

1.0 Introduction and Purpose



1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The City of Long Beach Redevelopment Agency (City) is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required for the Shoreline Gateway Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2005121066). This EIR has been prepared in conformance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.); *CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.); and the rules, regulations, and procedures for implementation of CEQA, as adopted by the City of Long Beach. The principal *CEQA Guidelines* sections governing content of this document are Sections 15120 through 15132 (Contents of Environmental Impact Reports) and Section 15161 (Project EIR).

The purpose of this EIR is to review the existing conditions, analyze potential environmental impacts, and identify feasible mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant effects of the proposed Shoreline Gateway Project (project), generally located north of Ocean Boulevard, between Atlantic Avenue and Alamitos Avenues in the City of Long Beach. For more detailed information regarding the proposal, refer to Section 3.0, *Project Description*.

This EIR has been prepared as a Project EIR, addressing the environmental effects of the project, in accordance with Section 15161 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. In accordance with Section 15121 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the main purposes of this EIR are to:

- Provide decision-makers and the public with specific information regarding the environmental effects associated with the proposed project;
- Identify ways to minimize the significant effects of the project; and
- Describe reasonable alternatives to the project.

Mitigation measures are provided that may be adopted as conditions of approval to minimize the significance of impacts resulting from the project. In addition, this EIR is the primary reference document in the formulation and implementation of a mitigation-monitoring program for the proposed project.

The City (which has the principal responsibility of processing and approving the project) and other public (i.e., responsible and trustee) agencies that may use this EIR in the decision-making or permit process will consider the information in this EIR, along with other information that may be presented during the CEQA process. Environmental impacts are not always mitigatable to a level considered less than significant; in those cases, impacts are considered significant unavoidable impacts. In accordance with Section 15093(b) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, if a public agency approves a project that has significant impacts that are not substantially mitigated (i.e., significant unavoidable impacts), the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project, based on the Final EIR and any other information in the public record for the project. This is termed, per Section 15093 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, a “statement of overriding considerations.”



This document analyzes the environmental effects of the project to the degree of specificity appropriate to the current proposed actions, as required by Section 15146 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. The analysis considers the activities associated with the project to determine the short-term and long-term effects associated with their implementation. This EIR discusses both the direct and indirect impacts of this project, as well as the cumulative impacts associated with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

1.2 COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRAFT EIR

The Draft EIR is subject to a 45-day review period by responsible and trustee agencies, the public and any interested parties. In accordance with the provisions of Sections 15085(a) and 15087(a)(1) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, as amended, the City of Long Beach Redevelopment Agency, serving as the Lead Agency shall (1) publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) to the public of a Draft EIR; and (2) prepare and transmit a Notice of Completion (NOC) to the California State Clearinghouse. (Proof of publication is available at the offices of the Lead Agency.)

Any public agency or members of the public desiring to comment on the Draft EIR must submit their comments in writing to the lead agency at the address indicated on the document's NOC prior to the end of the public review period. The Lead Agency will evaluate and prepare responses to all relevant written comments received from both citizens and public agencies during the public review period.

FINAL EIR

The Final EIR will consist of the Draft EIR, revisions to the Draft EIR (if any) and responses to all written comments addressing concerns raised in the comments of responsible agencies, the public and any other reviewing parties. After the Final EIR is completed, and at least ten days prior to the certification hearing, a copy of the response to comments made by public agencies on the Draft EIR will be provided to the commenting agencies.

1.3 EIR SCOPING PROCESS

In compliance with the *CEQA Guidelines*, the City of Long Beach Redevelopment Agency has maximized opportunities for the public to participate in the environmental review process. During preparation of the Draft EIR, efforts were made to contact various Federal, State, regional and local government agencies and other interested parties to solicit comments on the proposed project. This included the distribution of an Initial Study and Notice of Preparation (NOP) on December 13, 2005 and a Public Scoping Meeting held on January 9, 2006 at Patterson Hall in the First Congregational Church.



INITIAL STUDY

In accordance with Section 15063 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, as amended, the City undertook the preparation of an Initial Study. *The Shoreline Gateway Project Initial Study (Initial Study)* concluded that several environmental issue areas may be impacted by construction and buildout of the Shoreline Gateway Project. As a result, the *Initial Study* concluded that the Draft EIR should address the project's significant impacts on the environmental issue areas addressed in Section 5.0, *Environmental Analysis*, as follows:

- Land Use and Relevant Planning (Section 5.1),
- Aesthetics/Light and Glare (Section 5.2),
- Traffic and Circulation (Section 5.3),
- Air Quality (Section 5.4),
- Noise (Section 5.5),
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Section 5.6),
- Cultural Resources (Section 5.7), and
- Public Services and Utilities (Section 5.8).

Based on the *Initial Study*, no impact or a less than significant impact upon agricultural resources, biological resources, geology and soils or mineral resources are anticipated as a result of the proposed development. Accordingly, these issues are addressed in Section 10.0, *Effects Found Not To Be Significant*, contained in this EIR.

This EIR focuses primarily on changes in the environment that would result from the proposed project. This EIR identifies potential impacts resulting from the construction and operation of the proposed project and provides measures to mitigate potential significant impacts. Those impacts that cannot be mitigated to less than significant levels are identified as significant unavoidable impacts.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Pursuant to the provision of Section 15082 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, as amended, the City of Long Beach Redevelopment Agency circulated an NOP to public agencies, special districts and members of the public who had requested such notice for a 30-day period, beginning December 13, 2005, and ending January 13, 2006. The purpose of the NOP was to formally announce that the City is preparing a Draft EIR for the Shoreline Gateway Project, and that, as Lead Agency, was soliciting input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. The Initial Study was circulated with the NOP. The NOP and Initial Study are provided in Appendix 15.1, and NOP responses are provided in Appendix 15.2.

EARLY CONSULTATION (SCOPING)

During the NOP review period, the City of Long Beach advertised a public scoping meeting. The meeting was held at Patterson Hall in the First Congregational Church located at 241 Cedar Avenue in the City of Long Beach at 6:30 p.m. on January 9, 2006, and was intended to facilitate public input. The meeting was held with the



specific intent of providing interested individuals, groups, public agencies and others, a forum to orally provide input to the Lead Agency in an effort to assist in further refining the intended scope and focus of the EIR, as described in the NOP and Initial Study.

NOP AND SCOPING RESULTS

The specific environmental concerns outlined below were raised by responses to the NOP for the project. The numerical reference in parenthesis is the EIR section in which the analysis is provided.

- Alteration of community character due to size and location of proposed buildings (Section 5.1, *Land Use and Relevant Planning*);
- View impacts due to size and location of buildings (Section 5.2, *Aesthetics/Light and Glare*);
- Shade/shadow and light/glare impacts on adjacent properties (Section 5.2, *Aesthetics/Light and Glare*);
- Traffic impacts on roadways and intersections (Section 5.3, *Traffic and Circulation*);
- Traffic, circulation and access impacts resulting from the proposed vacation of roadways and intersections (Section 5.3, *Traffic and Circulation*);
- Parking impacts during and after construction (Section 5.3, *Traffic and Circulation*);
- Impacts to pedestrian circulation/access due to increased traffic in area (Section 5.3, *Traffic and Circulation*);
- Air quality impacts during construction (Section 5.4, *Air Quality*);
- Air quality impacts as a result of increased traffic from the project and location of the proposed parking structure (Section 5.4, *Air Quality*);
- Noise impacts during construction (Section 5.5, *Noise*);
- Noise impacts from increased traffic in the area and change in traffic circulation (Section 5.5, *Noise*);
- Noise impacts from parking structure, service alley and mechanical equipment to adjacent uses (Section 5.5, *Noise*);
- Impacts to historic buildings/resources from proposed construction activities including proposed demolition (Section 5.7, *Cultural Resources*);
- Impacts to historic buildings/resources due to the change in community character (Section 5.7, *Cultural Resources*);



- Impacts on public services and utilities (i.e., fire, police, emergency vehicles, water, wastewater) (Section 5.8, *Public Services and Utilities*);
- Impacts on stormwater runoff from increased traffic in the area (Section 5.8, *Public Services and Utilities*); and
- Impact on already lacking public park space (Section 5.8, *Public Services and Utilities*).

1.4 FORMAT OF THE EIR

The Draft EIR is organized into 15 sections, as follows:

- Section 1.0, *Introduction and Purpose*, provides CEQA compliance information.
- Section 2.0, *Executive Summary*, provides a brief project description and summary of the environmental impacts and mitigation measures.
- Section 3.0, *Project Description*, provides a detailed project description indicating project location, background and history; project characteristics, phasing and objectives; as well as associated discretionary actions required.
- Section 4.0, *Basis for the Cumulative Analysis*, describes the approach and methodology for the cumulative analysis.
- Section 5.0, *Environmental Analysis*, contains a detailed environmental analysis of the existing conditions, project impacts, recommended mitigation measures and unavoidable adverse impacts for a number of environmental topic areas.
- Section 6.0, *Long-Term Implications of the Proposed Project*, discusses significant environmental changes that would be involved in the proposed action, should it be implemented and growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project.
- Section 7.0, *Alternatives to the Proposed Project*, describes a reasonable range of alternatives to the project or to the location of the project that could avoid or substantially lessen the significant impact of the project and still feasibly attain the basic project objectives.
- Section 8.0, *Inventory of Mitigation Measures*, lists mitigation measures proposed to minimize the significant impacts.
- Section 9.0, *Inventory of Significance After Mitigation*, describes those impacts that remain significant following mitigation.
- Section 10.0, *Effects Found Not to Be Significant*, provides an explanation of potential impacts that have been determined not to be significant.



- Section 11.0, *Organizations and Persons Consulted*, identifies all Federal, State or local agencies, other organizations and individuals consulted.
- Section 12.0, *Bibliography*, identifies reference sources for the EIR.
- Section 13.0, *Mitigation Monitoring Program*, will be included in the Final EIR and will identify responsibilities for monitoring mitigation.
- Section 14.0, *Comments and Responses*, will be included in the Final EIR and will provide comments and responses pertaining to the Draft EIR.
- Section 15.0, *Appendices*, contains technical documentation for the project.

1.5 RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

Certain projects or actions undertaken by a Lead Agency require subsequent oversight, approvals or permits from other public agencies in order to be implemented. Such other agencies are referred to as Responsible Agencies and Trustee Agencies. Pursuant to Sections 15381 and 15386 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, as amended, Responsible Agencies and Trustee Agencies are respectively defined as follows:

“Responsible Agency” means a public agency, which proposes to carry out or approve a project, for which [a] Lead Agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or Negative Declaration. For the purposes of CEQA, the term “responsible agency” includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency, which have discretionary approval power over the project. (Section 15381)

“Trustee Agency” means a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project, which are held in trust for the people of the State of California. Trustee Agencies include.... (Section 15386, part)

Responsible and Trustee Agencies and other entities that may use this EIR in their decision-making process or for informational purposes include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- City of Long Beach;
- California Air Resources Board;
- California Department of Transportation;
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control;
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board;
- Long Beach Unified School District;
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority;
- Southern California Association of Governments;
- State Water Resources Control Board; and
- South Coast Air Quality Management District.



1.6 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Pertinent documents relating to this EIR have been cited in accordance with Section 15150 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, which encourages incorporation by reference as a means of reducing redundancy and length of environmental reports. The following documents, which are available for public review at the City of Long Beach, are hereby incorporated by reference into this EIR. Information contained within these documents has been utilized for each section of this EIR. A brief synopsis of the scope and content of these documents is provided below.

City of Long Beach General Plan (General Plan). The purpose of the *General Plan* is to provide a general, comprehensive and long-range guide for community decision-making. The *General Plan* consists of seven mandatory elements and two optional elements (Air Quality and Scenic Highways) adopted on various dates. The elements of the *General Plan* are:

- Land Use;
- Transportation;
- Noise;
- Air Quality;
- Housing;
- Scenic Routes;
- Open Space and Recreation;
- Conservation; and
- Seismic Safety.

City of Long Beach General Plan Maps and Descriptions of Land Use Districts. This document summarizes the City's Land Use Districts and provides graphic illustrations of District locations within the City.

City of Long Beach Municipal Code (Municipal Code). The *Municipal Code* consists of all the regulatory and penal ordinances and administrative ordinances of the City of Long Beach. It is the method the City uses to implement control of land uses, in accordance with General Plan goals and policies. The City of Long Beach Zoning Regulations, Title 21 of the *Municipal Code*, identifies land uses permitted and prohibited according to the zoning category of particular parcels.

Downtown Planned Development District (PD-30). The purpose of the PD-30 District is to guide development of the downtown area. The PD-30 District is further divided into eight districts. Land uses permitted and prohibited within the districts and development standards are identified. Additionally, PD-30 provides general development regulations and review procedures.

Strategic Guide for Development for the Central Study Area (Strategic Guide), July 2005. The *Strategic Guide* is intended to define land use planning concepts to facilitate the transformation of the Central Study Area and provides a framework of strategies to be used by the City of Long Beach Redevelopment Agency when making decisions regarding redevelopment opportunities in the central portion of Long Beach. The *Strategic Guide* is organized into the following sections:



- *Executive Summary* summarizes the major analysis findings, strategies and recommendations;
- Section I, *Introduction*, describes the community involvement process and identifies the Vision and Community Design Strategy statements;
- Section II, *Context*, provides the existing physical and economic conditions of the area;
- Section III, *Area-wide Strategies*, provide the framework for land use, urban design, open space and streetscapes for the neighborhoods and arterial corridors in the Study Area. Existing plans, programs and studies are also discussed; and
- Section IV, *Neighborhood Centers*, provides recommendations for representative Neighborhood Centers and Transit Oriented Districts to create new focal points for neighborhood services and residential revitalization.

Although the *Strategic Guide* is applicable to the project site, the area-wide strategies identified in the *Strategic Guide* focus on the smaller residential neighborhoods and commercial uses that predominantly comprise the Central Study Area. Because these strategies are area-wide, they do not specifically reference the project site or address the project site's unique location in relation to downtown Long Beach. The project site is located on the fringe of the Central Study Area and is part of the Ocean Boulevard corridor, which is more commonly associated with downtown Long Beach. The project site's relationship to the downtown is further emphasized by its zoning district (Downtown Core District), which is intended for a mix of uses, including office, retail, entertainment and high density residential.

Strategy for Development Greater Downtown Long Beach (Strategy), May 2000. The *Strategy* defines a vision for the Greater Downtown area by establishing priorities for the timing of development and creating coherent urban design guidelines for downtown. The *Strategy* divides the Greater Downtown into several areas and discusses existing conditions, redevelopment strategies and objectives for those specific areas. Design review procedures from conceptual review to construction check are summarized and design guidelines for the Greater Downtown area are discussed.

Downtown Long Beach Strategic Action Plan (Strategic Action Plan), July 2000. The *Strategic Action Plan* builds upon the foundation of ideas presented in the Downtown Development Strategy, but establishes a more focused, ready-to-implement vision. The *Strategic Action Plan* is organized into the following sections:

- Section I provides an introduction to the *Strategic Action Plan*;
- Section II provides a background on downtown Long Beach and the planning process to date;
- Section III outlines the assets and challenges identified by the Task Force and community workshop participants;



- Section IV provides an overview of current planning projects and activities;
- Section V outlines the Downtown Development Concept, which provides a structure for organizing activities, relationships, patterns and connections in the downtown;
- Section VI details the specific Action Plan items developed through the planning effort; and
- Section VIII addresses the recommended steps toward effective implementation of the priority actions and the overall *Strategic Action Plan*.

East Village Arts District Guide for Development, (Guide for Development), October 1996. The *Guide for Development* identifies comprehensive strategies for the creation of a viable arts district that serves as a distinct activity center and neighborhood in the City of Long Beach. The East Village Arts District is defined as the area bounded by Long Beach Boulevard, Ocean Boulevard, Alamitos Avenue and 7th Street. The *Guide for Development* seeks to shape an area that serves as the primary center of Long Beach's art community, is integrated with a vital and diverse residential neighborhood, provides a transition with adjacent convention and coastal uses and captures visitors to those uses. The *Guide for Development* is comprised of the following sections:

- Overview of Existing Conditions – Summary of the existing regulatory requirements, land uses, housing, population characteristics, architecture, streetscape, public art, transportation, parking and market conditions of the East Village.
- Summary of Key Planning and Design Issues – Summary of the key constraints and opportunities affecting the East Village as identified through technical analyses and public input.
- Vision For The East Village – Presentation of the vision for the future of the East Village.
- Overview of East Village Concepts – Overview of the strategies for the revitalization of the East Village and achievement of an arts district.
- East Village Strategies – Discussion of the specific near, mid, and long term physical, regulatory, programmatic, organization, and financial strategies.