF THE REEF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ON GENTRIFICATION, FINANCIAL STRAIN, AND DISPLACEMENT

Table 4: Rent-burdened households in proximity to the Reef Development Project

Likelihood of property value increase	Reef tracts in buffer	All cost burdened renter households	All people in cost burdened renter households	Risk Level for finan- cial strain and/or displacement	Total people per risk category
Very high	1/4 mile	403	1,294	Very High	1,294
High	1/4 - 1/2 mile	976	3,151	High	3,151
Moderate	1/2 - 1 mile	3,469	12,799	Moderate	39,311
Moderate	1 - 2 miles	6,172	26,512	Moderate	
Total					43,756

Figure 10: Buffer Zones Surrounding the Reef Project



Reef Development Project
South Central Study Area Census Tracts

Another category of people who could be vulnerable to displacement are those who live in currently deed-restricted housing that is at risk of converting to market-rate units because of expiring subsidies. We analyzed data provided by the California Housing Partnership Corporation³⁵ on subsidized affordable housing and identified 1,068 units in South Central funded through federal and state programs. This does not include public housing or any housing that may have been funded exclusively through local programs. Of these units, 152 are potentially at risk of converting to market-rate within the next 10 years. For-profit owners of currently subsidized units are likely to have greater incentives for converting those units to market-rate as rents appreciate.

This study has demonstrated the significant housing affordability challenges that residents in South Central

are already facing, and the increased pressures residents will face as a result of the Reef project.

Project sponsors, however, do not see it as their responsibility to respond to these challenges. The Reef Development Project plan currently contains "no mention of affordable housing for this low-income neighborhood." Furthermore, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) tates the following: "... Because no residential units currently exist on-site, development of the Project would not remove existing housing; thus, no housing would be displaced. Therefore, impacts related to housing growth and housing displacement would be less than significant," (p. IV.L-10). The DEIR also states, "The Project would not displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere," (p. IV.A-9).

This approach to measuring displacement is woefully inadequate. Given the extensive research indicating how the process of indirect displacement occurs through financial strain and lack of affordable housing options, the project cannot only look at its effects on direct displacement — even if that is in compliance with the local law. With thousands of people at risk of displacement due to this project — and the historical context of development, segregation, and trauma experienced by the community — project sponsors have a responsibility to examine how their project can mitigate its potential effects through the provision of affordable housing in response to the existing need and through displacement prevention strategies.

Many residents have already engaged in many different strategies to help them afford housing at current prices. When asked where they would move if they could no longer afford to stay, many people said they could not think of another place.

THE EFFECTS OF THE REEF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ON GENTRIFICATION, FINANCIAL STRAIN, AND DISPLACEMENT

"We've gone to look at houses in Lancaster. How far are we gonna go? We get so far to the point where it just makes no sense. It would take me 2 hours to get home, 2 hours to get back, and it just makes no sense." — Angélica

"They're pushing everyone out to Palmdale, Lancaster—I don't know about the rest of you but I'm not going to San Bernardino. I grew up in the hood." — Yolanda



"There's really no place to go. If we move, we have to pay for two months of rent plus that same month's rent, so there's no other option of where to go." —Margarita

Some said they would move out of the City.

"I would move out of LA to another city." - Ana

"I would move from the area." - Juana

And some anticipated they would become homeless.

"I can't work because nobody will be with [my son, who is sick]. I live off of SSI. Medical doesn't cover diabetes medication. It comes out of pocket. My son is 3 years old. If the rent goes up and this continues I'm gonna be homeless." — Berenice

"I keep thinking, 'What am I gonna do if this doesn't work out? Where am I gonna go? Am I gonna see my neighbors again? Where am I gonna find this kind of community again? Gonna have to start over. Gonna be homeless, without a family."" — Anayetzy

"You ask where are we going? A lot of us say: the streets." — Yolanda

INCREASES IN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ILLNESS

Community residents who experience financial strain and/or displacement may experience a wide variety of chronic stress-related physical and mental illnesses, including anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and sleep disorders. Additional constraints on health-protecting resources and exposures to health-damaging environments such as substandard and overcrowded housing could further contribute to a variety of negative health outcomes, including hunger, inadequate childhood nutrition, and poor childhood growth, higher risks for respiratory diseases, infectious disease, lead poisoning, injuries, and mortality. Disruption of social networks through forced serial displacement and root shock can lead to additional health challenges including exposure to fragmented social environments that have higher rates of violence and sexually transmitted diseases. Multi-generational traumas of this nature can potentially influence the genetic makeup of future generations, leaving them more physiologically susceptible to the impacts of stress.

This study demonstrates that communities surrounding the proposed project are vulnerable to financial strain and displacement and associated adverse impacts to physical health and mental health. While these relationships are well documented, Reef project sponsors do not consider the indirect effects of the project on physical and mental health in the DEIR.

The following chapters provider greater detail on the relationship between gentrification, financial strain, and displacement, followed by recommendations for the developer and the City to mitigate the predicted harmful effects just discussed.

Gentrification —

Financial strain:

- · Affordability of household necessities
- Housing instability
- Substandard housing
- Overcrowding
- Homelessness



Health and equity impacts:

- Impacts on mental health
- Impacts on physical health
- Impacts on children

The following chapter summarizes research that explains the relationship between gentrification and financial strain, and the relationship between financial strain and health.

GENTRIFICATION

This history of South Central Los Angeles has resulted in prolonged public and private disinvestment from infrastructure, social services, and economic opportunities. Gentrification is a process that often begins at this place - when an urban neighborhood has experienced long periods of public and private disinvestment. Vacant or underutilized land and relatively low housing costs may exist in an area that still has some desirable qualities, such as access to job centers or transportation. 38,39 This produces a rent gap, or "an economic gap between actual and potential land values in a given location."39 One driver of gentrification is when developers purchase inexpensive land in disinvested areas and then use the land to construct new, higher-quality amenities. This leads to increased value of the newly developed property and the surrounding properties in the neighborhood. 39,40 These new amenities - which often do not respond to the immediate needs of the local community - whether they are retail-related, residential, educational, or other occupational developments, have the potential to attract an influx of new consumers, workers, and residents.39,41,40

Gentrification can refer to shifts in the socio-economic, physical, and cultural characteristics of an area, but generally entails a shift to wealthier residents, workers, and/or consumers.⁴⁰ With this introduction comes the potential for displacement of existing residents, workers, and/or consumers.⁴² Original residents can be directly or indirectly pushed out of their neighborhoods as a result of the rising costs of living, growing cultural irrelevance, illegal practices by residential and commercial property owners, and/or the forcible removal from or destruction of original housing that can result from redevelopment and revitalization projects. 41,43

GENTRIFICATION AND FINANCIAL STRAIN

A core part of gentrification is that it puts upward pressure on property values and housing costs and, as a result, housing becomes even less affordable for lower income residents. ^{39,40} Increases in property values and policies that benefit land and homeowners can benefit property owners and increase property tax revenues within a city. However, low-income renters, who make up the majority of South Central households, may instead experience rising rents that lead to greater cost burdens. Urban economists argue that luxury residential development that attracts wealthy residents to an area can spur other property owners to disinvest from more affordable properties, converting them to higher-end and higher-priced units.

Megaprojects such as the Reef Development Project and other large-scale mixed-use revitalization projects in urban areas have been found to increase surrounding property values, even before actual construction begins. Researchers have shown increased property values in proximity to the Atlanta Beltline, which includes both transit, greenway, and residential and commercial development; Baltimore's Inner Harbor redevelopment;44 and in proximity to large scale mixed-use redevelopment in downtown Oakland. 45 These analyses have generally found that property values increase the most in the immediate vicinity of revitalizations projects, for example within 1/8 – 1/4 of a mile, but that price premiums can extend for up to two miles.⁴⁶ Economic analyses in Portland, Oregon have also shown that upscale retail amenities, including grocery stores and coffee shops, are associated with housing price premiums. 47

Once financial strain occurs, it can start to influence a variety of determinants of health by contributing to: reduced ability to afford other household necessities, housing instability, living in substandard housing, overcrowding, and homelessness.

<u>Financial Strain and Affordability of Household</u> Necessities

When a person or household undergoes financial strain due to an increased housing cost burden, they are forced to sacrifice other vital necessities. Housing—shelter—is one of the most basic human needs for survival. Therefore, when faced with unaffordable housing costs that leave an individual with an inadequate amount of income left to allocate to the cost of other needs, lower income people must make difficult trade-offs for themselves and their families.⁴⁸

Focus group participants confirmed that when people in the neighborhood do not have enough money for everything they need, they have to make difficult choices.



"My older son gets two pairs of shoes for the entire year, my daughter also gets two pairs of shoes a year. The little one, when he gets home, he takes off his shoes, puts on the old ones and goes out to play." — Lourdes

"What are our options? Stop paying the bills, borrow money, don't purchase our kids' school uniform, or the supplies that teachers ask us to get them when school is about to begin?... I need internet for my job, but I have to make the choice between paying for internet or my children's uniform..." — Patricia

"My daughter ... wanted ... ballet lessons, ballet is her dream, but I can't give her that. I can't even provide clothes." — Juana

Financial Strain and Housing Instability

Unsustainable housing cost burdens and a lack of affordable housing can lead low-income households to move more often, through what researchers have called "churning moves," frequent moves to similar or lower quality housing.⁴⁹ Housing instability often leads to additional housing problems for families, who may temporarily double up or experience periods of homelessness.⁵⁰ Less extreme types of instability, such as getting behind on rent, mortgage, or utility payments, can also lead to stress and lower levels of well being.⁵⁰

Financial Strain and Substandard Housing

When quality housing is made unaffordable and thus, inaccessible to lower income people, residents (and in particular, low-income people of color) are forced to inhabit substandard housing at a disproportionately high level.⁵¹ The California Health and Civil Code defines housing as substandard or 'uninhabitable' if it lacks working utilities, if the housing infrastructure and fixtures are in disrepair, or if the dwelling lacks maintenance to the extent that it provides unsanitary and unsafe living conditions.

Thirty percent of the respondents in the SAJE resident survey (47/155) mentioned problems with housing conditions.

83% - roaches

38% - holes

34% - defective plumbing

32% - mold

26% - rats

17% - humid walls

17% - defective electrical wiring

Other problems mentioned: Damaged floor and walls Peeling paint

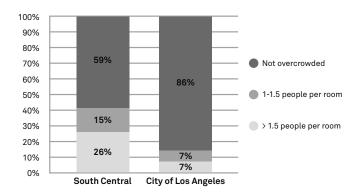
Financial Strain and Overcrowding

When an individual or family has difficulty paying the cost of rent, they may decide to move into housing that is smaller and more affordable, but not adequately large enough to accommodate the size of their household. In other instances of overcrowding, multiple families decide to live together to combine incomes to help afford the cost of rent.

Overcrowding or 'housing consolidation' is a perpetual issue in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Department of Housing and Urban Development defines crowding as any living quarters consisting of more than two persons per bedroom or more than one person per room. ⁵² Immigrant households experience the greatest rate of overcrowding in Los Angeles. ¹⁷ Based on these HUD criteria, 54% of those who responded to the 2015 SAJE survey are living in overcrowded living conditions, with 29% of the households surveyed renting rooms within apartments.

Overcrowding is especially prevalent in South Central. A Los Angeles Times analysis of 2008-2012 census data found that zip code 90011, which aligns closely with the census tracts used for the area defined as South Central, had the highest rate of overcrowding in the entire United States. Figure 11 shows that in South Central, 26% of households were severely overcrowded, with over 1.5 people per room.⁵³

Figure 11: Percent of Households Experiencing Overcrowding in South Central and the City of Los Angeles, 2009-2013



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2009-2013

Focus group participants shared personal experiences of people in the neighborhood living with others in overcrowded conditions to be able to afford housing.

"I pay about 40% of my personal income and split bills with the other person. It's not stable since I'm a day laborer and my income also fluctuates." – Moisés

"In our apartments we're piled on top of each other—imagine, two families have to live under one roof and split the rent. With my 5 children, I put them in the bedroom and their dad and I sleep in the living room." – Lourdes

"I used to live with three other people at the apartment, we used to split the rent. But one day they just left and I stayed there alone with no help. That same month, the landlord raised the rent. At one point I lived with other families in the same apartment to share rent." – Juana

People in the neighborhood also take on multiple jobs or look for other sources of income to help pay for housing and other bills.

"I recycle stuff like bottles and cans." - María

"I found myself recycling cans, and I realize that everyone does that, so there's not even cans anymore." — Berenice

"I rented out a property that I have in the back, have considered renting rooms out, anything I can possibly do to make extra income with taking on new jobs and taking in strangers to my home." - Cynthia

"I gotta make extra money just to get the eggs that I want. People are trying more and more ways to make some extra income. We ain't got no choice but to try it cause we're suffering down here."

-Yolanda

Some people in the neighborhood also do without certain necessities in order to make ends meet.

"I limit my food consumption and what I earn is for rent and food." – María R.



"After food and rent, we had \$20. Then we had to wash clothes, so I washed them by hand." — Berenice

Financial Strain and Homelessness

One of the most extreme results of financial strain is homelessness. Research in New York has found that increases in homelessness are associated with the rapid rise in housing costs in gentrifying neighborhoods.54 Homelessness is directly tied to what the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty has called an 'affordable housing crisis,' in which the demand for affordable housing far outweighs the supply.55 For example, the 2008 U.S. housing market provided approximately 37 affordable units for every 100 households in need.55 Across the 25 cities cited in the Conference of Mayors 2014 Report on Homelessness, 83% of the cities reported a lack of affordable housing as a driver of homelessness.³² This same report estimated that 22 percent of the need for emergency shelter went unmet.32

The quality of life for those who are able to receive emergency shelter is quite low. Officials remark that in order to accommodate a growing demand for emergency shelter services, shelter management resorts to "increasing the number of persons or families that can sleep in a single room; consistently having clients sleep on overflow cots, in chairs, in hallways, or using other subpar sleeping arrangements; and distributing vouchers for hotel or motel stays because shelter beds were not available." Therefore, emergency shelter environments also cause some of the same negative health impacts as those discussed in our section on substandard housing, such as overcrowding and more.

HEALTH AND EQUITY IMPACTS OF FINANCIAL STRAIN

Studies show that housing is a major social determinant of health for individuals and communities.56 Access to housing that is secure, habitable, and affordable has far-reaching positive health impacts for family and public health. 56-58 Affordable housing helps to free up family resources that can then go toward health promoting needs like nutritious foods and healthcare services.56 When quality housing is stable, households experience a greater sense of control, security, and sense of attachment, all of which leads to positive mental health outcomes especially in terms of reducing overall stress level for adults and children. 56,58 Access to affordable, quality housing also means that households are less exposed to physical hazards and toxins and are thus at a lower risk of disease and injury. 56,59 The reverse of all of these things can also be true. Reduced ability to afford other household necessities, housing instability, living in substandard housing, overcrowding, and homelessness are all determinants of poor health that can be caused by the financial strain of gentrification. These health determinants can have negative impacts on mental and physical health for adults, and can also specifically impact children.

Mental Health Impacts

The pressures of making involuntary concessions on vital necessities create a living situation filled with stress for struggling households. Housing instability — having to change residence multiple times without the ability to settle into one home for an extended period — also perpetuates high stress levels in adults and children. Substandard housing can further impact stress and anxiety levels as a result of uninhabitable living conditions. This stress has a direct impact on overall health, including mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. 60,57 61 62

Focus group participants provided personal descriptions of the stress and depression that can result from chronic financial strain of unaffordable housing.

"In my case, my husband had two heart attacks.

Now with this situation, neither of us sleep. That's called depression, that's what I've been told.

My hair is also falling out... How are we going to continue? Well, burning the midnight oil trying to think how we're going to get out of this situation."

Natividad



"It's hard, I feel impotent and I get depressed. I don't know where I would go if rent increased. I feel terrible because I can't meet the basic needs of the children and family. I'm also very sad... The other thing about stress is that it increases my sense of desperation. I also tend to overeat when I'm feeling this way. Right now I just ate, in a little bit I'll want to eat again. My eye twitches and my hands tremble and I always want to cry." — Juana

Physical Health Impacts

The financial strain of unaffordable housing causes lower income people to make trade-offs regarding such things as food and healthcare needs, insurance, and other activities and resources that support

their physical and psychological health.^{57,60,63,48} These trade-offs negatively impact physical health in the form of cheaper, less nutritious foods, infrequent or no healthcare, the inability to afford activities that serve as emotional and physical outlets. There are significant associations between high housing costs and hunger, inadequate childhood nutrition, and poor childhood growth.^{64,65,66}

Overcrowding can lead to higher risks of mortality, infectious disease, poor child development and school performance, poorer self-rated health, increased stress, noise, and fires, poor mental health, developmental delay, heart disease, and even short stature. ^{67,51,68,69} People with housing instability have poorer access to health care and higher rates of acute health care utilization than other populations with stable housing. ⁷⁰

When a housing unit is substandard it may be infested with pests and mold, it may contain lead poisoning hazards and other hazardous materials and have poor quality air filtration systems. Also, dependence on substandard facilities and household utilities that are meant to provide such crucial needs as water and air filtration negatively impacts physical health and childhood development. Mold, for example, is linked to cases of asthma, pneumonia, and other respiratory diseases. 51,60 Lead poisoning can cause brain damage, and behavioral disorders such as hyperactivity and heightened aggression, plus other learning disabilities, all of which can go relatively undiagnosed and untreated.60 In addition to respiratory disease and neurological and behavioral disorders, much research connects substandard housing features to high incidence of malnutrition, slow or impeded physical development, and physical injury. 58,60 Studies also link poor housing quality to a host of neurological, behavioral, and psychological deficiencies, as well as infectious and chronic disease. 51,59,60

Each of the impacts above can lead to chronic stress, leaving residents vulnerable to a variety of stress-related physical health problems, in addition to the mental health challenges mentioned above. Research suggests that chronic stress is strongly linked to the development of hypertension and other chronic diseases, and may cause physical problems including cardiovascular phenomena, such as hypertension; metabolic disorders, such as obesity, type-2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease; osteopenia and osteoporosis; and sleep disorders, such as insomnia or excessive daytime sleepiness. 61,62

Focus group participants shared how stress and limited choices have been harming their physical health too.

"Definitely, all this impacts health tremendously... it does cause worry and stress, one can't even concentrate 100% on their children or work. There are too many worries on the mind. But the emotional impacts also affect the physical health... So this does affect the emotional health, physical health, and even family relations. They're stressed, they're worried, they don't have that patience, so all this affect family relations." — Patricia

"When I was a little kid and the mortgage started going up, my mom's idea was, 'Well, just cook beans and rice for as long as we have to.'

Nowadays, eggs are so expensive and milk is so expensive. I just wonder — what kind of diet/nutrition do you have? ... You don't eat." — Pat

Impacts on Children

The long work hours that parents must put in to pay for rent often result in limited transportation options for students to get to school.⁷¹ Teenagers may have to work to supplement family income. Overcrowded homes can over stimulate children and lead to withdrawal, psychological distress, decreased motivation, patterns of helplessness, and behavioral problems.⁷²

Focus group participants shared how their children and other children in the neighborhood feel the effects as well.



"It has harmed my kids. My husband earns very little, so my kids have even said they want to get out of school so they can work and they can help us with bills and rent. My husband tells [them] to keep studying, but they see how pressured we feel so they want to leave school so they can help us work and pay for expenses." – Ruth

"The mental stress that people go through, that's pretty tangible. It will affect how you are with people. It hurts me so much when I see a parent smack a kid on the bus cause they don't move fast enough...they need a break." — Pat

Housing instability and inconsistent living environment negatively impact childhood environment, and this includes one's school environment. When a child undergoes repeated changes in living location and conditions, they are often less able to form connections with their peers and teachers, and less likely to feel connected with their neighborhood and home environment in general.⁷³

"There's also the change of school for children. I saw it when I changed my kids' schools. They were stressed. They arrived at a school where they didn't really know anyone. They're finally getting adjusted, so to have to move again doesn't sound like a good idea. It's stressful for them and it's stressful for us. We have to worry if there'll be good teachers, a safe school, everything." — María Elena



"It's more stressful to move, especially for the kids, they already know their teachers and they have their friends." – Oscar

"We've seen transiency, families are coming in and out..." – Martín Gómez, Principal of Santee Education Complex

Gentrification

<u>Displacement impacts on the social environment:</u>

- Social cohesion
- Place attachment
- · Serial forced displacement
- Root shock

Health and equity impacts:

- Health impacts
- Impacts on schools
- Impacts on businesses

The following chapter summarizes research that explains the relationship between gentrification and displacement, and the relationship between displacement and health.

GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT

One of the most damaging effects of gentrification is displacement. For the purposes of this report, we use the definition of displacement developed by Causa Justa:: Just Cause (CJJC), a grassroots organization working toward housing and racial justice. CJJC defines displacement as "the out-migration of low-income people and people of color from their existing homes and neighborhoods due to social, economic, or environmental conditions that make their neighborhoods uninhabitable or unaffordable". 15

As was mentioned previously, research on the relationship between gentrification and displacement has so far been mixed. 41 In other words, not all research showed a relationship between gentrification and displacement. However, this research has also been constrained, with many studies limited by scope, available data and brief time horizons for analysis. 41 Findings did consistently show that the financial strain of rising rents predicted displacement, and policy tools that helped protect residents from these rising costs, such as rent stabilization and public housing programs, helped to limit displacement. 72,41

Some researchers have suggested that one reason current gentrification research might not consistently show a relationship between gentrification and displacement could be that current residents might try harder to stay in the neighborhood when they begin to benefit from the new amenities that are brought to the area, even as rent prices increase. However, these authors also suggested that higher rent burdens are ultimately unlikely to be sustainable and might still lead to displacement, and current

studies have not used a long enough timeframe to capture this delayed effect.

When gentrification does lead to displacement, it can happen directly or indirectly. 41 Direct physical displacement can occur when an individual's home or an entire community is demolished or converted to another use and not adequately replaced following public or private redevelopment projects.⁴³ Commercial space can also be directly, physically displaced by chain stores and new building developments. Los Angeles has a vast history of this type of forced individual and community relocation, including the clearance of the Chavez Ravine neighborhood in the 1950s to develop a public housing project that was never fully built. This clearance forcibly displaced an entire community of over one thousand mostly Mexican-American farmers and their families from Chavez Ravine and made way for the construction of the Los Angeles Dodgers Stadium in 1962.75

Indirect displacement occurs when property values and rent costs rise to unaffordable levels and residents and business owners are forced to leave. 43 The same can be said for indirect commercial displacement, including the impacts of losing customer base and product relevancy, coupled with the inability to compete with newer developments. 42,43 Since the Reef Development Project and other projects in South Central Los Angeles have the potential to attract a wealthier set of residents to the neighborhood, landlords may experience a growing incentive to evict low-income renters from their homes in order to rent to higher-income residents with the ability to pay more.^{15,39} Evictions are "landlord-initiated forced moves from rental property" that most heavily impact the urban poor as a result of an inability to pay rent.⁷⁶ Evictions can also include varying levels of landlord harassment.15

Displacement can also occur gradually as a process of replacement, driven by a systematic "process of housing turnover and succession".77 As wealthier residents gradually replace existing residents, who are often lower-income people of color, previously accessible neighborhoods can become exclusionary.⁷⁷ One consistent finding across studies of gentrification is the finding that when neighborhoods gentrified, the people who were moving in were "wealthier, whiter, and of higher educational attainment", and those who were moving out were more likely to be "renters, poorer, and people of color".42 In turn, developers and planners construct amenities that speak to the preferences of the socially and economically empowered. Therefore, the introduction of wealthier residents to a community can place lower income people into new places of disadvantage and community exclusion.78

Changing neighborhood demographics and landscapes may lead existing residents to relocate as a consequence of the disintegration of social networks and cultural relevance that leads to community disconnectedness and alienation.¹⁵ Though this sort of relocation may appear to result from the resident's choice to move to a new area, it is ultimately an involuntary displacement that is the result of changes that were outside of that resident's control.⁴¹



"If we can't pay, who is going to come and live here? Well, those that have the money and can pay those prices. So then it does impact the neighborhood, it's going to look different because it'll only be benefitting those who have economic power. Meanwhile those of us who can't pay that will have to leave, so we're socially marginalized, and it gets worse each time and it affects us a lot." – Patricia

DISPLACEMENT IMPACTS ON THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Displacement has damaging impacts on the social environment of existing residents and business owners by negatively impacting the protective factors of social cohesion and place attachment that the community has developed. When a single event of displacement is experienced within the context of serial forced displacement, the impact can have even stronger negative impacts, producing a type of trauma known as "root shock".

Social cohesion

'Social cohesion' refers to systems of social support and familiarity and knowledge sharing.⁷⁹ Social cohesion develops with the protection and fostering of the connections that one forms when living in a neighborhood that supplies needed resources and community networks. This is what leads to the production of social norms and senses of community responsibility. It is what allows people to connect to their lived environment in a way that promotes a sense of belonging.⁷⁹

People currently living in the South Central neighborhood know each other and feel connected to each other – there is an established social cohesion of neighborhood residents.



"Where I live, all the neighbors know each other. We work for the same community." — Flavia

"I try to help people as much as I can. When neighbors ask me if I can pick up their kids from school... I tell them of course... I've lived there for 20 years and all the neighbors treat me like family." — Ruth

"I got to meet my neighbors.... I got sick, my appendix burst, and my neighbor checked in on me... if it wasn't for my neighbor looking out for me I could have died... The sense of neighborhood—looking out for each other—that's a sense of community... Community is important." – Pat



"I feel connected cause I've done work in the community... We planned a clean up on MLK Day... we had to ... knock on every door ... call the City, got stuff from business owners for the event. It was a huge success. It was nice doing it. ... It's rewarding when you go out and talk with the community... It's all about us, we are the community. We got to talk to each other." — Yolanda

Social cohesion—the ability to combine networks of capital—can serve as a method for poverty alleviation, since it allows for the bridging and linking of critical resources in a community.⁸⁰ It is often the more economically disadvantaged communities that benefit most from connection to place and the resource-sharing that it provides because of what their low socioeconomic status denies them.⁸¹ Research shows that gentrification "threatens the sustainability of community networks" and of the capital relations that lower-income, excluded groups often depend on.⁸²

"It's ironic — we have so many needs, we barely make ends meet, we are stressed and worried, without good health or incomplete health... but the places where we live are the places where we have ties. It's the place where if I'm low on rent I can ask my neighbor, I can ask my sister-in-law who lives near me, or if I don't have enough for groceries, I have a 20-year relationship with people there and I can suck it up and ask if I can take items on credit and pay them next Friday when I get my check. And because they've known me for a long time, they'll let this happen. But when people move to other places ... you're uprooting a large part of your life. Even if everything isn't perfect, at least there's a network of support." — Patricia

Place Attachment

Place attachment involves bonds between people and places of value, such as social and physical environments. Blace attachments are fostered by regular and habitual encounters with these people and places of value, through activities such as seasonal celebrations and daily routines. Blace attachments can produce group identity, feelings of pride, stability, familiarity, security, and a general

sense of well-being.⁸³ Place attachment theory argues that when people feel a sense of attachment and connection to their community, they are more likely to interact with their community in a positive way.⁸⁴

Respondents to the SAJE community survey described the attributes they enjoy about their community, and why they want to stay – essentially describing the reasons they feel attached to this community.

Seventy-eight percent of respondents (121/155) responded to the question, "What do you love about your community?"

30% calm 10% schools 27% neighbors 7% I know it /

14% transit lived here a long time

14% commercial space 7% safe

11% close to everything

Thirty-five percent of respondents (54/155) responded to the question, "Why do you want to stay in the neighborhood?"

57% affordability 32% access to public 39% schools transit 33% close to employment 13% culture of the 33% security neighborhood

"Other" responses included: "Difficult to find another option", and "Future of neighborhood".

Serial Forced Displacement

Serial forced displacement refers to the repeated, involuntary removal of groups from their community.85 Policies and processes like urban renewal, segregation and disinvestment supported by state-sanctioned redlining, and ongoing gentrification have contributed to serial forced displacement in U.S.85 Additional policies might include international trade and immigration policies that contribute to forced migration for economic and safety reasons, as well as policies that repeatedly displace homeless populations. Studies have shown that the cumulative impacts of these types of policies, and the repeated experiences of displacement that ensue, have had progressively more negative impacts on social organization and support.86,87 Some researchers argue that policies that consistently result in serial forced displacement have produced "a persistent de facto internal refugee population" of African Americans in the U.S.85

Forty-seven percent of survey respondents from the SAJE resident survey (73/155) provided information on why they had moved from their previous residence, suggesting that many residents came to this residence after already having been displaced from their previous location.

26% Expensive (neighborhood/rent)

25% Living conditions

18% Security (building/neighborhood)

14% Eviction

*16% of write-in options also mentioned size, which could indicate living conditions/overcrowding

Root Shock

When this sense of attachment is lost through the process of gentrification and displacement, an individual may enter a state of trauma known as 'root shock,' Root shock is a state defined as "the traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part of one's emotional ecosystem".88 It results from the loss of one's known world; it is the result of the disintegration of one's sense of community and attachment to place, and it is a loss of the social cohesion that such an attachment to place provides. Some of the individual impacts that result from such a loss are a decrease in community trust, a lesser sense of neighborhood responsibility and support, and increased levels of stress-related disease. On the community level, we often see a disruption of longstanding social networks and a conversion of the overall social landscape, usually to one that is less cohesive and feels less safe for community members.88



"Me, I go all over the city for resources... I go over there and be homeless. I move around a lot. Cause when you comfortable in one place, you start looking forward to what you've been getting, and when they stop giving, you feel like they don't wanna be bothered with you. So, me, I just move on." — Carthon

HEALTH AND EQUITY IMPACTS OF DISPLACEMENT

When social cohesion and place attachment are negatively impacted through displacement, and especially when the added impacts of serial forced displacement lead to the traumatic state of root shock, a variety of negative health impacts can occur. Displacement can also result in negative impacts for schools.

Health Impacts

Individuals who are burdened with involuntary displacement may experience the high costs of relocation and longer commutes, they may lose their jobs and their healthcare services, and they may relocate to lower quality housing in an area with more violence, all of which could cause chronic stress, which negatively impacts individuals' mental and physical health.^{15,89}

"It's suffocating. Kind of like holding my breath. When are they gonna sell this building out from under our feet?" — Angélica

"If they sell, even if we don't want to move we'll have to move." – Margarita



I used to live in La Puente. I had to commute here... the time it takes to commute is exhausting... the cost of transportation and the time it takes adds up, and the ties with neighbors are not tight because it's just work back to home, it's monotonous, there's not time for anything else. — Moisés

Social cohesion is what works against things such as distrust and anonymity that can produce a perception (and a potential reality) of a lack of safety in one's neighborhood. With a perceived lack of safety may come social isolation and a decrease in physical activity. A Studies have linked neighborhoods with less social cohesion to higher rates of smoking and depression. Disruption of social cohesion and support networks, disintegration of place attachment, and the negative effects of root shock, can exacerbate stress-induced disease mentioned in the last chapter, ranging from depression to heart attack. 15,63,88,61,62

These negative impacts also fall most heavily on low-income people of color due to a lack of socioeconomic empowerment.^{7,15,63}



"I don't wanna go to a place I don't know. The sense of family and community is important to me, as a single person." — Pat

"The problem is that I don't know what I'll do if they sell the building. I'm used to this area, I have my customers. Everything is nearby. It hurts me to say that I would have to move, my heart is here...I don't even know where I would move to."

- small business owner

Repeated serial displacement has been shown to cause a cycle of fragmentation for the displaced, which is primarily characterized by the disintegration of social networks, the high stress levels of housing instability and weak social ties, and the physical and mental manifestations of that stress.85 It can cause people to move to neighborhoods with higher rates of substance abuse and sexually transmitted disease and crime, leading to a sort of social disintegration and a forming of an individualist mentality, apart from the community.85 New research also suggests that people who have experienced intergenerational traumas, such as the populations of color residing in South Central that have experienced serial forced displacement across generations, may experience changes in gene structures that make future generations more susceptible to the impacts of stress.91,92

Impacts on Schools

Santee Education Complex a school located one block from the Reef Development Project that is populated by students from South Central. An interview with Dr. Martín Gómez, the principal of this school, revealed the following insights about the potential impacts of the development on his school and the students he serves.

"The homes in our areas will... become higher priced, which our parents are not going to be able to afford... as a school, we may see a decline in enrollment. So...35 kids is one teacher, that's 35 families, and I definitely see at least 35 families being displaced. And we're going to lose teachers and we're going to lose staff. We're going to lose support...because with the loss in those resources, how are we supposed to support students the way we have? We want to continue increasing our AP pass rates, our graduation rates. We'll go back to being a typical inner city school with 40 kids in a classroom instead of 30."

"I know from experience in San Francisco, that the gentrifying parents don't send their kids to public schools...they're going to send their kids to a private school."

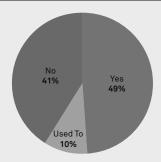
THE SMALL BUSINESSES OF SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES: A SIMILAR STORY

In 2015, CDTech conducted a survey of small businesses in the South Central Los Angeles neighborhood. 93 The findings reveal a similar pattern of financial strain and displacement for small businesses in South Central. Highlights from the CDTech report are quoted directly in the boxes below. Please see Appendix D for the full report.

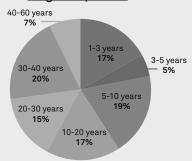
LONGEVITY OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN SOUTH CENTRAL

The small business establishments in the surveyed project referred to as the "Reef", represent the diverse population and historical contexts of the neighborhood's many uses. The variety of affordable goods and services they offer are reflections of the ethnic makeup and economic needs of neighborhood residents. Most small business owners in the area live in the community or used to.

Owners Who Live in the Community



Length of Operation



Fifty-nine percent of the businesses surveyed have been in operation at that location for over 10 years. Of the businesses that have been in operation for 20 to 30 years, 89% of the owners live in the community.

SOCIAL COHESION AMONG SMALL BUSINESSES AND THE SOUTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY

Small business owners also have a strong sense of social cohesion with residents and customers in the area.

A mobile locksmith has parked in the same spot at Washington Plaza down Washington from the Reef since 1991. Its current owner, son of the original owner, is very proud to be from the area and employ all local community members. He said he wouldn't have it any other way, and understands how important it is for local people to have local employment opportunities.

A few businesses shared that their commitment to their loyal customers is worth the sacrifice it might take to keep their prices accessible; they identify with the people they serve, each other's cultural and economic conditions, and the sense of community they have built together.

"We go out of our way to make our products accessible to the people who live here."

"We're all here for a reason. We left our countries for a reason... I think it's important that my customers know me... I don't know their names, they've never told me their names... but I know their faces. They just come in to get their waters, which is what they need the most since they work in the factories."

"I know families that have been in my neighborhood probably for my whole life... People come by, sit and watch games. It's pretty natural, nobody plans it, it can be pretty social in there."

IMPACTS OF GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

A potential result of urban redevelopment and re-investment projects is the direct or indirect commercial displacement of existing businesses, primarily those that are small and family-run or in the industrial/manufacturing sector. 43 This has to do with redevelopment's impacts on property values, amenities, consumer-base, and job development. Due to the transformative effects that development projects have on community landscapes and demographics, they can cause certain existing businesses to become obsolete or less relevant to their consumer-base.

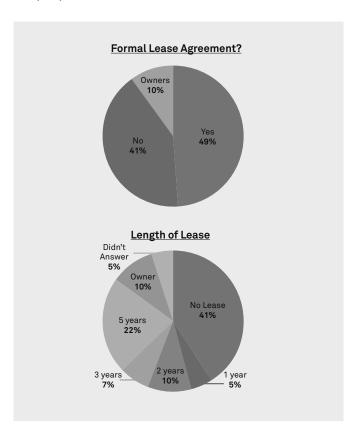
The project construction process alone can harm surrounding businesses by disrupting services and, at times, creating a physical blockade between businesses and their users, restricting over-all accessibility and interaction. 94 Research indicates that small businesses can serve as the primary sources of employment for surrounding, immediate neighborhoods. 7 However, there exists much concern that the increased desirability of an area—related to changes in the amenities that said area provides—will ultimately raise the cost of rent for small businesses to an unaffordable amount, thus pricing owners out of their existing properties. 95,96

A study conducted in St. Paul, Minnesota found that manufacturing and industrial businesses in particular are often pressured to relocate in instances of rezoning and redevelopment if their business sites are seen as potential profitable spaces for developers. 94 Developers are attracted to industrial properties since they are easily converted into space for residential and retail use. 97 According to the 2014 Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan, industrial land use makes up 15% of the plan area, and the 2000 census reports that 32% of Southeast Los Angeles employment was in the manufacturing sector.²³ A 2010 study conducted by researchers from USC in partnership with the historic Second Baptist Church of South Central Los Angeles, indicated that the top five industries that employ South Central residents are manufacturing, building and household service/ maintenance, retail, repair services, and construction. Each of these five industries belongs to an economic tier that provides relatively low wages to a predominantly less-educated class of workers.¹⁷

Industrial and manufacturing jobs commonly make up the employment opportunities that pay the highest wages and provide the most jobs for populations of

lower educational attainment, usually immigrant communities or members of marginalized racial groups.97,94 New developments such as the Reef Project look to create a large number of new jobs in the development area. However, rather than creating jobs that are attainable for the existing community, this job creation can lead to what is called an "education and jobs mismatch".94 This refers to the phenomenon in which the new jobs being created require a level of educational attainment unmet by local residents. Another outcome of this type of new job creation is that the newly created jobs that do accept employees with lower levels of educational attainment are commonly lower paying jobs--often in the service and accommodation industries--that offer fewer benefits to their workers.

"The jobs are not for those of us in the community, it's for those who have papers [documented people]." — Erendira



THE EFFECTS OF GENTRIFICATION ARE ALREADY HAPPENING FOR MANY SMALL BUSINESSES IN SOUTH CENTRAL

According to the CDTech small business survey from the area, one of the businesses that operated in the neighborhood for 20 years experienced a monthly rent increase from what had been \$1,000 to \$2,000, to \$5,000, all within one month. The business owners had to close their doors immediately. ⁹³ The report also states that many of the landlords and property owners are aware of the proposed development, and are, therefore, only offering short-term leases of between one month and a maximum of 5 years, despite business owners' efforts to try to negotiate for longer terms. ⁹³

SMALL BUSINESSES IN SOUTH CENTRAL HAVE EXPERIENCED SERIAL FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Small businesses in the neighborhood have also experienced serial forced displacement, according to the CDTech survey.⁹³

Twenty-nine percent of the businesses that have only been in the area 1 to 3 years moved to their current location because they were displaced due to rent increases or evictions when their building sold.



"I had another business on Washington and Western, it was also a bakery... In 1992 the shopping center was burned down during the Rodney King riots ... Everything was destroyed and I was left with nothing, so I had to find another way to make my business. That's when I came here."

- Mama Petra

"The problem is that I don't know what I'll do if they sell the building. I'm used to this area, I have my customers. Everything is nearby. It hurts me to say that I would have to move, my heart is here...I don't even know where I would move to."

- small business owner

HEALTH IMPACTS ON SMALL BUSINESSES IN SOUTH CENTRAL

The CDTech report discusses the potential health impacts that could be experienced if small businesses are displaced.

"If [local small businesses] are displaced—either by rent increases, lease insecurity, or eviction due to shifting property ownership—the loss would impact the health of this community. In turn, the stress experienced to avoid such outcomes greatly impacts the health of the business owners and staff themselves," (p. 23).93

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following chapter provides recommendations for the developer and the City of Los Angeles that would help to mitigate the predicted negative impacts of increased financial strain, displacement, and physical and mental illnesses, and provide additional health-protecting resources for current South Central residents.

TRAUMA-INFORMED AND ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY BUILDING

The developers of the Reef project and the City of Los Angeles have a unique opportunity to develop this property in a way that reduces the potential to further traumatize and harm the physical and mental health of current residents through increased financial strain and displacement.

Rather than continuing the legacy of racism and segregation through the replacement of current residents with those who hold more economic and political power, the developers and the City have an opportunity to become stewards for the health and wellbeing of the South Central community, by engaging in a cutting-edge trauma-informed approach to community development. Trauma Informed Community Building (TICB) is a new innovative approach to development that recognizes the existing community as assets and uses these assets as the building blocks for the future. The goals of TICB are to "de-escalate chaos and stress, build social cohesion, and foster community resiliency over time".98 TICB strategies have been developed that take into account residents' emotional needs and avoid re-traumatization triggers, promoting "community healing as part of housing transformation efforts".98 This can be achieved by ensuring that the project is developed using the four guiding principles of TICB: 1) Do no harm, 2) Acceptance, 3) Community empowerment, and 4) Reflective process. Additional details and strategies for TICB can be found here: http:// bridgehousing.com/PDFs/TICB.Paper5.14.pdf

Findings from this study show that community members already have assets such as social cohesion among community members and among small business owners and the community. The development should be structured in a way that honors and enhances these assets.

The project should be developed in collaboration with community members to ensure that economic opportunities and affordable housing options are incorporated into the plan. As Benjamin Torres, President and CEO of CDTech states, "South LA residents aren't trying to keep outsiders out of their backyards; they just want a fair opportunity to be able to stay." 99



"If they're going to go forward with [the Reef development], ... take us into account and [have] opportunities for us. Don't leave us out. Don't discriminate against us. We're human beings and we have needs. We are not living for free. We are paying our rent with the sweat from our brows. Right now, we aren't making it. We aren't even living day-to-day. I want this to be considered. But they're not going to take us into account. They're pushing us to the brink." — Natividad

"We gotta remember that this used to be a healthy community. We gotta work on rebuilding up what we used to have." — Cynthia

The SAJE resident survey asked respondents what changes they would like to see in the neighborhood. Eighty-one percent responded (126/155). Of those, 64% reported that they would like to see city repairs and cleaning (e.g., trash cleanup, road conditions, traffic lights, more parking options and shade structures, and safe city parks). Thirty-two percent of respondents mentioned safety/security (e.g., violence and gang activity). These responses reflect a desire of community residents for the City to reverse its current pattern of disinvestment and provide civic infrastructure support. In addition, a series of community resident engagement sessions have recently been hosted by the UNIDAD coalition with approximately 50 community members from South Central Los Angeles in attendance over the course of five weeks. As a result of these meetings, community members have identified the following priority areas, which align closely with the findings from this report:

RECOMMENDATIONS

homelessness, displacement prevention, affordable housing, jobs, small business, health and safety, and green space. The following recommendations, which were developed through discussions with the Advisory Committee and informed by other relevant development projects in the area, have the potential to address current community concerns, respond to the health impacts identified in this report, and take advantage of broader regional goals and needs. In addition to these overarching recommendations to take a TICB approach and to develop the project with community members, we also recommend a number of specific actions for the developers to implement directly and/or though a community benefits agreement, and also for the City to consider.



RECOMMENDATION
Produce and Protect
Affordable Housing

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LADPH) has produced multiple documents discussing the relationship between health and housing, and the importance of providing and protecting affordable housing for Los Angeles County residents, including their Community Health Improvement Plan for Los Angeles County 2015-2010¹⁰⁰ and Housing and Health in Los Angeles County (2015).¹⁰¹ In both documents they offer recommendations and/or strategies to protect and increase the availability of affordable housing as a means to "achieve equity and community stability".¹⁰⁰ For example, the LADPH recommends:

"Support plans and policies in Los Angeles County jurisdictions that expand the supply of affordable housing for low-income families and individuals, and protect existing affordable housing that is at risk of conversion to unaffordable market-rate housing," (p.29).¹⁰⁰

The LADPH also recommends that the City align its housing goals with their efforts.¹⁰⁰ Focus group participants also voiced the need for affordable housing in South Central.

"Help us build affordable housing especially for low-income populations and for people who truly need it." — Lourdes

"Affordable housing and job opportunities because that's what we need to afford rent. Rent is too high, it's the hardest thing." — Juana

"I would like to see more housing and rent lowered..." — Verónica

Affordable housing should be provided, with a diverse strategy of both producing new on- and off-site units and preserving old units. An emphasis should be put on providing housing for families, and a significant portion of housing should be set aside for extremely low income people.



Through Developer

New on-site units at levels of affordability that reach very low income and extremely low income residents.

Example: On-site housing: 25% of units affordable to very low income households.

Total affordable apartments for renters: 15% for residents with very low incomes (those who make less than 50% of the area median income) and 10% for residents with extremely low incomes (those who make less than 30% of the area median income).



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funds for acquiring land and building new off-site units.

Funds to preserve and rehab existing units.

Example: \$20,000,000 paid to City Affordable Housing Trust Fund or community benefits fund for affordable housing.



City

Target new investments and policies to achieve new off-site affordable units.

Preserve old/existing affordable units.



RECOMMENDATION Prevent Displacement

The Los Angeles Department of City Planning's Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles (2015) "acknowledges the negative health consequences of displacement," (p.15)¹⁰² and offers mitigation strategies to "create opportunities for existing residents to benefit from local revitalization," (p.32). These include supporting local employment opportunities, protecting and expanding affordable housing options for low-income residents, and maintaining culturally relevant resources, including case management, for Los Angeles residents to "access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhoods" (p. 137).¹⁰² This is in alignment with the LADPH recommendation to:

"Support housing, land use, and economic development policies that prioritize anti-displacement as new investment enters an area. This includes, but is not limited to, preserving or replacing affordable housing for low-income community members in all neighborhoods and areas undergoing new development," (p. 29).

Programs should be put in place to prevent the displacement of local residents from their homes. Measures should include staffing for renter advocacy and organizing initiatives, funds for tenant associations and emergency rental assistance, enforcement of existing renter protections, and the establishment of new renter protections in the surrounding neighborhoods.

To achieve neighborhood stabilization goals, resources should prioritize residents who are most vulnerable to displacement in the areas closest to the project site.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funds for staffing tenant organizing/advocacy and legal services initiatives.

Funds for tenant associations and emergency rental assistance.



City

Funds for tenant associations and emergency rent relief.

Enforcement of existing renter protections.

Establish enforceable "anti-displacement/no net loss" zones within a 1-mile radius of the project site. Create a community-City partnership to monitor and collaborate around anti-displacement efforts.



RECOMMENDATION House and Protect the Homeless

Maintaining housing and preventing homelessness not only helps protect the health of those who are at risk of homelessness, but also makes good economic sense for the region. The standard monthly public cost for homeless individuals is \$2,879 per individual, a cost five-times greater than their counterparts who have received housing.³¹ Research shows that public spending focused on social services, including housing subsidies, can produce better health outcomes than healthcare services spending.¹⁰³

The LADPH has made a recommendation to:

"Expand efforts to increase access to permanent housing with supportive services for homeless individuals and families to help them maintain stability and self-sufficiency," (p. 29).¹⁰⁰

One of the focus group participants from South Central shared his thoughts on the need for housing for the homeless through the Reef Development Project.

"The thing about it is we got 30,000 homeless people, and we just asking for 30 homes, not even getting that." – Wallace

Funding should be provided to house and protect the homeless in the area. In addition to producing/financing permanent supportive housing, their rights to rest and to maintain possessions in encampments must be protected and they should be provided with facilities and case management services.



Through Developer

Provide on-site rent-free facilities for case management services. Maintain rent-free status for 20 years.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funds for permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless residents.

Funds for case management services.



City

Provide facilities and case management services. Enforce/enact policies to protect the rights of the homeless.



RECOMMENDATION
Create Good Jobs and Career
Pathways for Local Residents:

The Los Angeles Department of City Planning's *Plan* for a Healthy Los Angeles (2015) cites health-supporting policies in the City's General plan, including one framework element policy to: "support efforts to provide all residents with reasonable access to transit infrastructure, employment, and educational and job training opportunities," (p. 145).¹⁰²

Recent research indicates that lower levels of metropolitan income inequality and segregation are related to sustained regional economic growth. 104 Rather than perpetuating and possibly exacerbating existing income inequalities and segregation in the region, the developers and the City have an opportunity to incorporate economic opportunities into the redevelopment process and outcomes through jobs for those in the community at highest risk, including: those in the geographic vicinity of the development who are likely to be impacted by financial strain or displacement directly or through their employers, and people with multiple barriers to employment such as single mothers, previously incarcerated people, and/or "at risk" youth ages 18-24.

There are multiple opportunities for the City and the developer to partner with other groups to achieve these recommendations, including: coordinating job training among County agencies, working with Unions on labor agreements, working with organized labor (building trades) and City Council to coordinate jobs with housing displacement protections, working with the LA Black Worker Center to assist in hiring Black workers, and providing preference for off-site contractual agreements to minority and womanowned businesses, and/or businesses that pay a living wage.

Focus group participants also mentioned the need for jobs to be targeted for those who are currently in the neighborhood.

"More work for those of us who are undocumented. More jobs." – Ruth

"I wish there were more investment in my community... investment in businesses, but for the jobs to be for people that live here... for it to be welcoming to the people regardless of immigration status... We also need job training programs so people can be better prepared and for the education to be of quality." – Patricia

A Community Jobs Training and Placement program should be created to provide jobs for local residents, including construction jobs created by the development and permanent jobs with the businesses located on site after construction.

Funding should be provided for workforce development and job pipelines. Local high schools should be partners in developing career pathways for students, and the community should have an ongoing role in monitoring jobs programs.



Through Developer

Examples:

Construction jobs for the development: 40% local hiring, with 20% for disadvantaged residents including those who are homeless or aged-out foster youth.

Future retail jobs: 50% local hiring, with 30% for disadvantaged residents.

Maintenance jobs: 100% local residents and require a living wage.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Establish a policy through the CBA for community-based monitoring and enforcement of local and targeted hiring policies. Provide funding to support this activity.

Funds for workforce development and job pipelines, including community-based training and placement programs.

Example: \$300,000 to community benefits fund to support Jobs Coordinator and the creation of a Community Jobs Training and Placement program.



City

Funds for workforce development and job pipelines to supplement project-related funds.

Leverage existing City services to bolster Community Jobs Training and Placement program.



RECOMMENDATION Support Small Businesses:

The CDTech survey of small businesses in South Central reports that of the businesses surveyed who have at least one employee, 52% hire locally, and an additional 24% have at least some local employees. 93 This means that supporting economic development for local residents through jobs also means supporting local businesses that are currently providing many of those jobs, to make sure they are not displaced.

The report goes on to describe these businesses.

"The small business establishments in the surveyed project area referred to as the 'Reef' represent the diverse population and historical contexts of the neighborhood's many uses. The variety of affordable goods and services they offer are reflections of the ethnic makeup and economic needs of the neighborhood residents. Small businesses are long-term investors in the community — who, in turn, draw their immediate capital from the neighborhood directly, making them a unique element of a neighborhood's DNA.

"At the same time, businesses are under-re-sourced and at high risk of displacement. Rents continue to rise, and leases shorten; the minority percentage of small businesses who have an actual formal lease agreement, still have no long term stability nor rent control, and all find themselves struggling to advocate for their rights/ability to stay if the owner raises their rent too high, forcibly evicts them, or sells the property," (p. 3).93

Supporting these existing small businesses within the context of the Reef Development Project could be achieved through a few concrete efforts, such as supporting physical improvements like improved signage, using promotional reach to support off-site businesses, and establishing an emergency fund for small businesses.

Focus group participants also had suggestions for economic development in the area.



"Invest in the small business owner and help build them up to the point where they are attractive and customers want them... Help build what is already there and these are the people who are invested in this community. So they are the ones who are going to take care of it." — Cynthia

"Affordable economic development. Have a forgivable loan or a forgivable grant... You have to hire locally, hire neighborhood kids, create co-ops... It can be done. It should be done." — Pat

Small businesses, both on- and off-site, should be supported with funding, support, and technical assistance. Care should be taken to support existing community-serving small businesses in the neighborhood. Innovative models that enhance economic security for residents vulnerable to displacement – such as cooperative businesses run by local residents – should be supported.



Through Developer

Example: Create incubator space for local and community-based small businesses.

Provide a percentage of retail space at discounted rent levels for community-serving businesses that are culturally and economically accessible to local residents.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funds for support and technical assistance for both on-site and off-site small businesses.

Example: 10% of retail space for community-serving businesses at discounted rent.

\$300,000 for small business support fund.



City

Support and technical assistance for both on-site and off-site small businesses.

Establish programs/policies to protect off-site businesses from displacement due to rising rents.



RECOMMENDATION
Maintain Public Transit Use
by Local Residents:

The City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning considers public transit to be a key for achieving both environmental and social health and well-being. One of the main goals for the Department of City Planning is to promote a form of sustainable growth that opens access to resources for all Los Angeles residents, particularly for the underserved.¹⁰²

The City's commitment to sustainability is directly associated with its aim to invest in development that is intentionally located along transit corridors and within transit-rich neighborhoods. The City views its public transit system as a primary mechanism for benefiting the environment.

"There's transit oriented development, and this is the last best chance to get affordable housing in that area and protect it... It's not so much what you're displacing with a big development, but what you're giving up by doing a housing development that does not take into account this huge opportunity." – Manuel Pastor, University of Southern California, Professor

Los Angeles' 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) also recognizes the importance of transit in achieving environmental justice. The Transportation Plan promotes transit investment in areas with lower-income populations, as it is lower-income people who are most transit-dependent.¹⁰⁵

Access to public transit should be maintained for those who most utilize it and depend upon it – the current residents of the neighborhood. Utilize actions listed above for housing and economic development to avoid replacing current transit-users living in a transit-oriented neighborhood with new residents who will be less likely to use transit.



Through Developer

Provide monthly transit passes to tenants living in affordable housing units on site.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funds to provide monthly transit passes to tenants living in affordable housing units off site.



City

Maximize City, County and transit agency services for low-income transit riders in the area.



RECOMMENDATION
Protect the Safety and
Security of the Community:

The Los Angeles Department of City Planning's Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles (2015) lists "safe and just neighborhoods" as one of its primary focus areas and states, "Safe neighborhoods are free from violence and crime and are characterized by a trusting, collaborative relationship between law enforcement and residents," (p. 108).102 Data from this study suggest that there is still work to do to achieve protection from crime and also achieve a trusting and collaborative relationship between law enforcement and residents, and that sometimes efforts to achieve the former may come at the expense of the latter. The City has an opportunity to renew these efforts in a meaningful, community-oriented way, through the redevelopment process. The City and the developer can also incorporate additional new efforts to ensure safety and security of the residents, making sure to include private security forces into their considerations.

The safety and security of the community should be protected. Police should be available to protect the residents of the area, but at the same time, programs should be put in place to make sure that neighborhood residents, including homeless residents, are not criminalized or targeted by police or other security staff.



Through Developer

Create event programming on site to raise awareness and build capacity among community members and security professionals around anti-criminalization practices.

Rules and regulations should be put in place so that low-income residents are not discriminated against, by management or other residents, within the development.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Programs should be put in place to make sure that neighborhood residents are not criminalized or targeted by security staff.

Establish a community board overseeing the policies and practices of on-site and off-site security.



City

Work in collaboration with the on-site community oversight board to extend the anti-criminalization policies and practices to include City and County police forces.

Police should be available to protect the residents of the area, but at the same time, programs should be put in place to make sure that neighborhood residents are not criminalized or targeted by police or other security staff.



RECOMMENDATION Provide Green Space for Neighborhood Residents:

The Los Angeles Department of City Planning's *Plan* for a Healthy Los Angeles (2015) also features "bountiful parks and open spaces" as one of its overarching goals to achieve a healthy City. The guidance document specifically states:

"Abundant and accessible parks and beautified open spaces are fundamental components of healthy neighborhoods... As a top health priority, the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles strives to improve access to existing parks and open spaces and prioritizing new parks in the most underserved neighborhoods," (p. 53).¹⁰²

The City already has a process to do this, through the Quimby fee system, though this process is currently being revised. Based on these goals from the City, it would be expected that Quimby fees collected from the development should be spent on constructing and/or maintaining parks within poor areas of South Central.

The focus group participants reported an interest in more parks.

"I wish there were more parks for the kids." - Ruth

"More parks, a big, big one. We just have one." – Maria

"There aren't enough parks, on the contrary, they want to close them." **– Ana**

"I would like programs [at the parks] like we used to have." — Lourdes

Green space created by new development should be made public and open to neighborhood residents, with space planned for community gardens and local produce sales. Funding should be provided to create and improve off site parks and to carry on active programming for children and families.



Through Developer

Green space created by the development should be made public and open to neighborhood residents, with space planned for community gardens and local produce sales.



Through Developer & Community Benefits Agreement

Funding should be provided to create and improve off site parks and to carry on active programming for children and families.



City

Funding should be provided to create and improve off site parks and to carry on active programming for children and families.

REFERENCES

- 1. World Health Organization. Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as Adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; Signed on 22 July 1946 by the Representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, No. 2, P. 100) and Entered into Force on 7 April 1948. The Definition Has Not Been Amended since 1948.; 1948.
- 2. University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. 2014 County Health Rankings - Ranking System. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; 2014. http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/ranking-methods/ranking-system.
- 3. Commission on Social Determinants of Health. Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity through Action on the Social Determinants of Health. Final Report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2008.
- 4. Simpson K. A Southern California Dream Deferred: Racial Covenants in Los Angeles | Portraits | Departures Columns | KCET. http://www.kcet.org/socal/departures/columns/portraits/a-southern-california-dream-deferred.html. Published February 2012. Accessed October 1, 2015.
- 5. McCone Commission. Violence in the City: An End or a Beginning?; 1965. http://www.usc.edu/libraries/archives/cityinstress/mccone/contents.html.
- 6. KQED. Timeline: South Central Los Angeles. Indep Lens. 2009. http://www. pbs.org/independentlens/cripsandbloods/timeline.html. Accessed October 22, 2015.
- 7. Bell J, Lee MM. Why Place and Race Matter: Impacting Health Through a Focus on Race and Place. PolicyLink; 2011:1-113.
- 8. Behrens Z. Maps: A Quick Look at the Changing Demographics of L.A., 1940 to

- the Present. KCET. January 2011. http://www.kcet.org/updaily/socal_focus/places/maps-a-quick-look-at-the-changing-demographics-of-la-1940-to-the-present.html. Accessed October 21, 2015.
- 9. Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. Regional Equity and Smart Growth: Opportunities for Advancing Social and Economic Justice in America. http://www.fundersnetwork.org/files/learn/Regional_Equity_and_Smart_Growth_2nd_Ed.pdf. Published 2004. Accessed September 14, 2015.
- 10. Kwak N. Urban Renewal and Revitalization. Encycl Am Urban Hist. 2007;2. http://go.galegroup.com.oca.ucsc.edu/ps/retrieve.do?sort=RELEVANCE&inPS=true&prodId=GVRL&userGroupName=ucsanta-cruz&tabID=T003&searchId=R1&result-ListType=RESULT_LIST&contentSegment=&searchType=BasicearchForm¤tPosition=3&contentSet=GALE%7C-CX3470500480&docType=GALE.
- 11. Barraclough LR. South Central Farmers and Shadow Hills Homeowners: Land Use Policy and Relational Racialization in Los Angeles. Taylor Francis Group LLC. 2009;61(2):164-186.
- 12. Pastor M, Prichard M. L.A. Rising. Program for Environmental And Regional Equity / Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration; 2012. https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/LArising_web.pdf.
- 13. DeGruy Leary J. Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing. Portland, OR: Uptone Press: 2005.
- 14. Medina J. In Years Since the Riots, a Changed Complexion in South Central. The New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/25/us/in-south-los-angeles-a-changed-complexion-since-theriots.html. Published April 2012.

- 15. Causa Justa :: Just Cause.
 Development without Displacement:
 Resisting Gentrification in the Bay Area.;
 2014. http://cjjc.org/images/development-without-displacement.pdf.
 Accessed September 18, 2015.
- 16. Pastor M. Equity, Growth, and Community: Crafting Sustainable Diversity. July 2015.
- 17. Terriquez V, Carter V. Celebrating the Legacy, Embracing the Future: Second Baptist Church Neighborhood Study. USC Center for Immigrant Integration http://csii.usc.edu/second_baptist.htm. Accessed September 15, 2015.
- 18. The Reef. http://www.the-reef.com/about/. Accessed September 17, 2015.
- 19. EcoTierra Consulting, Inc. SOLA Village Project 1900 S. BROADWAY INITIAL STUDY.; 2014. http://city-planning.lacity.org/eir/nops/ENV-2014-1773-EIR_IS.pdf.
- 20. Barragan B. Gamechanging Mixed-User/Hotel/Grocery Store Planned For Historic South-Central. CURBED Los Angeles. http://la.curbed.com/archives/2014/06/gamechanging_mixeduserhotelgrocery_store_planned_for_historic_southcentral.php. Published June 4, 2015.
- 21. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Los Angeles County Health Survey, 2011: Selected Health Indicators for Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area and for Los Angeles County.; 2011.
- 22. Simsek H, Doganay S, Budak R, Ucku R. Relationship of socioeconomic status with health behaviors and self-perceived health in the elderly: A community-based study, Turkey. Jpn Geriatr Soc. 2013;14:960-968.
- 23. Los Angeles Department of City Planning. Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan.; 2014.

- 24. Facts at a Glance. metro.net. http://www.metro.net/news/facts-glance/. Accessed October 5, 2015.
- 25. Devin O'Brien. See The Cheapest And Most Expensive LA Neighborhoods To Rent This Fall. Zumper Blog. September 2015. https://www.zumper.com/blog/2015/09/see-the-cheapest-and-most-expensive-la-neighborhoods-to-rent-this-fall/. Accessed September 26, 2015.
- 26. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Affordable Housing. HUD.GOV. http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/. Published 2015. Accessed July 10, 2015.
- 27. US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Rental Burdens: Rethinking Affordability Measures. PD R Edge. September 2014. http://www.huduser.org/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_featd_article_092214.html. Accessed September 18, 2015.
- 28. Southern Calfornia Association of Non-Profit Housing. Out of Reach in 2015. 2015. http://economicrt.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Out-of-Reach-in-2015-Los-Angeles-County.pdf. Accessed September 18, 2015.
- 29. Devin O'Brien. Zumper National Rent Report: September 2015. Zumper Blog. https://www.zumper.com/blog/2015/09/zumper-national-rent-report-september-2015/. Accessed September 28, 2015.
- 30. California Housing Partnership Corporation. Special Report: Lack of Affordable Housing Driving More Los Angelenos into Poverty. http://www. chpc.net/dnld/LAHousingNeed2015.pdf. Accessed September 28, 2015.
- 31. Flaming D, Burns P, Matsunaga M. Where We Sleep: Costs When Homeless and Housed in Los Angeles. Economic Roundtable; 2009. http://economicrt.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Where_We_Sleep_2009.pdf. Accessed September 22, 2015.

- 32. City Policy Associates, Washington, D.C. The United States Conference of Mayors Hunger and Homelessness Survey: A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities. US Conference of Mayors; 2014. http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/uploads/2014/1211-report-hh.pdf.
- 33. Los Angeles Homeless services Authority (LAHSA). LAHSA 2015 Greater Los Angleles Homeless Count.; 2015.
- 34. Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. Homeless Brochure 102208_ Homeless_brochure.pdf. http://www.lachamber.com/clientuploads/LUCH_committee/102208_Homeless_brochure.pdf. Accessed September 28, 2015.
- 35. California Housing Partnership Corporation. Preservation. http://www. chpc.net/preservation/index.html. Published 2014. Accessed October 6, 2015.
- 36. Barragan B. First Look at the 35-Story SoLA Village Megaproject Headed Just South of Downtown. CURBED Los Angeles. http://la.curbed.com/archives/2014/06/first_look_at_the_35story_sola_village_megaproject_headed_just_south_of_downtown.php#more. Published June 6, 2014.
- 37. EcoTierra Consulting. Draft Environmental Impact Report: The Reef Project. Lead Agency: The City of Los Angeles; 2015. http://planning.lacity.org/ eir/theReef/deir/index.html.
- 38. Bates L. Gentrification and Displacement Study: Implementing an Equitable Inclusive Development Strategy in the Context of Gentrification. Portland, OR: City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability; 2013. http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/454027. Accessed July 6, 2015.
- 39. Smith N. Gentrification and the Rent Gap. Taylor Francis Ltd. 1987;77(3):462-465. https://lambethrenters.files.word-press.com/2014/04/smith-n-gentrification-and-the-rent-gap.pdf.
- 40. Kennedy M, Leonard P. Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices. The Brookings Institution; 2001.

- http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2001/04/metropolitanpolicy. Accessed December 15, 2012.
- 41. Zuk M, Bierbaum AH, Chapple K, et al. Gentrification, Displacement and the Role of Public Investment: A Literature Review. University of California Berkeley Institute of Urban and Regional Development; 2015. http://iurd.berkeley.edu/uploads/Displacement_Lit_Review_Final.pdf.
- 42. Zuk M. Regional Early Warning System for Displacement: Typologies Final Project Report. Berkeley, CA: UC Berkeley Center for Community Innovation; 2015. http://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/ images/rews_typologies_final_report. pdf. Accessed September 19, 2015.
- 43. Great Communities Initiative. Preventing Displacement Policy Fact Sheet. 2007. http://www.greatcommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/2009%2010%20Displacement%20 Handout.pdf.
- 44. Oliva S. The effects of waterfront development on housing prices: the case of eastern Baltimore. December 2006. http://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/4205. Accessed September 25, 2015.
- 45. Fauria A, Mathur S. Impact of Targeted Redevelopment of Central Business District on Housing Prices in the Surrounding Neighborhoods: Evidence from Oakland, California. J Urban Plan Dev. 2012;138(3):244-253. doi:10.1061/(ASCE) UP.1943-5444.0000112.
- 46. Immergluck D. Large Redevelopment Initiatives, Housing Values and Gentrification: The Case of the Atlanta Beltline. Urban Stud. 2009;46(8):1723-1745. doi:10.1177/0042098009105500.
- 47. Johnson Gardner. An Assessment of the Marginal Impact of Urban Amenities of Residential Pricing.; 2007. http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/JohnsonGardner-Urban-Living-Infra-Research-Report.pdf. Accessed October 5, 2015.

- 48. Burns P, Flaming D. Rental Housing 2011 The State of Rental Housing in the City of Los Angeles. ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE; 2012.
- 49. Addressing Residential Instability: Options for Cities and Community Initiatives. http://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/cityscpe/vol14num3/Cityscape_Nov2012_addr_res_insta.pdf. Accessed October 21, 2015.
- 50. Nabihah Maqbool, Janet Viveiros, Mindy Ault. The Impacts of Affordable Housing on Health: A Research Summary. Center for Housing Policy; 2015. http://media.wix.com/ugd/19cfbe_d31c27e13a 99486e984e2b6fa3002067.pdf. Accessed October 21, 2015.
- 51. Krieger J, Higgins DL. Housing and Health: Time Again for Public Health Action. Am J Public Health. 2002;92(5):758-768. http://ajph.apha-publications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.92.5.758. Accessed May 1, 2013.
- 52. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Measuring Overcrowding in Housing.; 2007. http://www.huduser.org/publications/pdf/Measuring_Overcrowding_in_Hsg.pdf.
- 53. Emily Alpert Reyes, Ryan Menezes. L.A. and Orange counties are an epicenter of overcrowded housing. Los Angeles Times. http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-crowding-20140308-story. html. Published March 7, 2014. Accessed October 6, 2015.
- 54. A Theory of Poverty Destabilization: Why Low-income Families Become Homeless in New York City. ICPHusa. org. http://www.icphusa.org/index.asp?page=16&report=111&pg=106. Accessed October 21, 2015.
- 55. National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. Simply Unacceptable: Homelessness and the Human Right to Housing in the United States.; 2011. http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/SimplyUnacceptableReport1.pdf.
- 56. Cohen R. The Impacts of Affordable Housing on Health: A Research Summary. Washington, D.C.: Center for Housing Policy; 2011. http://www.nhc.org/media/

- documents/FramingIssues_Heath.pdf. Accessed December 12, 2011.
- 57. Lubell J, Crain R, Cohen R. Framing the Issues: The Positive Impact of Affordable Housing on Health. Center for Housing Policy; 2007. http://www.nhc.org/media/documents/FramingIssues_Heath.pdf. Accessed July 8, 2015.
- 58. Pollack C, Egerter S, Sadegh-Nobari T, Dekker M, Bravement P. Where We Live Matters for Our Health: The Links between Housing and Health. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; 2008. http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/commis-sionhousing102008.pdf.
- 59. Pollack C, Egerter S, Sadegh-Nobari T, Dekker M, Bravement P. Where We Live Matters for Our Health: The Links between Housing and Health. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; 2008. http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/commis-sionhousing102008.pdf.
- 60. Bashir SA. Home is where the harm is: inadequate housing as a public health crisis. Am J Public Health. 2001;92(5):733-738.
- 61. Garrido M, Hash-Converse J, Leventhal H, Leventhal E. Stress and chronic disease management. In: Contrada R, Baum, eds. The Handbook of Stress Science: Biology, Psychology, and Health. New York: Springer; 2011.
- 62. Chrousos G. Stress and disorders of the stress system. Nat Rev Endocrinol. 2009;5:374-381.
- 63. Allbee A. Preserving, Protecting, and Expanding Affordable Housing: A Policy Toolkit for Public Health. ChangeLab Solutions; 2015. http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Preserving_Affordable_Housing-POLICY-TOOLKIT_FINAL_20150401.pdf.
- 64. Sandel MJ, Sharfstein J, R Shaw. There's No Place like Home: How America's Housing Crisis Threatens Our Children. San Francisco: Housing America; 1999.
- 65. Sharfstein J, Sandel M, Kahn R, Bauchner H. Is child health at risk while families wait for housing vouchers? Am J Public Health. 2001;91:1191-1192.

- 66. Meyers A, Rubin D, Napoleone M, Nichols K. Public housing subsidies may improve poor children's nutrition. Am J Public Health. 1993;83(1):115-119.
- 67. Blake KS, Kellerson RL, Simic A. Measuring Overcrowding in Housing. Bethesda, MD: US Department of Housing and Urban Development; 2007. http://www.huduser.org/Publications/pdf/Measuring_Overcrowding_in_Hsg.pdf.
- 68. Krieger JW, Takaro TK, Rabkin JC. Healthcare disparities at the crossroads with healthcare reform. In: Williams RA, ed. Breathing Easier in Seattle: Addressing Asthma Disparities through Healthier Housing. New York: Springer; 2011.
- 69. Jacobs DE, Wilson J, Dixon SL, Smith J, Evens E. The relationship of housing and population health: A 30-year retrospective analysis. Environ Health Perspect. 2009;117(4):597-604.
- 70. Reid K, Vittinghoff E, Kushel M. Association between the level of housing instability, economic standing, and health care access: A meta-regression. J Health Care Poor Underserved. 2008;19(4):1212-1228.
- 71. Chhang J. Health Status and Condition in Long Beach: Highlights from the Community Health Assessment. Building Healthy Communities, Long Beach.; 2012. http://bhclongbeach.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/11/Final-11-6-12-ppt-CHA-Highlights-Kushner.pdf.
- 72. Kopko K. The Effects of the Physical Environment on Children's Development. Cornell University College of Human Ecology; 2007. http://www.human.cornell.edu/hd/outreach-extension/upload/evans.pdf.
- 73. Mueller EJ, Tighe JR. Making the Case for Affordable Housing: Connecting Housing with Health and Education Outcomes. Sage Publ. 2007;21(4):371-385. http://jpl.sagepub.com.oca.ucsc.edu/content/21/4/371.full.pdf+html.

- 74. Chapple K. Planning Sustainable Cities and Regions: Towards More Equitable Development. New York, NY: Routledge; 2014.
- 75. Becerra H. Decades later, bitter memories of Chavez Ravine. Los Angeles Times. http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/05/local/la-me-adv-chavez-ravine-20120405. Published April 5, 2012. Accessed September 22, 2015.
- 76. Desmond M, Kimbro RT. Eviction's Fallout: Housing, Hardship, and Health. 2015. http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/DesmondKimbro_Evictions_Fallout_SF2015.pdf. Accessed September 22, 2015.
- 77. Pollack C, Griffin B, Lynch J. Housing affordability and health among homeowners and renters. Am J Prev Med. 2010;39(6):515-521.
- 78. Chaskin RJ. Integration and Exclusion: Urban Poverty, Public Housing Reform, and the Dynamics of Neighborhood Restructuring. SAJE. May 2013:237-267.
- 79. Chinchilla M. Social Cohesion and Community Safety in New and Redeveloped Mixed Income Housing. San Francisco Department of Public Health, Program on Health Equity and Sustainability; 2010:44. http://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/EHSdocs/HDMT/WhitePaperSocial.Cohesion.pdf. Accessed July 8, 2013.
- 80. Seferiadis AA, Cummings S, Zweekhorst MBM, Bunders JFG. Producing social capital as a development strategy: Implications at the microlevel. SAGE Publ. 2015;15(2):170-185.
- 81. Atkinson R. The Politics of Knowing: Spatial Isolation, Disconnection, and Social with drawl. Swed Soc Anthropol Geogr. 2009;91(4).
- 82. Atkinson R. The hidden costs of gentrification: Displacement in central London. J Hous Built Environ. 2000;15(4):307-326.
- 83. Brown B, Perkins D, Brown G. Incivilities, place attachment and crime: block and individual effects. J Environ Psychol. 2004;24(3):359-371.

- 84. Taylor RB. Neighborhood responses to disorder and local attachments: the systemic model of attachment, social disorganization, and neighborhood use value. Sociol Focus. 1996;11:41-74.
- 85. Fullilove MT, Wallace R. Serial Forced Displacement in American Cities, 1916–2010. J Urban Health Bull N Y Acad Med. 2011;88(3):381-389. doi:10.1007/s11524-011-9585-2.
- 86. Watkins B. Fantasy, Decay, Abandonment, Defeat, and Disease: Community Disintegration in Central Harlem 1960–1990. New York, NY: Columbia University; 2000.
- 87. Fullilove MT. Psychiatric implications of displacement: contributions from the psychology of place. Am J Psychiatry. 1996;153(12):1516-1523.
- 88. Fullilove M. Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It. Random House Publishing Group; 2009. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&l-r=&id=-oumVM9qzb8C&oi=fnd&p-g=PA3&dq=root+shock&ots=flVFrE-QYcG&sig=1m0w-ZxkVblen-93Klo-LaQ99bqQ#v=onepage&q=root%20 shock&f=false.
- 89. Healthy City. Gentrification and Displacement Mapping and Analysis of the City of Los Angeles & the Figueroa Corridor Community. Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE); 2009.
- 90. Echeverría S, Diez-Roux AV, Shea S, Borrell LN, Jackson S. Associations of neighborhood problems and neighborhood social cohesion with mental health and health behaviors: the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis. Health Place. 2008;14(4):853-865. http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1353829208000105. Accessed August 23, 2013.
- 91. Mohatt NV, Thompson AB, Thai ND, Tebes JK. Historical Trauma as a Public Narrative: A Conceptual Review of How History Impacts Present-Day Health. Soc Sci Med. 2014;106:128-136.

- 92. Yehuda, R, Daskalakis, NP, Bierer LM, et al. Holocaust Exposure Induced Intergenerational Effects on FKBP5 Methylation. Biol Psychiatry. 2015:1-9.
- 93. CDTech. Small Business Needs and Opportunities Survey.; 2015.
- 94. Malekafzali S, Bergstrom D. Healthy Corridor for All: A Community Health Impact Assessment of Transit-Oriented Development Policy in St. Paul, Minnesota. PolicyLink; 2011. http://www.healthimpactproject.org/resources/body/Healthy-Corridor-Technical-Report.pdf.
- 95. JAEGER WK. THE EFFECTS OF LAND-USE REGULATIONS ON PROPERTY VALUES. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; 2006. http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/shorelandzoning/documents/landuseregeffect-propvalues.pdf.
- 96. Yoon H, Currid-Halkett E. Industrial gentrification in West Chelsea, New York: Who survived and who did not? Empirical evidence from discretetime survival analysis. SAGE J. 2015. http://usj.sagepub.com.oca.ucsc.edu/content/52/1/20.full.pdf+html.
- 97. Curran W. "From the Frying Pan to the Oven": Gentrification and the Experience of Industrial Displacement in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. SAGE J. 2015. http://usj.sagepub.com/content/44/8/1427.short.
- 98. Weinstein E, Wolin J, Rose S. Trauma Informed Community Building A Model for Strengthening Community in Trauma Affected Neighborhoods. Bridge Housing Corporation and Health Equity Institute, San Francisco University; 2014. http://bridgehousing.com/PDFs/TICB. Paper5.14.pdf.
- 99. Torres B. With the City's Housing Prices Out of Control, South L.A. Could Be the Next Big Thing. April 2015. http://www.zocalopublicsquare. org/2015/04/30/with-the-citys-housing-prices-out-of-control-south-l-a-could-be-the-next-big-thing/ideas/nexus/. Accessed October 6, 2015.
- 100. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Community Health Improvement Plan for Los Angeles

REFERENCES

County 2015-2020.; 2015. http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/plan/docs/CHA_CHIP/CHIPforLACounty20152020.pdf.

101. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Housing and Health in Los Angeles County.; 2015.

102. Los Angeles Department of City Planning. Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles: A Health and Wellness Element of the General Plan.; 2015. http://healthyplan.la/wordpress/wp-content/ uploads/2014/11/PlanforHealthyLA_ Web-11.pdf. Accessed October 7, 2015.

103. Herrin J, Elbel B. Health and social services expenditures: associations with health outcomes. BMJ Qual Saf. March 2011:1-7. doi:10.1136/bmjqs.2010.048363.

104. Benner C, Pastor M. Whither resilient regions? Equity, growth and community. J Urban Aff. 2015:1-20. doi:10.1111/juaf.12194.

105. 2009 Final Long Range Transportation Plan. Metro; 2009. http://media.metro.net/projects_studies/images/final-2009-LRTP.pdf. Accessed October 15, 2015. Human Impact Partners is a national non-profit working to transform the policies and places people need to live healthy lives by increasing the consideration of health and equity in decision-making. Through research, advocacy, and capacity-building, we bring the power of public health science to campaigns and movements for a just society.

For more information, contact Holly Avey at Human Impact Partners, 510-452-9442 ext 108 or visit <u>www.humanimpact.org.</u>

Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Proposed Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles:

Appendices







United Neighbors In Defense Against Displacement
UNIDAD • UNITY

APPENDIX A. HIA PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY	
HIA Process	3
Stakeholder engagement	3
DATA COLLECTION	3
METHODS	4
LITERATURE REVIEW	4
FOCUS GROUPS	5
Subject matter expert Interviews	5
STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS METHODOLOGY	6
APPENDIX B. FOCUS GROUP METHODOLOGY	7
FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS AND PROBES	8
APPENDIX C. SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY	11
APPENDIX D. CDTECH SMALL BUSINESS NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES SURVEY	20

Appendix A. HIA Process and Methodology

HIA Process

HIA is a flexible process that typically involves six steps:

- 1. Screening involves determining whether or not an HIA is warranted and would be useful in the decision-making process.
- 2. Scoping collaboratively determines which health impacts to evaluate, the methods for analysis, and the workplan for completing the assessment.
- 3. Assessment includes gathering existing conditions data and predicting future health impacts using qualitative and quantitative methods.
- 4. Developing recommendations engages partners by prioritizing evidence-based proposals to mitigate negative and elevate positive health outcomes of the proposal.
- 5. Reporting communicates findings.
- 6. Monitoring evaluates the effects of an HIA on the decision and its implementation as well as on health determinants and health status.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement, including participation of community members who are directly impacted by the development, is a vital part of HIA. We engaged stakeholders primarily through participation in the Advisory Committee and through data collection.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee consisted of representatives of member organizations in the UNIDAD Coalition and additional members, who are listed on the acknowledgements page of this report.

The advisory committee met by phone in July 2015 and in-person in Los Angeles in October 2015. The Advisory Committee advised HIA researchers on where to find specific data and research, organizing focus groups, how to communicate findings, the political context of the proposed development, review of the draft findings and the draft report, and regarding recommendations. The Advisory Committee represented the primary channel through which affected community members were engaged. The Advisory Committee also played a key role in disseminating the HIA findings and recommendations.

Data Collection

The need to gather data and research for HIA is one way to begin or start a discussion about the impacts a policy has on health. We engaged stakeholders for the following data collection tasks:

Focus Groups. Esperanza, SAJE, CDTech, TRUST South LA, and the St. Francis
 Center helped to organize the focus groups with residents of South Central Los

- Angeles and with homeless and food back clients from the area who are served by the St. Francis Center.
- Subject Matter Expert Interviews. Interviewees provided valuable context on the experiences of small business owners in South Central Los Angeles; the perspective of a representative of a school system in the area; the perspective of a church leader for a church that was originally established to serve the African American population in the area, but has since expanded to also provide services to the Latin@ population; and a researcher who is well-versed in the demographic, built environment, gentrification, and immigrant rights issues that are specific to Los Angeles.

Methods

The following methods were employed to describe existing conditions and make impact predictions related to residents and businesses of the South Central Los Angeles community. Human Impact Partners:

- Review of the scientific (peer-reviewed) and grey (non peer-reviewed) literature;
- Data collection from existing sources, such as the American Community Survey, and data from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health;
- Focus groups with residents of the South Central Los Angeles neighborhood; and
- Subject matter expert interviews with small business owners, the principal of a local school, a researcher from the University of Southern California, and a pastor from a local church.

The data collection area used to define South Central Los Angeles was established through consultation with community partners that work in the area. Partners from Esperanza and SAJE identified census tracts to use, and a contact from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health identified the community planning area most closely aligned with the collection of their data.

Additional data was obtained, analyzed, and utilized from a survey of South Central neighborhood residents conducted by SAJE and a survey of small business owners conducted by CDTech.

Literature Review

For the literature review we gathered empirical evidence using databases such as Google Scholar, general Internet searches, and other public health and sociological databases. Grey literature included reports produced by organizations and institutions such as Causa Justa, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, PolicyLink, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the University of Southern California, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the California Housing Partnership Corporation, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, ChangeLab Solutions, and others.

Focus Groups

Five separate focus groups in Los Angeles consisted of a total of forty-one participants. Please see Appendix B for more information on the focus group methodology, including recruitment methods and discussion guides. Typed and recorded notes were taken during the focus groups and all participants granted permission to use quotes gathered for this report.

Interviews with Subject Matter Experts

Six interviews were conducted with subject matter experts (see page 3 for listing) with three small business owners in the area, the principal of Santee Education Complex located very near the proposed Reef Development location, a researcher from the University of Southern California Sociology department, and a pastor from the 2nd Baptist Church.

Advisory committee members identified subject matter experts to interview. Interviews with small business owners were coordinated and co-facilitated by a representative from CDTech. For other interviews, Human Impact Partners staff sent an email and/or contacted the person by phone explaining the project and requesting an interview. All interviews were conducted in person except for the interview with Pastor Epps, which was conducted over the phone. Please see Appendix C for an example interview guides. Typed notes were taken during the interviews and all interviewees granted permission to use quotes gathered for this report.

Predicting the of Effects of the Reef Development Project on Gentrification, Financial Strain, and Displacement

When calculating the number of people at risk for financial strain and displacement as a result of the gentrification that would occur with the Reef Development Project, the buffer zones were selected based on an analysis of rising property values for homes in a low-income neighborhood adjacent to the planned Atlanta Beltline, which provides evidence for the way that a large scale project could impact property values in a low income neighborhood. This analysis showed that property values increased the most when they were within 1/8 to 1/4 mile from the Beltline, and properties that were within ½ to ½ mile from the Beltline also increased significantly. Smaller increases in property values were also experienced for properties between ½ mile and 2 miles from the redevelopment. The study also demonstrated that property value increases coincided with media coverage of the Beltline, years before actual construction.

The people most likely to be negatively impacted by increased property values are renters, particularly those who are already burdened by housing costs. The number of cost-burdened renter households within each buffer zone was calculated by census tract, based on whether the majority of a tract fell within the zone. Only census tracts identified as within the South Central study area were included (see the *About the Report* section of this report for more details).

We then estimated the number of people in these households based on the average renter household size in each tract, as shown in Table 4 of the report.

Many of these renters will have some protection against rising rents if they live in deed-restricted affordable housing or rent-stabilized units (and know the rights afforded to them under Los Angeles's Rent Stabilization Ordinance.) The most vulnerable renters will be those who live in units – such as detached single-family homes – that are not rent-stabilized and thus have little recourse if their landlords choose to raise rents.

Strengths and Limitations of this Methodology

We faced several limitations in conducting this assessment. For example, the timeline for conducting this study was only four months in length, so the scope of the project was limited to primarily just the impacts of gentrification on financial strain and displacement, though there are many other potential impacts of redevelopment that could also potentially impact the health and equity of community members. And while we collected qualitative data to describe the experience of living in the South Central Los Angeles community, these findings are not meant to compare residents of South Central Los Angeles to the City of Los Angeles as a whole, or to make claims about statistically significant differences. Also, definitions around the South Central community and the concept of community in general vary depending on differences in lived experience that produce individual and, at times, divergent ways of identifying with one's surroundings. Finally, with any study of how an intervention affects outcomes, there are myriad social changes in the residents who live in this community that also impact the outcomes of interest studied in this report.

Numerous strengths are evident as well. The participation of Advisory Committee members ensured that we included a variety of community perspectives and were able to access community members who might not otherwise have participated in this study. As a result, the voice of the community is strong in this report. Furthermore, their connections to small business owners, service providers, and community resources, provided us with access to meaningful and credible stories that provide additional context to our findings.

Appendix B. Focus Group Methodology

Five focus groups were conducted on August 25-27, 2015. Focus groups were conducted to answer questions where there were gaps in the literature and existing conditions data, to confirm findings from those sources, and to provide additional localized context and understanding to these topics. Partner organizations Esperanza Community Housing Corp. and SAJE were compensated for their services in recruitment and facilitation, as well as to provide stipends to each focus group participant, to supply food during the meetings, and to address any other barriers to participation through the provision of transportation or parking reimbursement, childcare services, and so on, as needed.

A critical case sampling selection strategy² was used to recruit critical populations where data was currently lacking: English and Spanish-speaking residents of the community directly surrounding the proposed Reef Development Project, including homeless populations and those of extremely low income who utilize community foodbank services.

Several partner organizations – Esperanza, SAJE, CDTech, TRUST South LA, and the St. Francis Center – recruited focus group participants for the five groups – through existing connections with their client base. Recruiters from each organization worked together to populate a spreadsheet of potential participants and establish estimates of potential demographic variables of interest, to attempt as much variation as possible. Such criteria included: primary language, gender, age, race/ethnicity, children living with them, etc.

All five focus groups had at least one or two facilitators and one note-taker. All focus groups had one staff member or consultant from one of the recruiting partner organizations and one or two staff members from Human Impact Partners. All five focus groups were held in Los Angeles. Participants all provided verbal assent to participate after receiving a detailed description of what would occur, how it would be recorded, and how the data would be used. All adult participants were sent the final quotes that were used in the report in advance, with an opportunity to have them deleted or modified if they felt it did not accurately reflect what they said. One focus group participant corrected one word of her quote before it was included, no other focus group participants selected to have their quotes modified in any way or deleted.

Detailed notes were collected at each focus group, in addition to audio recordings, which were used just to clarify specific quotes as needed. Following the guidelines of qualitative researchers Miles and Huberman³, a codebook was created prior to reading the data. The codebook was informed by theoretical constructs, literature review, and preliminary research gathered from stakeholder feedback during the early phases of the HIA process. The data from the focus group notes were then reviewed line by line by Human Impact Partners staff to identify segments of the text that could be coded according to these previously selected themes and categories. In addition, data that did

not fit into these themes and categories were categorized into their own "in vivo" codes, according to Strauss's guidelines on codes that derive from the data itself.⁴ (Codebook is provided after interview guides.) Finally, the data were analyzed by reviewing all codes in the same category to derive and further summarize the codes that most clearly represented those overall concepts. Selected examples of these codes were incorporated into the final HIA report where they offered additional context, depth, validity, or original concepts to the critical concepts in the report.

Focus Group Questions and Probes

For each focus group, we prepared a set of questions to guide the conversation. We also included probes for some questions in case the focus group discussions needed extra direction. See questions on the following pages.

References

- 1. Immergluck D. Large Redevelopment Initiatives, Housing Values and Gentrification: The Case of the Atlanta Beltline. *Urban Stud*. 2009;46(8):1723-1745. doi:10.1177/0042098009105500.
- 2. Cohen D, Crabtree B. *Qualitative Research Guidelines Project*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; 2006. http://www.qualres.org/HomeSamp-3702.html.
- 3. Miles M, Huberman A. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 1994.
- 4. Strauss A. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; 1987.

Focus Group Interview Guide

Warm up Questions:

- 1) What is your name and how long have you lived in South LA?
- 2) What kind of employment do you have or does your partner have?

Financial strain

- 3) What percentage of your income do you spend on your rent or mortgage?
- 4) How does the cost of rent or mortgage affect your ability to pay for other things you need? (Examples your: food, utilities, clothing, transportation, educational resources for children, and other necessities)
- 5) Is it stressful when you can't afford the things you need? What kinds of choices would you have to make if you couldn't afford everything you need?
- 6) How do you think those choices would affect your health?
- 7) How would those choices affect the health of your children and other family members?

Displacement

- 8) If the cost of rent or property taxes went up in your neighborhood, how likely are you to move to a different neighborhood? What neighborhood would you move to and why?
 - a) Do you think you would stay connected with the neighbors you've gotten to know here?
- 9) How would relocating/moving affect life in this neighborhood if people start to leave because they can't afford to live here?
 - a) What would happen to the businesses?
 - b) What would happen to the schools? (Ex: would children have to switch schools, less funding for schools etc)
- 10) How do you think those experiences (being evicted, losing your home, losing connection with friends/neighbors) would affect your stress level? Your health? The health or stress of your children and family?

Concluding questions

- 11) What kinds of changes would you like to see in your community? (ex: community resources, schools, retail, green space, safety, access to healthy foods, access to health resources etc.)
- 12) What makes you proud of your community? What are some of the things you enjoy doing in your community and/or with your family?
- 13) Is there anything else you would like to share regarding our discussion?

Guía para grupo de enfoque

Preguntas iniciales:

- 1) ¿Cómo te llamas y cuanto tiempo tienes viviendo en el sur de Los Angeles?
- 2) ¿En qué trabajas tú o tu pareja?

Problemas Financieros

- 3) ¿Qué porcentaje de tus ingresos gastas para la renta o hipoteca?
- 4) ¿Cómo afecta el costo de la renta o hipoteca tu habilidad de pagar otras necesidades? (Ejemplos: comida, utilidades o facturas de servicios públicos, ropa, transportación, recursos de educación, y otras necesidades)
- 5) ¿Es estresante cuándo no puedes pagar las cosas que necesitas? ¿Qué clase de decisiones tendrías que hacer si no pudieras pagar todas las cosas que necesitas?
- 6) ¿Cómo crees que estas decisiones afectarían tu salud?
- 7) ¿Cómo crees que estas decisiones afectarían la salud de tus hij@s y otros miembros de tu familia?

Desplazamiento

- 8) Si el costo de la renta o impuestos de propiedad suben en tu vecindad, ¿qué tan probable sería que te mudaras a otra vecindad? ¿A qué vecindad te mudarías y por qué?
 - i. ¿Crees que te quedarías en contacto con tus vecinos a quienes has llegado a conocer aquí?
- 9) Si la gente empieza a mudarse o reubicarse porque no pueden pagar el costo de vivir aquí ¿cómo afectaría la vida en esta vecindad?
 - i. ¿Qué le pasaría a los negocios?
 - ii. ¿Qué le pasaría a las escuelas? (Ejemplo: tendrían que cambiar de escuelas los estudiantes, habrían menos fondos para las escuelas etc.)
- 10) ¿Cómo crees que esas experiencias (ser desalojados, perder tu casa, perder conexión con amistades y vecinos) afectaría tu nivel de estrés? ¿tu salud? ¿la salud o estrés de tus hij@s y familia?

Preguntas conclusivas

- 11) ¿Qué clases de cambios te gustaría ver en tu comunidad? (Ejemplo: recursos comunitarios, escuelas, venta de al por menor, parques o espacios verdes, acceso de recurso de salud etc.)
- 12) ¿Qué te orgullece de tu comunidad? ¿Qué actividades disfrutas hacer en tu comunidad y/o con tu familia?
- 13) ¿Hay algo más que te gustaría compartir acerca de nuestra discusión?

Appendix C. Subject Matter Expert Interview Methodology

In addition to focus groups, six subject matter expert interviews were also conducted to provide additional localized context and understanding to the impacts of the proposed Reef Development Project on the South Central Los Angeles community.

Six subject matter expert interviews were conducted (see page 3 for listing) with three small business owners in the area, the principal of Santee Education Complex located very near the proposed Reef Development location, a researcher from the University of Southern California Sociology department, and a pastor from the Second Baptist Church.

Advisory committee members identified subject matter experts to interview. Interviews with small business owners were coordinated and co-facilitated by a representative from CDTech. All other interviews were conducted by Human Impact Partners staff.

Specific interview questions can be found on the following pages.

Subject Matter Expert Interview – small business owners

Intro

Explain Reef project and research project

Background on the business

- 1. What did you do before you opened the business?
- 2. Can you tell me about your business? What services/products do you provide? Why (goals: serve community, provide a product/service, profit growth)?
- 3. How many people do you employ and what are your employment practices? (within the community?)
- 4. Who are your customers?
 - a. People from neighborhood? Race/ethnicity, gender, income? (Just describe them)
 - b. Do they live here? Work here? Both?

Neighborhood context for the business

- 5. Do you live in the neighborhood? What was the reason you started your business in this neighborhood? Does it matter to your customers that they know you?
- 6. What is your relationship with other businesses in the area?
 - a. Are relationships based on shared customer base? Shared cultural heritage?
- 7. How is the money from your business invested in the community?
 - a. Any other ways you "give back to community"? (sponsorships/donations/informal support)

Changes over time and Displacement

- 8. If the cost of rent went up in your neighborhood, how likely are you to move your business to a different neighborhood (or to close your business)? What neighborhood would you move to and why?
 - a. How does the cost of rent or mortgage affect your ability to pay for other things you need for your business? (Examples your: paying your staff, supplies/products, utilities, etc.)
 - b. What would happen if the residents and clientele in the neighborhood started to change? How would that affect the services/products you offer, the pricing, the staffing of your store, etc.
 - c. Where would current clientele be able to get the resources/services you offer if your business had to move?
- 9. Do you think you would stay connected with the customers and other business owners you've gotten to know here?
- 10. As a business, what are your needs? Are those needs met in the neighborhood?

Concluding questions

- 11. What kinds of changes would you like to see in this neighborhood? (excommunity resources, schools, retail, green space, safety, access to healthy foods, access to health resources etc.) What are the needs of your business?
- 12. What makes you proud to be a business owner in this neighborhood?
- 13. Is there anything else you would like to share that you would like to share regarding our discussion?

Entrevistas de informantes – propietarios de pequeñas empresas

Introducción

Explica el projecto Reefy y el estudio

Antecedentes sobre la empresa

- 1. ¿Qué hacías antes de abrir tu negocio?
- 2. ¿Me puedes contar sobre tu negocio? ¿Qué servicios o productos provees? ¿Por que? (meta de servir a tu comunidad, proveer productos o servicios, ganancias)?
- 3. ¿Cuántas personas trabajan aquí? ¿Viven en esta vecindad tus empleados?
- 4. ¿Quién son tus clientes?
 - a. ¿Son personas que vive en esta vecindad? ¿Trabajan aquí? ¿Los dos?

Contexto de la vecindad para el negocio

- 5. ¿Vives en esta vecindad? ¿Cuál es la razón por la que empezaste tu negocio en esta vecindad? ¿Es importante que tus clientes te conozcan?
- 6. ¿Cómo es tu relación con otros empresarios en la área?
 - a. ¿Tienen una relación por lo que comparten clientes? ¿Por qué comparten una cultura?
- 7. ¿Cómo inviertes en tu comunidad como empresarios?
 - a. De alguna manera devuelves a tu comunidad? Patrocinando, donaciones, apoyo informal

Cambios a través del tiempo y desplazamiento

- 8. Si el costo de la renta para tu negocio sube, ¿qué tan probable seria que mudaras tu negocio a otra vecindad (¿o cerrar tu negocio?). ¿A que vecindad te mudarías y por qué?
 - a. ¿Cómo afecta el costo de la renta de tu negocio tu habilidad de pagar para otras cosas que necesitas para tu negocio? (Ejemplos: pagar a empleados, materiales/producto, gastos etc.)
- ¿Qué pasaría si los residentes y los clientes de la vecindad empiezan a cambiar?
 ¿Cómo afectaría los servicios/productos que ofreces, los precios, los empleados, etc.
 - a. ¿Dónde irían los clientes que tienes para los servicios y recursos que tu negocio ofrece si te tuvieras que mover?
- 10. ¿Crees que te quedarías conectad@ con los clientes y otros empresarios que haz llegado a conocer aquí?

Preguntas conclusivas

- 11. ¿Qué clases de cambios te gustaría ver en tu comunidad? (Ejemplo: recursos comunitarios, escuelas, venta de al por menor, parques o espacios verdes, acceso de recurso de salud etc.) ¿Qué son unas necesidades de tu negocio?
- 12. ¿Qué te orgullece de ser empresario en esta comunidad?
- 13. ¿Hay algo más que te gustaría compartir acerca de nuestra discusión?

Subject Matter Expert interview – Martin Gomez, principal, Tuesday August 25, 2015 9:25-10:15AM Santee Education Complex

Intro - Explain Reef project and research project

Background Questions

- Could you start by telling me a little about your connection to the South LA community? Had you previously worked or lived here?
- 2. Why did you choose the field of education? Have you worked in other school districts? Housing conditions that students live in? Challenges to school/studying?

School Climate

- 3. What percent of students are bussed in from other neighborhoods?
- 4. As an educator, what is your perception of Santee High being 100% free & reduced lunch and having 100% black & brown students—94% Latino, 6% African American.
 - a. How do you think this will impact them when they go off to colleges, where that racial/ethnic composition is not the case?
- 5. How involved are the parents in their children's education? What are some sources of stress for Santee High Students? Their parents?
 - **a.** What are some impacts on their education status? Impacts on their health? (Asthma, diabetes, dental care) And what are ways they cope with stress?

Neighborhood

- 6. We've heard that South LA has a transient population why do they move? Is it because of affordability of neighborhood? Work-related?
- 7. How much does housing stability in the area impact the students' attendance rates? Or any other challenges they may experience as a result of evictions, etc. How do people view Skid Row and being so close to it? Are there students who are homeless? If so, what percentage?
- 8. How would you describe the level of of social cohesion in the neighborhood if people are more likely to be transient, are there still strong social connections? What supports those social connections? What hurts them?
- 9. Are there any influences of the history of the neighborhood on current conditions? Political history? Cultural history?

Gentrification

- 10. Have you experienced, witnessed, or heard of any impacts of gentrification on the neighborhood in this area or other areas? Explain
- 11. What's your fear if gentrification happens?

12. Do you think there could be opportunities that might result from gentrification or the development?

Concluding questions

- 13. What kinds of changes would you like to see in this community? (ex: community resources, schools, retail, green space, safety, access to healthy foods, access to health resources etc.)
- 14. What makes you proud of this community?
- 15. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding our discussion?

Subject matter expert interview – Manuel Pastor Wednesday August 26, 2015 12-1pm 950 W. Jefferson Blvd., JEF 102, Los Angeles, CA 90089

Intro - Explain Reef project and research project

- Mention focus groups and interviews being conducted in Spanish (he suggested this for USC HIA)
- Mention interviews with local business owners and focus on investment in local economy
- Will not be specifically studying economic impacts due to limited time and funds and need to streamline, but may be able to make some recs based on his thoughts on this topic

Neighborhood

- 1. What have been the socio-demographic and economic trends in south LA?
 - a. How have the demographics shifted? (African American to Latino communities other shifts?)
 - b. How has the economy shifted?
 - i. Manufacturing, small businesses
- 2. You work on Black-Latino relations, is there anything we can learn from that that would be relevant to south LA, given the changing demographics over time?
 - a. Anything on history of displacement, about immigration status, about disempowerment/empowerment, about structural and systemic discrimination?
- 3. Can you speak to social cohesion in south LA?

Gentrification and equity

- 4. In thinking about the planned Reef Project and its potential impacts on the current residents of south LA, what are the potential impacts on equity, the economy/jobs, housing, health, social connections, culture, etc... of this project?
 - a. How might these effects impact the community?
 - b. What are some ways to counter those negative impacts?
 - c. Any positive impacts that might happen?
- 5. What are the opportunities to achieve or enhance social justice through the response to this proposed development? What do developers and community leaders need to know?
- 6. What are some issues around gentrification, population, culture, economy, etc. that people don't understand or don't think to ask about that we should consider?
- 7. What are your thoughts on balancing the needs for people in a particular neighborhood with the needs of a region overall? How can the need for housing at a regional level be balanced with the potential for displacement at a neighborhood scale?

Concluding questions

- 8. What kinds of changes would you like to see in the South LA community? (excommunity resources, schools, retail, green space, safety, access to healthy foods, access to health resources etc.)
- 9. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding our discussion?

Subject matter expert interview – Pastor Epps

Intro Explain Reef project and research project

Background on his church

- 14. What did you do before you began your service at 2nd Baptist Church?
- 15. Can you tell me about your church? How long has it been in this neighborhood? What is the mission of this church?
- 16. Can you tell me about your congregants? Who comes to your church?
 - a. How many people?
 - b. Do they live in the neighborhood?
 - c. Age, race/ethnicity, gender, income? (Just describe them)
 - d. Have they changed over time?

Neighborhood context for the church

- 17. Do you live in the neighborhood? What was the reason you came to this church in this neighborhood?
- 18. What is your relationship with other churches and residents in the area?
 - a. What makes those relationships helpful?
 - b. What makes them challenging?
- 19. How does your church contribute to the neighborhood?
 - b. Any other ways you "give back to community"? (sponsorships/donations/informal support)

Changes over time and Displacement

- 20. If the cost of rent went up in this neighborhood, how would that affect your church and its congregants?
 - a. Would you ever move the church to a different neighborhood because of rising costs? What neighborhood would you move to and why?
 - d. How does the cost of rent or mortgage affect your church? (Examples your: paying your staff, supplies, utilities, etc.)
 - e. What would happen if the residents in the neighborhood started to change? How would that affect your church?
 - f. Where would current congregants be able to go to church if your church had to move?
- 21. Do you think you would stay connected with the residents and other churches you've gotten to know here?
- 22. As a church, what are your needs? Are those needs met in the neighborhood?

Concluding questions

- 23. What kinds of changes would you like to see in this neighborhood? (ex: community resources, schools, retail, green space, safety, access to healthy foods, access to health resources etc.)
- 24. What makes you proud to have this church in this neighborhood?
- 25. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding our discussion?

Appendix D. CDTech Small Business Needs and Opportunities Survey

Comment Letter No. 10

UNIDAD
United Neighbors in Defense Against Displacement
[no address]

Response to Comment 10-1

The commenter states that the comments are submitted on behalf of the UNIDAD Coalition, including the 14 organizations that co-sign the comment letter. The commenter expresses concerns regarding the DEIR and the development as a whole. The commenter opines that, since the DEIR analysis did not provide the opportunity for meaningful public review, the Draft EIR should be revised and recirculated. These comments are acknowledged and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determine whether to approve the Project. With respect to the adequacy of the Draft EIR, the commenter provides specific comments in Comments 10-2 through 10-42, which are responded to individually in the sections below.

Response to Comment 10-2

The commenter states that the DEIR comment process has not provided residents an adequate opportunity to review and respond to potential impacts on the community. The commenter states that the UNIDAD Coalition and others requested an extension of the comment period from 47 days to 90 days, based on the scale of the Project, the length and technical nature of the DEIR, and the lack of a Spanish translation. With respect to extension of the public comment period, see Response to Comment 9-1. With respect to providing a Spanish translation of the EIR, such translations are not required under CEQA or the CEQA Guidelines. The commenter's concerns in this regard will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.

Response to Comment 10-3

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR Project Description is inaccurate because it refers to the Project as being located in downtown Los Angeles. The commenter references the Draft EIR as locating the Project "in downtown Los Angeles". The Draft EIR reference is incorrect, and has been corrected in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). This correction does not affect the conclusions of the analysis in the Draft EIR, as it merely clarifies the information presented in the Draft EIR. Elsewhere on page II-1 of the Draft EIR (i.e., 1st paragraph under B. Surrounding Land Uses), the Project Site is correctly referred to as being located "south of downtown Los Angeles". In other places, the Project Site is referred to as being part of "greater downtown Los Angeles (for example, pages, III-1, IV.B.1-22, IV.E-25, IV.H-1, etc.). This characterization is accurate because the Project Site is located in the northernmost part of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan area, and downtown development is moving from the downtown core to the south, in the direction of the Project Site and the surrounding part of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan area (see Response to Comment 10-8).

The commenter also contends that the Project Description used in the Draft EIR is not accurate because the Project also includes Design Guidelines and a Land Use Equivalency Program that permit the alteration of building locations and the substitution of land uses within the Project Site. The Project Description provided in the Draft EIR on pages II-9 through II-21 provides the land uses, site plan, building heights, and

densities that comprise the Project. This Project Description is used without modification throughout the Draft EIR to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the Project, and meets the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15124, including "the precise location and boundaries of the project" (Figures II-1, II-2, and II-5); "a statement of objectives sought by the proposed project" (pages II-39 and II-40); a general description of the project's technical, environmental and economic characteristics (pages II-9 through II-21); and a statement describing the intended uses of the EIR, including a list of agencies expected to use the EIR in their decision-making (page II-41), a list of permits and other approvals required to implement the project (page II-40 and II-41), and a list of related environmental review and consultation requirements required by federal, state or local laws, regulations, or policies (not applicable). While the Project does include a Land Use Equivalency Program, and Design Guidelines, as referenced by the commenter, implementation of these programs would require a separate approval process from the Project, including implementation of the City's Site Plan Review process, and separate environmental review (Draft EIR, page II-37). Nonetheless, the Draft EIR evaluates the potential effects of these programs in each section of the EIR, using the most impactful combinations of land uses, and most impactful building locations, to determine the potential environmental effects of implementing the Land Use Equivalency Program and Design Guidelines. As such, the Draft EIR ensures that all potential impacts of the Project, including the Land Use Equivalency Program, and Design Guidelines, have been addressed and mitigated, if necessary. No further analysis is necessary.

Response to Comment 10-4

The commenter contends that the description of the Project's Supplemental Use District for Signage (Signage SUD) is inaccurate, and does not reflect traffic hazards and effects on human health associated with the Project signage. See Response to Comments 9-4 through 9-7.

Response to Comment 10-5

The commenter contends that the proposed Sign District Criteria must be corrected with respect to Digital Display Signs and Integral Electronic Display Signs that are in encapsulated areas that are no more than incidentally visible from the right of way. See Response to Comment 9-8.

Response to Comment 10-6

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not adequately address the growth inducing effects of the Project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15162.2(d) requires an EIR to discuss the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing growth, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. As discussed in the Draft EIR (page V-2 and V-3), the Project would increase employment, population and housing on the Project Site, which could stimulate existing businesses and foster economic growth in the Project area. This growth would occur within an area planned for future urban development, and would not require the extension of major infrastructure into areas that would experience unplanned growth. The Project would not exceed the applicable forecasts of employment, population, and housing growth in the Southeast Community Plan area, and would concentrate development in a transit station area, consistent with state, regional, and local land use plans. As such, even though the Project would work to promote growth in the area, the Draft EIR assesses this impact to be less than significant. Even though the Project would work to promote the development of this area, this development would not necessarily occur at the expense of the existing housing and residents in the Project area (see Response to Comment 10-8).

Response to Comment 10-7

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR did not address indirect displacement of housing, or the true growth inducing impacts of the Project. With respect to growth inducement, see Response to Comment 10-6. With respect to indirect displacement of housing, see Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 10-8

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not adequately analyze the potential impacts of the Project related to the indirect displacement of people and housing. The Draft EIR correctly notes that the Project Site does not include any residential units, and would therefore not directly displace any housing units (Draft EIR, pages IV.L-9, and IV.L-10). The Draft EIR also correctly notes that the Project would not directly result in the displacement of existing residents, since no permanent residents are presently located on the Project Site, and would therefore not necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (Draft EIR, page IV.A-9). Further, as discussed in the Draft EIR (pages IV.J-36 through IV.J-43), the Project as proposed would provide a mix of land uses in close proximity to the regional transit system, and would work to implement state, regional, and local policies regarding the goal to concentrate future urban growth in transit station areas. Moreover, as noted in the Draft EIR (pages IV.J-34 and IV.J-35), urban development and growth associated with downtown Los Angeles is moving from the downtown core to the south, toward the Project Site and surrounding areas. This trend is shown in the related projects identified in the Draft EIR. Of the 82 related projects identified in the Draft EIR (pages III-8 through III-18), 24 (approximately 30%) are residential or mixed use projects located south of Olympic Boulevard, or within 0.8 miles of the Project Site. These projects represent the largest concentration of future related projects in the area of the Project Site (Draft EIR, Figure III-4, page III-18). Of these 24 projects, one-third (8 projects) are located south of Pico Boulevard, within one-half mile of the Project Site. Accordingly, the Project would represent an appropriate project in an appropriate location, with density that reflects its proximity to transit. In addition, by bringing new residents to the area, the Project will benefit local businesses.

The commenter contends that the Project would result in off-site displacement of housing units and residents that would be an indirect impact of the Project. To support this contention, the commenter cites a study that was prepared by Human Impact Partners, an advocacy organization that "help(s) organizations and public agencies who work with low-income communities and communities of color understand the effects of current or proposed projects and policies on community health." The study was prepared in partnership with two organizations that are represented within the coalition that submitted Comment Letter No. 10, and was assisted by an Advisory Committee that included, among others, seven organizations that are signatory to the comment letter. This study, entitled "Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development in South Central Los Angeles", dated October, 2015, (hereinafter referred to as the "Study"), is included as an attachment to the commenter's letter (see Response to Comment No. 10-43). Based on this Study, the commenter suggests that the Project potentially threatens to displace over 43,000 residents of South Los Angeles.

The Study examined a Study Area consisting of 23 census tracts, and presented data regarding race/ethnicity, education, income, health status, transit dependency, housing, and housing affordability within the study area. The study provides data regarding homelessness, even though the Project has no relationship with the Citywide homeless problem (see Response to Comment 9-22). The Study also

_

⁸ http://www.humanimpact.org/about-us/, accessed February 6, 2016.

provides anecdotal information regarding public investment and security in the Project area, based on input from a focus group convened by the commenter, without representation from the City or the Applicant. To provide its estimate of the potential displacement that could result from the Project, the Study identified "cost burdened" households, based on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development criteria related to housing costs and income, within ¼ mile, ½ mile, and 1-2 miles of the Project Site, and uses an average household size to estimate the number of people affected. The Study then assesses the "likelihood of property value increase" for each of these radii (Very High, High, and Moderate). No evidence is presented as to how the Project will cause this increase in property value. The Study then assumes that all of the people reflected in its calculations would be displaced by property value increases attributable to the Project. This forms the basis for the commenter's claim that "the Project potentially threatens to displace over 43,000 South LA residents".

Notwithstanding the lack of evidence to support this contention, and the apparent overstatement of potential impacts, the Study has several flaws that preclude its utility in predicting any indirect displacement that can be attributed to the Project. First, throughout the Study, the potential area of impact is referred to as "South Central Los Angeles". The City does not recognize this characterization. The Project Site is located in the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan area, which is surrounded by the South Los Angeles, Central City, and Central City North Community Plan areas (Draft EIR, page III-1). The Study Area shown by commenter (page 14 of the Study) includes parts of all of these Community Plan areas. Further, the neighborhoods within the Study Area contain widely varying characteristics. The neighborhoods around the Project Site are different from the University Park neighborhood to the west, and the neighborhoods to the south near Martin Luther King Boulevard are substantially different from the Fashion District to the north. Yet the Study does not acknowledge these differences, preferring to present the Study Area as a uniform and unvarying "South Central" area, rather than the collection of diverse neighborhoods that it actually is. In particular, the Study Area is not representative of the Project Site and its immediately surrounding area, as these areas have different characteristics with regard to housing product, and housing occupancy, than does the remainder of the Study Area. These differences are pertinent to projecting the effects of the Project on the future development of surrounding land, and are not reflected in the Study.

The Project Site is located within Census Tract 2240.2, and is immediately surrounded by the following census tracts: 2240.1, 2244.2, 2246, and 2264.1. The Project Site is located in the northern 25% of the Study Area. Fully 75% of the Study Area is located to the south of the Project Site. Contrary to the commenter's assertion, the Project Site and surrounding area do have characteristics in common with downtown Los Angeles, as indicated by Census data regarding housing types. Table III-1 shows the percentage of housing units that are located within buildings containing 20 or more units for the Project Site, the area immediately surrounding the Project Site, and the remainder of the Study Area. In addition, for comparison purposes, data from the two Census Tracts located immediately north of the Study Area is provided. The data show that 65.9% of the housing units within the Census Tract containing the Project Site are located within buildings containing 20 or more units, and 51.7% of the housing units located within the Project Site Census Tract and immediately surrounding Census Tracts are located within buildings containing 20 or more units. Within the remaining Census Tracts that comprise the Study Area, only 10.9% of the housing units are located within buildings containing 20 or more units. The data also show that residents within the Project Site Census Tract and surrounding Census Tracts are more likely than the remainder of the Study Area to live in one or two person households. Table III-2 shows that 61.5% of the households located in the Census Tract containing the Project Site are one or two person households, while 54% of the households in the area of the Project Site and immediately adjacent Census Tracts are comprised of one or two person households. In the remainder of the Study Area, 32% of households are one or two person households, while 68% of households are comprised of three or more persons. As a

point of comparison, data from Census Tracts 2077.1, and 2079, located immediately north of the Study Area (not included in the Study Area, but representative of downtown Los Angeles) show that 97.7% of housing units in this area are located within buildings of 20 or more units, and 89.5% of households are comprised of one or two persons. In sum, the data shows that persons presently living in the area of the Project Site, and the immediately surrounding area, share characteristics of housing units and residents of downtown Los Angeles, are more likely to live in high density buildings, and at lower household sizes, than the remainder of the Study Area. This has implications for projecting the effects of the Project with respect to indirect displacement because the Project would provide a housing product that is not in high demand outside the immediate area of the Project Site. It suggests that the Project would serve a different housing market, and that the Project and the surrounding neighborhood can co-exist and complement one another, supporting each others' businesses and sharing community spaces, rather than competing, to the detriment of one group or the other.

Table III-1
Housing Characteristics - Project Site & Study Area

Geographic Area	Percentage of Housing Units Located In Structures Containing 20 or more units	Percentage of Housing Units Located In Structures Containing 1 or 2 units
Project Site Census Tract	65.9%	12.3%
Project Site and Immediately Adjacent Census Tracts	51.7%	22.4%
Remainder of Study Area Census Tracts	10.9%	65.0%
Downtown Census Tracts	97.7%	1.4%

Source: U.S. Census, American Communities Survey, 2010-2014. Source data are provided in Appendix I to this Final EIR.

Table III-2 Household Size - Project Site & Study Area

Geographic Area	Percentage of 1 Person and 2 Person Households	Percentage of 3 Person and 4 or More Person Households
Project Site Census Tract	61.5%	38.6%
Project Site and Immediately Adjacent Census Tracts	54.0%	46.0%
Remainder of Study Area Census Tracts	32.0%	68.0%
Downtown Census Tracts	89.5%	10.5%

Source: U.S. Census, American Communities Survey, 2010-2014. Source data are provided in Appendix I to this Final EIR.

Note: Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Further, the surrounding zoning outside the Project Site is not conducive to the development of high density housing that would be associated with the increase in property value that is speculated on in the Study, and used as the basis of estimating displacement impacts of the Project. There are two residential neighborhoods located within one-half mile of the Project Site. One is located approximately 0.25 miles south of the Project Site, and the other is located approximately 0.4 miles west of the Project Site, across the Harbor Freeway. Both of these areas are designated for Low Medium Density II development, which allows maximum density of RD 1.5 zoning (1,500 sq.ft. of lot area per unit). Expansion of high-density housing into these areas would be discouraged under the existing zoning.

Furthermore, the extension of possible effects from the Project to a two mile radius, crossing two freeways, is completely speculative. Determination of property value is a complex consideration that takes into account many factors that are outside the scope or influence of the Project, and any projection of property value increase in any area of the City would be speculative. Even the Study itself acknowledges that the possible effects presented are speculative: "Gentrification driven by the Reef Project *could* lead residents and businesses to be displaced as they are priced out of the area." (page 19 of the Study, emphasis added). Accordingly, since the Study's projection is based on property value increase leading to displacement of "cost burdened" households, the entire projection would be beyond the reasonable scope of impact of the Project, and would be considered speculative under CEQA. Accordingly, the commenter's contention that up to 43,000 persons could be displaced by the Project would also be speculation. CEQA does not require the analysis of purely speculative impacts.

In addition, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15131(a), economic or social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment, unless a cause and effect relationship can be established that an economic and social effect would result in an adverse physical effect on the environment. Since the expectation of gentrification and displacement resulting from the Project is speculative, as discussed above, the commenter has not provided evidence that this speculative economic or social impact has an adverse physical effect on the environment. Since such a relationship cannot be established, CEQA clearly states that such potential effects shall not be treated as significant, and would also be considered speculation, which is not required to be analyzed under CEQA.

The indirect health impacts identified by the comment such as "disruption of social networks and environments" and "economic strain" on nearby residents are also speculative and not physical impacts upon the environment as a result of the proposed Project. The comment asserts that displacement (presuming nearby residents) would result in higher rates of crime and sexually transmitted diseases. However, the commenter provides no evidence that development of this Project would produce such disruption and economic strain, nor that such social impacts would themselves result in a physical change to the environment. CEQA Guidelines Section 15131 states: "economic or social changes need not be analyzed in any detail greater than necessary to trace the chain of cause and effect. The focus of the analysis shall be on the physical changes" caused by a proposed project's impact on economic or social issues. That is, an analysis of economic or social changes is relevant only to show that a proposed project would cause economic or social changes and that such project-induced economic or social changes would in turn result in a physical change to the environment. (Id.). CEQA Guidelines Section 15131(b) provides the following example of economic or social effects of a project's physical change upon the environment:

"...if the construction of a road and the resulting increase in noise in an area disturbed existing religious practices in the area, the disturbance of the religious practices could be used to determine that the construction and use of the road and the resulting noise would be significant effects on the environment. The religious practices would need to be analyzed only to the extent to show that the increase in traffic and noise would conflict with the religious practices."

Further CEQA Guidelines Section 15382 defines "Significant Effect on the Environment" to mean:

"...a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including air, water, mineral, 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."

The Study provides no evidence to support a contention that the Project creates economic, social or health impacts. Nor does it provide evidence to trace the chain of cause and effect from approval of the Project "through anticipated economic and social changes resulting from the [P]roject to physical changes caused in turn by the economic or social issues." (CEQA Guidelines Section 15131(a). Nor does it provide evidence that the Project creates any physical change, let alone a significant physical change, on the environment.

In summary, the commenter's opinion is based on pure speculation, and presents no substantial evidence of a clear correlation between the construction of the Project and the physical impact upon the environment which would result in nearby residents and businesses being displaced and experiencing health impacts that would cause a subsequent physical change in the environment. Accordingly, the health impacts identified in the Study would be economic and social effects, not physical changes caused by the Project, and, therefore, not significant effects on the environment under CEQA.

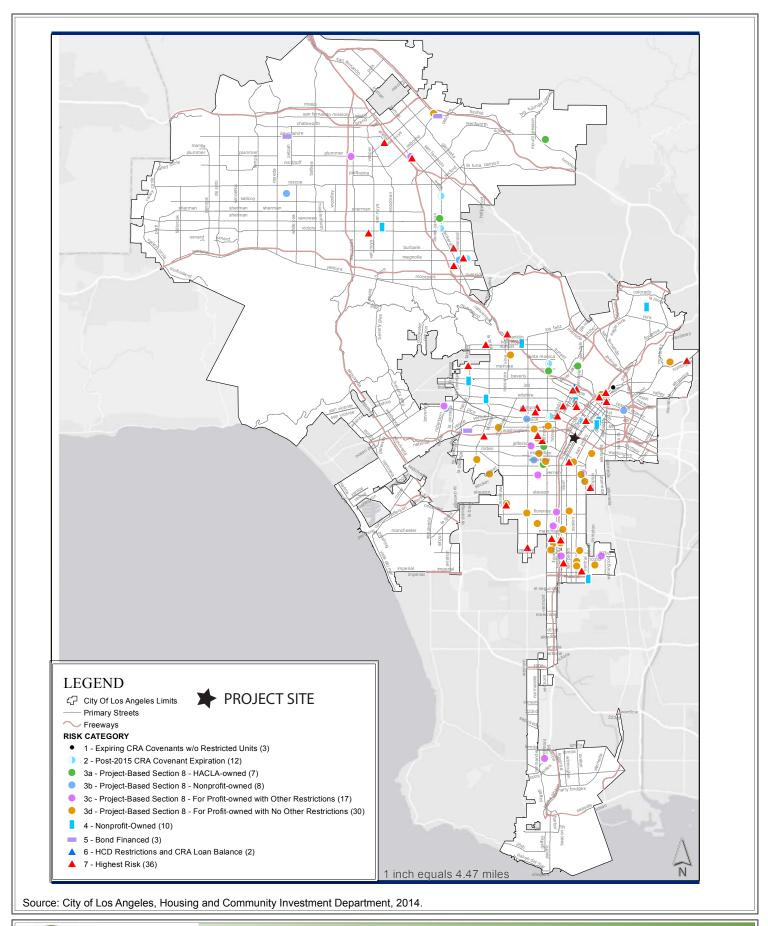
Based on all of the above, it is speculative to infer that the Project would result in indirect displacement of housing units or people, and the provision of affordable housing within the Project is therefore not required to mitigate an environmental impact of the Project. As noted in Response 9-22, the Project will be providing community benefits as a condition of its proposed development agreement, which could include affordable housing if determined to be appropriate by the City Council.

Response to Comment 10-9

The commenter notes that there is a shortage of affordable housing in the City of Los Angeles, and that covenants for affordable units in the Project Area are set to expire. The commenter cites a study from the City's Housing and Community Investment Department that identifies 128 properties with CRA/LA covenants that were set to expire in 2015. The commenter contends that "many of these properties are situated in the Project Area. As shown in Figure III-4, only three of these 128 properties are located near the Project Site, and they are located south of Jefferson Boulevard (2), and east of Alameda Street (1). Any influence which the Project may exert on the owners of these properties in deciding whether or not to continue an affordable housing covenant on their properties would be speculative.

Response to Comment 10-10

The commenter suggests that the Project should include affordable housing in the Project design. The commenter suggests other measures including use of zoning to limit displacement, increased code enforcement, hiring of low-income local residents into the Project, measures to ease pressures on local businesses, and establishment of neighborhood based programs to provide solutions for residents at risk of displacement. The commenter's opinion is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in considering whether or not to approve the Project, and the conditions to be included as part of the Project's development agreement (see Response to Comment 9-22).





Response to Comment 10-11

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR did not adequately analyze potential urban decay that could be caused by the Project. The commenter bases this comment on the displacement of existing businesses that would result from the Project. It is incongruous for the commenter to argue on one hand that the Project would raise property values to such an extent that massive displacement would occur, and on the other hand argue that the area would experience substantial urban decay from the same project. Both arguments are based on speculation. As noted in Response to Comment 10-8, the Project is expected to bring new employees and residents to the area who would be expected to patronize existing as well as new businesses. Any projection that the Project would displace existing businesses would be speculation, and any corresponding physical effects resulting from urban decay would also be speculation. As noted above, economic and social effects are not considered effects on the environment under CEQA. No further analysis is required.

Response to Comment 10-12

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR did not adequately analyze and mitigate the aesthetic impacts of the Project. The Draft EIR evaluated the impacts of the Project's height and mass (Draft EIR, pages IV.B.1-22 through IV.B.1-26), and concludes that the increased height and building mass associated with the Project would not be inappropriate in this area of the City. The commenter's disagreement with this conclusion is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. However, the dividing lines between Community Plan areas in the City do not provide distinct and discrete separation, and it is not uncommon for parts of Community Plan areas that are adjacent to other plan areas, as occurs in this case, to share common characteristics. As noted in the Draft EIR (page IV.B.1- 26), and Responses to Comments 10-8 and 9-31, the area containing the Project Site shares characteristics with both the Southeast Community Plan area, and the Central City Community Plan area. Accordingly, to judge the effects of the Project based on the characteristics of one plan area alone is inaccurate, and fails to reflect the complete physical context of the Project Site. It is entirely appropriate to evaluate these impacts in this case based upon the characteristics of both plan areas. No additional analysis is necessary.

Response to Comment 10-13

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not take into account the current population of South Los Angeles with respect to the size, height and style of the Project. See Response to Comment 10-12. The Project would also provide a grocery store, other retail uses, and community open space that would serve the existing community residents.

Response to Comment 10-14

The commenter contends that the amount, size and type of signage proposed for the Project is unprecedented in the Project Area. See Response to Comments 9-3 and 9-4.

Response to Comment 10-15

The commenter contends that the Project signage would result in disruption to daily activities and sleep as a result of Project lighting. See Response to Comments 9-5 and 9-6.

Response to Comment 10-16

The commenter suggests that light impacts of Project signage would be significant. The commenter contends that light and glare from Project signage would increase risk of driving accidents, and that the proposed mitigation measure to reduce operating hours of the proposed signage is not sufficient, and that additional measures should be provided. See Response to Comment 9-5.

Response to Comment 10-17

The commenter contends that proposed air quality mitigation measures are inadequate and should be strengthened. The Draft EIR (pages IV.C-1 through IV.C-31) evaluated the potential effects of air emissions associated with Project construction and operations in accordance with methodologies established by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), which is the agency responsible for monitoring and addressing air quality in the South Coast Air Basin (Basin). The analysis concludes that regional emissions of Reactive Organic Gases/Volatile Organic Compounds (ROG/VOC) during construction would exceed the applicable SCAQMD thresholds, and would be significant (Draft EIR, page IV.C-21). The analysis also concludes that regional emissions of VOC/ROG, and Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) during operations would exceed the applicable SCAQMD thresholds, and would be significant (Draft EIR, page IV.C-21). As discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.C-2), regional emissions of VOC/ROG and NOx are pertinent because they combine in the atmosphere in the presence of sunlight to form ozone, which is a regional pollutant that affects the entire Basin. The mitigation strategy employed by SCAQMD to address regional emissions is to provide regulatory measures to minimize construction and operational emissions at the source. With respect to VOC/ROG and NOx emissions, these measures are included in the Project as Regulatory Compliance Measure RC-AQ-2. In addition, the Project would comply with the energy conservation features contained in the City of Los Angeles Green Building Code, which would reduce NOx emissions (RC-AQ-3). Moreover, as a Project Design Feature, the Project would include the employment of Tier 3 off-road construction equipment, which includes measures that reduce NOx emissions from this source (PDF-AQ-1, page IV.C-19). These measures represent the only remaining measures available to the Project to address the significant regional emissions associated with the Project. As noted in the Draft EIR (page IV.C-30), the primary source of ROG/VOC and NOx emissions during operations is motor vehicles, which are regulated at the state and federal levels. Accordingly, the Project includes all feasible mitigation measures related to regional emissions of ROG/VOC and NOx.

The commenter further contends that the significant regional emissions of VOCs and NOx would specifically impact sensitive receptors located nearby the Project. This contention is incorrect. In addition to the analysis of regional emissions, the Draft EIR includes an analysis of the localized effects of Project construction and operational emissions. This analysis evaluated the concentrations of emissions that would be experienced at nearby receptors, based on SCAQMD thresholds that identify the level of emissions that would be needed to exceed health-based thresholds, and thereby cause health effects on neighboring locations. This analysis demonstrates that Project emissions associated with construction and operations would be well below all thresholds that represent the point at which Project-related health effects could occur (Draft EIR, pages IV.C-23 through IV.C-25). This analysis was based on the highest levels of Project construction activity associated with the Project (Draft EIR, page IV.C-20), and also used the most conservative assumption regarding the proximity of sensitive receptors (Draft EIR, page IV.C-3). Accordingly, no mitigation measures are required to address effects on sensitive receptors resulting from Project-related air emissions during construction and operations.

Response to Comment 10-18

The commenter contends that the analysis of cultural resources impacts is flawed. The commenter contends that the analysis of historic resources does not take into account the potential for relocation of buildings under the Project's Design Guidelines, and that the ultimate location of these buildings could have impacts that are not included in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR (pages IV.E-1 through IV.E-20, and Appendix IV.E-1) evaluates the potential for the Project to impact historic resources based on the thresholds of significance established in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (a substantial adverse change to a historic resource means demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of a historic resource such that the significance of a historical resource would be impaired), and in the L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, which incorporates these criteria (Draft EIR, page IV.E-16 and IV.E-17). Since no historic resources are located within the Project Site, the only potential impact of the Project with respect to historic resources would be associated with resources located off-site. The analysis concludes that the Project would not impact the character-defining features of off-site historic resources because of the physical separation of Project buildings from the off-site resources, and well as the distribution of building mass throughout the Project Site, such that "surrounding buildings would not be overwhelmed by the contrast in scale" (Draft EIR, page IV.E-18). With respect to the commenter's contention that the Draft EIR does not take into account the proposed Design Guidelines, the Draft EIR includes an analysis (page IV.E-19) that evaluates the potential for application of the Design Guidelines to result in additional impacts related to historic resources. This analysis concludes that, since the Design Guidelines would not permit greater height, or increased concentration of building mass adjacent to off-site historic resources, than would be permitted under the Project, no additional impacts to off-site historic resources would result from implementation of the Design Guidelines. Moreover, any changes to the Project proposed under the Design Guidelines would be subject to the City's Site Plan Review process, including additional CEQA review (Draft EIR, page II-39).

The commenter also contends that the Draft EIR incorrectly concludes that Project signage would not impact surrounding historic resources because it would be subject to the proposed Signage SUD. The Draft EIR (page IV.E-14) lists three potential historic resources located in the vicinity of the Project (155 W Washington Blvd, 107 W Washington Blvd, and 300 E Washington Blvd), that were identified as potential resources based upon their architecture and as examples of early multifamily and mixed use development in the City. Since the context in which these buildings were constructed has been long removed, the designation of these resources was based on their individual characteristics, and not the surrounding context. Since the Project signage would not affect the physical, character-defining characteristics of any of these properties, Project signage would not affect the significance of the resources, and impacts of Project signage would be less than significant. Accordingly, the intent of the Draft EIR analysis was to establish that impacts would be less than significant as long as proposed signs conform with the parameters of the proposed SUD. This has been clarified in the Final EIR (see Chapter IV, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR). As such, this conclusion does not presume adoption of the SUD, but uses the proposed SUD to establish the parameters of the signs used in the analysis. If the proposed SUD is not adopted by the City, the proposed signs evaluated in the Draft EIR would not be constructed.

Response to Comment 10-19

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR transportation analysis is flawed and does not include adequate mitigation measures. Specifically, the commenter contends that the Draft EIR analysis of construction traffic does not adequately address mitigation measures needed during the construction phase of the Project. The commenter correctly notes that, during the excavation activities associated with the Project, approximately 120 truck trips per hour (360 passenger car equivalents) would be associated

with the Project. This activity would occur over an approximate three month period, and the level of traffic generation would be only a fraction of the 942 to 1,203 a.m. and p.m. peak hour trips associated with the Project (Draft EIR, page IV.N-21). Moreover, hauling activity would be limited to off-peak periods by LADOT, and truck movements during this time would be controlled by a construction traffic control plan approved by LADOT (Draft EIR, page IV.N-48, and IV.N-49). As such, hauling activity in and of itself would not represent a significant impact on the street system, and no mitigation measures are required. The number of construction workers cited by the commenter (125-500) would occur during the building construction phase, and would not overlap with the excavation and hauling phase. These workers would similarly not impact the street system because the trips associated with this activity would occur outside the peak periods (Draft EIR, page IV.N-19). As discussed in Response to Comment 10-20, the significant and unavoidable traffic impacts that would be associated with the Project would occur during the operation of the fully constructed project. Mitigation measures identified in the Draft EIR would be implemented during this time as directed by LADOT (Draft EIR, Mitigation Measures MM-TR-1 through MM-TR-12, pages IV.N-50 through IV.N-55).

Response to Comment 10-20

The commenter contends that the Project traffic analysis incorrectly relies upon travel characteristics associated with downtown Los Angeles residents, rather than the demographics of South Los Angeles residents. As discussed in Response to Comment 10-8, the characteristics of the Project, its location in the immediate vicinity of a rail transit station and at the northern edge of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan area, as wells as the patterns of new development immediately north of the Project Site, suggest that the Project will operate as an extension of downtown, and that potential future residents will exhibit the characteristics in common with current residents of downtown Los Angeles. Accordingly, inclusion of the travel characteristics of downtown residents in the Project traffic analysis is appropriate. Moreover, boundaries of the Downtown Los Angeles Demographic Study (the "Demographic Study") area closely relate to the Project Site, as the southern boundary of the Demographic Study area was Washington Boulevard (Draft EIR, Appendix IV.N, page 4-23). The findings of the Demographic Study were not used in the estimation of the amount of traffic that would be generated by the Project, as suggested by the commenter, but rather in the distribution of traffic around the Project Site. The Demographic Study suggests that residents would be more inclined to patronize shops and restaurants located in their immediate vicinity. As such, based on the findings of the Demographic Study, the Draft EIR estimates that 50% of the travel to and from the Project would occur on local surface streets (Draft EIR, page IV.N-23).

Response to Comment 10-21

The commenter contends that the transportation mitigation measures proposed in the Draft EIR are inadequate, and are insufficient to reduce Project impacts to a less than significant level. The Draft EIR (pages IV.N-1 through IV.N-56) evaluated the potential transportation impacts of the Project in accordance with the policies and procedures of the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT). The analysis identified that the Project would result in between two and 22 significantly impacted intersections under LADOT significance criteria, depending upon the peak hour evaluated (weekday a.m., weekday p.m., Friday evening, Saturday mid-day). The Mitigation Measures provided in the Draft EIR (MM-TR-1 through MM-TR-12, pages IV.N-50 through IV.N-55) were identified in conjunction with, and approved by LADOT, which is the City agency responsible for operating the City's streets in the most optimum manner. The measures presented reflect the full range of feasible mitigation measures available to address the significant traffic impacts of the Project, and include, as suggested by the commenter, measures to provide increased access to transit (Mitigation Measure MM-TR-11), and

additional transportation options for Project residents (Mitigation Measure MM-TR-10). These measures include a transit information center, bus shelters, unbundling parking from housing, expansion of DASH bus service, bicycle facilities, provision of a Mobility Hub within the Project, car sharing, ride sharing, carpooling, van pooling, and late night rides.

The commenter also suggests that the Project include affordable housing to provide benefits with respect to reductions in traffic generation. As discussed in Response to Comment 9-35, housing located in a transit station area provides benefits across all income groups with respect to trip reduction, not just low income housing as suggested by the commenter. Accordingly, inclusion of affordable housing in the Project is not needed to mitigate an environmental traffic impact of the Project.

Response to Comment 10-22

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR noise analysis does not accurately reflect the construction noise impacts of the Project. The commenter correctly notes that the Draft EIR identifies the construction period of the Project as approximately five years (Draft EIR, page II-20). The commenter also notes that Project development is expected to occur between 2016 and 2035. However, this time frame reflects the term of the Project's Development Agreement, which is not the same as the construction schedule. The commenter also notes that the Draft EIR identified five sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the Project Site, four of which are within 310 feet of the Project Site. In fact, the Draft EIR identifies seven sensitive receptor locations, all but one of which are located within 305 feet of the Project Site (Draft EIR, pages IV.K-5 and IV.K-6). These locations represent the locations most likely to be impacted by noise sources associated with the Project. The commenter claims that the Draft EIR does not accurately reflect the noise levels associated with construction equipment that would be used on the Project. As discussed in the Draft EIR (pages IV.K-18 and IV.K-19), Federal Highway Administration data on construction equipment noise levels, in addition to typical patterns of equipment utilization for the construction phases that would be associated with the Project, were used to develop the average noise source levels that were then used to determine the construction noise impacts of the Project. These average noise source levels represent the operation of multiple pieces of construction equipment simultaneously. Although noise levels fluctuate over time, the source levels used in the Draft EIR analysis provide a representative average that would be experienced at the surrounding receptors. This is a standard methodology for assessing construction noise impacts in the City. Based upon these source levels, the Draft EIR concludes (page IV.K-20) that Project construction on the West Block would not cause an increase of 5 dBA over ambient noise levels at any of the nearby sensitive receptors, which is the City's significance criterion. Accordingly, impacts from construction activities on the West Block would be less than significant. The Draft EIR concludes that one sensitive receptor (Receptor R2, Rutland Apartments) would experience noise levels in excess of 5 dBA over ambient levels from construction activity on the East Block, which would be mitigated through provision of a noise barrier between the East Block construction area and the Rutland Apartments (Draft EIR, Mitigation Measure MM-NOI-1, page IV.K-40). Accordingly, the Draft EIR properly concludes (page IV.K-41) that construction noise impacts of the Project would be less than significant after mitigation.

Response to Comment 10-23

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not adequately evaluate inconsistencies between the Project and applicable land use plans. The commenter specifically contends that the Draft EIR: (1) does not evaluate the Project's conflicts with existing zoning requirements; (2) does not evaluate the Project's consistency with all relevant General Plan policies; (3) does not evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy; (4) does not evaluate consistency with the Draft Southeast Los

Angeles Community Plan and Community Plan Implementation Ordinance; and (5) does not address the consistency of the proposed Sign District with the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan goals and objectives. The commenter provides detailed comments with regard to each of these contentions in Comments 10-24 through 10-30. Responses to these comments are provided below.

Response to Comment 10-24

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR land use analysis assumes that the Project will be constructed in a manner that is inconsistent with existing zoning requirements. See Response to Comment 9-21.

Response to Comment 10-25

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR land use analysis did not consider the Project's consistency with all relevant General Plan policies. The commenter further contends that the Project as proposed is inconsistent with many of the policies that are not examined in the Draft EIR. However, the commenter does not specify which policies are not examined in the Draft EIR, with which the Project would be inconsistent. The commenter's opinion is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in considering whether or not to approve the Project. See also Response to Comments 9-22 through 9-30.

Response to Comment 10-26

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP), and the ILUP Community Benefits requirements. See Response to Comments 9-31 and 9-32.

Response to Comment 10-27

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not adequately evaluate the Project's consistency with the Draft Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan. See Response to Comment 9-50.

Response to Comment 10-28

The commenter contends that the impacts of the Project's proposed signage district are not accurately assessed with respect to land use and planning. See Response to Comment 9-17.

Response to Comment 10-29

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not adequately analyze the Project's proposed signage district relative to the City's existing signage regulations. See Response to Comments 9-17 and 9-18.

Response to Comment 10-30

The commenter contends that the City's current signage regulations prohibit signage that constitute a hazard to safe and efficient operation of vehicles on streets and freeways. See Response to Comment 9-5.

Response to Comment 10-31

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR should have included an environmental justice analysis. Environmental justice effects are not considered to be significant impacts to the physical environment as that term is defined under CEQA. However, if it is acknowledged that the community surrounding the Project Site would be considered low income, consideration of environmental justice would involve determination of whether potentially significant adverse environmental impacts would be created as a result of the Project, and whether the potential impacts would rise to a level that appreciably exceeds the impact upon the general population. Environmental justice does not simply consider whether a project would impact a low-income community. Rather, considerations of environmental justice are intended to identify situations where a project would result in disproportionate impacts on a low income community, as compared to similar impacts that are experienced from projects located in higher income communities. As discussed in the Draft EIR (pages V-1 and V-2), the Project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to aesthetics (signage, shade/shadow); air quality (regional construction and operational emissions); traffic (intersection and driveway impacts); and noise (traffic noise). These are typical impacts associated with urban development that can potentially be experienced in all neighborhoods throughout the City where development projects are proposed, regardless of income. None of these impacts would be disproportionately experienced by the surrounding low-income community. Impacts associated with electronic signage are experienced throughout the City, as are shade/shadow impacts associated with new development in residential areas. The Project's impacts related to air emissions are regional in nature in that they contribute to overall levels of ozone and nitrogen oxides throughout the South Coast Air Basin that are experienced by all residents of the Basin, and are experienced at higher levels in the inland areas of the Basin because of climatic and geographical conditions. These effects are not related to income. Traffic impacts are often more disproportionately experienced in higher income neighborhoods, such as West Los Angeles, because of the concentration of development in these areas. Similarly, such higher income communities experience higher traffic noise impacts because of these higher traffic levels. Accordingly, the impacts of the Project would not be disproportionately experienced by a low income community, and no environmental justice effects would be associated with the Project.

Response to Comment 10-32

The commenter contends that the analysis of population, housing and employment impacts is inadequate because it does not evaluate the characteristics of jobs associated with the Project, and evaluate the ability of local workers to fill these jobs. Specifically, the commenter contends that the Draft EIR's statements regarding construction employment are inaccurate. The Draft EIR concludes (page IV.L-7) that relocation of workers to the region to fill construction jobs is not expected because construction workers move from job to job as construction occurs in different areas, and that, construction workers are matched with skill requirements at each construction project. As further noted in the Draft EIR (page IV.L-8), the Project would create jobs from the activities in The Reef and the new commercial development, which would expand the economic base of the community. These jobs would be available to community residents. The extent to which these jobs match the needs and desires of community residents is speculative, and would constitute a social and economic impact that is not an impact on the environment under CEQA.

Response to Comment 10-33

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR incorrectly concludes that housing growth associated with the Project would be within Citywide and Community Plan housing growth projections because it does

not consider affordability of housing to be provided by the Project. The Draft EIR considered the addition of 1,444 housing units, and between 2,224 and 6,309 permanent residents that would be associated with the development of the Project in light of the adopted growth projection for the City of Los Angeles subregion developed by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and the forecasts of population and housing growth developed by the City of Los Angeles for the Draft/Proposed Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan, which is the most recent forecast developed for the Community Plan area. The projected housing and population growth associated with the Project would be within these forecasts (Draft EIR, pages IV.L-10 and IV.L-11). As discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.L-7), the evaluation of significance for population and housing growth, in accordance with the L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, shall be made on a case-by-case basis considering whether the Project would cause growth or accelerate development in an undeveloped area that exceeds projected/planned levels for the year of project occupancy. Because the Project would be consistent with the applicable forecasts, it would not result in development that exceeds projected/planned levels, and therefore the Draft EIR appropriately concludes that that the impacts of housing and population growth associated with the Project would be less than significant. With respect to affordable housing, there is no City requirement that the Project include affordable housing (see Response to Comment 9-22), and the provision of affordable housing is not required to mitigate an environmental impact of the Project (see Response to Comment 10-8).

Response to Comment 10-34

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR should address impacts of the Project related to housing prices and effects on other housing supply. See Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 10-35

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not take into account the share of Project area growth that would be taken up by the Project. The Draft EIR identifies (pages IV.L-10 and IV.L-11) that projected housing and population growth associated with the Project would represent approximately 19 percent of the projected housing growth, and between 8 and 22 percent of the projected population growth within the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan area between 2008 and 2035. Because the Project Site represents one of the few large, available development sites within the Community Plan area, and the concentration of growth in a transit station area would be consistent with state, regional, and local land use plans, it is not unreasonable to expect that any project on this site would represent a substantial portion of the projected growth within the Community Plan area. Accordingly, the Project would not call the forecasts of population and housing growth for the Community Plan into question.

Response to Comment 10-36

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR analysis of cumulative impacts is flawed because it uses a related projects list developed for the Project's traffic analysis. With respect to addressing cumulative impacts in EIRs, CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1) provides that either a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, or a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect, be used to evaluate potential cumulative effects. The related projects list contained in Section III, Environmental Setting, of the Draft EIR fulfills the first option set forth in Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1). However, the related projects list was not the only source of information regarding the sources of potential cumulative effects evaluated in the Draft EIR. The commenter contends that the related projects list is not an appropriate source for determining cumulative air quality impacts. The commenter is correct. The Draft EIR (page IV.C-29) identifies the South Coast Air

Basin as the geographic area of impact for cumulative air quality impacts, which would include all existing and proposed development within the Basin. The Draft EIR evaluates cumulative air quality impacts in accordance with the methodology established by the SCAQMD and concludes that the Project's VOC and NOx emissions would be cumulatively considerable. The commenter further contends that the related projects list was used in the evaluation of impacts under every impact category. As noted above with respect to air quality, this contention is incorrect. In each section of the Draft EIR, a cumulative impacts analysis is provided which first identifies the geographic area of impact, and then evaluates potential cumulative impacts of the Project, along with other projects, for that geography. Where the potential cumulative impacts are localized, the analysis uses the relevant projects from the related projects list to assess whether the Project, in conjunction with those projects, would result in cumulatively considerable effects. Where the potential for cumulative effect extends beyond the radius of the related projects list, the analysis supplements the related projects list with additional relevant information that establishes the potential for cumulative effects within the identified geography. As such, the cumulative impacts analyses provided in the Draft EIR address "the Project's incremental impacts which, when combined with other projects which may have related impacts in that category, may be cumulatively considerable", as suggested by the commenter. No additional analysis is required.

Response to Comment 10-37

The commenter contends that impacts to fire protection services during construction are not adequately addressed in the Draft EIR because the Draft EIR incorrectly identifies these impacts as temporary. The Draft EIR (page IV.M.1-5) identifies that Project construction could potentially impact fire protection services provided by the Los Angeles Fire Department by increasing the potential for on-site fires, and by potentially affecting access to the Project Site as a result of construction traffic and lane closures. The Draft EIR concludes that impacts to fire protection services associated with Project construction would be less than significant, not only because they are temporary, but because of standard safety precautions and provision of fire flow to the construction site that are employed on all construction projects and enforced by the City's Department of Building and Safety, Fire Department, and the California Occupational Safety and Health Agency, as well as the establishment of a construction traffic control plan, approved by LADOT, that ensures that adequate emergency access is maintained to the Project Site throughout the construction process. Accordingly, the Draft EIR concludes (page IV.M.1-5) that Project construction would not require the expansion, consolidation or relocation of fire facilities, which is the City's significance threshold for fire protection services, and impacts during construction would be less than significant.

Response to Comment 10-38

The commenter contends that the impacts to police and fire protection services during construction are not adequately addressed in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR notes (pages IV.M.1-5, and IV.M.2-4) that the Project could include temporary partial; lane closures during construction. The Draft EIR further notes that any such closures would be regulated by LADOT as part of a construction traffic control plan (Regulatory Compliance Measure RC-TR-1, Draft EIR, page IV.N-48), which would assure that access is maintained throughout the area during Project construction. The Project proposes no full closures of any streets during construction, and partial closures would be limited to one lane on streets that presently contain multiple through lanes (Hill Street, Broadway, Main Street). Existing intersections in the Project vicinity are all operating at acceptable Level of Service (LOS D or better, Draft EIR, Table IV.N-2, pages IV.N-9 and IV.N-10). In addition, there are many other streets in the area that can provide access and alternate routes in the event of temporary traffic conditions. There are many construction projects in downtown Los Angeles at this time that involve temporary lane closures that have been permitted by

LADOT, and there is no evidence that police and fire access has been impeded in this area. Accordingly, the mitigation measures proposed by the commenter are not necessary. Regulatory Compliance Measure RC-TR-1 includes addressing limiting potential lane closures to off-peak periods, and scheduling deliveries in off-peak periods (Draft EIR, page IV.N-49).

Response to Comment 10-39

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR does not sufficiently examine potential impacts to crime and demand for police services. The Draft EIR states (page IV.M.2-4) that impacts to police services would be potentially significant because of the increase in on-site activity that would be associated with the Project. This assessment was based upon information provided by the Los Angeles Police Department (Draft EIR, Appendix IV.M-2), the City agency responsible for providing police and public safety services to the Project Site and surrounding area. The commenter suggests that the analysis should have included an analysis of existing police calls to the Project Site and a projection of the anticipated calls after Project construction. This analysis would be infeasible as the LAPD has no methodology for providing projections of service calls for a Project based on project characteristics, and there are no known methodologies for projecting the level of service calls based upon a project's land uses. Accordingly, the Draft EIR provides a qualitative analysis of projected impacts on police services based on the known characteristics of the existing Project Site and the expected characteristics of the Project, and concludes that the impacts would be significant (Draft EIR, page IV.M.2-5). The impact would be mitigated to less than significant through the provision of on-site security features in coordination with the LAPD, per their request (Draft EIR, Appendix IV.M-2), and is set forth in Mitigation Measure MM-PS-1 (Draft EIR, page IV.M.2-8). The specifics of the security features to be provided would be determined through this process, which would provide a more accurate assessment of Project on-site security requirements than can be obtained at this time, since these measures are dependent upon specific Project design and conditions in the surrounding area related to crime and security.

Response to Comment 10-40

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR should provide additional open space and recreational opportunities for current residents, in order to address the existing shortage of neighborhood and community park acreage for current residents of the area. The Draft EIR acknowledges that the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan area includes neighborhood and community parkland at a ratio below the City wide average. The provision of park and recreation in the City is subject to many factors that are beyond the influence of the Project, including the availability of land, and the resources necessary to develop new parks, which fall under the purview of the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the City Council. The Draft EIR acknowledges that the Southeast Community Plan area, like the City as a whole, would be considered deficient with respect to neighborhood and community parks (Draft EIR, page IV.M.4-1).

The Draft EIR evaluated the potential impacts of the Project on parks and recreation facilities and concluded (page IV.M.4-6) that the Project would meet the LAMC open space requirement of 162,250 square feet, of which 73 percent (118,464 sq.ft.) would be common open space (common open space includes open space areas fully open to the public). This area would include the public mid-block paseo that would be provided within the Project between Hill Street and Main Street, along with community rooms and recreation rooms). The proposed mid-block paseo would comprise the vast majority (108,985 sq.ft., or 92 percent of public open space, see Table II-4, page II-19 of the Draft EIR) of the public open space provided by the Project. This would consist of space that is clearly open to the public, as it would provide access to retail uses, and would include public gathering places, such as amphitheaters, and

outdoor seating and eating areas. These spaces would be obviously open to the public, and would not require additional advertisement or direction to the public to permit or promote their use by the community. Accordingly, the additional measures suggested by the commenter would not be necessary to ensure effective use of these spaces by the surrounding community.

Additionally, the Draft EIR concludes that the Project would work to not further exacerbate existing park deficiencies in the area because it would include private open space and recreational facilities that would reduce demand on City facilities (Draft EIR, page IV.M.4-6). Nonetheless, the Draft EIR concludes that the Project's impacts on City park and recreational facilities would be alleviated through compliance with the City's existing impact fees, through payment of either Quimby fees or Dwelling Unit Construction tax (Draft EIR, page IV.M.4-7). Accordingly, the Draft EIR concludes that impacts to parks and recreational facilities would be reduced to less than significant through compliance with existing regulatory requirements (Draft EIR, page IV.M.4-7).

Response to Comment 10-41

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR should have "chosen" the Environmentally Superior Alternative to the Project. The commenter correctly notes that the Draft EIR analyzed five alternatives to the Project, and identified Alternative 3, the Reduced Height/Reduced Signage Alternative, as environmentally superior to the Project (Draft EIR, page VI-108). However, the commenter contends that CEQA requires that this Alternative be adopted instead of the Project, and that public agencies cannot approve the Project as presently proposed. This contention is incorrect. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires that an EIR consider a reasonable range of alternatives to a Project, including a No Project Alternative. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) requires that, if the No Project Alternative is environmentally superior to the Project, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. Accordingly, the Draft EIR identifies the Reduced Height/Reduced Signage alternative as environmentally superior to the Project. This meets the requirements of CEQA. The City's decision-making bodies will take this information as provided in the Draft EIR into account in determining whether or not to approve the Project. However, the decision-making bodies are under no obligation to adopt the environmentally superior alternative if they determine that the alternative is infeasible due to economic, environmental, legal, social, or technological factors. As noted in the Draft EIR (page VI-59 and VI-60), the Reduced Height/Reduced Signage Alternative would not meet all Project Objectives to the same degree as the Project. The objectives met by the Alternative to a lesser degree than the Project include the economic factor of reduced revenues to the City of Los Angeles, and the social and economic factor of reducing the ability to attract events to the City of Los Angeles.

Response to Comment 10-42

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR is flawed, and must be revised and recirculated to provide meaningful public review of the Project. The commenter's opinion is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5 (Recirculation of an EIR Prior to Certification) defines issues associated with re-circulation which include disclosure of a "new significant information" that involves "a new significant impact", "substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact", or "feasible project alternatives or mitigation measures that the project proponent declines to adopt." As described in Responses 10-1 through 10-41 above, no new significant information, as defined by CEQA, has been identified. Accordingly, recirculation of the Draft EIR is not required.

Response to Comment 10-43

The commenter attaches the Study "Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Reef Development in South Central Los Angeles", prepared by Human Impact Partners, dated October, 2015, (hereinafter referred to as the "Study"). As discussed in Response to Comment No. 10-8, the Study does not provide substantial evidence of an indirect displacement of housing or population that would be attributable to the Project, for the following reasons:

- The Study examines a Study Area that contains a variety of diverse neighborhoods, but provides
 general conclusions regarding existing conditions that do not acknowledge these differences or
 distinguish between these neighborhoods. In particular, the Study Area is not representative of
 the Project Site and its immediately surrounding area, as these areas have different characteristics
 with regard to housing product, and housing occupancy, than does the remainder of the Study
 Area.
- Based on data for the individual census tracts that comprise the Project Site and surrounding area, persons presently living in the area of the Project Site, and the immediately surrounding area are more likely to live in high density residential buildings, and at lower household sizes, than the remainder of the Study Area. This has implications for projecting the effects of the Project with respect to indirect displacement, because the Project would provide a housing product that is not in high demand outside the immediate area of the Project Site, and suggests that the Project would complement, not compete with housing and businesses in the surrounding area. This scenario is as plausible as the one suggested by the Study.
- The Study provides anecdotal information regarding public investment and security in the Study Area, based on input from a focus group convened by the commenter, which is speculative as to the location of the effects being referred to, or their applicability to the Project Site or surrounding area.
- To provide its estimate of the potential displacement that could result from the Project, the Study identified "cost burdened" households, based on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development criteria related to housing costs and income, within ¼ mile, ½ mile, and 1-2 miles of the Project Site, and uses an average household size to estimate the number of people affected. The Study then assesses the "likelihood of property value increase" for each of these radii (Very High, High, and Moderate). No evidence is presented as to how the Project will cause this increase in property value, or how it will result in displacement of existing residents.
- Even the Study itself acknowledges that the possible effects presented are speculative: "Gentrification driven by the Reef Project *could* lead residents and businesses to be displaced as they are priced out of the area." (page 19 of the Study, emphasis added).

Accordingly, the Study does not provide evidence of potential displacement that is attributable to the Project, and does not support any claim of a potential environmental impact of the Project.

1

2

3

4



October 29, 2015

Erin Strelich,
City of Los Angeles Planning Department
200 North Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, California 90012
Fax: (213) 978-1343
E-mail: erin.strelich@lacity.org

RE: Draft EIR ENV-201401773-EIR The Reef (formerly SOLA Village)

Dear Ms. Strelich,

Union del Barrio, a community based organization in South Central, writes to express our concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the Reef Development Project ("the Project") and the substantial flaws in the current Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

Union del Barrio is based in the immediate community where the proposed project would be built. The majority of our membership lives and/or works in the South Central community so we are especially concerned about this project and the effects that it would have on our members.

The Project proposes to transform an existing limited industrial property into a massive mixed-use development with 1,444 luxury residential units, 90,000 square feet of high-end retail uses, 46,000 square feet of restaurant/bar uses, a 208-key hotel, 18,000 square foot gallery, an 8,000 square-foot yoga/fitness studio, approximately 2,733 parking spaces and 234,067 square feet of animated signage where virtually none exists, in part, because the City's zoning does not allow it. Despite the profound environmental impacts this Project would have on the surrounding community and the City as a whole, the DEIR is characterized by self-serving assertions, circular logic, and anemic analysis.

The Project, as currently proposed, threatens to destabilize the surrounding low-income community. Not only does the Project fail to offer even one affordable unit, it intensifies the displacement pressures on current local residents with increased rents and escalated gentrification. Yet the DEIR falls far short of evaluating these and the many other negative environmental impacts inherent in the Project, as proposed. For all its deficiencies, however, the DEIR concedes that the Project would result in numerous significant environmental impacts. The DEIR cavalierly concludes that many of these impacts cannot be mitigated. It is wrong. Rather the DEIR simply fails to consider mitigation that is both appropriate and at times obvious even to the casual observer. As a result, the DEIR must be revised and recirculated to address its material CEQA shortcomings.

Key among the DEIR's deficiencies are the following:

1. The DEIR fails to adequately evaluate the significant displacement and gentrification pressures the Project, as proposed, foist onto the local community.

Page 1 of 4

The Project proposal and the DEIR fail to acknowledge - let alone adequately address - the threat of displacement and the corresponding negative social and health impacts on the existing community. Citing only the fact that there is no existing housing on-site, the DEIR concludes that no people will be displaced, without further analysis. This is an overly simplistic conclusion which does not take into account the lived experience of residents or the reality of development pressures in Los Angeles, wherein residents are often displaced by the economic effects of development such as the Project independently of whether their housing is displaced. CEQA is clear that in addition to direct impacts, an EIR should also analyze those indirect impacts which are reasonably foreseeable outcomes of the project. This includes the economic effects of a project which will foreseeably lead to physical changes in the environment.

A report on the health impacts of the Project concludes that over 40,000 people have a moderate to very high risk for financial strain and/or displacement intensified by the Project's impacts on housing prices in the surrounding area.³ Many of the residents of South Central have likely experienced serial forced displacement, which can have a cumulative impact resulting in a traumatic condition called "root shock." The tangible human impacts of these pressures include disintegration of health promoting networks of social cohesion, exposure to substandard housing conditions, and a wide variety of chronic stress-related physical and mental illness, including anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and sleep disorders. The City's own General Plan Health Element acknowledges the negative health impacts of displacement created by major development projects, and explicitly calls for "opportunities for low-income and vulnerable populations to access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhood."

Despite the overwhelming demonstrated potential for significant impacts with regard to displacement, the Project does not include any mechanism to create or preserve affordable housing or to minimize the catalytic impacts on increased housing prices and speculation. The DEIR fails to properly analyze and mitigate these impacts.

2. There are numerous and substantial flaws in the DEIR's Land Use and Planning analysis.

The Project is seeking at least 15 different discretionary land use entitlements, including General Plan Amendments, a zone change, variances, parking reductions and a significant Supplemental Use District – Sign District. This long list of required departures from adopted plans calls into question the merits of the Project and lays bare the fact that the Project upends existing city policy.

The DEIR must evaluate any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans.⁷ The DEIR fails to meet this standard. To start, the DEIR does

4 cont.

5

Page 2 of 4

¹ 14 CCR 15126.2 ("Direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects.")

² Anderson First Coalition v. City of Anderson (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 1173, 1182. ("When there is evidence... that economic and social effects caused by a project... could result in a reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental impact, such as urban decay or deterioration, then the CEQA lead agency is obligated to assess this indirect environmental impact.")

³ [draft, 52-53].

⁴ Id, at 6, 43-44

⁵ Id.

⁶ City of Los Angeles, Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, Policy 1.7, Program 86.

⁷ CEQA Guidelines, 15125(d) ("The EIR shall discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans.") See also, City of Los Angeles CEQA

not evaluate the Project's many conflicts with existing zoning requirements. Instead, the DEIR merely assumes that the Project's laundry list of requested zone changes, general plan amendments and other discretionary approvals are a foregone conclusion, thereby failing to evaluate the impacts of the Project based on existing physical conditions. The DEIR grossly errs in concluding that the Project poses no environmental impacts on the City's land use and policy with respect to the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage (SUDS). In fact, the SUDS gravely threatens the City's continued ability to ban such signage along highways – a land use power the City fought tooth and nail to preserve. Further, the DEIR fails to provide any analysis whatsoever of the Project's consistency with a number of highly relevant General Plan Policies. Likewise, the DEIR neglects to evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP), which includes a clear directive that industrial land use conversion projects, like the Reef, should include affordable housing and other community benefits.

3. The DEIR's Transportation Analysis is flawed.

The Project will significantly increase traffic in the area during both construction and operation. During construction, which will occur over at least 60 months, there will be between 125 and 500 construction workers on site per day. Although the DEIR claims that they will not arrive or depart the site during "peak traffic hours," this cannot be guaranteed, and these workers will still create additional traffic during other hours. In addition, during the first (at least) three months of construction (the excavation phase), 800 - 900 truck trips per day would haul truckloads off the site. This would amount to the equivalent of 360 passenger car trips per hour, which would create substantial congestion on local roads.

During the life of the Project, much more traffic would be created. The Project Site will include over 2,700 parking spaces for patrons, visitors, residents, and employees. The DEIR predicts an increase of about 940 car trips during the morning peak hour and 1200 during the evening peak hour. But in reality, it is likely that this number will be significantly higher. Because of the catalytic nature of the Project, other similar developments may be enticed to build in the area, resulting in significantly more traffic. In addition, the demographic that the Project is likely to attract is wealthier than the current population, and therefore more likely to travel using motor vehicles, despite the close proximity of the Project to public transportation.

After mitigation measures are implemented, the Project would still result in 24 significant impacts, an extremely high number, considering the amount of traffic that already exists in the area.

4. The DEIR's Air Quality Mitigation Measures are Inadequate.

The Project will result in significant and unavoidable impacts from Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) during the construction and operation phases, and in and Nitrogen Oxide

Thresholds Guide (calling for an evaluation of "whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans.")

5 cont.

6

7

⁸ The relevant General Plan policies that go unanalyzed in the DEIR include, but are not limited to <u>Housing Element</u> Objectives 1.1 and 1.2, Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101; <u>Health Element</u> Policy 1.7 and Program 86, <u>Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan</u> Policies 1.5-2 and 11-2.3; <u>Framework Element</u> Policies 3.14.6 and 4.2.1.

⁹ Los Angeles Industrial Land Use Policy, Staff Direction Memorandum Regarding Industrial Land Use and Potential Conversion to Residential or Other Uses," 5-8 (2008). http://planning.lacity.org/Code Studies/LanduseProj/Industrial_Files/StaffDirections.pdf

(NOx) emissions impacts during the operation phase. Both VOCs and NOx are extremely harmful when inhaled, particularly for sensitive receptors, including young children and the elderly. The types of health effects that are associated with these gases/ chemicals are asthma, respiratory illness, cancer and even death. The Site is located within 1000 feet of three schools and at least 264 residences. But the Project's mitigation measures only address the residents, employees and visitors that will be within the Project boundaries. The DEIR should have addressed the need for mitigation measures including air filters, air proof windows, and indoor spaces for the community, in order to counter the negative air quality effects that the Project will cause.

8 cont.

The DEIR does not adequately analyze the aesthetic impacts of the Project.

According to the DEIR, signs will be located on each of the Project's four multi-story buildings, totaling 234,067 square feet of permitted signage. Many of the signs will be extremely large, animated, and placed high up on the buildings, where they will be clearly visible from a distance of at least 2.5 miles away. The size, amount, and type of signage that the Project proposes is completely out of character with the current lighting and signage in the area. This type of signage is problematic for several important reasons, including the potential danger to drivers on nearby freeways and local roads, the distraction that the signs will cause for students in nearby schools, and the health effects of artificial lighting on nearby residents. No mitigation measures were proposed for signage, other than limiting the hours when the signs can be operational to hours when most residents will be asleep. Additional mitigation measures must be introduced through a recirculated DEIR – including a plan alternative with signage limited to non-animated onsite signage.

9

We appreciate your attention to these comments. At Union del Barrio we know that responsible community development is possible, and that development projects need not usurp, displace nor disrespect the existing community. Rather, it is possible to develop projects that satisfy the particular needs of the developer and minimize direct and indirect environmental impacts on the community.

10

We trust that you will notify us in writing of any hearings, decisions, notifications, or actions referring or related to this project (pursuant to Pub. Res. Code Section 21092.2 and Gov. Code Section 65092). Should you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at 323-450-6113.

Sincerely,

Ron Gochez Political Secretary

Union del Barrio-Los Angeles

rongochez@gmail.com

¹⁰ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-20.

¹¹ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-22

Comment Letter No. 11

Unión Del Barrio Ron Gochez, Political Secretary [no address]

Response to Comment 11-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 11-2 through 11-10.

Response to Comment 11-2

The commenter states that the City's zoning does not allow animated signage on the Project Site. See Response to Comment 9-3.

Response to Comment 11-3

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not analyze the impact of destabilizing the surrounding community, displacement and gentrification. See Responses to Comments 9-22 and 10-8.

The commenter also states that mitigation measures are available for many of the significant unavoidable impacts identified in the Draft EIR, and requests that the Draft EIR be revised and recirculated. See Responses to Comments 11-4 through 11-10.

Response to Comment 11-4

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not adequately evaluate the indirect displacement of residents, and the impact of gentrification. See Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 11-5

The commenter requests that the land use analysis in the Draft EIR be expanded to include conflicts with existing zoning requirements, the impact of the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage on City Land Use policy, several relevant General Plan policies, and consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy. See the following Responses to Comments:

Comment	Response
Number of discretionary actions	9-3
Conflict with Existing Zoning Requirements	9-21
Conflict with Signage Policy	9-19
Consistency with General Plan Policies	
Housing Element Objective 1.1 and 1.2; Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101	9-22
Health Element Policy 1.7 and Program 86	9-23
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 1.5-2	9-24
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 11-2.3	9-26
Framework Element Policy 3.14.6	9-27
Framework Element Policy 4.2.1	9-29
Consistency with the Industrial Land Use Policy and provision of community benefits	9-31 and 9-32

Response to Comment 11-6

The commenter states that the Project will increase traffic during construction, which would create congestion on local roadways. See Response to Comment 10-19.

Response to Comment 11-7

The comment states that the number of vehicle trips generated by the Project during operation would be higher than what is indicated in the Draft EIR. See Responses to Comments 10-20 and 10-21. With respect to the potential transportation benefits of locating higher income housing near transit stations, see Response to Comment 9-35.

Response to Comment 11-8

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts to nearby sensitive receptors during Project construction and operation from VOCs and NOx, including air filters, air-proof windows, and indoor spaces. See Response to Comment 10-17.

Response to Comment 11-9

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts from the proposed signage, including limiting the signage to non-animated signs. With respect to the impacts of proposed signage as addressed in the Draft EIR, including consistency with the surrounding community, hazards to drivers,

distractions to schools, health effects of lighting, and inclusion of additional mitigation measures, see Responses to Comments 9-3 through 9-7. With respect to an additional alternative with non-animated signage, see Response to Comment 9-53.

Response to Comment 11-10

The comment includes closing remarks, and reiterates concern for displacement of low-income residents. The commenter requests to be notified of all hearings, decisions, notifications and actions related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.

Intentionally blank.

Post Office Box 11337 • 4707 South Central Avenue • Los Angeles, California 90011

Telephone: 323-846-2500 • FAX: 323-846-2508

RECEIVED CITY OF LOS ANGELES

NOV 16 2015

ENVIRONMENTAL UNIT

October 30, 2015

Ms. Erin Strelich LA Department of City Planning 200 N Spring St Room 750 Los Angeles CA 90012

Dear Ms. Strelich:

I'm writing to express my support for The Reef development project (ENV-Case No. Env-2014-1773-EIR).

I have spent half my life working for this community through Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles. I'm interested in seeing this project be developed because we need this type of big thinking and investment in our community. I've been pleased that the developer is making a sincere effort to meet with people in the community and is seeking feedback on how to address real needs in this community. Together with them, many of us are working to make sure that benefits secured for the community will be allocated, right here, in South Central Los Angeles. This means construction jobs, permanent jobs and it means cleaning up the area and replacing parking lots with what will be an amazing gathering place for all of us.

I respectfully request that the City move forward with the process so that The Reef Project becomes a reality.

Sincerely,

Noreen McClendon Executive Director

Intentionally blank.

Comment Letter No. 12

Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles Noreen McClendon, Executive Director Post Office Box 11337 4707 South Central Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90011

Response to Comment 12-1

The commenter expresses support for the Project, and does not comment directly on the Draft EIR. No response is required. The commenter's opinion will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.

Intentionally blank.

November 1, 2015

Erin Strelich,
City of Los Angeles Planning Department
200 North Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, California 90012
Fax: (213) 978-1343
E-mail: erin.strelich@lacity.org

RE: Draft EIR ENV-201401773-EIR The Reef (formerly SOLA Village)

Dear Ms. Strelich,

St. John's Well Child and Family Center writes to express our concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the Reef Development Project ("the Project") and the substantial flaws in the current Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

St. John's is a nonprofit network of federally qualified health centers providing medical, dental and behavorial health services to more than 100,000 individuals in the Reef Development Project service area. Founded in 1964 by the LA Pediatrics Society and St. John's Episcopal Church, St. John's has grown to be the largest primary healthcare provider in South Los Angeles, operating 14 sites and six school based health centers, and two mobile clinics. Many of the children and families we treat are exposed to many environmental toxins, including exposure to traffic pollution and health conditions resulting from living in slum housing – the result of an abject lack of safe, affordable housing options in South Los Angeles. Fifteen percent of the children we care for, have chronic asthma.

Key among the DEIR's deficiencies is the following:

The DEIR's Air Quality Mitigation Measures are Inadequate.

The Project will result in significant and unavoidable impacts from Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) during the construction and operation phases, and in and Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions impacts during the operation phase. Both VOCs and NOx are extremely harmful when inhaled, particularly for sensitive receptors, including young children and the elderly. Furthermore, they react in sunlight to form Ozone (O_3), a particularly dangerous criteria air pollutant. The potential significant and unavoidable impact from corresponding increases in Ozone pollution in not sufficiently assessed in the DEIR. The types of health effects that are associated with these gases/chemicals are asthma, respiratory illness, cancer and even death. The Site is located within 1000 feet of three schools and at least 264 residences. But the Project's mitigation measures only address the residents, employees and visitors that will be within the Project boundaries. The DEIR should have addressed the need for mitigation measures including air filters, air proof windows, and indoor spaces for the community, in order to counter the negative air quality effects that the Project will cause.

1

As nonprofit healthcare providers, we are extremely alarmed at the inevitability of increased air pollution levels (in an already high air pollution area given industrial traffic and proximity to several freeways) in the area as a result of this project. Construction vehicles working on the project will be driving through already environmentally-besieged neighborhoods, exacerbating health conditions our children and families already suffer. As well, St. John's operates two federally qualified health centers within blocks of the Reef construction site.

2 cont.

3

We appreciate your attention to these comments. At St. John's Well Child and Family Center we know that responsible community development is possible, and that development projects need not usurp, displace nor disrespect the existing community. Rather, it is possible to develop projects that satisfy the particular needs of the developer and minimize direct and indirect environmental impacts on the community.

We trust that you will notify us in writing of any hearings, decisions, notifications, or actions referring or related to this project (pursuant to Pub. Res. Code Section 21092.2 and Gov. Code Section 65092). Should you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at 323-541-1600, x. 4000 or at: jimmangia@wellchild.org

Sincerely.

Jim Mangia, MPH President & CEO

St. John's Well Child and Family Centers

Comment Letter No. 13

St. John's Well Child & Family Center Jim Mangia, MPH, President & CEO 808 W. 58th Street Los Angeles, CA 90037

Response to Comment 13-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 13-2 and 13-3.

Response to Comment 13-2

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts to nearby sensitive receptors during Project construction and operation from VOCs and NOx, including air filters, air-proof windows, and indoor spaces. The commenter expresses concern regarding increases in air pollution due to Project construction. See Response to Comment 10-17.

Response to Comment 13-3

The comment includes closing remarks, and states that the Project need not usurp, displace, or disrespect the existing community. The commenter requests to be notified of all hearings, decisions, notifications and actions related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.

Intentionally blank.

1

2

3



3655 S. Grand Ave., Suite 250, Los Angeles 90007.

November 2, 2015

Erin Strelich,
City of Los Angeles Planning Department
200 North Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, California 90012
Fax: (213) 978-1343E-mail: erin.strelich@lacity.org

RE: Draft EIR ENV-201401773-EIR The Reef (formerly SOLA Village)

Dear Ms. Strelich,

Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) Council District 9 chapter writes to express our concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the Reef Development Project ("the Project") and the substantial flaws in the current Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

ACCE is a state wide multi-racial, democratic, non-profit community organization building power in low to moderate income neighborhoods to fight and stand for economic, racial and social justice. ACCE CD9 Chapter members are mostly low-income individuals of color, the great majority Spanish speakers living in the close proximity to the SoLA Village Project (Case No. ENV-2014-1773-EIR) ("Project").

On behalf of the hundreds of ACCE members, I'm writing to express our concerns regarding the environmental impact study performed of the Reeef Development Project and the many weaknesses in the current DEIR.

The Project proposes to transform an existing limited industrial property into a massive mixed-use development with 1,444 luxury residential units, 90,000 square feet of high-end retail uses, 46,000 square feet of restaurant/bar uses, a 208-key hotel, 18,000 square foot gallery, an 8,000 square-foot ____ yoga/fitness studio, approximately 2,733 parking spaces and 234,067 square feet of animated signage where virtually none exists, in part, because the City's zoning does not allow it. Despite the profound environmental impacts this Project would have on the surrounding community and the City as a whole, the DEIR is characterized by self-serving assertions, circular logic, and anemic analysis.

The Project, as currently proposed, threatens to destabilize the surrounding low-income community. Not only does the Project fail to offer even one affordable unit, it intensifies the displacement pressures on current local residents with increased rents and escalated gentrification. Yet the DEIR falls far short of evaluating these and the many other negative environmental impacts inherent in the Project, as proposed. For all its deficiencies, however, the DEIR concedes that the Project would result in numerous significant environmental impacts. The DEIR cavalierly concludes that many of these impacts cannot be mitigated. It is wrong. Rather the DEIR simply fails to consider mitigation that is both



appropriate and at times obvious even to the casual observer. As a result, the DEIR must be revised and recirculated to address its material CEQA shortcomings.

Key among the DEIR's deficiencies are the following:

1. The DEIR fails to adequately evaluate the significant displacement and gentrification pressures the Project, as proposed, foist onto the local community.

The Project proposal and the DEIR fail to acknowledge - let alone adequately address — the threat of displacement and the corresponding negative social and health impacts on the existing community. Citing only the fact that there is no existing housing on-site, the DEIR concludes that no people will be displaced, without further analysis. This is an overly simplistic conclusion which does not take into account the lived experience of residents or the reality of development pressures in Los Angeles, wherein residents are often displaced by the economic effects of development such as the Project independently of whether their housing is displaced. CEQA is clear that in addition to direct impacts, an EIR should also analyze those indirect impacts which are reasonably foreseeable outcomes of the project. This includes the economic effects of a project which will foreseeably lead to physical changes in the environment. 2

A report on the health impacts of the Project concludes that over 40,000 people have a moderate to very high risk for financial strain and/or displacement intensified by the Project's impacts on housing prices in the surrounding area. Many of the residents of South Central have likely experienced serial forced displacement, which can have a cumulative impact resulting in a traumatic condition called "root shock." The tangible human impacts of these pressures include disintegration of health promoting networks of social cohesion, exposure to substandard housing conditions, and a wide variety of chronic stress-related physical and mental illness, including anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and sleep disorders. The City's own General Plan Health Element acknowledges the negative health impacts of displacement created by major development projects, and explicitly calls for "opportunities for low-income and vulnerable populations to access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhood."

3 cont.

¹ 14 CCR 15126.2 ("Direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects.")

² Anderson First Coalition v. City of Anderson (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 1173, 1182. ("When there is evidence... that economic and social effects caused by a project... could result in a reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental impact, such as urban decay or deterioration, then the CEQA lead agency is obligated to assess this indirect environmental impact.")

³ [draft, 52-53].

⁴ Id, at 6, 43-44

⁵ Id.

⁶ City of Los Angeles, Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, Policy 1.7, Program 86.



Despite the overwhelming demonstrated potential for significant impacts with regard to displacement, the Project does not include any mechanism to create or preserve affordable housing or to minimize the catalytic impacts on increased housing prices and speculation. The DEIR fails to properly analyze and mitigate these impacts.

2. There are numerous and substantial flaws in the DEIR's Land Use and Planning analysis.

The Project is seeking at least 15 different discretionary land use entitlements, including General Plan Amendments, a zone change, variances, parking reductions and a significant Supplemental Use District – Sign District. This long list of required departures from adopted plans calls into question the merits of the Project and lays bare the fact that the Project upends existing city policy.

The DEIR must evaluate any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans. The DEIR fails to meet this standard. To start, the DEIR does not evaluate the Project's many conflicts with *existing* zoning requirements. Instead, the DEIR merely assumes that the Project's laundry list of requested zone changes, general plan amendments and other discretionary approvals are a foregone conclusion, thereby failing to evaluate the impacts of the Project based on existing physical conditions. The DEIR grossly errs in concluding that the Project poses no environmental impacts on the City's land use and policy with respect to the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage (SUDS). In fact, the SUDS gravely threatens the City's continued ability to ban such signage along highways — a land use power the City fought tooth and nail to preserve. Further, the DEIR fails to provide any analysis whatsoever of the Project's consistency with a number of highly relevant General Plan Policies. Likewise, the DEIR neglects to evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP), which includes a clear directive that industrial land use conversion projects, like the Reef, should include affordable housing and other community benefits. PEIR

3. The DEIR's Transportation Analysis is flawed.

The Project will significantly increase traffic in the area during both construction and operation. During construction, which will occur over at least 60 months, there will be between 125 and 500 construction workers on site per day. Although the DEIR claims that they will not arrive or depart the

4 cont.

5

⁷ CEQA Guidelines, 15125(d) ('The EIR shall discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans.") See also, City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide (calling for an evaluation of "whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans.")

⁸ The relevant General Plan policies that go unanalyzed in the DEIR include, but are not limited to Housing Element Objectives 1.1 and 1.2, Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101; Health Element Policy 1.7 and Program 86, Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policies 1.5-2 and 11-2.3; Framework Element Policies 3.14.6 and 4.2.1.

⁹ Los Angeles Industrial Land Use Policy, Staff Direction Memorandum Regarding Industrial Land Use and Potential Conversion to Residential or Other Uses," 5-8 (2008). http://planning.lacity.org/Code Studies/LanduseProj/Industrial Files/StaffDirections.pdf



site during "peak traffic hours," this cannot be guaranteed, and these workers will still create additional traffic during other hours. In addition, during the first (at least) three months of construction (the excavation phase), 800 - 900 truck trips per day would haul truckloads off the site. This would amount to the equivalent of 360 passenger car trips per hour, which would create substantial congestion on local roads.

6 cont.

During the life of the Project, much more traffic would be created. The Project Site will include over 2,700 parking spaces for patrons, visitors, residents, and employees. The DEIR predicts an increase of about 940 car trips during the morning peak hour and 1200 during the evening peak hour. But in reality, it is likely that this number will be significantly higher. Because of the catalytic nature of the Project, other similar developments may be enticed to build in the area, resulting in significantly more traffic. In addition, the demographic that the Project is likely to attract is wealthier than the current population, and therefore more likely to travel using motor vehicles, despite the close proximity of the Project to public transportation.

7

8

9

After mitigation measures are implemented, the Project would still result in 24 significant impacts, an extremely high number, considering the amount of traffic that already exists in the area.

4. The DEIR's Air Quality Mitigation Measures are Inadequate.

The Project will result in significant and unavoidable impacts from Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) during the construction and operation phases, and in and Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions impacts during the operation phase. Both VOCs and NOx are extremely harmful when inhaled, particularly for sensitive receptors, including young children and the elderly. The types of health effects that are associated with these gases/ chemicals are asthma, respiratory illness, cancer and even death. The Site is located within 1000 feet of three schools and at least 264 residences. But the Project's mitigation measures only address the residents, employees and visitors that will be within the Project boundaries. The DEIR should have addressed the need for mitigation measures including air filters, air proof windows, and indoor spaces for the community, in order to counter the negative air quality effects that the Project will cause.

5. The DEIR does not adequately analyze the aesthetic impacts of the Project.

According to the DEIR, signs will be located on each of the Project's four multi-story buildings, totaling 234,067 square feet of permitted signage. ¹⁰ Many of the signs will be extremely large, animated, and placed high up on the buildings, where they will be clearly visible from a distance of at least 2.5 miles away. ¹¹The size, amount, and type of signage that the Project proposes is completely out of character with the current lighting and signage in the area. This type of signage is problematic for several important reasons, including the potential danger to drivers on nearby freeways and local roads,

¹⁰ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-20.

¹¹ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-22.



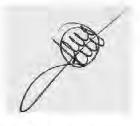
the distraction that the signs will cause for students in nearby schools, and the health effects of artificial lighting on nearby residents. No mitigation measures were proposed for signage, other than limiting the hours when the signs can be operational to hours when most residents will be asleep. Additional mitigation measures must be introduced through a recirculated DEIR - including a plan alternative with signage limited to non-animated onsite signage.

9 cont.

We appreciate your attention to these comments. At ACCE we know that responsible community development is possible, and that development projects need not usurp, displace nor disrespect the existing community. Rather, it is possible to develop projects that satisfy the particular needs of the developer and minimize direct and indirect environmental impacts on the community.

We trust that you will notify us in writing of any hearings, decisions, notifications, or actions referring or related to this project (pursuant to Pub. Res. Code Section 21092.2 and Gov. Code Section 65092). Should you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at 213, 884,5315

Sincerely,



Martha Sanchez ACCE CD9 Chapter Chair 133 30th Street Los Angeles, Ca 90011 213.884.5315

Intentionally blank.

Comment Letter No. 14

Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment Martha Sanchez, ACCE CD9 Chapter Chair 133 30th Street Los Angeles, CA 90011

Response to Comment 14-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 14-2 through 14-10.

Response to Comment 14-2

The commenter states that the City's zoning does not allow animated signage on the Project Site. See Response to Comment 9-3.

Response to Comment 14-3

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not analyze the impact of destabilizing the surrounding community, displacement and gentrification. See Responses to Comments 9-22 and 10-8.

The commenter also states that mitigation measures are available for many of the significant unavoidable impacts identified in the Draft EIR, and requests that the Draft EIR be revised and recirculated. See Responses to Comments 14-4 through 14-10.

Response to Comment 14-4

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not adequately evaluate the indirect displacement of residents, and the impact of gentrification. See Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 14-5

The commenter requests that the land use analysis in the Draft EIR be expanded to include conflicts with existing zoning requirements, the impact of the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage on City Land Use policy, several relevant General Plan policies, and consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy. See the following Responses to Comments:

Comment	Response
Number of discretionary actions	9-3
Conflict with Existing Zoning Requirements	9-21
Conflict with Signage Policy	9-19
Consistency with General Plan Policies	
Housing Element Objective 1.1 and 1.2; Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101	9-22
Health Element Policy 1.7 and Program 86	9-23
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 1.5-2	9-24
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 11-2.3	9-26
Framework Element Policy 3.14.6	9-27
Framework Element Policy 4.2.1	9-29
Consistency with the Industrial Land Use Policy and provision of community benefits	9-31 and 9-32

Response to Comment 14-6

The commenter states that the Project will increase traffic during construction, which would create congestion on local roadways. See Response to Comment 10-19.

Response to Comment 14-7

The comment states that the number of vehicle trips generated by the Project during operation would be higher than what is indicated in the Draft EIR. See Responses to Comments 10-20 and 10-21. With respect to the potential transportation benefits of locating higher income housing near transit stations, see Response to Comment 9-35.

Response to Comment 14-8

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts to nearby sensitive receptors during Project construction and operation from VOCs and NOx, including air filters, air-proof windows, and indoor spaces. See Response to Comment 10-17.

Response to Comment 14-9

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts from the proposed signage, including limiting the signage to non-animated signs. With respect to the impacts of proposed signage as addressed in the Draft EIR, including consistency with the surrounding community, hazards to drivers,

distractions to schools, health effects of lighting, and inclusion of additional mitigation measures, see Responses to Comments 9-3 through 9-7. With respect to an additional alternative with non-animated signage, see Response to Comment 9-53.

Response to Comment 14-10

The comment includes closing remarks, and reiterates concern for displacement of low-income residents. The commenter requests to be notified of all hearings, decisions, notifications and actions related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.

Intentionally blank.

Coalition to

BanBillboardBlight Defending the Visual Environment

2700 Military Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90064 310.386.9661 info@banbillboardblight.org www.banbillboardblight.org

November 2, 2015

Erin Strelich Los Angeles Department of City Planning 200 North Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Case Number: ENV-2014-1773-EIR

The Reef Project

Dear Ms. Strelich:

The Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight is a registered non-profit organization that represents individuals, homeowners associations, civic organizations, and other community groups in the city of Los Angeles. Its mission is to advocate for public policies, regulations, and decisions that protect the city's visual environment from negative impacts of outdoor advertising.

Following are comments on the DEIR for the above referenced project. These comments are limited to the signage proposed to be entitled by a Sign Supplemental Use District (SSUD).

I. The Visual Impacts of the Proposed Signage are Incorrectly Assessed.

In Section IV.B. Aesthetics, it is stated that "..the visual prominence of signs is principally dependent upon the animation associated with the sign." Such an assertion has no basis in fact or any commonly accepted definition of visual prominence. Static signs, including billboards, have long been designed to be visually prominent, and have been criticized by many for the very fact of their prominence in the visual landscape. One only has to look a few blocks from the project site to the Staples Center/L.A. Live area to see a number of static signs that are certainly of visual prominence, including multi-story images of Coke and beer bottles on the walls of a hotel.

The DEIR correctly concludes that the impacts of the signage in Vertical Zone 3 are significant. However, the assertion that this is because of visibility from long distances and the levels of sign animation ignores the impact of commercial advertising signs that aren't animated and aren't visible from long distances. Hence, the conclusion that signage in Vertical Zone 2 has a less than significant impact, which once again is not supported by fact or commonly accepted notions of visual impact. Moreover, the DEIR states that signage in both zones is available for commercial, or "off-site" advertising, and courts have repeatedly held that cities can regulate or even ban off-site advertising in the interests of promoting traffic safety and aesthetic improvement, which is an explicit endorsement of the idea that these kind of signs have a significant impact. And that impact may be intensified by the fact of a sign being animated and/or visible from a long distance, but it certainly isn't negated.

In addition, the signage in Vertical Zone 2, which extends to 75 ft., would be visible from some distance, including the campus of the Santee Education Complex, Trade Tech College, and the

1

2 cont.

single family residential neighborhood to the south, and the I-10 freeway. By any logical assessment, this signage has a significant impact.

II. The Potential Safety Impacts on Freeway Traffic are Incorrectly Assessed

The DEIR correctly concludes that "overly bright or distracting images can potentially cause danger to motorists looking at the signage." But it incorrectly concludes that the signage would not impair motorists because it complies with the brightness limitations of the California Motor Vehicle Code. The intention of that regulation is to protect drivers from overly-bright light sources in their line of sight, not from distractions that may occur from billboards and signage that can clearly be seen from the roadway. The animated Vertical Zone 3 signage on the Reef building and the North Tower is approximately 700 feet from the westbound lanes of the I-10 freeway, and is prominently viewable to both Westbound and Eastbound traffic. In fact, it can be reasonably inferred that much of the intended audience for this signage, which reaches as high as 400 ft., is freeway users. The potential for distraction is further increased by the fact that much of the signage has a message change interval of 8 seconds. Given the fact that there are no tall buildings impeding the view of the Project from either direction on the freeway, drivers are likely to see at least one message change. This not only creates added distraction because of a change in light levels and colors, it creates an anticipation of the next change. By failing to address these facts, the DEIR ignores potential, serious safety hazards associated with the project signage.

III. The Mitigations Proposed for Vertical Zone 3 Signage are Inadequate

The proposed mitigations for signs classified as Limited Animation 1 and Controlled Refresh 1 are to limit the hours of operation from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and limit the sign luminance at night from 135 to 295 candelas/sq.m, depending upon the location of the sign. Contrary to the DEIR, these mitigations do not come close to reducing the impact to less than significant.

According to a study entitled "Luminance Criteria and Measurement Considerations for Light-Emitting Diode Billboards" by the Lighting Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, "the preferred luminance of simulated outdoor signage for legibility and acceptability under nighttime viewing conditions, sign luminances of no more than 100 cd/m² were found to optimize legibility and acceptability, even when competing signs were present." In "Digital LED Billboard Luminance Recommendations" researchers at Arizona State University also recommended luminance levels not to exceed 100 cd/m². According to these researchers, high brightness in contrast to the lower brightness of the street or road in a driver's view could increase risk of accidents because of the delay in visual adaption after viewing a sign.

Not only are the proposed luminance limits too high, the signs would still be in operation for up to four hours of nighttime darkness for up to six months of the year. This means that during the hours of some of the heaviest freeway traffic the brightly-lighted signs would still be a potential distraction and safety hazard to freeway drivers. And the higher luminances proposed for east, south, and west-facing signs would have a significant impact on those areas, including a residential neighborhood and apartment houses, within viewing distance of the signs.

IV. The Impact of Energy Consumption by Signage is Inadequately Analyzed
The DEIR concludes that the impact of greenhouse gas emissions associated with operation of the
Project is less than significant. According to the assessment of energy use, the daily energy
consumption attributable to signage is 24,970 KWH. According to the U.S. Energy Information
Administration, the average annual consumption of a U.S. household is 10,932 KWH. Therefore,
the daily energy consumption of the proposed signage is more than twice that of an average

3

4

household's yearly consumption, which means that the annual energy consumption from the signage is equivalent to approximately 833 households. By any reasonable measure, that amount of energy consumption largely for the broadcast of outdoor ads for products and services constitutes a significant impact and should be analyzed as such and subject to mitigation.

5 cont.

V. The Signage Impact Analysis Leaves Out Important Details

A number of details needed to understand the signage impacts and consider mitigations are nowhere to be found in the DEIR. For example, fully animated signs would be allowed in Vertical Zone 1, but those would be "no more than incidentally visible" from the public right-of-way. Without knowing the location and size of those signs, there is no way to evaluate that assertion, or the possible impact on pedestrians and motorists. As another example, the DEIR states that signs in Vertical Zones 2 and 3 can convey any message, commercial or otherwise. It has long been recognized, by the U.S. Supreme Court among others, that commercial speech can be regulated differently than non-commercial speech because it has a different impact. But without knowing which signs would broadcast ads for products and services such as fast food, cars, alcohol, and other products and services and which might broadcast non-commercial messages it is impossible to evaluate those impacts. This implies the necessity of deferred analysis and deferred mitigation, which constitute piecemealing under CEOA.

VI. Alternatives to the Project Should Include No Sign Supplemental Use District
Alternative 1, No Project, would obviously eliminate all proposed signage. Alternative 3, Reduced Height/Reduced Signage, and Alternative 4, Reduced Density, would reduce the overall amount of signage. While the latter two somewhat lessen the visual, traffic safety, and energy consumption impacts, they do not eliminate those impacts. An alternative that should have been included is No SSUD. A project of this magnitude would be entitled to a considerable amount of "by right" signage, but sign types prohibited by code, such as the proposed animated signs, could not be included, and overall amount of signage allowed would be significantly reduced. This would greatly lessen the highly significant signage impacts of the Project.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the City Planning Commission on Oct. 22 approved a new citywide sign ordinance that restricts sign districts to areas zoned regional center or regional commercial. That ordinance is now pending before the City Council, and if approved would mean that this project isn't eligible for the sign district discussed in the DEIR.

This restriction has been discussed as long as 6 years ago, and that discussion has emphasized that sign districts should be located in high-intensity commercial areas where the impacts of electronic signage and other generally prohibited sign types are contained within that intensive commercial zone. This project definitely doesn't fit that definition. The area is small-scale industrial and commercial closely bordered by schools and a residential neighborhoods, and this project would constitute a brightly-lit island of signage highly visible for all directions.

In addition, the new ordinance would require new off-site signage in sign districts to be offset by the takedown of existing billboards in surrounding communities, at a ratio of 5 to 1 for static signs and 10 to 1 for digital, which would apply to much of the Project signage. Since the city approved an off-site sign ban in 2002, it has been policy to not allow a proliferation of signage. Adding more than 200,000 sq. ft. of potentially off-site signage, or the equivalent of more than 300 full-size conventional billboards, flies in the face of the this policy.

In summary, the only effective mitigation for the impact of the signage entitled by adoption of a

6

7

sign supplemental use district is to reduce the amount of signage far below that proposed and to eliminate animated signage visible from the freeway and residential neighborhoods.

8 cont.

Sincerely,

Dennis Hathaway, President

Comment Letter No. 15

Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight Dennis Hathaway, President 2700 Military Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90064

Response to Comment 15-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 15-2 through 15-8.

Response to Comment 15-2

The commenter states that the analysis of the aesthetics impacts resulting from the proposed signage in the Draft EIR are incorrect. See Responses to Comments 9-8 through 9-15.

Response to Comment 15-3

The commenter states that the analysis of the safety impacts on freeway traffic due to the proposed signage are incorrect in the Draft EIR. See Response to Comment 9-5.

Response to Comment 15-4

The commenter states that the measures in the Draft EIR with respect to signs classified as Limited Animation 1 and Controlled Refresh 1 in Vertical Sign Zone 3 are inadequate. The commenter bases this conclusion on the traffic hazard that could be associated with lighted signage during hours of darkness. See Response to Comment 9-5.

Response to Comment 15-5

The commenter states that the amount of energy that would be required for the proposed signage is not adequately analyzed in the Draft EIR. The energy consumption associated with Project signage is discussed in Section IV.O.4 (Utilities/Electricity) of the Draft EIR. The commenter correctly cites the electricity consumption associated with signage identified in Table IV.O.4-2 on page IV.O.4-5 of the Draft EIR. The commenter's opinion regarding the level of energy consumption associated with Project signage is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. However, as discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.O.4-4), the Project's electricity demand can be accommodated by existing generation and supply infrastructure. Accordingly, the Draft EIR appropriately concludes that the Project's impacts related to electricity would be less than significant.

Response to Comment 15-6

The commenter states that additional information is needed in the Draft EIR analysis to understand the impacts of the proposed signage. With respect to Vertical Sign Zone 1 signs that are no more than

incidentally visible from the public right of way, see Response to Comment 9-8. With respect to potential effects associated with the content of the signage, see Response to Comment 9-7.

Response to Comment 15-7

The commenter suggests that an alternative be added to the Draft EIR that excludes the Sign Supplemental Use District. See Response to Comment 9-53.

Response to Comment 15-8

The commenter notes that the City Planning Commission approved a new citywide sign ordinance on October 22, 2015, which restricts sign districts to areas zoned Regional Center or Regional Commercial; the ordinance is pending before City Council. The commenter also states that the Project would not comply with the pending ordinance. See Response to Comment 9-18. The commenter contends that the only effective mitigation for the impacts of Project signage is for the amount of signage to be reduced, and that the proposed animated signage visible from freeways and residential neighborhoods be eliminated. The commenter's opinion is acknowledged and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.



Los Angeles / Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council

1626 Beverly Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90026-5784 Phone (213) 483-4222 (714) 827-6791 Fax (213) 483-4419



Affiliated with the Building & Construction Trades Dept., AFL-CIO October 30, 2015

Ms. Erin Strelich LA Department of City Planning 200 N Spring St Room 750 Los Angeles CA 90012

Re:

Case No. Env-2014-1773-EIR

Dear Ms. Strelich,

On behalf of the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council, representing 140,000 hard-working, skilled members in 47 unions, I am expressing our strong support of the Reef project, case # Env-2014-1773-EIR.

The Reef will bring homes and jobs to an area that needs both. It will fill existing parking lots, which are currently under-utilized and produce little revenue for the city.

In terms of planning, the Reef is scaled correctly for the area. Its proximity to downtown Los Angeles will help bridge the gap between a prosperous area north of the 10 Freeway and the under-served area south of it. The project's proximity to the Metro Blue Line and buses will cut down on potential car trips and traffic.

In addition, the Reef development will house neighborhood businesses that will directly improve the local community, including a supermarket.

Also, the Reef will be built under a Project Labor Agreement with the Building Trades. This includes a provision to hire residents from the local ZIP Codes.

The Reef is located within one block of Los Angeles Trade-Tech College, which is working with the Trades to prepare Los Angeles residents for apprenticeships and lifelong careers in the Building Trades. In order to open these pipelines to middle-class careers, this project must be set in motion.

This area has long been under-served in many ways. The Reef is a major step to create jobs, housing, revenue and a vibrant new development for the City of Los Angeles.

Sincerely, Angle

Ron Miller

Executive Secretary

CC: Councilman Curren Price

Intentionally blank.

Comment Letter No. 16

Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council Ron Miller, Executive Secretary 1626 Beverly Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90026

Response to Comment 16-1

The commenter expresses support for the Project, and does not directly comment on the Draft EIR. No response is required. The commenter's opinion will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.

Intentionally blank.



November 2nd, 2015

VIA EMAIL

Los Angeles City Council & Planning Commission Los Angeles Department of City Planning 200 North Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Erin Strelich, Project Planner erin.strelich@lacity.org

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON THE REEF PROJECT DEIR

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed "The Reef" Project. Please accept and consider these comments on behalf of SoCal Environmental Justice Alliance.

Project Description:

The Project consists of development of a mixed use project containing approximately 2,533,000 square feet of development in the [Q]M1-2-O and M1-2-O zones, including modifications to the existing 861,162 square foot, approximately 194 foot tall Reef Building, and construction of approximately 1,664,000 square feet of new development on the remainder of the Project Site currently occupied by surface parking lots and an 11,150 square foot warehouse/ storage/distribution building. The Project Site consists of two full city blocks comprising approximately 9.7 acres bounded by Washington Boulevard on the north, Hill Street to the west, 21st Street to the south, and Main Street to the east, in downtown Los Angeles. Broadway bisects the Project Site into the East Block and the West Block. The Project Site is occupied by the existing 861,162 square foot, 12-story plus basement Reef building, surface parking lots with approximately 1,100 parking spaces, and an approximately 11,150 square foot warehouse building.

Under the Project, The Reef would be modified to incorporate a new 8,000 square foot restaurant and event space on the rooftop, and potentially convert up to 210,000 square feet of existing wholesale/showroom space within The Reef to office, retail and restaurant uses. The

1

existing warehouse building and surface parking lots would be demolished and replaced by new construction comprised of an integrated mixed-use development containing 1,444 residential units, a 208-room hotel, 67,702 square feet of retail/restaurant use, a 29,255 square foot grocery store, a 17,507 square foot gallery, and a 7,879 square foot fitness center, along with community spaces which would be accommodated in multiple single- and multi-story buildings ranging in height from up to 88 feet to up to 420 feet, along with public open space areas. The Project would provide at least 2,512 parking spaces in multiple above-ground and subterranean structures.

1 cont.

Comments:

The Draft Environmental Impact Report is inadequate and a supplemental EIR is required to be prepared and recirculated for public comment. In particular, the DEIR suffers from the following significant errors and omissions, among others:

2

Aesthetics Impact 1: Significant and Unavoidable after Mitigation

Impacts to visual character of the Project Site would be significant and unavoidable in Sign Zone 3 animated signage during the daytime operating hours of the signage. Although the Project would result in significant visual quality impacts related to Sign Zone 3 animated signage, no feasible mitigation measures, other than reduction of signage and/or limitation of animation, are available to completely address the impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-AES-2 below, which limits the operating hours of Sign Level 3 signage to address the lighting impact associated with this signage, would reduce the visual impact of this signage during nighttime hours to less than significant. However, the impact would remain during the daytime and evening hours when the signage is in operation. Under these conditions, this signage would be prominent and would not contribute to the desired aesthetic image of an urban center, which would constitute a significant impact.

3

The DEIR states the Project will directly cause a significant and unavoidable Class I adverse impact to the aesthetics of the region. Further mitigation measures for reducing the impact of signage must be studied. The DEIR states that there are no feasible mitigation measures. The DEIR implies that reducing signage and/or limitation of animation could possibly be a feasible mitigation measure. This mitigation measure can be included to reduce the significant and unavoidable impact to aesthetics. The DEIR fails to adequately mitigate for aesthetic impacts and must be substantially supplemented, amended, and recirculated to adequately mitigate this significant long-term impact to aesthetics. The Project Alternatives must be considered in order to mitigate this impact to aesthetics. The Project as proposed does not adequately mitigate for these impacts. The environmentally superior alternative must be chosen to in order to mitigate the significant impact to aesthetics.

4

5

6

Aesthetics Impact 2- Light and Glare: Significant and Unavoidable after Mitigation

Impacts related to the concentration of signage on The Reef would be significant and unavoidable. Significant impacts associated with concentration of signage on The Reef in Vertical Zones 1, 2, and 3 are related to the number and size of signs that would be permitted in these locations. Other than reduction of signage and/or limitation of animation, there are no feasible mitigation measures available to address this impact. The Project Alternatives must be considered in order to mitigate this impact. The Project as proposed does not adequately mitigate for these impacts. The environmentally superior alternative must be chosen to in order to mitigate the significant effect of light and glare.

Aesthetics Impact 3- Shade and Shadow: Significant and Unavoidable after Mitigation

Shadow impacts of the Project on the Rutland Apartments during the spring and fall equinox would be significant and unavoidable. Project shadows would cover all or part of the Rutland Apartments, a shadow sensitive residential use, for more than three hours between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM during the spring and fall equinox. Shadow impacts from the Project would be significant during the spring and fall equinox. Although the Project would result in significant shadow impacts to the Rutland Apartments during the spring and fall equinox, no mitigation measures are available to address the impact, which is caused by the angle of the sun in combination with the rotation and orbit of the earth around the sun.

The DEIR must explore mitigation measures such as reduced building height as project alternatives to reduce the significant and unavoidable impact regarding shade and shadow. Project alternatives must be seriously considered and the environmentally superior alternative must be chosen in order to mitigate the effect of shadow impacts to the Rutland Apartments during the fall and spring equinox.

Air Quality Impact 1: Significant and Unavoidable after Mitigation

Project and cumulative impacts of the Project would be significant and unavoidable with respect to VOC (construction and operations) and NOx (operations) emissions. The DEIR fails to adequately mitigate for operational emissions of NOx, even after some mitigation measures are implemented. The significance of this impact must be reduced even further to ensure it is in compliance with SCAQMD regional thresholds of significance. The violations of existing federal and state ozone standards must be corrected. There must be adequate mitigation for operational emissions of NOx and operational/construction emissions of VOC that remain above regional significance thresholds. The DEIR fails to acknowledge any adequate mitigation measures for the long-term air quality and pollutant impacts. The DEIR must be substantially supplemented, amended, and recirculated to adequately mitigate this significant long-term impact to air quality. Project alternatives must be considered and the environmentally superior alternative must be chosen in order to comply with SCAQMD regional thresholds of significance.

Noise Impact 1: Significant and Unavoidable after Mitigation

The cumulative traffic noise impact on 17th Street (west of Hill Street) would be significant and unavoidable. The DEIR for the Proposed Project does not offer any mitigation measures that reduce the noise impact in this area below levels of significance. The environmentally superior alternative suggests that the reduced building height and reduced signage would decrease the amount of traffic going to the Project during operations. The environmentally superior alternative must be studied further to determine if the reduced height and signs will have a significant impact on traffic and not only aesthetics. The DEIR must offer further mitigation measures in order to adequately mitigate for the cumulative traffic noise impact on 17th Street.

Traffic Impact 1: Significant and Unavoidable after Mitigation

With the proposed mitigation program, there would be two remaining significant impacts in the AM peak hour (with all the impacted intersections operating at LOS D or better), nine remaining significant impacts in the PM peak hour (with six of the impacted intersections operating at LOS E and one operating at LOS F), ten remaining significant impacts in the Friday Evening peak hour (with two of the impacted intersections operating at LOS E and five operating at LOS F), and one remaining significant impact in the Saturday Midday peak hour (the impacted intersections operating at LOS D or better). To sum up, there are 15 impacted intersections operating at LOS E or F throughout the week with the proposed mitigation program. The Project Alternatives do not offer mitigation measures that would bring the level of impact to acceptable levels that are less than significant. Impacts of these Alternatives would be lower than the Project's significant and unavoidable impacts related to traffic, but would remain significant and unavoidable. These mitigation measures do not adequately address the significant negative impacts regarding traffic, transportation and unacceptable LOS directly generated by the Project. The DEIR fails to adequately mitigate for these impacts and must be substantially supplemented, amended, and recirculated to adequately mitigate these significant and unavoidable impacts.

With implementation of the Project Design Feature, Regulatory Compliance Measures, and Mitigation Measures, all other transportation impacts of the Project would be less than significant, except for the Project's Main Street driveway. With respect to the significant impact at this driveway, Mitigation Measure MM-TR-12 would reduce the impact at this location to less than significant. However, this mitigation measure would require modifications to the Sports Museum driveways, which are located on private property outside the control of the Project Applicant, and would therefore require the concurrence of the Sports Museum property owner in order to be implemented. In the event the Sports Museum property owner does not agree to the modifications associated with Mitigation Measure MM-TR-12 on the Sports Museum property, Mitigation Measure MM-TR- 12 would be infeasible and impacts at this location would be significant and unavoidable.

The Project Alternatives would have the same significant and unavoidable impact on the Sports Museum driveways, in the event the Sports Museum property owner does not agree to the

7

8

9

modifications associated with the mitigation measure on the Sports Museum property. The feasibility of making this arrangement with the Sports Museum property owner was not studied. The DEIR must study and analyze this potential arrangement if it is to be suggested as an adequate mitigation measure. If it is not feasible, alternatives must be offered. The Project Alternatives do not offer any further mitigation measures for this impact. The DEIR fails to adequately mitigate for these impacts and must be substantially supplemented, amended, and recirculated to adequately mitigate these significant and unavoidable impacts.

9 cont.

SoCal Environmental Justice Alliance believes the DEIR for the Proposed Project fails to comply with CEQA and must be substantially supplemented, amended, and recirculated before the City Council makes its decision on the Proposed Project. The Alliance encourages the city to require the DEIR to address the Environmental Justice Element as outlined in the California General Plan Guidelines and give the Element the same weight as the mandatory elements of the General Plan.

10

For these reasons, SCEJA respectfully requests the need for this Project's DEIR to be substantially supplemented, amended, and recirculated and the City Council's denial to certify this DEIR. SoCal Environmental Justice Alliance requests to be notified via email at socaleja@gmail.com regarding any subsequent environmental documents, public notices, public hearings, and notices of determination for this project. SoCal Environmental Justice Alliance requests a minimum 14 days advance notice of all public hearings.

Sincerely,

Joe Bourgeois Chairman of the Board SoCal Environmental Justice Alliance

Intentionally blank.

Comment Letter No. 17

SoCal Environmental Justice Alliance Joe Bourgeois [no address]

Response to Comment 17-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 17-2 through 17-9.

Response to Comment 17-2

The commenter contends that the Draft EIR is inadequate, and that a Supplemental EIR is required to be prepared and circulated for public comment. The commenter's opinion is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. See Response to Comment 9-54.

Response to Comment 17-3

The commenter contends that additional mitigation measures are required to be included in the Draft EIR to reduce the aesthetics impacts. See Response to Comments 9-10 through 9-15. The "mitigation measures" suggested by the commenter are in fact changes to the signage program that are more appropriately addressed as alternatives to the Project, and are indeed addressed in Alternatives 1 and 3 that are evaluated in the Draft EIR (Draft EIR, pages VI-4 through VI-6). See also Response to Comment 9-53. The commenter further contends that the environmentally superior alternative must be chosen selected in order to mitigate the significant impact to aesthetics. See Response to Comment 10-41.

Response to Comment 17-4

The commenter contends that the environmentally superior alternative must be chosen in order to mitigate significant light and glare impacts. See Responses to Comment 9-53 and 10-41.

Response to Comment 17-5

The commenter requests that mitigation measures, such as reduced building height, be included in the EIR to reduce the impact due to shade and shadow. The commenter also suggests that an alternative be included in the EIR that reduces the shadow impacts on the Rutland Apartments. Alternative 4, the Reduced Density Alternative, included reduced height buildings, and would avoid the significant and unavoidable shadow impact of the Project on the Rutland Apartments (Draft EIR, page VI-65).

Response to Comment 17-6

The commenter requests that additional mitigation measures for impacts during Project construction and operation from VOCs and NOx be included in the EIR, as well as alternatives that have less-than-significant impacts on air quality. See Response to Comment 10-17.

Response to Comment 17-7

The commenter requests that additional mitigation measures for cumulative impacts during Project operation from traffic noise be included in the EIR, as well as alternatives that have less-than-significant cumulative impacts from traffic noise. As noted in the Draft EIR (page IV.K-40), no mitigation measures are available to address cumulative noise impacts, which result from cumulative traffic levels. Alternatives 3 (Reduced Height/Reduced Signage) and 4 (Reduced Density) would have lower traffic generation than the Project, and would avoid the significant and unavoidable cumulative traffic noise impact on 17th Street (west of Hill Street), as discussed in the Draft EIR (pages VI-49 and VI-75, respectively).

Response to Comment 17-8

The commenter suggests that the Alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIR include additional mitigation measures that reduce traffic impacts to a less-than-significant level. See Response to Comment 10-21.

Response to Comment 17-9

The commenter indicates that Mitigation Measure MM-TR-12 may not be feasible if the Sports Museum property owner does not agree to the driveway modifications included in that measure. If the mitigation measure is not feasible, then the commenter suggests that alternatives be analyzed in the EIR. As noted in the Project Traffic Study (Appendix IV.N, page 7-7), the proposed modifications were conceptually agreed to by the Sports Museum. As discussed in the Draft EIR (page IV.N-43), the Main Street driveway would be located mid-block, as would be required by LADOT. During the design process, alternatives for the location of this driveway were studied, including locating the Project driveway opposite one of the existing driveways for the Sports Museum. These alternate locations were determined to be infeasible for numerous reasons. The new driveway would be signalized, and LADOT requires signals to be located approximately midblock for adequate signal spacing and to provide room for back-to-back left turn lanes. Moving the driveway north or south to coincide with the existing Sports Museum driveways would not provide sufficient room for back-back left turn lanes. As such, there are no alternative locations for this driveway. Accordingly, the Draft EIR properly identifies the potential significant and unavoidable impact at the Sports Museum driveway, in the event that the Sports Museum driveway cannot be relocated (Draft EIR, page IV.N-56).

Response to Comment 17-10

The comment includes closing remarks, and requests that the Draft EIR address the Environmental Justice Element as outlined in the California General Plan Guidelines. With respect to environmental justice, see Response to Comment 10-31. The commenter requests to be notified of all hearings, decisions, notifications and actions related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.



WATTS LABOR COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

"Changing the face of a community... Moving the lives of a people"

10950 South Central Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90059 • Telephone 323.563.5639 • Facsimile 323.923.1474

TED WATKINS FOUNDER AND ADMINISTRATOR 1965-1993

OFFICERS TIMOTHY WATKINS

Dr. MESSELE NEGASH VICE PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT

PAULETTE HUNTER TREASURER

SHAMIKA SHOULDERS SECRETARY

DIRECTORS MICHAEL P. BISHOP SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICIAL (RETIRED)

RACHEL BRASHIER UCLA GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

CORFY BURNS TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST

HALEEMAH HENDERSON GRANTSMANSHIP PROFESSIONAL

MARESSA MONTES DE OCA CERTIFIED PROPERTY MANAGER

BONNIE RICE KAISER FOUNDATION

JULYANA RODRIGUEZ CERTIFIED PROPERTY MANAGER

MATTHEW ROTH AUTOMOBILE CLUB ARCHIVIST

CHARLES STANDOKES HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONAL

TRACI WATSON REAL ESTATE AND DEVELOPMENT

DIRECTORS EMERITI: BERNICE WATKINS COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AND SOCIAL

ELIZABETH "PAT" EASTMAN SOCIAL ACTIVIST AND COMMUNITY

LILLIAN HARKLESS MOBLEY SOCIAL ACTIVIST AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

PAUL SCHRADE UNION ORGANIZER, SOCIAL ACTIVIST AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

November 2, 2015

Erin Strelich, City of Los Angeles Planning Department 200 North Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, California 90012

Fax: (213) 978-1343

E-mail: erin.strelich@lacity.org

RE: Draft EIR ENV-201401773-EIR The Reef (formerly SOLA Village)

Dear Ms. Strelich,

Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) writes to express its concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the Reef Development Project ("the Project") and the substantial flaws in the current Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

Founded in 1965 in the aftermath of the Watts Revolt, WLCAC has consistently responded to the needs of underserved communities throughout Los Angeles. Having recently committed hundreds of low-to-moderate, affordable housing units to South Central, we are concerned about the impacts of rapid development, particularly when absent robust, thoughtful consideration to vulnerable populations in its path. We are also particularly concerned about the lack of commitment to zero displacement, authentic local hiring efforts, and the replacement of affordable housing that will arguably be sown under by the proposed Reef Development Project.

WLCAC has a fifty-year history of major community benefit achievements including legal transformation of major brown sites, retention and preservation of urban farm land, the capture and preservation of historic and cultural documentation, unrelenting championship for underserved Los Angeles populations suffering unemployment, homelessness, mental illness and for at risk youth as well as the frail and elderly.

The Project proposes to transform an existing limited industrial property into a massive mixeduse development with 1,444 luxury residential units, 90,000 square feet of high-end retail uses, 46,000 square feet of restaurant/bar uses, a 208-key hotel, 18,000 square foot gallery, an 8,000 square-foot yoga/fitness studio, approximately 2,733 parking spaces and 234,067 square feet of animated signage where virtually none exists, in part, because the City's zoning does not allow it. Despite the profound environmental impacts this Project would have on the surrounding community and the City as a whole, the DEIR is characterized by self-serving assertions, circular logic, and anemic analysis.

The Project, as currently proposed, threatens to destabilize the surrounding low-income community. Not only does the Project fail to offer even one affordable unit, it intensifies the

1

5

displacement pressures on current local residents with increased rents and escalated gentrification. Yet the DEIR falls far short of evaluating these and the many other negative environmental impacts inherent in the Project, as proposed. For all its deficiencies, however, the DEIR concedes that the Project would result in numerous significant environmental impacts. The DEIR cavalierly concludes that many of these impacts cannot be mitigated. It is wrong. Rather the DEIR simply fails to consider mitigation that is both appropriate and at times obvious even to the casual observer. As a result, the DEIR must be revised and recirculated to address its material CEQA shortcomings.

Key among the DEIR's deficiencies are the following:

1. The DEIR fails to adequately evaluate the significant displacement and gentrification pressures the Project, as proposed, foist onto the local community.

The Project proposal and the DEIR fail to acknowledge - let alone adequately address – the threat of displacement and the corresponding negative social and health impacts on the existing community. Citing only the fact that there is no existing housing on-site, the DEIR concludes that no people will be displaced, without further analysis. This is an overly simplistic conclusion which does not take into account the lived experience of residents or the reality of development pressures in Los Angeles, wherein residents are often displaced by the economic effects of development such as the Project independently of whether their housing is displaced. CEQA is clear that in addition to direct impacts, an EIR should also analyze those indirect impacts which are reasonably foreseeable outcomes of the project. This includes the economic effects of a project which will foreseeably lead to physical changes in the environment.

A report on the health impacts of the Project concludes that over 40,000 people have a moderate to very high risk for financial strain and/or displacement intensified by the Project's impacts on housing prices in the surrounding area.³ Many of the residents of South Central have likely experienced serial forced displacement, which can have a cumulative impact resulting in a traumatic condition called "root shock." The tangible human impacts of these pressures include disintegration of health promoting networks of social cohesion, exposure to substandard housing conditions, and a wide variety of chronic stress-related physical and mental illness, including anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and sleep disorders.⁵ The City's own General Plan Health Element acknowledges the negative health impacts of displacement created by major development projects, and explicitly calls for "opportunities for low-income and vulnerable populations to access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhood."

Despite the overwhelming demonstrated potential for significant impacts with regard to displacement, the Project does not include any mechanism to create or preserve affordable housing or to minimize the catalytic impacts on increased housing prices and speculation. The DEIR fails to properly analyze and mitigate these impacts.

2. There are numerous and substantial flaws in the DEIR's Land Use and Planning analysis.

The Project is seeking at least 15 different discretionary land use entitlements, including General Plan Amendments, a zone change, variances, parking reductions and a significant Supplemental

¹ 14 CCR 15126.2 ("Direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects.")

² Anderson First Coalition v. City of Anderson (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 1173, 1182. ("When there is evidence... that economic and social effects caused by a project... could result in a reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental impact, such as urban decay or deterioration, then the CEQA lead agency is obligated to assess this indirect environmental impact.")

³ [draft, 52-53].

⁴ Id, at 6, 43-44

³ Id.

⁶ City of Los Angeles, Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, Policy 1.7, Program 86.

5 cont.

7

8

Use District – Sign District. This long list of required departures from adopted plans calls into question the merits of the Project and lays bare the fact that the Project upends existing city policy.

The DEIR must evaluate any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans.⁷ The DEIR fails to meet this standard. To start, the DEIR does not evaluate the Project's many conflicts with *existing* zoning requirements. Instead, the DEIR merely assumes that the Project's laundry list of requested zone changes, general plan amendments and other discretionary approvals are a foregone conclusion, thereby failing to evaluate the impacts of the Project based on existing physical conditions. The DEIR grossly errs in concluding that the Project poses no environmental impacts on the City's land use and policy with respect to the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage (SUDS). In fact, the SUDS gravely threatens the City's continued ability to ban such signage along highways – a land use power the City fought tooth and nail to preserve. Further, the DEIR fails to provide any analysis whatsoever of the Project's consistency with a number of highly relevant General Plan Policies.⁸ Likewise, the DEIR neglects to evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP), which includes a clear directive that industrial land use conversion projects, like the Reef, should include affordable housing and other community benefits.⁹

3. The DEIR's Transportation Analysis is flawed.

The Project will significantly increase traffic in the area during both construction and operation. During construction, which will occur over at least 60 months, there will be between 125 and 500 construction workers on site per day. Although the DEIR claims that they will not arrive or depart the site during "peak traffic hours," this cannot be guaranteed, and these workers will still create additional traffic during other hours. In addition, during the first (at least) three months of construction (the excavation phase), 800 - 900 truck trips per day would haul truckloads off the site. This would amount to the equivalent of 360 passenger car trips per hour, which would create substantial congestion on local roads.

During the life of the Project, much more traffic would be created. The Project Site will include over 2,700 parking spaces for patrons, visitors, residents, and employees. The DEIR predicts an increase of about 940 car trips during the morning peak hour and 1200 during the evening peak hour. But in reality, it is likely that this number will be significantly higher. Because of the catalytic nature of the Project, other similar developments may be enticed to build in the area, resulting in significantly more traffic. In addition, the demographic that the Project is likely to attract is wealthier than the current population, and therefore more likely to travel using motor vehicles, despite the close proximity of the Project to public transportation.

After mitigation measures are implemented, the Project would still result in 24 significant impacts, an extremely high number, considering the amount of traffic that already exists in the area.

4. The DEIR's Air Quality Mitigation Measures are Inadequate.

The Project will result in significant and unavoidable impacts from Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) during the construction and operation phases, and in and Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions impacts during the operation phase. Both VOCs and NOx are extremely harmful when

⁷ CEQA Guidelines, 15125(d) ("The EIR shall discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans.") See also, City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide (calling for an evaluation of "whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans.")

⁸ The relevant General Plan policies that go unanalyzed in the DEIR include, but are not limited to <u>Housing Element</u> Objectives 1.1 and 1.2, Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101; <u>Health Element</u> Policy 1.7 and Program 86, <u>Southeast</u> Los Angeles Community Plan Policies 1.5-2 and 11-2.3; Framework Element Policies 3.14.6 and 4.2.1.

⁹ Los Angeles Industrial Land Use Policy, Staff Direction Memorandum Regarding Industrial Land Use and Potential Conversion to Residential or Other Uses," 5-8 (2008). http://planning.lacity.org/Code_Studies/LanduseProj/Industrial_Files/StaffDirections.pdf "Great things are happening in Watts!"

10

According to the DEIR, signs will be located on each of the Project's four multi-story buildings,

completely out of character with the current lighting and signage in the area. This type of signage is problematic for several important reasons, including the potential danger to drivers on nearby freeways and local roads, the distraction that the signs will cause for students in nearby schools, and the health effects of artificial lighting on nearby residents. No mitigation measures were proposed for signage, other than limiting the hours when the signs can be operational to hours when most residents will be asleep. Additional mitigation measures must be introduced through a recirculated DEIR - including a plan alternative with signage limited to non-animated

We appreciate your attention to these comments. At WLCAC we know that responsible community development is possible, and that development projects need not usurp, displace nor disrespect the existing community. Rather, it is possible to develop projects that satisfy the particular needs of the developer and minimize direct and indirect environmental impacts on the community.

inhaled, particularly for sensitive receptors, including young children and the elderly. The types

of health effects that are associated with these gases/ chemicals are asthma, respiratory illness, cancer and even death. The Site is located within 1000 feet of three schools and at least 264 residences. But the Project's mitigation measures only address the residents, employees and visitors that will be within the Project boundaries. The DEIR should have addressed the need for

mitigation measures including air filters, air proof windows, and indoor spaces for the community, in order to counter the negative air quality effects that the Project will cause.

5. The DEIR does not adequately analyze the aesthetic impacts of the Project.

totaling 234,067 square feet of permitted signage. 10 Many of the signs will be extremely large, animated, and placed high up on the buildings, where they will be clearly visible from a distance of at least 2.5 miles away. 11 The size, amount, and type of signage that the Project proposes is

We trust that you will notify us in writing of any hearings, decisions, notifications, or actions referring or related to this project (pursuant to Pub. Res. Code Section 21092.2 and Gov. Code Section 65092). Should you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at 323.563.5639.

If there are any additional questions that you'd like to address to me, please contact me at 323.563.5639.

Sincerely,

onsite signage.

Timothy Watkins President & CEO

¹⁰ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-20.

¹¹ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-22.

Comment Letter No. 18

Watts Labor Community Action Committee Timothy Watkins, President & CEO 10950 Central Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90059

Response to Comment 18-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 18-2 through 18-10.

Response to Comment 18-2

The commenter states that the City's zoning does not allow animated signage on the Project Site. See Response to Comment 9-3.

Response to Comment 18-3

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not analyze the impact of destabilizing the surrounding community, displacement and gentrification. See Responses to Comments 9-22 and 10-8.

The commenter also states that mitigation measures are available for many of the significant unavoidable impacts identified in the Draft EIR, and requests that the Draft EIR be revised and recirculated. See Responses to Comments 18-4 through 18-10.

Response to Comment 18-4

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not adequately evaluate the indirect displacement of residents, and the impact of gentrification. See Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 18-5

The commenter requests that the land use analysis in the Draft EIR be expanded to include conflicts with existing zoning requirements, the impact of the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage on City Land Use policy, several relevant General Plan policies, and consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy. See the following Responses to Comments:

Comment	Response
Number of discretionary actions	9-3
Conflict with Existing Zoning Requirements	9-21
Conflict with Signage Policy	9-19
Consistency with General Plan Policies	
Housing Element Objective 1.1 and 1.2; Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101	9-22
Health Element Policy 1.7 and Program 86	9-23
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 1.5-2	9-24
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 11-2.3	9-26
Framework Element Policy 3.14.6	9-27
Framework Element Policy 4.2.1	9-29
Consistency with the Industrial Land Use Policy and provision of community benefits	9-31 and 9-32

Response to Comment 18-6

The commenter states that the Project will increase traffic during construction, which would create congestion on local roadways. See Response to Comment 10-19.

Response to Comment 18-7

The comment states that the number of vehicle trips generated by the Project during operation would be higher than what is indicated in the Draft EIR. See Responses to Comments 10-20 and 10-21. With respect to the potential transportation benefits of locating higher income housing near transit stations, see Response to Comment 9-35.

Response to Comment 18-8

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts to nearby sensitive receptors during Project construction and operation from VOCs and NOx, including air filters, air-proof windows, and indoor spaces. See Response to Comment 10-17.

Response to Comment 18-9

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts from the proposed signage, including limiting the signage to non-animated signs. With respect to the impacts of proposed signage as addressed in the Draft EIR, including consistency with the surrounding community, hazards to drivers,

distractions to schools, health effects of lighting, and inclusion of additional mitigation measures, see Responses to Comments 9-3 through 9-7. With respect to an additional alternative with non-animated signage, see Response to Comment 9-53.

Response to Comment 18-10

The comment includes closing remarks, and reiterates concern for displacement of low-income residents. The commenter requests to be notified of all hearings, decisions, notifications and actions related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.

Intentionally blank.

Regarding Case: Env-2014-1773-EIR

To whom this may concern:

As a longtime resident of South Los Angeles where my family have roots here for over 50 years and are very proud of it. I am in favor for the plans The Reef has in its development project and feel many opportunities and benefits us those living here in the area will benefit.

Investment and positive change is what we need here in my community. I have a baby daughter and two teenagers and if a project like this will assist in giving them pride of where they're from and give them opportunities with work and school, I welcome a project of this caliber as long as the developers are responsible and do what they say they will do, assist the community. The City shouldn't be persuaded to slow down this EIR document. Let's focus on real issues, jobs, education and the welfare of those that live in our community.

1

Thank you,

Aileen Sanchez

South Los Angeles Resident

Comment Letter No. 19

Aileen Sanchez South Los Angeles Resident [no address]

Response to Comment 19-1

The commenter expresses support for the Project, and does not directly comment on the Draft EIR. No response is necessary. The commenter's opinion will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.

Intentionally blank.

1

2

3

4



I am writing about project number ENV-2014-1773-EIR.

I have heard that as a part of the Reef project, there will be proposed pedestrian circulation improvements along Washington Boulevard and Hill Street, among other streets. Are there any plans to make these streets safer and more pedestrian friendly?

These are long and unattractive blocks. Are there any plans to make them wider for pedestrian walking, more aesthetically pleasing, and most importantly, safer?

Will improvements be taken into consideration and what will they do to improve public safety in the area?

I've been following the Reef project and it's addition to the neighborhood is likely to bring more activities in the evening. The Reef project is expected to bring more lighting and will bring more foot traffic to that area.

I would like to know more about how this project and how it will help improve walking in the area while at the same increase sense of personal safety.

4 cont.

Thank you for your time!

Evelyn Ramirez

Evelynn Ramirez Cell: 323.823.0121

Comment Letter No. 20

Evelyn Ramirez [no address]

Response to Comment 20-1

The commenter inquires as to making Washington Boulevard and Hill Street safer and more pedestrian friendly as part of the Project. As discussed in the Draft EIR (pages II-16 and II-17), the Project would include minimum 15-foot wide sidewalks on Washington Boulevard (east of Broadway), Broadway and Main Street, and minimum 20 foot sidewalks on Washington Boulevard (west of Broadway), Hill Street, and Broadway, adjacent to The Reef building. Pedestrian enhancements would be provided on Broadway to facilitate access to the public mid-block paseo within the Project (Draft EIR, Project Design Feature PDF-TR-1, pages IV.N-18 and IV.N-19). The Project would also include enhancements to promote pedestrian connectivity to the Blue Line station (Draft EIR, Mitigation Measure MM-TR-1, pages IV.N-54 and IV.N-55).

Response to Comment 20-2

The commenter inquires as to widening sidewalks, and making sidewalks more aesthetically pleasing and safe. With respect to sidewalk widths under the Project, see Response to Comment 20-1. As discussed in the Draft EIR (pages II-18 and II-19), the Project would include public amenities, such as street trees, tree well covers, outdoor seating, bike racks, and trash receptacles to improve the existing aesthetic qualities of the streets surrounding the Project Site. The Project would also increase activity on the Project Site, and provide on-site security to enhance the safety of the Project Site and surrounding area (Draft EIR, pages IV.M.2-8 and IV.M.2-9).

Response to Comment 20-3

The commenter inquires as to improvements and their contribution public safety in the Project area. See Responses to Comments 20-1 and 20-2.

Response to Comment 20-4

The commenter states that the Project is likely to bring activity in the evening, more lighting, and more foot traffic. As discussed in the Draft EIR (page II-18), the Project would include street lighting, and other sources of on-site lighting that would increase nighttime ambient lighting levels, but would be consistent with lighting levels of an urban area (Draft EIR, page IV.B.2-11). The commenter inquires as to how the Project will improve walking and safety in the area. See Responses to Comments 20-1 and 20-2.

Intentionally blank.

1

2

3

4

Via Email (erin.strelich@lacity.org)

November 2, 2015

Attn: Major Projects & EIR Section The City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning 200 North Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, CA 90012-2601

RE: Draft EIR ENV-201401773-EIR The Reef (formerly SOLA Village)

Dear Department of City Planning Staff:

As a resident of the South Los Angeles community I am writing to express my concerns regarding the DEIR of the Reef Development Project. The 90011 and 90007 zip codes, which stand to be more impacted by this development, are made up of mostly low-income individuals of color, many of whom are mono-lingual Spanish Speakers, who have not received appropriate notification or information on this project and its impacts. While the South Central Neighborhood Council and many other local groups requested a 90-day review period this was not granted. The report was not made available at the home library for the residents of 90011, Vernon Branch Library or in Spanish.

The Project represents the floodgates that once open will not be able to stop the impact on the existing community. The Project proposes to transform an existing limited industrial property into a massive mixed-use development with 1,444 luxury residential units, 90,000 square feet of high-end retail uses, 46,000 square feet of restaurant/bar uses, a 208-key hotel, 18,000 square foot gallery, an 8,000 square-foot yoga/fitness studio, approximately 2,733 parking spaces and 234,067 square feet of animated signage where virtually none exists, in part, because the City's zoning does not allow it. Despite the profound environmental impacts this Project would have on the surrounding community and the City as a whole, the DEIR is characterized by self-serving assertions, circular logic, and anemic analysis.

The Project, as currently proposed, threatens to destabilize the surrounding low-income community. Not only does the Project fail to offer even one affordable unit, it intensifies the displacement pressures on current local residents with increased rents and escalated gentrification. Yet the DEIR falls far short of evaluating these and the many other negative environmental impacts inherent in the Project, as proposed. For all its deficiencies, however, the DEIR concedes that the Project would result in numerous significant environmental impacts. The DEIR cavalierly concludes that many of these impacts cannot be mitigated. It is wrong. Rather the DEIR simply fails to consider mitigation that is both appropriate and at times obvious even to the casual observer. As a result, the DEIR must be revised and recirculated to address its material CEQA shortcomings.

Key among the DEIR's deficiencies are the following:

1. The DEIR fails to adequately evaluate the significant displacement and gentrification pressures the Project, as proposed, foist onto the local community.

The Project proposal and the DEIR fail to acknowledge - let alone adequately address — the threat of displacement and the corresponding negative social and health impacts on the existing community. Citing only the fact that there is no existing housing on-site, the DEIR concludes that no people will be displaced, without further analysis. This is an overly simplistic conclusion which does not take into account the lived experience of residents or the reality of development pressures in Los Angeles, wherein residents are often displaced by the economic effects of development such as the Project independently of whether their housing is displaced. CEQA is clear that in addition to direct impacts, an EIR should also

analyze those indirect impacts that are reasonably foreseeable outcomes of the project. This includes the economic effects of a project that will foreseeably lead to physical changes in the environment. 2

A report on the health impacts of the Project concludes that over 40,000 people have a moderate to very high risk for financial strain and/or displacement intensified by the Project's impacts on housing prices in the surrounding area. Many of the residents of South Central have likely experienced serial forced displacement, which can have a cumulative impact resulting in a traumatic condition called "root shock." The tangible human impacts of these pressures include disintegration of health promoting networks of social cohesion, exposure to substandard housing conditions, and a wide variety of chronic stress-related physical and mental illness, including anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and sleep disorders. The City's own General Plan Health Element acknowledges the negative health impacts of displacement created by major development projects, and explicitly calls for "opportunities for low-income and vulnerable populations to access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhood."

Despite the overwhelming demonstrated potential for significant impacts with regard to displacement, the Project does not include any mechanism to create or preserve affordable housing or to minimize the catalytic impacts on increased housing prices and speculation. The DEIR fails to properly analyze and mitigate these impacts.

2. There are numerous and substantial flaws in the DEIR's Land Use and Planning analysis.

The Project is seeking at least 15 different discretionary land use entitlements, including General Plan Amendments, a zone change, variances, parking reductions and a significant Supplemental Use District – Sign District. This long list of required departures from adopted plans calls into question the merits of the Project and lays bare the fact that the Project upends existing city policy.

The DEIR must evaluate any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans. The DEIR fails to meet this standard. To start, the DEIR does not evaluate the Project's many conflicts with existing zoning requirements. Instead, the DEIR merely assumes that the Project's laundry list of requested zone changes, general plan amendments and other discretionary approvals are a foregone conclusion, thereby failing to evaluate the impacts of the Project based on existing physical conditions. The DEIR grossly errs in concluding that the Project poses no environmental impacts on the City's land use and policy with respect to the proposed Supplemental Use District for

4 cont.

5

¹ 14 CCR 15126.2 ("Direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects.")

² Anderson First Coalition v. City of Anderson (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 1173, 1182. ("When there is evidence... that economic and social effects caused by a project... could result in a reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental impact, such as urban decay or deterioration, then the CEQA lead agency is obligated to assess this indirect environmental impact.")

^{3 [}draft, 52-53].

⁴ Id, at 6, 43-44

⁵ Id.

⁶ City of Los Angeles, Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, Policy 1.7, Program 86.

⁷ CEQA Guidelines, 15125(d) ("The EIR shall discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans.") See also, City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide (calling for an evaluation of "whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans.")

Signage (SUDS). In fact, the SUDS gravely threatens the City's continued ability to ban such signage along highways – a land use power the City fought tooth and nail to preserve. Further, the DEIR fails to provide any analysis whatsoever of the Project's consistency with a number of highly relevant General Plan Policies. Likewise, the DEIR neglects to evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP), which includes a clear directive that industrial land use conversion projects, like the Reef, should include affordable housing and other community benefits.

5 cont.

6

7

8

3. The DEIR's Transportation Analysis is flawed.

The Project will significantly increase traffic in the area during both construction and operation. During construction, which will occur over at least 60 months, there will be between 125 and 500 construction workers on site per day. Although the DEIR claims that they will not arrive or depart the site during "peak traffic hours," this cannot be guaranteed, and these workers will still create additional traffic during other hours. In addition, during the first (at least) three months of construction (the excavation phase), 800 - 900 truck trips per day would haul truckloads off the site. This would amount to the equivalent of 360 passenger car trips per hour, which would create substantial congestion on local roads.

During the life of the Project, much more traffic would be created. The Project Site will include over 2,700 parking spaces for patrons, visitors, residents, and employees. The DEIR predicts an increase of about 940 car trips during the morning peak hour and 1200 during the evening peak hour. But in reality, it is likely that this number will be significantly higher. Because of the catalytic nature of the Project, other similar developments may be enticed to build in the area, resulting in significantly more traffic. In addition, the demographic that the Project is likely to attract is wealthier than the current population, and therefore more likely to travel using motor vehicles, despite the close proximity of the Project to public transportation.

After mitigation measures are implemented, the Project would still result in 24 significant impacts, an extremely high number, considering the amount of traffic that already exists in the area.

4. The DEIR's Air Quality Mitigation Measures are Inadequate.

The Project will result in significant and unavoidable impacts from Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) during the construction and operation phases, and in and Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions impacts during the operation phase. Both VOCs and NOx are extremely harmful when inhaled, particularly for sensitive receptors, including young children and the elderly. The types of health effects that are associated with these gases/ chemicals are asthma, respiratory illness, cancer and even death. The Site is located within 1000 feet of three schools and at least 264 residences. But the Project's mitigation measures only address the residents, employees and visitors that will be within the Project boundaries. The DEIR should have addressed the need for mitigation measures including air filters, air proof windows, and indoor spaces for the community, in order to counter the negative air quality effects that the

⁸ The relevant General Plan policies that go unanalyzed in the DEIR include, but are not limited to <u>Housing Element</u> Objectives 1.1 and 1.2, Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101; <u>Health Element Policy 1.7</u> and Program 86, <u>Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan</u> Policies 1.5-2 and 11-2.3; <u>Framework Element Policies 3.14.6</u> and 4.2.1.

⁹ Los Angeles Industrial Land Use Policy, Staff Direction Memorandum Regarding Industrial Land Use and Potential Conversion to Residential or Other Uses," 5-8 (2008). http://planning.lacity.org/Code Studies/LanduseProj/Industrial Files/StaffDirections.pdf

8 cont.

9

Project will cause.

5. The DEIR does not adequately analyze the aesthetic impacts of the Project.

According to the DEIR, signs will be located on each of the Project's four multi-story buildings, totaling 234,067 square feet of permitted signage. Many of the signs will be extremely large, animated, and placed high up on the buildings, where they will be clearly visible from a distance of at least 2.5 miles away. The size, amount, and type of signage that the Project proposes is completely out of character with the current lighting and signage in the area. This type of signage is problematic for several important reasons, including the potential danger to drivers on nearby freeways and local roads, the distraction that the signs will cause for students in nearby schools, and the health effects of artificial lighting on nearby residents. No mitigation measures were proposed for signage, other than limiting the hours when the signs can be operational to hours when most residents will be asleep. Additional mitigation measures must be introduced through a recirculated DEIR – including a plan alternative with signage limited to non-animated onsite signage.

In addition to the signage, the proposed towers will be triple in height compared to the prevailing height in the area, of 12 stories. These new building would constitute a substantial change in the visual prominence of the Project site.

]

10

11

We appreciate your attention to these comments. Among the concerns and flaws in the DEIR listed above, the most pressing is the likely displacement of low-income residents of our community. Pursuant to Pub. Res. Code Section 21092.2 and Gov. Code Section 65092, please notify us in writing of any and all hearing, decisions, notifications or actions related to this project. Should you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at (323) 401-1571.

Sincerely,

Azusena Favela Community Resident

¹⁰ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-20.

¹¹ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-22.

Comment Letter No. 21

Azusena Favela Community Resident 1162 E. 48th Street Los Angeles, CA 90011

Response to Comment 21-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 21-2 through 21-11.

Response to Comment 21-2

The commenter states that the City's zoning does not allow animated signage on the Project Site. See Response to Comment 9-3.

Response to Comment 21-3

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not analyze the impact of destabilizing the surrounding community, displacement and gentrification. See Responses to Comments 9-22 and 10-8.

The commenter also states that mitigation measures are available for many of the significant unavoidable impacts identified in the Draft EIR, and requests that the Draft EIR be revised and recirculated. See Responses to Comments 21-4 through 21-11.

Response to Comment 21-4

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not adequately evaluate the indirect displacement of residents, and the impact of gentrification. See Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 21-5

The commenter requests that the land use analysis in the Draft EIR be expanded to include conflicts with existing zoning requirements, the impact of the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage on City Land Use policy, several relevant General Plan policies, and consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy. See the following Responses to Comments:

Comment	Response
Number of discretionary actions	9-3
Conflict with Existing Zoning Requirements	9-21
Conflict with Signage Policy	9-19
Consistency with General Plan Policies	
Housing Element Objective 1.1 and 1.2; Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101	9-22
Health Element Policy 1.7 and Program 86	9-23
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 1.5-2	9-24
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 11-2.3	9-26
Framework Element Policy 3.14.6	9-27
Framework Element Policy 4.2.1	9-29
Consistency with the Industrial Land Use Policy and provision of community benefits	9-31 and 9-32

Response to Comment 21-6

The commenter states that the Project will increase traffic during construction, which would create congestion on local roadways. See Response to Comment 10-19.

Response to Comment 21-7

The comment states that the number of vehicle trips generated by the Project during operation would be higher than what is indicated in the Draft EIR. See Responses to Comments 10-20 and 10-21. With respect to the potential transportation benefits of locating higher income housing near transit stations, see Response to Comment 9-35.

Response to Comment 21-8

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts to nearby sensitive receptors during Project construction and operation from VOCs and NOx, including air filters, air-proof windows, and indoor spaces. See Response to Comment 10-17.

Response to Comment 21-9

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts from the proposed signage, including limiting the signage to non-animated signs. With respect to the impacts of proposed signage as addressed in the Draft EIR, including consistency with the surrounding community, hazards to drivers, distractions to schools, health effects of lighting, and inclusion of additional mitigation measures, see Responses to Comments 9-3 through 9-7. With respect to an additional alternative with non-animated signage, see Response to Comment 9-53.

Response to Comment 21-10

The commenter states that the proposed towers would constitute a substantial change to the visual prominence of the Project Site. See Response to Comment 9-12.

Response to Comment 21-11

The comment includes closing remarks, and reiterates concern for displacement of low-income residents. The commenter requests to be notified of all hearings, decisions, notifications and actions related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.

Intentionally blank.

1

2

3

CLEMENTE FRANCO

1295 W. Sunset Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90026 Telephone: (213) 842-9221 Facsimile: (213) 213-2501

Via Email: erin.strelich@lacity.org

November 2, 2015

Erin Strelich, City of Los Angeles Planning Department 200 North Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, California 90012 Fax: (213) 978-1343

RE: Draft EIR ENV-201401773-EIR The Reef (formerly SOLA Village)

Dear Ms. Strelich,

I write to express my concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the Reef Development Project ("the Project") and the substantial flaws in the current Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). I was born and raised in the community where the Project would be developed. I am also involved with various nonprofit and community groups in the South Central community, and I am a board member of the South Central Neighborhood Council.

The Project proposes to transform an existing limited industrial property into a massive mixed-use development with 1,444 luxury residential units, 90,000 square feet of high-end retail uses, 46,000 square feet of restaurant/bar uses, a 208-key hotel, 18,000 square foot gallery, an 8,000 square-foot yoga/fitness studio, approximately 2,733 parking spaces and 234,067 square feet of animated signage where virtually none exists, in part, because the City's zoning does not allow it. Despite the profound environmental impacts this Project would have on the surrounding community and the City as a whole, the DEIR is characterized by self-serving assertions, circular logic, and anemic analysis.

The Project, as currently proposed, threatens to destabilize the surrounding low-income community. Not only does the Project fail to offer even one affordable unit, it intensifies the displacement pressures on current local residents with increased rents and escalated gentrification. Yet the DEIR falls far short of evaluating these and the many other negative environmental impacts inherent in the Project, as proposed. For all its deficiencies, however, the DEIR concedes that the Project would result in numerous significant environmental impacts. The DEIR concludes that many of these impacts cannot be mitigated. It is wrong. Rather the DEIR simply fails to consider mitigation that is both appropriate and at times obvious even to the casual observer. As a result, the DEIR must be revised and recirculated to address its material CEQA shortcomings.

1. The DEIR fails to adequately evaluate the significant displacement and gentrification pressures the Project, as proposed, foist onto the local community.

The Project proposal and the DEIR fail to acknowledge - let alone adequately address – the threat of displacement and the corresponding negative social and health impacts on the existing community. Citing only the fact that there is no existing housing on-site, the DEIR concludes that no people will be displaced, without further analysis. This is an overly simplistic conclusion which does not take into account the lived experience of residents or the reality of development pressures in Los Angeles, wherein residents are often displaced by the economic effects of development such as the Project independently of whether their housing is displaced. CEQA is clear that in addition to direct impacts, an EIR should also analyze those indirect impacts which are reasonably foreseeable outcomes of the project. This includes the economic effects of a project which will foreseeably lead to physical changes in the environment.

A report on the health impacts of the Project concludes that over 40,000 people have a moderate to very high risk for financial strain and/or displacement intensified by the Project's impacts on housing prices in the surrounding area. Many of the residents of South Central have likely experienced serial forced displacement, which can have a cumulative impact resulting in a traumatic condition called "root shock." The tangible human impacts of these pressures include disintegration of health promoting networks of social cohesion, exposure to substandard housing conditions, and a wide variety of chronic stress-related physical and mental illness, including anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and sleep disorders. The City's own General Plan Health Element acknowledges the negative health impacts of displacement created by major development projects, and explicitly calls for "opportunities for low-income and vulnerable populations to access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhood."

Despite the overwhelming demonstrated potential for significant impacts with regard to displacement, the Project does not include any mechanism to create or preserve affordable housing or to minimize the catalytic impacts on increased housing prices and speculation. The DEIR fails to properly analyze and mitigate these impacts.

4

¹ 14 CCR 15126.2 ("Direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects.")

² Anderson First Coalition v. City of Anderson (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 1173, 1182. ("When there is evidence... that economic and social effects caused by a project... could result in a reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental impact, such as urban decay or deterioration, then the CEQA lead agency is obligated to assess this indirect environmental impact.")

³ [draft, 52-53].

⁴ Id, at 6, 43-44

⁵ Id.

⁶ City of Los Angeles, Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, Policy 1.7, Program 86.

2. There are numerous and substantial flaws in the DEIR's Land Use and Planning analysis.

The Project is seeking at least 15 different discretionary land use entitlements, including General Plan Amendments, a zone change, variances, parking reductions and a significant Supplemental Use District – Sign District. This long list of required departures from adopted plans calls into question the merits of the Project and lays bare the fact that the Project upends existing city policy.

The DEIR must evaluate any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans. The DEIR fails to meet this standard. To start, the DEIR does not evaluate the Project's many conflicts with existing zoning requirements. Instead, the DEIR merely assumes that the Project's laundry list of requested zone changes, general plan amendments and other discretionary approvals are a foregone conclusion, thereby failing to evaluate the impacts of the Project based on existing physical conditions. The DEIR grossly errs in concluding that the Project poses no environmental impacts on the City's land use and policy with respect to the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage (SUDS). In fact, the SUDS gravely threatens the City's continued ability to ban such signage along highways – a land use power the City fought tooth and nail to preserve. Further, the DEIR fails to provide any analysis whatsoever of the Project's consistency with a number of highly relevant General Plan Policies.8 Likewise, the DEIR neglects to evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP), which includes a clear directive that industrial land use conversion projects, like the Reef, should include affordable housing and other community benefits.

5

6

3. The DEIR's Transportation Analysis is flawed.

The Project will significantly increase traffic in the area during both construction and operation. During construction, which will occur over at least 60 months, there will be between 125 and 500 construction workers on site per day. Although the DEIR claims that they will not arrive or depart the site during "peak traffic hours," this cannot be guaranteed, and these workers will still create additional traffic during other hours. In addition, during the first (at least) three months of construction (the excavation phase), 800 - 900 truck trips per day would haul truckloads off the site.

⁷ CEQA Guidelines, 15125(d) ("The EIR shall discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans.") See also, City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide (calling for an evaluation of "whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans.")

The relevant General Plan policies that go unanalyzed in the DEIR include, but are not limited to Housing Element Objectives 1.1 and 1.2, Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101; Health Element Policy 1.7 and Program 86, Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policies 1.5-2 and 11-2.3; Framework Element Policies 3.14.6 and 4.2.1.

⁹ Los Angeles Industrial Land Use Policy, Staff Direction Memorandum Regarding Industrial Land Use and Potential Conversion to Residential or Other Uses," 5-8 (2008). http://planning.lacity.org/Code Studies/LanduseProj/Industrial Files/StaffDirections.pdf

This would amount to the equivalent of 360 passenger car trips per hour, which would create substantial congestion on local roads.

6 cont.

7

8

9

During the life of the Project, much more traffic would be created. The Project Site will include over 2,700 parking spaces for patrons, visitors, residents, and employees. The DEIR predicts an increase of about 940 car trips during the morning peak hour and 1200 during the evening peak hour. But in reality, it is likely that this number will be significantly higher. Because of the catalytic nature of the Project, other similar developments may be enticed to build in the area, resulting in significantly more traffic. In addition, the demographic that the Project is likely to attract is wealthier than the current population, and therefore more likely to travel using motor vehicles, despite the close proximity of the Project to public transportation.

After mitigation measures are implemented, the Project would still result in 24 significant impacts, an extremely high number, considering the amount of traffic that already exists in the area.

4. The DEIR's Air Quality Mitigation Measures are Inadequate.

The Project will result in significant and unavoidable impacts from Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) during the construction and operation phases, and in and Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions impacts during the operation phase. Both VOCs and NOx are extremely harmful when inhaled, particularly for sensitive receptors, including young children and the elderly. The types of health effects that are associated with these gases/ chemicals are asthma, respiratory illness, cancer and even death. The Site is located within 1000 feet of three schools and at least 264 residences. But the Project's mitigation measures only address the residents, employees and visitors that will be within the Project boundaries. The DEIR should have addressed the need for mitigation measures including air filters, air proof windows, and indoor spaces for the community, in order to counter the negative air quality effects that the Project will cause.

5. The DEIR does not adequately analyze the aesthetic impacts of the Project.

According to the DEIR, signs will be located on each of the Project's four multistory buildings, totaling 234,067 square feet of permitted signage. Many of the signs will be extremely large, animated, and placed high up on the buildings, where they will be clearly visible from a distance of at least 2.5 miles away. The size, amount, and type of signage that the Project proposes is completely out of character with the current lighting and signage in the area. This type of signage is problematic for several important reasons, including the potential danger to drivers on nearby freeways and local roads, the distraction that the signs will cause for students in nearby schools, and the health effects of artificial lighting on nearby residents. No mitigation measures were proposed for signage, other than limiting the hours when the signs can be operational to

¹⁰ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-20.

¹¹ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-22.

Draft EIR ENV-20141773-EIR The Reef Comments November 2, 2015 Page 5 of 5

hours when most residents will be asleep. Additional mitigation measures must be introduced through a recirculated DEIR – including a plan alternative with signage limited to non-animated onsite signage.

9 cont.

I appreciate your attention to these comments. The Project will have a tremendous impact on the surrounding low-income community. Many of these negative impacts are not recognized or adequately addressed by the DEIR. First and foremost is the displacement the Project will have absent mitigation factors.

10

Pursuant to Pub. Res. Code Section 21092.2 and Gov. Code Section 65092 please notify me in writing of any hearings, decisions, notifications, or actions referring or related to this project. Should you have any questions or need more information. please contact me at 213.842.9221.

Sincerely,

Clemente Franco

Comment Letter No. 22

Clemente Franco 1295 Sunset Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90026

Response to Comment 22-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 22-2 through 22-11.

Response to Comment 22-2

The commenter states that the City's zoning does not allow animated signage on the Project Site. See Response to Comment 9-3.

Response to Comment 22-3

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not analyze the impact of destabilizing the surrounding community, displacement and gentrification. See Responses to Comments 9-22 and 10-8.

The commenter also states that mitigation measures are available for many of the significant unavoidable impacts identified in the Draft EIR, and requests that the Draft EIR be revised and recirculated. See Responses to Comments 22-4 through 22-10.

Response to Comment 22-4

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not adequately evaluate the indirect displacement of residents, and the impact of gentrification. See Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 22-5

The commenter requests that the land use analysis in the Draft EIR be expanded to include conflicts with existing zoning requirements, the impact of the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage on City Land Use policy, several relevant General Plan policies, and consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy. See the following Responses to Comments:

Comment	Response
Number of discretionary actions	9-3
Conflict with Existing Zoning Requirements	9-21
Conflict with Signage Policy	9-19
Consistency with General Plan Policies	
Housing Element Objective 1.1 and 1.2; Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101	9-22
Health Element Policy 1.7 and Program 86	9-23
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 1.5-2	9-24
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 11-2.3	9-26
Framework Element Policy 3.14.6	9-27
Framework Element Policy 4.2.1	9-29
Consistency with the Industrial Land Use Policy and provision of community benefits	9-31 and 9-32

Response to Comment 22-6

The commenter states that the Project will increase traffic during construction, which would create congestion on local roadways. See Response to Comment 10-19.

Response to Comment 22-7

The comment states that the number of vehicle trips generated by the Project during operation would be higher than what is indicated in the Draft EIR. See Responses to Comments 10-20 and 10-21. With respect to the potential transportation benefits of locating higher income housing near transit stations, see Response to Comment 9-35.

Response to Comment 22-8

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts to nearby sensitive receptors during Project construction and operation from VOCs and NOx, including air filters, air-proof windows, and indoor spaces. See Response to Comment 10-17.

Response to Comment 22-9

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts from the proposed signage, including limiting the signage to non-animated signs. With respect to the impacts of proposed signage as addressed in the Draft EIR, including consistency with the surrounding community, hazards to drivers,

distractions to schools, health effects of lighting, and inclusion of additional mitigation measures, see Responses to Comments 9-3 through 9-7. With respect to an additional alternative with non-animated signage, see Response to Comment 9-53.

Response to Comment 22-10

The comment includes closing remarks, and reiterates concern for displacement of low-income residents. The commenter requests to be notified of all hearings, decisions, notifications and actions related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.

1

2

3

4

November 2, 2015

Attn: Major Projects & EIR Section The City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
200 North Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2601

RE: Draft EIR ENV-201401773-EIR The Reef (formerly SOLA Village)

Dear Department of City Planning Staff:

My name is Martha Sanchez, property owner at 133 East 30th Street Los Angeles, Ca 90011. I live in a close proximity to the REEF Development Project. I have tried to understand the EIR so I could provide with my input to your office but unfortunately I have to rely on my allies and other community organizations to help me to draft a letter so I could still have a say in the process.

The reason why I'm depending on others to understand the process is simple, first, I haven't had a chance to read totally the study since I'm not fluent in English, the language utilized in that study is very technical and there are hundreds of unfriendly terms and codes in hundreds of pages that I couldn't even had the chance to get someone to explain to me due the very little time that you gave us.

Second, as a longtime resident I have witnessed the increase of noise, traffic, pollution and many other troubles caused by the construction boom occurring in my area. The Reed Project will add more and more disturbances not just for a couple of years, or five years, we are talking about 15 years of more and more turbulences around the most dangerous metro lines in the United States. That's unacceptable!

Third, as a low income resident, I'm concern about the economic impact that such project will cause to hundreds of low income families. Forget about property owners, what is going to happen to those poor renters that can barely make their means. Projects like this always push people out of the neighborhoods, ignoring their needs, concerns and health problems.

For these and many other hundreds of reasons, I don't feel welcome, included or acknowledged to participate on the benefits of this project. I feel excluded from the process and discriminated against. I appreciate your attention to my comments and please notify me in writing of any and all hearings decision, notifications or actions related to this project.

Sincerely,

Martha Sanchez, 133 East 30th Street Los Angeles, Ca 90011 213.884.5315

Martha Sanchez

Comment Letter No. 23

Martha Sanchez 133 East 30th Street Los Angeles, CA 90011

Response to Comment 23-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. In addition, the commenter expresses concern regarding the language used in the Draft EIR, because the commenter is not fluent in English. See Response to Comment 10-2. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 23-2 through 23-4.

Response to Comment 23-2

The commenter expresses concerns regarding construction impacts (i.e., noise, traffic, and air quality), as well as safety concerns with respect to the local Metro Rail line. The comment does not directly address the Draft EIR. The commenter's opinion is acknowledged, and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.

Response to Comment 23-3

The commenter expresses concern regarding the economic and health impacts of the Project on low-income residents. See Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 23-4

The comment includes closing remarks, and expresses the commenter's feelings of exclusion, being unwelcome, and discriminated against due to the reasons expressed in prior comments. The commenter requests to be notified on all hearings, decisions, notifications, and actions related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.

George Torres 857 E 43rd Street Los Angeles, CA 90011

November 2, 2015

Erin Strelich, City of Los Angeles Planning Department 200 North Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, California 90012 Fax: (213) 978-1343

E-mail: erin.strelich@lacity.org

RE: Draft EIR ENV-201401773-EIR The Reef (formerly SOLA Village)

Dear Ms. Strelich,

I, George Torres write to express concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the Reef Development Project ("the Project") and the substantial flaws in the current Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). I am a life-long resident of South Central Los Angeles that regularly uses Washington Blvd, Broadway and surrounded streets to get to destinations.

The Project proposes to transform an existing limited industrial property into a massive mixed-use development with 1,444 luxury residential units, 90,000 square feet of high-end retail uses, 46,000 square feet of restaurant/bar uses, a 208-key hotel, 18,000 square foot gallery, an 8,000 square-foot yoga/fitness studio, approximately 2,733 parking spaces and 234,067 square feet of animated signage where virtually none exists, in part, because the City's zoning does not allow it. Despite the profound environmental impacts this Project would have on the surrounding community and the City as a whole, the DEIR is characterized by self-serving assertions, circular logic, and anemic analysis.

The Project, as currently proposed, threatens to destabilize the surrounding low-income community. Not only does the Project fail to offer even one affordable unit, it intensifies the displacement pressures on current local residents with increased rents and escalated gentrification. Yet the DEIR falls far short of evaluating these and the many other negative environmental impacts inherent in the Project, as proposed. For all its deficiencies, however, the DEIR concedes that the Project would result in numerous significant environmental impacts. The DEIR cavalierly concludes that many of these impacts cannot be mitigated. It is wrong. Rather the DEIR simply fails to consider mitigation that is both appropriate and at times obvious even to the casual observer. As a result, the DEIR must be revised and recirculated to address its material CEQA shortcomings.

Key among the DEIR's deficiencies are the following:

1. The DEIR fails to adequately evaluate the significant displacement and gentrification pressures the Project, as proposed, foist onto the local community.

The Project proposal and the DEIR fail to acknowledge - let alone adequately address - the threat of displacement and the corresponding negative social and health impacts on the existing community. Citing only the fact that there is no existing housing on-site, the DEIR concludes that no people will be displaced, without further analysis. This is an overly simplistic

1

2

3

development pressures in Los Angeles, wherein residents are often displaced by the economic effects of development such as the Project independently of whether their housing is displaced. CEQA is clear that in addition to direct impacts, an EIR should also analyze those indirect impacts which are reasonably foreseeable outcomes of the project. This includes the economic effects of a project which will foreseeably lead to physical changes in the environment.

conclusion which does not take into account the lived experience of residents or the reality of

A report on the health impacts of the Project concludes that over 40,000 people have a moderate to very high risk for financial strain and/or displacement intensified by the Project's impacts on housing prices in the surrounding area.³ Many of the residents of South Central have likely experienced serial forced displacement, which can have a cumulative impact resulting in a traumatic condition called "root shock." The tangible human impacts of these pressures include disintegration of health promoting networks of social cohesion, exposure to substandard housing conditions, and a wide variety of chronic stress-related physical and mental illness, including anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and sleep disorders. The City's own General Plan Health Element acknowledges the negative health impacts of displacement created by major development projects, and explicitly calls for "opportunities for low-income and vulnerable populations to access the benefits created by new development and investment in their neighborhood."

Despite the overwhelming demonstrated potential for significant impacts with regard to displacement, the Project does not include any mechanism to create or preserve affordable housing or to minimize the catalytic impacts on increased housing prices and speculation. The DEIR fails to properly analyze and mitigate these impacts.

2. There are numerous and substantial flaws in the DEIR's Land Use and Planning analysis

The Project is seeking at least 15 different discretionary land use entitlements, including General Plan Amendments, a zone change, variances, parking reductions and a significant Supplemental Use District – Sign District. This long list of required departures from adopted plans calls into question the merits of the Project and lays bare the fact that the Project upends existing city policy.

The DEIR must evaluate any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans.⁷ The DEIR fails to meet this standard. To start, the DEIR does not evaluate the Project's many conflicts with existing zoning requirements. Instead, the DEIR merely assumes that the Project's laundry list of requested zone changes, general plan amendments and other discretionary approvals are a foregone conclusion, thereby failing to

4 cont.

¹ 14 CCR 15126.2 ("Direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly ² Anderson First Coalition v. City of Anderson (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 1173, 1182. ("When there is evidence... that economic and social effects caused by a project... could result in a reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental impact, such as urban decay or deterioration, then the CEQA lead agency is obligated to assess this indirect environmental impact.")

³ [draft, 52-53].

⁴ Id, at 6, 43-44

⁵ Id.

⁶ City of Los Angeles, Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, Policy 1.7, Program 86.

⁷ CEQA Guidelines, 15125(d) ("The EIR shall discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans.") See also, City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide (calling for an evaluation of "whether the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or adopted environmental goals or policies contained in other applicable plans.")

evaluate the impacts of the Project based on existing physical conditions. The DEIR grossly errs in concluding that the Project poses no environmental impacts on the City's land use and policy with respect to the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage (SUDS). In fact, the SUDS gravely threatens the City's continued ability to ban such signage along highways – a land use power the City fought tooth and nail to preserve. Further, the DEIR fails to provide any analysis whatsoever of the Project's consistency with a number of highly relevant General Plan Policies. Likewise, the DEIR neglects to evaluate the Project's consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy (ILUP), which includes a clear directive that industrial land use conversion projects, like the Reef, should include affordable housing and other community benefits. 9

5 cont.

3. The DEIR's Transportation Analysis is flawed.

The Project will significantly increase traffic in the area during both construction and operation. During construction, which will occur over at least 60 months, there will be between 125 and 500 construction workers on site per day. Although the DEIR claims that they will not arrive or depart the site during "peak traffic hours," this cannot be guaranteed, and these workers will still create additional traffic during other hours. In addition, during the first (at least) three months of construction (the excavation phase), 800 - 900 truck trips per day would haul truckloads off the site. This would amount to the equivalent of 360 passenger car trips per hour, which would create substantial congestion on local roads.

6

During the life of the Project, much more traffic would be created. The Project Site will include over 2,700 parking spaces for patrons, visitors, residents, and employees. The DEIR predicts an increase of about 940 car trips during the morning peak hour and 1200 during the evening peak hour. But in reality, it is likely that this number will be significantly higher. Because of the catalytic nature of the Project, other similar developments may be enticed to build in the area, resulting in significantly more traffic. In addition, the demographic that the Project is likely to attract is wealthier than the current population, and therefore more likely to travel using motor vehicles, despite the close proximity of the Project to public transportation.

7

After mitigation measures are implemented, the Project would still result in 24 significant impacts, an extremely high number, considering the amount of traffic that already exists in the area.

4. The DEIR's Air Quality Mitigation Measures are Inadequate.

The Project will result in significant and unavoidable impacts from Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) during the construction and operation phases, and in and Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions impacts during the operation phase. Both VOCs and NOx are extremely harmful when inhaled, particularly for sensitive receptors, including young children and the elderly. The types of health effects that are associated with these gases/ chemicals are asthma, respiratory illness, cancer and even death. The Site is located within 1000 feet of three schools and at least 264 residences. But the Project's mitigation measures only address the residents, employees and

⁸ The relevant General Plan policies that go unanalyzed in the DEIR include, but are not limited to <u>Housing Element</u> Objectives 1.1 and 1.2, Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101; <u>Health Element</u> Policy 1.7 and Program 86, <u>Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan</u> Policies 1.5-2 and 11-2.3; Framework Element Policies 3.14.6 and 4.2.1.

⁹ Los Angeles Industrial Land Use Policy, Staff Direction Memorandum Regarding Industrial Land Use and Potential Conversion to Residential or Other Uses," 5-8 (2008). http://planning.lacity.org/Code Studies/LanduseProj/Industrial Files/StaffDirections.pdf

visitors that will be within the Project boundaries. The DEIR should have addressed the need for mitigation measures including air filters, air proof windows, and indoor spaces for the community, in order to counter the negative air quality effects that the Project will cause.

8 cont.

9

10

5. The DEIR does not adequately analyze the aesthetic impacts of the Project.

According to the DEIR, signs will be located on each of the Project's four multi-story buildings, totaling 234,067 square feet of permitted signage. ¹⁰ Many of the signs will be extremely large, animated, and placed high up on the buildings, where they will be clearly visible from a distance of at least 2.5 miles away. ¹¹The size, amount, and type of signage that the Project proposes is completely out of character with the current lighting and signage in the area. This type of signage is problematic for several important reasons, including the potential danger to drivers on nearby freeways and local roads, the distraction that the signs will cause for students in nearby schools, and the health effects of artificial lighting on nearby residents. No mitigation measures were proposed for signage, other than limiting the hours when the signs can be operational to hours when most residents will be asleep. Additional mitigation measures must be introduced through a recirculated DEIR – including a plan alternative with signage limited to non-animated onsite signage.

I appreciate your attention to these comments. I know that responsible community development is possible, and that development projects need not usurp, displace nor disrespect the existing community. Rather, it is possible to develop projects that satisfy the particular needs of the developer and minimize direct and indirect environmental impacts on the community.

We trust that you will notify us in writing of any hearings, decisions, notifications, or actions referring or related to this project (pursuant to Pub. Res. Code Section 21092.2 and Gov. Code Section 65092). Should you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at (323) 907-0014

Sincerely,

George Torres

DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-20.

¹¹ DEIR, Aesthetics, pg. IV.B.1-22.

Comment Letter No. 24

George Torres 857 E. 4rd Street Los Angeles, CA 90011

Response to Comment 24-1

The comment is an introduction and, as such, is acknowledged for the record and will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project. Specific comments raised in the remainder of the comment letter are addressed in Responses to Comments 24-2 through 24-11.

Response to Comment 24-2

The commenter states that the City's zoning does not allow animated signage on the Project Site. See Response to Comment 9-3.

Response to Comment 24-3

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not analyze the impact of destabilizing the surrounding community, displacement and gentrification. See Responses to Comments 9-22 and 10-8.

The commenter also states that mitigation measures are available for many of the significant unavoidable impacts identified in the Draft EIR, and requests that the Draft EIR be revised and recirculated. See Responses to Comments 24-4 through 24-10.

Response to Comment 24-4

The commenter states that the Draft EIR does not adequately evaluate the indirect displacement of residents, and the impact of gentrification. See Response to Comment 10-8.

Response to Comment 24-5

The commenter requests that the land use analysis in the Draft EIR be expanded to include conflicts with existing zoning requirements, the impact of the proposed Supplemental Use District for Signage on City Land Use policy, several relevant General Plan policies, and consistency with the City's Industrial Land Use Policy. See the following Responses to Comments:

Comment	Response
Number of discretionary actions	9-3
Conflict with Existing Zoning Requirements	9-21
Conflict with Signage Policy	9-19
Consistency with General Plan Policies	
Housing Element Objective 1.1 and 1.2; Policies 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.8, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, and Programs 8, 54, 73, 99 and 101	9-22
Health Element Policy 1.7 and Program 86	9-23
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 1.5-2	9-24
Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Policy 11-2.3	9-26
Framework Element Policy 3.14.6	9-27
Framework Element Policy 4.2.1	9-29
Consistency with the Industrial Land Use Policy and provision of community benefits	9-31 and 9-32

Response to Comment 24-6

The commenter states that the Project will increase traffic during construction, which would create congestion on local roadways. See Response to Comment 10-19.

Response to Comment 24-7

The comment states that the number of vehicle trips generated by the Project during operation would be higher than what is indicated in the Draft EIR. See Responses to Comments 10-20 and 10-21. With respect to the potential transportation benefits of locating higher income housing near transit stations, see Response to Comment 9-35.

Response to Comment 24-8

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts to nearby sensitive receptors during Project construction and operation from VOCs and NOx, including air filters, air-proof windows, and indoor spaces. See Response to Comment 10-17.

Response to Comment 24-9

The commenter requests additional mitigation measures for impacts from the proposed signage, including limiting the signage to non-animated signs. With respect to the impacts of proposed signage as addressed in the Draft EIR, including consistency with the surrounding community, hazards to drivers,

distractions to schools, health effects of lighting, and inclusion of additional mitigation measures, see Responses to Comments 9-3 through 9-7. With respect to an additional alternative with non-animated signage, see Response to Comment 9-53.

Response to Comment 24-10

The comment includes closing remarks, and reiterates concern for displacement of low-income residents. The commenter requests to be notified of all hearings, decisions, notifications and actions related to the Project. The Lead Agency will include the commenter on the distribution list for all notices, decisions, and documents distributed by the Lead Agency related to the Project.

Erin Strelich Los Angeles Department of City Planning 200 North Spring Street, Room 750 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Email: erin.strelich@lacity.org

Re: The Reef Project - ENV-2014-1773-EIR

Dear Ms. Strelich:

I have owned and operated Anne McGilvray & Company at the LA Mart for 25 years. As a longtime stakeholder in this community, I am very excited about the Reef Project.

The Environmental Impact Report details an incredible investment that provides opportunities both for me as a business owner in the building, and to the surrounding businesses and residents in the community. For example, The Reef Project will provide a convenient location for our customers to stay when they visit our showroom, as well as restaurants, cafes, and public plazas.

These enhancements will help to ensure that the small businesses like ours within the LA Mart will continue to thrive for many years to come, providing quality jobs and attracting customers to the city from around the country.

The Reef Project is an exciting development that will be positive for the LA Mart community, and for all of South LA.

Sincerely,

Liesl Ludwig

CEO

Anne McGilvray and Company

CC: Councilman Curren Price

Comment Letter No. 25 [Form Letter No. 1]

This comment letter is a form letter submitted by 25 individuals who are currently tenants of The Reef building. A single response to the issues raised in the form letter is provided below. All of the letters have been included in Appendix J to the Final EIR.

Response to Comment 25-1

The commenter expresses support for the Project, and does not directly comment on the Draft EIR. No response is required. The commenter's opinion will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Ms. Erin Strelich LA Department of City Planning 200 N Spring St Room 750 Los Angeles CA 90012

Los Angeles City Councilman Curren Price 200 N Spring St Room 420 Los Angeles CA 90012

Re: Case No. Env-2014-1773-EIR

I support the Reef Project at 1933 S Broadway. This is an amazing vision for South Los Angeles, especially for our neighborhood where no one has been willing to invest in for decades.

As with my neighbors and other residents living and working here in this community, I'm most interested in the jobs that the Reef Project will bring. I am also excited that the Reef Project will transform the two large parking lots and replace them with a development that creates an outdoor gathering place for the community among many other needed amenities.

Please move this project forward swiftly and help bring this investment in the community and the jobs it will create to fruition.

Sincerely.

Name Christopher Suncher
Address 703 w 43rd pl 90037

Comment Letter No. 26 [Form Letter No. 2]

This comment letter is a form letter submitted by 55 individuals located in the surrounding community. A single response to the issues raised in the form letter is provided below. All of the letters have been included in Appendix K to the Final EIR.

Response to Comment 26-1

The commenter expresses support for the Project, and does not directly comment on the Draft EIR. No response is required. The commenter's opinion will be considered by the City's decision-making bodies in determining whether or not to approve the Project.