

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT INFORMATION

<u>Project Title:</u>	350 South Figueroa Project
<u>Project Location:</u>	The Project site is located at 350 South Figueroa Street in the City of Los Angeles, California 90071.
<u>Project Applicant:</u>	350 South Figueroa, LLC 3450 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1200-115 Los Angeles, CA 90010
<u>Lead Agency:</u>	City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Central Project Planning Division 200 North Spring Street, Room 621 Los Angeles, CA 90012

1.2 PROJECT SUMMARY

This Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA) has been prepared pursuant to Section 21155.2 of the California Public Resources Code. In 2008 the state legislature created an additional document for environmental review called a Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA). Previously, the City reviewed the environmental impacts of a project through one of three methods: categorical exemption, negative declaration/mitigated negative declaration (MND/ND), or environmental impact report (EIR).

The subject of this SCEA is a Project that includes the proposed demolition of an approximately 29,500-square-foot portion of an existing structure and construction of a new, 41-story residential building integrated into the existing structure. The Project site is approximately 160,000 square feet in area and includes approximately 330,000 square feet of existing floor area; the Project would add approximately 624,500 square feet of new residential floor area at the southwest corner of the Project site for a combined 925,000 square feet of floor area.¹ The residential building would be a maximum of 480 feet in height and

1 Floor Area is defined in the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC 12.03) as “that area in square feet confined within the exterior walls of a building, but not including the area of the following: exterior walls, stairways, shafts, rooms housing building-operating equipment or machinery, parking areas with associated driveways and ramps, space for the landing and storage of helicopters, and basement storage areas.”

contain 570 units. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of the Project, including the existing building to remain in place, would be 5.8:1.

The Project would include activated street frontages on the building's ground floor, as well as a number of community spaces throughout the building, including open space areas on the sixth-floor podium deck and roof deck. The Project would maintain the existing six levels of parking though the configuration and number of spaces would change. The Project when complete would include approximately 1,387 automobile parking spaces that comply with the Los Angeles Municipal Code-required bicycle parking.

The Project approvals requested by the Applicant include:

- Project Permit Compliance pursuant to LAMC Section 11.5.7 C for the Bunker Hill Specific Plan.
- Approval of other permits, ministerial or discretionary, may be necessary in order to execute and implement the Project. Such approvals may include, but are not limited to: landscaping approvals, exterior approvals, storm water discharge permits, grading permits, haul route permits, off-site improvements, and installation and hookup approvals for public utilities and related permits, and the removal of trees on public and/or private property.

1.3 REGULATORY BACKGROUND

Through the "Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008," known as Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), the state legislature created a new document for environmental review called a Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA). The intent of a SCEA is to encourage projects that would implement regional plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. by building housing near public transit) by providing for streamlined environmental review of "Transit Priority Projects" that are consistent with an adopted sustainable communities strategy. The SCEA provides complete environmental analysis by evaluating the potential effects of a Project in an Initial Study similar to a Mitigated Negative Declaration, with additional requirements specific to a SCEA as described below.

SB 375 sought to integrate transportation and land use planning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by directing the State's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) that prepare regional transportation plans to include in those plans a "sustainable communities strategy" to achieve greenhouse gas emission targets set by the California Air Resources Board.^{2,3} The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the MPO for the County of Los Angeles (along with the Counties of Imperial, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, and Ventura). On April 7, 2016, SCAG's Regional Council adopted the 2016–2040

2 Stats. 2008, ch. 728, Section 1; Stats. 2009, ch. 354, Section 5.

3 Gov. Code, Section 65080, subd. (b)(2)(B).

Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016–2040 RTP/SCS), which outlines strategies to meet or exceed the greenhouse gas emission targets set by CARB.

1.4 TRANSIT PRIORITY PROJECT CRITERIA

SB 375 provided CEQA streamlining provisions for projects that are consistent with an adopted applicable SCS and meet certain other criteria. Cities acting as lead CEQA agency within the SCAG region can now prepare a SCEA as the environmental CEQA Clearance for "transit priority projects" that are consistent with SCAG's 2016–2040 RTP/SCS. A transit priority project is a project that meets the following four criteria:

- Is consistent with the general use designation, density, building intensity, and applicable policies specified for the project area in the SCAG 2016–2040 RTP/SCS;
- Contains at least 50 percent residential use, based on total building square footage or, if the project contains between 26 percent and 50 percent nonresidential uses, a floor area ratio of not less than 0.75;
- Provides a minimum net density of at least 20 units per acre; and
- Is within one-half mile of a major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor included in a regional transportation plan.

1.5 SCEA PROCESS

A transit priority project may be approved using a SCEA if it has been determined to not result in significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. For a SCEA, an initial study shall be prepared to identify all potentially significant impacts.⁴ As with an MND, mitigation must be identified for any potentially significant impacts. In addition, for a project to qualify to be evaluated through a SCEA, the project should incorporate all feasible mitigation measures, performance standards and criteria set forth in prior applicable EIRs.⁵ This would include the SCAG 2016–2040 RTP/SCS Program EIR.

A SCEA need not consider the cumulative effects of the project that have been adequately addressed and mitigated in prior EIRs; growth-inducing impacts are not required to be referenced, described or addressed; and project specific or cumulative impacts from cars and light duty truck trips on global warming or the regional transportation network need not be analyzed.⁶ The SCEA does not analyze

4 PRC Section 21155.2(b)(1).

5 PRC Section 21155.2(a).

6 PRC Section 21159.28.

alternatives to a project because, like with an ND or MND, there are no significant impacts that need to be reduced or eliminated through project alternatives.

A draft of the SCEA will be circulated for public comment for a period of not less than 30 days with notice provided in the same manner as required for an environmental impact report.⁷ Prior to acting on the SCEA, the lead agency shall conduct a public hearing and shall review and consider all comments received.⁸

The SCEA may be approved by the lead agency after the lead agency's legislative body conducts a public hearing, reviews comments received, and finds the following:

- a. All potentially significant or significant effects required to be identified in the initial study have been identified and analyzed, and
- b. With respect to each significant effect on the environment required to be identified in the initial study, either of the following apply:
 - i. Changes or alternations have been required in or incorporated into the project that avoid or mitigate the significant effects to a level of insignificance.
 - ii. Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been, or can and should be, adopted by that other agency.

The lead agency's decision to review and approve a TPP with a SCEA shall be reviewed under the substantial evidence standard.

1.6 REQUIRED FINDINGS

The City of Los Angeles has determined that:

1. The Proposed Project is consistent with the general use designations, density, building intensity, and applicable policies specified for the project area in the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) prepared by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG);
2. The State Air Resources Board, pursuant to subparagraph (H) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 65080 of the Government Code, has accepted SCAG's determination that the sustainable communities strategy adopted by SCAG in the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS would, if implemented, achieve the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.
3. The Proposed Project qualifies as a transit priority project pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21155(b).

7 PRC Section 21155.2(b)(3).

8 PRC Section 21155.2(b)(5).

4. The Proposed Project is a residential or mixed-use project as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21159.28(d).
5. The Proposed Project incorporates all relevant and feasible mitigation measures, performance standards, or criteria set forth in the prior environmental reports, including the RTP/SCS Program Environmental Impact Report.
6. All potentially significant or significant effects required to be identified and analyzed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) have been identified and analyzed in an initial study; and
7. The Proposed Project, as mitigated, either avoids or mitigates to a level of insignificance all potentially significant or significant effects of the Proposed Project required to be analyzed pursuant to CEQA.

Therefore, the City of Los Angeles finds that the Proposed Project complies with the requirements of CEQA for using an SCEA as authorized pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21155.2(b).

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE SCEA

This SCEA is organized into the following sections:

Section 1.0: Introduction provides introductory information about the Project.

Section 2.0: Project Description provides a detailed description of the Project, including the environmental setting, Project characteristics, related Project information, Project objectives, and environmental clearance requirements.

Section 3.0: Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment Criteria describes the regulatory background and criteria for the use of a SCEA in completing the CEQA process for this Project.

Section 4.0: 2016–2040 RTP/SCS Program EIR Mitigation Measures identifies all feasible mitigation measures, performance standards, and criteria from the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS Program EIR.

Section 5.0: Initial Study Checklist contains the completed SCEA Initial Study Checklist showing the significance level under each environmental impact category.

Section 6.0: Sustainable Communities Environmental Analysis contains an assessment and discussion of impacts associated with each environmental issue identified in the Initial Study Checklist

In addition, the **Appendices** include Project-specific reports and data used to support the analysis in this Initial Study.