



**City of
West Hollywood**

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: Notice of Preparation Recipients (see attached distribution list.)

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Lead Agency

Agency Name City of West Hollywood
 Street Address 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard
 City/State/Zip West Hollywood, CA 90069-6216
 Contact David DeGrazia, Senior Planner

Consulting Firm

Firm Name LSA Associates, Inc.
 Street Address 20 Executive Park, Suite 200
 City/State/Zip Irvine, CA 92614-4731
 Contact Ashley Davis, Associate

Project Title: Melrose Triangle

Project Location: The project site is a triangular parcel located at the west boundary of the City of West Hollywood and is adjacent to the City of Beverly Hills. The project site is bounded by Santa Monica Boulevard to the north, Almont Drive to the east, Melrose Avenue to the south, and Doheny Drive to the west. The project addresses are 9040-9098 Santa Monica Boulevard, 603-629 Almont Drive, and 9001-9021 Melrose Avenue. The site totals 3.05 acres and is currently fully developed with office buildings, industrial uses, a parking structure, and retail uses.

Project Description: The City of West Hollywood (City) is considering an application to develop a mixed-use project at the Melrose Triangle (the city block bordered by Melrose Avenue, Santa Monica Boulevard, and Almont Drive). The project would involve demolition of the existing structures on site and the construction of three buildings, with five floors above ground and four parking levels below ground. Components of the project include retail, art gallery/showroom, restaurant, office, residential, and parking uses. This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is being recirculated due to the proposed project being scaled down from its original plans.

The City of West Hollywood will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the proposed project. This NOP is being circulated in order to obtain input from your agency on the scope and content of the environmental analyses to be contained in the Draft EIR. Specifically, the City of West Hollywood requests input on the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibility in connection with the proposed project.

The project description, location, and potential environmental effects, based on the information known to date, are contained in the attached document. Through the receipt of comments on this NOP and the process of preparing the Draft EIR, additions, deletions, and/or modifications of these potential environmental impacts may occur.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be received by March 12, 2012. Please send your response to David DeGrazia, Senior Planner, Planning Division, Community Development Department, at the address shown above. We will need the name of a contact person in your agency in case there are questions related to your response to this NOP.

Date 2-1-12

Signature 
 Title Senior Planner
 Telephone (323) 848-6475

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE MELROSE TRIANGLE PROJECT

SUMMARY

The City of West Hollywood (City) is considering an application to develop a mixed-use project at the Melrose Triangle (the triangular block bordered by Melrose Avenue, Santa Monica Boulevard, and Almont Drive). The project would involve demolition of the existing structures on site and the construction of three buildings, with five stories above ground and four parking levels below ground. Components of the project include retail, art gallery/showroom, restaurant, office, residential, and parking uses.

Under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and its Guidelines, the City is the Lead Agency for environmental review and must evaluate the potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed project. The City previously determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) should be prepared to assess the proposed project's effects on the environment, to identify significant impacts, and to identify feasible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potentially significant environmental impacts. The Draft EIR was circulated from January 17, 2008, to March 3, 2008. However, based on comments received during the public review period and because the City has subsequently adopted an updated General Plan, the project applicant has revised the project plans. Therefore, the Draft EIR will be updated and recirculated.

While a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was initially circulated in early 2004 and re-circulated in 2007, changes to the project design and an updated City General Plan require updated analysis of potential *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, Geology and Soils, Noise, Traffic, Soils, and Hydrology/Water Quality* impacts. This new *Notice of Preparation*:

- Provides updated details on the Melrose Triangle proposal and its construction schedule;
- Informs you of the opportunity to comment on the *scope*, or what is to be included in the contents of the Draft EIR that will be circulated later this year; and
- Is available for review on the City's website at www.weho.org and at the City of West Hollywood, Community Development Department, 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, California.

This NOP is being circulated pursuant to California Resources Code Section 21153(a) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15082. Public agencies and the public are invited to comment on the proposed scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the recirculated Draft EIR. A 30-day comment period is provided to return written comments to the City by March 12, 2012. All comments should be directed to the City at the following address:

Mr. David DeGrazia
Senior Planner
Planning Division
Community Development Department
City of West Hollywood
8300 Santa Monica Boulevard
West Hollywood, CA 90069-6216
Fax: (323) 848-6575

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Project Site and Surrounding Uses

The project site is located on the south side of Santa Monica Boulevard, the north side of Melrose Avenue, and the west side of Almont Drive, adjacent to the City of Beverly Hills (Figure 1, Project Location). The project addresses are 9040–9098 Santa Monica Boulevard, 603–633 Almont Drive, and 9001–9021 Melrose Avenue. The site totals 3.05 acres and is currently developed with office buildings, light industrial uses, a parking structure, and retail uses. The existing commercial uses on Santa Monica Boulevard are generally offices, and on Melrose Avenue are fine art and antique shops and/or studios. Commercial uses on Almont Drive include services, such as appliance repair, with customer parking in the street setback areas. Surrounding land uses consist of one- to three-story commercial buildings along all three streets. South of commercial uses on Melrose Avenue are single- and multi-family dwellings on Rangely Avenue. Beverly Gardens Park and single-family dwellings are located north of Santa Monica Boulevard/Doheny Drive in the City of Beverly Hills.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Melrose Triangle project includes approximately 82,021 square feet (sf) of retail/restaurant floor area designated for general retail, art galleries, design showroom, and café/restaurant uses. These retail/restaurant uses would be located along Melrose Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard at the project's street levels. The second through fifth floors are designated for office and residential uses. The project includes a total of 76 residential units, including 12 one-bedroom units, 53 studio/loft units, and 11 two-bedroom units. The project as proposed would provide 923 parking spaces within four parking levels, three of which would be entirely subterranean. The development would be presented in three primary structures; the Boulevard Building, the Gateway Building, and the Avenue Building, which are divided by a broad paseo that would accommodate pedestrian access from Santa Monica Boulevard through to Melrose Avenue (Figure 2, Conceptual Site Plan). Three driveways would provide vehicular access from the adjacent streets. Table A provides a description of the project features.

The building heights of the various components that comprise the proposed development range up to five stories above ground, with four subterranean levels. Because of the elevation change across the project site, the project level that is accessible from the street along the eastern segments of Melrose Avenue and Almont Avenue is below grade on the northern and western parts of the project site. Because the Melrose level is partially subterranean, it is known as Level B1 in the project's architectural plans.

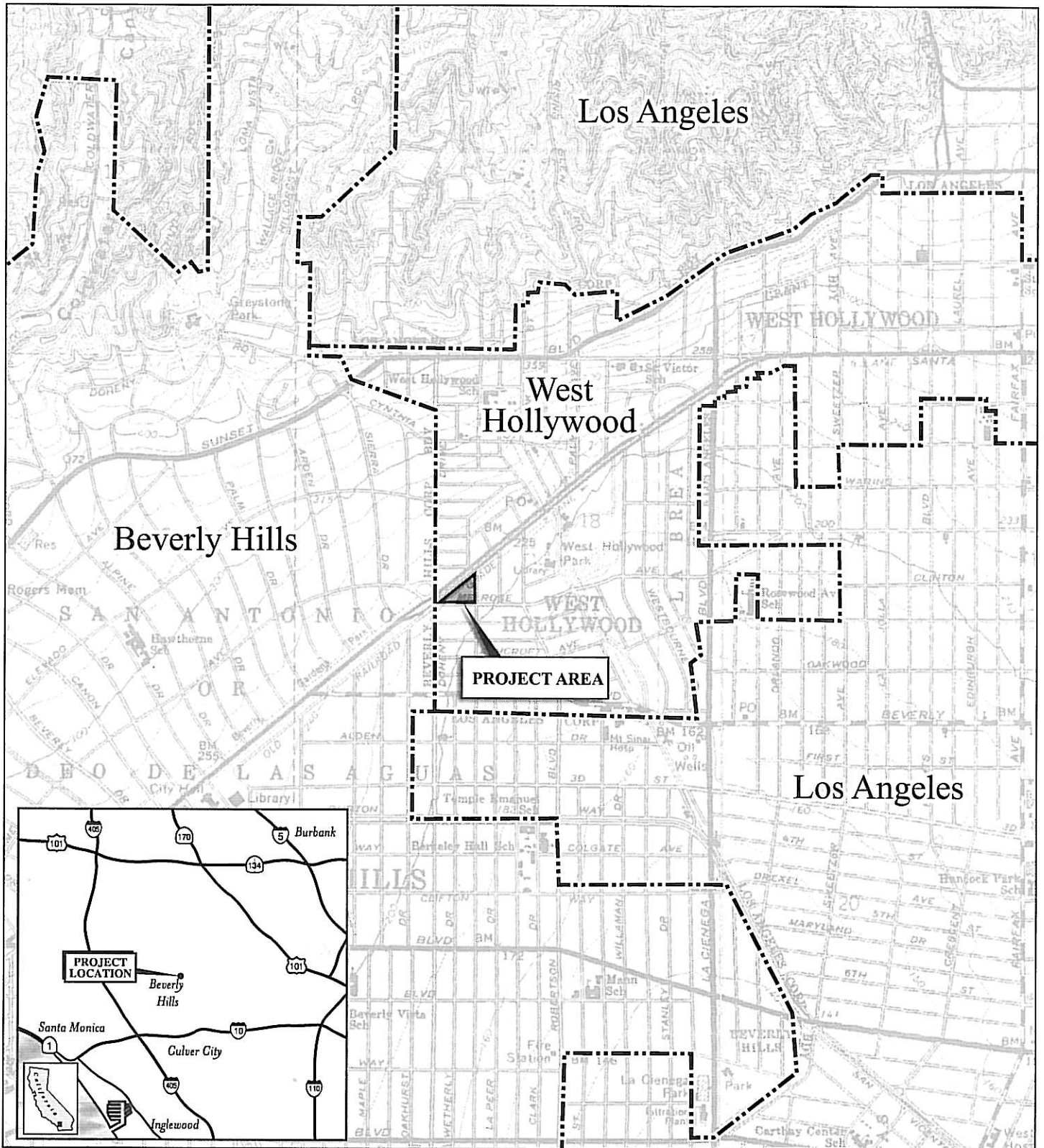
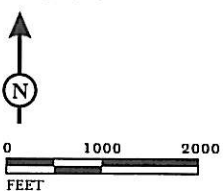


FIGURE 1

LSA



Melrose Triangle

Project Location

SOURCE: USGS 7.5' Quads - Beverly Hills & Hollywood, Ca.

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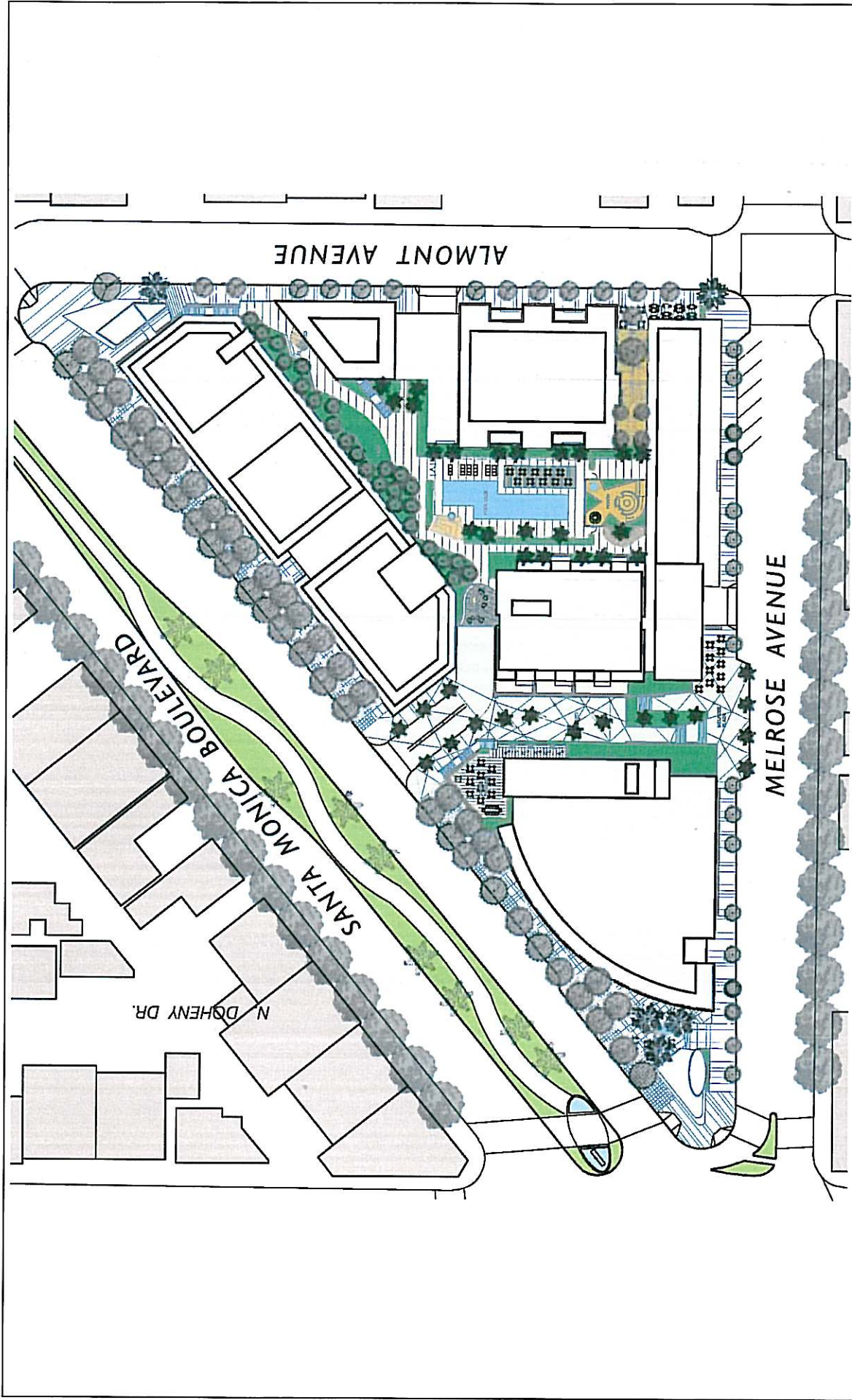
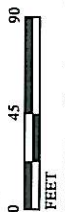
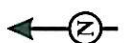


FIGURE 2

Melrose Triangle
Site Plan

LSA



SOURCE: studionelevan at Perkowitz+Ruth Architects

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Table A: Project Features

Type	Square Footage
General Retail	45,112 square feet
Art Galleries	16,404 square feet
Design showrooms	12,303 square feet
Café/restaurant	8,202 square feet
Studio lofts	53 units
One-bedroom apartments	12 units
Two-bedroom apartments	11 units
Parking	923 spaces

PROJECT CHANGES

As stated previously, an NOP was originally circulated in 2004 and recirculated in 2007, and a Draft EIR was circulated in 2008; however, since the time the Draft EIR was circulated, the following changes to the project design have occurred:

- The building heights of the various components that compose the proposed development have been reduced from six stories above ground to five stories above ground.
- The retail/commercial area has been changed to retail/restaurant area providing general retail, art gallery, design showroom, and café/restaurant areas.
- The residential component has been reduced from 195 dwelling units to 76 dwelling units.
- Subterranean levels have been reduced from six levels to four levels, and the subterranean wine and art storage component of the project has been eliminated.
- Vehicular access to the project has been reduced from four driveways to three, providing one driveway each on Santa Monica Boulevard, Melrose Avenue, and Almont Drive.

TOPICS TO BE ANALYZED IN THE DRAFT EIR

The topics to be analyzed in the Draft EIR are based on the environmental areas that will be potentially impacted by the project. These areas are:

- **Aesthetics.** The Draft EIR will include updated visual simulations that will depict pre- and postproject views of the new buildings. The Draft EIR will describe the proposed change in views of the site and evaluate the impact of the proposed change, as shown in the simulations. An analysis of lighting and glare and shade and shadow will also be prepared.
- **Air Quality.** The air quality technical report will be updated and summarized in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR analysis will include the following components: assessment of baseline air quality in the area, as documented by nearby air monitoring stations; assessment of traffic and construction impacts; and assessment of operational impacts, consistent with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) guidelines.

- **Biological Resources.** An updated biological tree survey will be conducted and summarized in the Draft EIR. The evaluation in the Draft EIR will include potential project impacts to existing vegetation and associated animal species for areas affected by the proposed project.
- **Cultural Resources.** A supplemental historic resources assessment will be conducted and summarized in the Draft EIR. Evaluation of potential archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources for areas affected by the proposed project will be addressed in the Draft EIR.
- **Geology and Soils.** The geotechnical report will be updated and summarized in the Draft EIR. The geology and soils of the site will be evaluated in the Draft EIR in terms of affecting project implementation. The analysis will include the location of known faults and the potential for earthquake-induced groundshaking capable of causing rupture, liquefaction, settlement, or surface cracks. The potential exposure of people or structures to geologic hazards such as aseismic-related ground failure or substantial erosion and to soil conditions such as instability, subsidence, compressibility, expansiveness, or other conditions that might affect project components will also be evaluated. This section of the Draft EIR will summarize the geotechnical report.
- **Global Climate Change/Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** The Draft EIR will include a discussion of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and their potential effects on global climate changes will be included. Regulatory requirements on such emissions, if any, will be identified. Emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), a key GHG identified in AB 32, and other major GHGs such as methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) from direct (such as building heating systems for the community center) and indirect (such as power plant emissions from increased electricity demand) project-related sources will be calculated. The total project GHG emissions will be put into context of area and statewide emissions.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials.** An updated hazardous radius report database search will be conducted and summarized in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR will evaluate the findings of the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment relative to existing and historical activities at the site. This section will also discuss the effects of hazardous materials used during construction and operation of the project.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality.** The Draft EIR will include a discussion of surface water and groundwater, hydrology, and water quality. The section will discuss storm water runoff generated by the project and pollution prevention and will describe how runoff from the site will be collected and distributed to the City storm drain system. Control of groundwater will also be discussed. The water quality analysis will describe the proposed best management practices (BMPs) required to address potential water quality impacts and regulatory requirements. This section will summarize the hydrology/hydrogeology/water quality technical reports.
- **Land Use and Planning.** The project's compatibility with existing surrounding land uses, the recently revised City General Plan policies, and the Zoning Code will be analyzed in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR will also consider compatibility with surrounding uses in the City of Beverly Hills.
- **Noise.** The noise technical report will be updated and summarized in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR analysis will include the following components: assessment of baseline noise levels on site, assessment of traffic and construction impacts, and assessment of operational impacts. The Draft EIR will evaluate the potential effect of construction-related vibration on the adjacent properties.

The impact analysis will be limited to changes resulting from the implementation of the proposed project.

- **Population and Housing.** The project's contribution to a population increase within the City and the associated housing effects will be analyzed based on the most current population and housing projections provided by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the 2010 United States Census, and Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) projections, and will be summarized in the Draft EIR.
- **Public Services and Utilities.** Public services and utilities data will be updated and summarized in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR will evaluate the location of infrastructure and public services to serve the project and the capacity of these services and/or infrastructure to serve the project when implemented. Potential impacts to fire safety, police, and emergency services will be addressed. The evaluation will identify service providers' expansion plans and will provide information regarding the purveyor's capacity to provide services and meet demand created by the proposed project.
- **Recreation.** The project's effects on recreation facilities will be updated based on the City's current population and recreation acreage and analyzed in the Draft EIR.
- **Transportation and Traffic.** The traffic impact analysis will be updated and summarized in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR will analyze short-term and long-term traffic impacts, focusing on the following four primary areas: (1) potential increases in vehicle traffic volumes resulting from the proposed project; (2) pedestrian safety, both on site and within the vicinity of the project site; (3) access driveway interface with the local circulation network; and (4) on-site circulation for vehicles. In addition, potential parking impacts will be addressed.

TOPICS EXCLUDED FROM ANALYSIS IN THE DRAFT EIR

The following topics were not evaluated in the previously circulated Draft EIR because they were not expected to have a significant effect on the environment. These topics will not be addressed in the recirculated Draft EIR for the same reason.

- **Agricultural Resources.** Based on farmland maps prepared by the California Department of Conservation, the project site is not located in an area designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (California Department of Conservation 2000). The project site is developed with commercial uses, and project implementation would not affect any existing or future agricultural uses. In addition, since the project site is not used for agricultural activities, the project would not convert existing agricultural land to nonagricultural use. Therefore, development of the site would not impact agricultural resources.
- **Mineral Resources.** The project site consists of commercial uses in an urban, built-out portion of Los Angeles County. No known mineral resources that would be of value to the region or the State are located within the project area. Therefore, project implementation would not result in the loss of availability of a known or locally important mineral resource and would not impact mineral resources.

RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

According to Sections 15050 and 15367 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City is designated as the Lead Agency for the project. Responsible Agencies are those agencies that have discretionary approval authority over one or more actions involved with the development of a proposed project. Trustee Agencies are State agencies having discretionary approval or jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a proposed project that are held in trust of the people of the State of California. The potential Responsible Agencies that have been identified as of the preparation of this document and the required permits, approvals, or their associated responsibilities for the proposed project are identified in Table B.

Table B: Potential Responsible Agencies

Agency	Potential Permit/Approval/Responsibility/Trust
State Water Resources Control Board/Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board	General Construction Activity Stormwater Permit, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
South Coast Air Quality Management District	Rule 402 and 403 Compliance during construction

ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURES

This NOP for the proposed project will be submitted to the State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, and other interested parties that will be included in approving or funding the project or that have specifically requested a copy of the NOP.

After the 30-day review period for the NOP is complete, the Draft EIR will be prepared in accordance with CEQA as amended (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.) and the State Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA (California Code of Regulations, Section 15000 et seq.).

Detailed analyses will be conducted and updated in support of the Draft EIR in order to ascertain the revised project’s effects on the environment and the relative degree of impact prior to implementation of mitigation measures. Where impacts are determined to be significant, mitigation measures will be prescribed with the purpose of reducing the project’s effects on those impacts either completely or to the maximum degree feasible.

Once the updated Draft EIR is completed, it will be made available for public review and comment. Copies of the Draft EIR will be mailed directly to those agencies commenting on the NOP.