

I. SUMMARY

A. PROJECT LOCATION

The Project Site is located at 19601 Nordhoff Street in the Chatsworth area of the City of Los Angeles, California, within the Chatsworth - Porter Ranch Community Plan Area. The Project Site is square in shape, consisting of approximately 35.5-acres. The Site is bounded by Prairie Street to the north, Corbin Avenue to the west, Nordhoff Street to the south, and Shirley Avenue to the east.

The Project Site includes an approximately eight acre parcel of land previously approved for the development of a senior housing facility. This parcel is located at the southeast corner of Prairie Street and Corbin Avenue.

Pursuant to the request of the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning (LADCP) staff, approximately fifteen parcels of land, consisting of approximately fifteen acres (“Add Area”) have been included as part of the analysis of the potential Zone Change and Plan Amendment. The Add Area is rectangular in shape and generally bounded by commercial properties that front Plummer Street to the north, Corbin Avenue to the west, Prairie Street to the south, and Shirley Avenue to the east. The Add Area is not currently under the Applicant’s control.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is an informational document which will inform public agency decisionmakers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. Because the proposed Project will require approval of various discretionary actions by the City of Los Angeles, the proposed Project is subject to CEQA. The LADCP has been designated as the Lead Agency for the proposed Project under CEQA. Under CEQA Article 11, there are many variations of EIRs, as all environmental documents are intended to be tailored to different situations and project conditions.

The proposed Project at the Project Site includes a General Plan Amendment and Zone Change. While a specific development proposal has not yet been determined for the Project Site, a range of potential future development scenarios that will fit within the proposed Plan Amendment and Zone Change has been determined. Due to the nature of the proposed Project scenarios, it was determined by the Lead Agency that a Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) would be the most appropriate environmental document.

The MEIR (CEQA Section 15175) is intended to identify potential mitigation measures early to streamline later environmental analysis. As part of this Draft Master Environmental Impact Report (Draft MEIR), a Project Area Initial Study (attached in **Section IX**) is proposed to be utilized for subsequent projects if this MEIR is certified. At the time that a subsequent project is proposed at the Project Site or Add Area, an Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) must be filed with the LADCP. Following the filing of an EAF, LADCP will utilize the Project Area Initial Study to determine whether the subsequent project is in conformance with the analysis provided in the MEIR and whether the subsequent project is within the scope of the MEIR. After completion of the Project Area Initial Study, LADCP will determine all feasible mitigation measures identified in the MEIR that should be adopted as part of the approval of the subsequent project. Prior to a public hearing on the subsequent project, LADCP will provide notice of its intent to utilize the MEIR for the subsequent project. The content of this notice will include, but is not limited to, a brief description of the subsequent project; dates of the review period and locations where the MEIR can be reviewed; notice of any pending public meetings or hearings regarding the subsequent project; a list of significant environmental impacts anticipated as a result of the subsequent project; and the mitigation measures identified by LADCP to be adopted as part of the subsequent project approval. At the time of subsequent project approval, the Lead Agency will recertify the MEIR and make a formal finding of conformance of the subsequent project with the MEIR and make the identified mitigation measures a condition of the subsequent project approval.

This Draft MEIR was prepared for the proposed Project at the property located at 19601 Nordhoff Street, Los Angeles, California. The property is located within the Chatsworth - Porter Ranch Community Plan Area. As stated above and fully examined in **Section II** of this document, the proposed Project includes a General Plan Amendment from Light Industrial to Community Commercial and Zone Change from [T][Q]M1-1, MR2-1 and P-1 to C2-1 over 35.5 acres of land. The proposed Project at the Project Site also includes the previously approved Homeplace Retirement Community consisting of 389 senior housing units and 35 assisted living units.¹ The Project Site is currently under the control of the applicant and the current tenant plans to vacate the Site upon termination of the lease in 2005 or possibly sooner. While a specific development scenario has not been determined for the Project Site, for planning and analysis purposes, four potential worst-case development scenarios have been identified as follows:²

¹The Homeplace Retirement Community included 389 senior housing units and 35 assisted living units at the time the EIR was prepared. However, the revised application for the Homeplace facility included 390 senior housing units and 35 assisted living units, within 505,000 square feet.

²Development scenarios for the project site were determined based on the assumption that surface parking would be provided for retail services and structured parking would be provided for commercial services. Additionally, it was assumed that any retail development on site would not exceed three stories. Based on these assumptions, the amount of parking that could fit on the project site was determined. The corresponding square footage of floor area for retail and office use was calculated. Potential development scenarios that include residential units were also determined. These square footage calculations were then extrapolated to the Add Area properties (total acreage) to determine the allowable floor area for retail, office, and residential land uses.

Scenario 1: Retail

340,000 square feet Retail
389 Senior Housing units
35 Assisted Living units

Scenario 2: Office

930,000 square feet Office
389 Senior Housing units
35 Assisted Living units

Scenario 3: Retail/Residential

250,000 square feet Retail
300 Condominium units
389 Senior Housing units
35 Assisted Living units

Scenario 4: Office/Residential

690,000 square feet Office
300 Condominium units
389 Senior Housing units
35 Assisted Living units

The potential development scenarios were determined under the following assumptions:

- Due to the additional cost associated with mechanical and emergency systems, that the proposed development will not exceed six stories or seventy-five feet in height.
- Surface parking would be provided for all retail uses, and structured parking would be provided for all office and residential uses.
- Due to the cost associated with soil conditions, ground water, potential liquefaction and land value, development proposed for the southern half of the Project Site will not include subterranean levels, such as basement levels or subterranean parking. However, subterranean parking could occur on the northwestern portion of the Project Site that is not affected by liquefaction, in association with the Homeplace Retirement Community.
- Parking associated with the proposed commercial development will adhere to the City of Los Angeles Code requirements.
- Vehicular access to the project area will be provided from each of the following roadways: Prairie Street, Corbin Avenue, Nordhoff Street, and Shirley Avenue. It is anticipated that full access (both ingress and egress) turning movements will be accommodated at the project driveways.
- The proposed development build out year for the Project Site is 2005.
- The proposed Project at the Project Site will be constructed primarily in one phase. However, ancillary buildings may be added after the initial construction. The length of construction cannot be accurately estimated until the project design is finalized.

- The proposed Homeplace Retirement facility, previously approved for the northwestern corner of the Project Site (ZA 2002-6851-ZV), consisting of approximately 389 independent senior housing units and 35 assisted living units could be fully constructed prior to full development of the proposed Project.

Each of the potential development scenarios was analyzed for probable environmental impacts. In many of the environmental impact sections, the identified impacts of the potential development scenarios were similar. Where the impacts of the potential development scenarios were similar, there is a single discussion of the impacts. Where the impacts of the potential development scenarios were dissimilar, there is a discussion of the impacts of each of the potential development scenarios. Where there is a discussion of each of the potential development scenarios, the scenario with the most significant impact is identified and utilized in determining the level of significance of the environmental impact and the appropriate mitigation measures.

The LADCP staff identified fifteen properties located to the north of Prairie Street (Add Area), comprising approximately fifteen acres, for a potential additional area to coincide with the General Plan Amendment and Zone Change at the Project Site. As a result, potential environmental impacts resulting from the development scenarios analyzed for this Add Area have been included using the same development assumptions as the Project Site. The Add Area properties are not currently under the applicant's control and each property has a separate owner. Application and initiation of project proposals can either be completed by the LADCP or the Add Area property owners. While a specific development scenario has not been determined for the Add Area, for planning and analysis purposes, the following potential development scenarios have been determined and were analyzed throughout the document:

Scenario 1: Retail

200,000 square feet Retail

Scenario 2: Office

586,000 square feet Office

Scenario 3: Retail/Residential

150,000 square feet Retail

100 Condominium units

Scenario 4: Office/Residential

435,000 square feet Office

100 Condominium units

An Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) was submitted on March 11, 2002. A preliminary scope of significant impacts for the Draft MEIR was determined by the LADCP, Environmental Review Section (ERS). Due to the size of the Project, it was determined that an EIR would be required and an Initial Study was not prepared. The LADCP ERS circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) from May 23 to June 24, 2002 and held a Public Scoping Meeting on June 4, 2002 at California State University–Northridge to elicit comments regarding the proposed scope of the EIR. A final scope for the Draft MEIR includes the following areas of potential impact:

- Aesthetics
- Geology and soils
- Land use and planning
- Recreation
- Air quality
- Hazardous materials
- Noise
- Transportation
- Biological resources
- Hydrology
- Population/housing
- Utilities

Potential impacts to areas such as agricultural resources, cultural resources, and mineral resources were determined to be less than significant based on the lack of identification of a substantial concentration of these resources in the General Plan Framework EIR, the developed nature of the Project Site and Add Area, and the considerable length of time that the Project Site and Add Area have been developed.

The four development scenarios proposed for the Project Site were analyzed for potential environmental impacts, and are referred to throughout the document as “the proposed Project at the Project Site”. The four potential development scenarios determined for the Add Area were analyzed separately for potential environmental impacts, and are referred to throughout the document as the “development scenarios analyzed for the Add Area”. Therefore, within each impact section, a total of eight future potential development scenarios were analyzed. Analysis was conducted separately to differentiate between potential impacts resulting from the project applied for under CPC 2002-7295-PPR-BL filed December 17, 2002 (the proposed Project) and potential impacts resulting from the extrapolation of the General Plan Amendment and Zone Change to the Add Area properties, as requested by the City of Los Angeles (development scenarios analyzed for the Add Area). Potential impacts of the eight development scenarios were based on the worst-case scenario and, based on economic conditions at the time of development, may be less substantial than originally anticipated.

As required by CEQA, this Draft MEIR must assess both impacts generated by the anticipated development and the potential cumulative impacts on the environment of the proposed Project combined with applicable related projects. It should be noted that cumulative impacts for this Draft MEIR were assessed based on the proposed Project at the Project Site combined with related projects, the development scenarios analyzed for the Add Area combined with related projects, and then the potential cumulative impact of related projects combined with both the proposed Project at the Project Site and the development scenarios analyzed for the Add Area.

The City of Los Angeles has adopted thresholds of significance (LA CEQA Thresholds Guide) to assist City Departments in assessing the level of significance of environmental impacts resulting from development projects within the City. These thresholds were applied throughout this Draft MEIR. However, for individual environmental impact sections, where appropriate, additional thresholds were utilized to further determine potential impacts of the proposed Project at the Project and the development scenarios analyzed for the Add Area. For each impact section, mitigation measures proposed to reduce significant impacts to a less than significant level are identified as Office(O), Retail(C), and/or Residential(R) corresponding to the type of development that will trigger the mitigation measure.