

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared by the City of West Hollywood (City) to evaluate potential environmental effects that could result from development of The Bond Project (proposed project). This EIR has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) statutes (PRC Section 21000, et seq., as amended) and implementing guidelines (14 CCR 15000, et seq.). The City is the lead agency under CEQA.

The project applicant, 1125 North Ogden, LLC, proposes to construct a mixed-use project of approximately 214,483 square feet (sf) in gross building area with a maximum height of 71.5 feet. The project would consist of an 86-room hotel, a restaurant, 70 residential units, and an art gallery. The project site consists of three Assessor's Parcels, 5530-002-067, 5530-002-019, and 5530-002-027, which correspond to properties located at 7811 Santa Monica Boulevard, 1114 North Orange Grove Avenue, and 1125 North Ogden Drive, respectively. Construction of the proposed project would involve demolition of the existing 10,000-square-foot commercial building currently used as a gym and located on the existing 7811 Santa Monica Boulevard parcel, the parking lot adjacent to the commercial building, the parking lot currently leased by the City and located along Orange Grove Avenue, and the multifamily structure located on the parcel along Ogden Drive. The proposed project also would include two subterranean levels of parking, totaling approximately 75,483 square feet of parking area, with 175 parking stalls, 45 spaces of which would be available for public parking. The surplus parking spaces provided onsite are intended to continue to meet the needs of surrounding neighborhood businesses, employees, and customers similar to existing conditions. The proposed project would provide vehicular access to hotel guests and the public from driveways along Santa Monica Boulevard and Orange Grove Avenue, with a separate vehicle entrance for project residents along Ogden Drive. The proposed project would also provide 37 bicycle parking spaces.

1.2 THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

CEQA requires preparation of an EIR when there is substantial evidence supporting a fair argument that a proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment. The purpose of an EIR is to provide decision makers, public agencies, and the general public with an objective and informational document that fully discloses the environmental effects of the proposed project. The EIR process is intended to facilitate the objective evaluation of potentially significant direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project, and to identify feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives that would reduce or avoid the proposed project's significant effects.

In addition, CEQA specifically requires an EIR to identify those adverse impacts determined to be significant after mitigation.

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study (IS) was prepared and a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was distributed on October 24, 2016, to public agencies and organizations. The purpose of the NOP was to provide notification that the City plans to prepare an EIR and to solicit input on the scope and content of the EIR. Approximately 59 copies of the NOP were distributed and 14 written comment letters were received from various agencies, organizations, and individuals. These letters, the NOP, and the IS are included in Appendix A.

A scoping meeting was held by the City at Plummer Park on November 16, 2016. The purpose of this meeting was to seek input from agencies and the general public regarding the environmental issues and concerns that may potentially result from the proposed project and to be evaluated in the EIR for the proposed project. Approximately 20 people attended the scoping meeting. The following list summarizes the public comments, questions, and concerns received at the scoping meeting:

- **Aesthetics.** Concerns were raised regarding potential visual impacts to surrounding residential neighborhoods, potential impacts to neighborhood character, potential shade/shadow impacts, and blocking of views. A suggestion was made for architectural variation (setbacks at higher levels).
- **Air Quality.** Concern was raised regarding construction-related dust on nearby sensitive receptors.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials.** Concern was raised regarding hazardous materials in soil related to surrounding automotive uses as well as from neon lighting.
- **Land Use and Planning.** Concerns were raised regarding the size of the project and number of units along Ogden, retail spaces that do not serve or are not accessible to local businesses, increased development intensity at the project site, access through residential neighborhood, impacts of overall development in West Hollywood on infrastructure, proposed land use and scale (height and massing), incompatibility with surrounding land uses, and the proximity of a restaurant serving alcohol next door to a school.
- **Population and Housing.** Concerns were raised regarding loss of existing affordable housing and displacement of existing residences, lack of public outreach to existing residents, and potential impacts to existing residents along Ogden Drive who will not be displaced by the project.
- **Public Services.** Concerns were raised regarding potential impacts to public services, in terms of emergency response and traffic effects on emergency response times.
- **Transportation.** Concerns were raised regarding potential impacts to the neighboring school in terms of traffic, traffic safety, parking, and traffic flow on Orange Grove. A suggestion of

valet parking for school drop-off and pick up was offered. Concerns were raised regarding traffic safety on Ogden Drive (traffic speeds, left turns), parking issues at nearby auto leasing lots, traffic flow and lack of parking to support existing and proposed residences. Concerns were also raised regarding traffic on residential streets, the design of ingress/egress and overall traffic flow to and from the project, the number of parking spaces for the intended uses, potential impacts intersections, truck access (i.e., delivery trucks, trash trucks), loss of street parking, potential increase in illegal parking, and the loss of overflow parking for Whole Foods patrons and potential for encroachment into residential neighborhoods.

This EIR focuses on the environmental impacts identified as potentially significant during the scoping process, completed after preparing and issuing the IS/NOP and receiving comments in response to the NOP. For purposes of the analysis included within this EIR, the City is utilizing the thresholds of significance included within Appendix G of the newly revised CEQA Guidelines (December 2018). The IS was prepared and circulated prior to the new 2019 CEQA amendments. However, the City is now using the new thresholds of significance included within Appendix G to comply with the comprehensive CEQA revisions. As such, the issue areas analyzed in detail in this EIR include air quality, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, public services, transportation, utilities and service systems, and energy. Effects found not to be significant are addressed in the IS, included in Appendix A of this EIR. Aesthetics is discussed in the EIR; however, in accordance with Section 21099 of the Public Resources Code, for qualified projects in a transit area zone as defined by this section, aesthetics impacts cannot be considered significant, and therefore, this analysis makes no judgment of the significance of any possible aesthetics impacts under CEQA.

This Draft EIR is being circulated for 45 days for public review and comment. The timeframe of the public review period is identified in the Notice of Availability (NOA) attached to this Draft EIR. During this 45-day review period, comments from the general public, organizations, and agencies regarding environmental issues analyzed in the Draft EIR and the Draft EIR's accuracy and completeness may be submitted to the lead agency at the following address:

City of West Hollywood
Antonio Castillo, Associate Planner
Community Development Department
8300 Santa Monica Boulevard
West Hollywood, California 90069
Email: acastillo@weho.org

General questions about this EIR and the EIR process also should be directed to the email address above. The City will prepare written responses to all comments pertaining to environmental issues raised in the Draft EIR if they are submitted in writing and postmarked by the last day of the public review period identified in the NOA.

Prior to approval of the proposed project, the City, as the lead agency and decision-making entity, is required to certify this EIR has been completed in accordance with CEQA, the proposed project has been reviewed and the information in this EIR has been considered, and this EIR reflects the independent judgment of the City. CEQA also requires the City to adopt “findings” with respect to each significant environmental effect identified in the EIR (PRC Section 21081; 14 CCR 15091). For each significant effect, CEQA requires the approving agency to make one or more of the following findings:

- Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects as identified in the Final EIR.
- Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.
- Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measure or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

If the City concludes the proposed project will result in significant effects that cannot be substantially lessened or avoided by feasible mitigation measures and alternatives, the City must adopt a “statement of overriding considerations” prior to approval of the proposed project (PRC Section 21081 (b)). Such statements are intended under CEQA to provide a written means by which the lead agency balances in writing the benefits of the proposed project and the significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. Where the lead agency concludes the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable environmental impacts, the lead agency may find such impacts “acceptable” and approve the proposed project.

In addition, public agencies, when approving a project, must also adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) describing the changes incorporated into the proposed project or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment (PRC Section 21081.6). The MMRP is adopted at the time of project approval and is designed to ensure compliance during project implementation. Upon approval of the proposed project, the City will be responsible for implementation of the proposed project’s MMRP. This document will be attached to the Final EIR.

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This EIR is organized as follows:

An **Executive Summary** of the EIR is provided at the beginning of this document. This summary outlines the conclusions of the environmental analysis and provides a summary of the proposed project and the project alternatives analyzed in the EIR. This section also includes a table summarizing all environmental impacts identified in this EIR along with the associated mitigation measures proposed to reduce or avoid each impact.

Chapter 1, Introduction, serves as a forward to this EIR, introducing the proposed project, the applicable environmental procedures, and the organization of the EIR.

Chapter 2, Project Description, provides a thorough description of the proposed project elements, the purpose and need for the proposed project, project objectives, and required discretionary approvals. This chapter also includes a description of the intended uses of the EIR and public agency actions.

Chapter 3, Environmental Analysis, describes the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, as well as proposed mitigation measures to reduce or avoid any potentially significant impacts. The discussion in Chapter 3 is organized into 10 environmental issue areas, as follows:

- 3.1, Aesthetics
- 3.2, Air Quality
- 3.3, Cultural Resources
- 3.4, Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- 3.5, Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 3.6, Noise
- 3.7, Public Services
- 3.8, Transportation
- 3.9, Utilities and Service Systems
- 3.10, Energy

For each environmental issue area, the analysis and discussion are organized into seven subsections as described as follows:

Environmental Setting – This subsection describes the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the proposed project at the time of publication of the NOP. The environmental

setting establishes the baseline conditions by which the City will determine whether specific project-related impacts are significant.

Relevant Plans, Policies, and Ordinances – This subsection describes the regulatory setting applicable to the environmental issue area and the proposed project at the time of publication of the Notice of Preparation.

Thresholds of Significance – This subsection identifies a set of thresholds by which the level of impact is determined. Thresholds eliminated from further review in the EIR as part of the IS analysis will be identified here.

Methodology – This subsection describes how the analysis was conducted.

Impact Analysis – This subsection provides a detailed analysis regarding the environmental effects of the proposed project, and whether the impacts of the proposed project would meet or exceed the established significance criteria.

Mitigation Measures – This subsection identifies potentially feasible mitigation measures that would avoid or substantially reduce significant adverse project impacts.

Significance After Mitigation – This subsection discusses whether project-related impacts would be reduced to below a level of significance with implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the EIR. If applicable, this subsection also identifies any residual significant and unavoidable adverse effects of the proposed project that would result even with implementation of mitigation measures.

In addition to the seven subsections previously listed, full citations for all documents referred to in each environmental issue area discussion are included at the end of each section or chapter.

Chapter 4, Cumulative Effects, discusses the cumulative effects of the project in combination with the effects of other projects in the vicinity.

Chapter 5, Other CEQA Considerations, addresses significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided, the significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project, and growth-inducing impacts associated with the proposed project.

Chapter 6, Alternatives, discusses alternatives to the proposed project, including a No Project Alternative. This section describes the rationale for selecting the range of alternatives discussed in the EIR and identifies the alternatives considered by the City that were rejected from further discussion as infeasible during the scoping process. Lastly, Chapter 6 includes a discussion of the environmental effects of the alternatives that were carried forward for analysis and identifies the environmentally superior alternative.

Chapter 7, List of Preparers, provides names and contact information of those responsible for writing this EIR.

Appendices include various technical studies prepared for the proposed project, as listed in the Table of Contents.

The City, as the designated lead agency for the proposed project, is responsible for enforcing and verifying each mitigation measure is implemented as required; however, the project applicant shall be responsible for implementing the required mitigation measures. As part of the Final EIR process, an MMRP will be prepared.

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