

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The proposed Project (Project) is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Promote the consistency of the Project Site and Add Area with surrounding properties with respect to Zoning and General Plan designation.
- To create a new commercial center with the necessary entitlements to allow for marketing of the Site for redevelopment.
- To encourage the preservation of industrially used land within the Northridge Industrial Core by redesignating lands on the edge of the Core currently surrounded by commercial zones and encroached upon by non-industrial uses.
- To update land designations in the Chatsworth - Porter Ranch Community Plan Area to reflect the economic changes of the industrial base of the north San Fernando Valley such that land uses are designated in quantities and at densities, at appropriate locations, for various uses.

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, as shown in **Figure 1: Regional Map**. 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, as shown in **Figure 2: Vicinity Map** and **Figure 3: Radius Map**. An overview of the project area is provided in **Figure 4: Aerial Photograph**.

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 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, as shown in **Figure 3: Radius Map**. 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 Applicants control.

Figure 1: Regional Map

Figure 2: Vicinity Map

Figure 3: Radius Map

Figure 4: Aerial Photo

PROJECT IMPACTS

A scope for the Draft MEIR was determined by the LADCP, Environmental Review Section (ERS). An EAF was submitted on March 11, 2002. A preliminary scope of significant impacts for the Draft MEIR was determined by the LADCP, ERS. Due to the size of the Project, it was determined that an EIR would be required and an Initial Study was not prepared. 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 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. The scope for this 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.

As set forth in the following analysis, the Project at the Project Site will not result in significant impacts to the project area as a result of construction activities. However, the Project at the Project Site may result in significant impacts to the project area as a result of operational activities. After the incorporation of mitigation measures, the Project at the Project Site will result in significant impacts to air quality and police protection services in the project area.

Analysis also includes project impacts for four development scenarios extrapolated from the Project Site for the Add Area. Within each impact section, a total of eight future potential development scenarios were analyzed. Analysis was conducted separately for the Project Site and Add Area 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 environmental impacts presented in the following analysis are based on the worst-case development of the eight future potential development scenarios analyzed. Based on economic conditions at the time of development, impacts may be less than those predicted in the following analysis.

Environmental impacts were also analyzed for full build out of the determined development scenarios at the Project Site and Add Area (Full Project Build Out). Full Project Build Out will result in less than significant environmental impacts as a result of construction activities. However, Full Project Build Out may result in significant impacts as a result of operational activities. After the incorporation of mitigation measures, Full Project Build Out will result in significant impacts to operational air quality and police protection services.

The analysis utilized in this Draft MEIR included the following development assumptions:

- Due to the additional cost associated with mechanical and emergency systems, 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, and potential liquefaction, development proposed for the southern half of the Project Site will not include subterranean levels, such as basement levels or subterranean parking. 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 will be constructed primarily in one phase. However, ancillary buildings may be added after the initial construction phase. 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 potential 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. 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.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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 environmental impacts presented in the following analysis are based on the worst-case development of the eight future potential development scenarios presented for analysis. Based on economic conditions at the time of development, impacts may be less than those predicted in the following analysis.

Project Site

The Project at the Project Site consists of a Zone Change and General Plan Amendment to allow for redevelopment of an antiquated industrial building located on the Project Site (CPC 2002-7295-PPR-BL filed December 17, 2002). The Project at the Project Site includes a Zone Change from MR2-1, [T][Q]M1-1, and P-1 to C2-1 and a General Plan Amendment from Light Manufacturing to Community Commercial. The Project Site is currently under the control of the applicant and the current tenant plans to vacate the Project Site upon termination of the lease, in the year 2005.

The Project Site is square in shape, approximately 35.5 acres in size located at 19601 Nordhoff Street. The Site is roughly bounded by Prairie Street to the north, Corbin Avenue to the west, Nordhoff Street to the south, and Shirley Avenue to the east.

A specific development scenario for the Project Site is not known at this time. However, for environmental analysis and planning purposes, four potential development scenarios have been identified to demonstrate the range of development options for the Project Site. Based on development patterns in the northern San Fernando Valley, the potential development scenarios for the Project Site are as follows:

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 entitled Homeplace Retirement facility is assumed to be developed under each of the potential development scenarios for the Project Site. The Retirement facility consists of approximately 389 independent senior housing units and 35 assisted living units within a 588,000 square development.²¹

Add Area

Pursuant to the request of the LADCP staff, fifteen properties located to the north of Prairie Street (“Add Area”) have been included in the analysis of potential environmental impacts. The Add Area is developed with light industrial and commercial uses. At the Add Area, the development scenarios include analysis of the Zone Change from MR2-1 and P-1 to C2-1 and a General Plan Amendment from Light Manufacturing to Community Commercial to coincide with the Zone Change and General Plan Amendment requested at the Project Site. The Add Area properties are not currently under the applicant’s control and each property has a separate owner. Due to the lack of coordinated control over the Add Area properties, the applicant has no control over the processing of applications for properties within the area. Application and initiation of project proposals can either be completed by the City of Los Angeles or the Add Area property owners.

A specific development scenario for the Add Area is not known at this time. For environmental analysis and planning purposes, four potential development scenarios have been identified to demonstrate the range of development options for the Add Area properties. Based on development patterns in the northern San Fernando Valley, the potential development scenarios for the Add Area are as follows:

Scenario 1: Retail

200,000 square feet Retail

Scenario 2: Office

586,000 square feet Office

²¹The 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 a 505,000 square feet development.

Scenario 3: Retail/Residential

150,000 square feet Retail
 100 Condominium units

Scenario 4: Office/Residential

435,000 square feet Office
 100 Condominium units

TRIP EQUIVALENCY

An equivalency program has been utilized in this Master EIR to help define a specific framework within which certain land uses can be exchanged for identified land uses without increasing the potential for environmental impacts. As part of the Project, a total of eight development scenarios with different mixes of office, retail, and condominium land uses were analyzed. Within the limited scope, there may be increases in the square footages of certain land uses in exchange for corresponding decreases in the square footages of other land uses. The equivalency program is designed to ensure that, although the final land uses and mixes may be different from the original assumptions provided in this document, maximum thresholds of environmental impacts addressed and mitigated will not be exceeded.

In order to implement the equivalency program, a set of equivalency factors have been developed. The equivalency factor for each land use is derived based on the total PM peak hour trip generation. It should be noted that this approach accounts for the total number of trips during the PM peak hour and does not account for the specific characteristics of those trips (i.e. whether the trips are inbound or outbound). Equivalency factors have been established for office, retail, and residential floor areas which have been considered, or suggested based on market forces, for the Project Site and Add Area. Review of other recent redevelopment of large commercially zoned parcels indicated that potential tenants might utilize medical office space, a hotel or a car dealership concurrent with either office or retail development. A major residential development has also been identified for the Project Site. This project alternative is examined in **Section VII, Alternatives**. The trip equivalency factors for alternate commercial uses are shown in **Table 2: Trip Equivalency**.

TABLE 2
TRIP EQUIVALENCY

Converted Use	Converted Floor Area	Equivalent Office Floor Area	Equivalent Retail Floor Area
Medical Office	100,000 sf	302,000 sf	111,000 sf
Hotel	100 Rooms	50,400 sf	18,000 sf
New Car Dealership	100,000 sf	231,000 sf	85,000 sf
Condominiums	100 DU	45,000 sf	16,000 sf

SOURCE: Letter from David Shender, Linscott, Law & Greenspan Engineers to Dwight Steinert, Planning Associates, Inc.

SURROUNDING LAND USES

The project area is surrounded by commercial properties to the north, south, and east, with industrial properties located to the west. To the north, the Add Area is adjacent to commercial land uses that front Plummer Street such as Gelson's supermarket, a DSW shoe warehouse, Kmart, and various small retail outlets. To the south, the Project Site is bordered by various small retail outlets that include fast food restaurants, a car dealership, and small stores. To the east, the Project Site and Add Area are bordered by the Northridge Fashion Center, a large shopping mall. To the west, the Project Site and Add Area are bordered by industrially designated lands that house office and industrial buildings.

INTENDED USE OF THE MEIR

As defined by Section 15362 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report is an informational document which will inform public agency decisionmakers and the public of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify 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. If the subsequent project is determined to be outside of the scope of the MEIR, either a Negative Declaration or a Focused Environmental Impact Report will be required.

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 will serve as the environmental document for all project approvals that may be subject to CEQA on the Project Site and Add Area. These requested actions and approvals are expected to include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Zone Change at the Project Site from MR2-1, M1-1, and P-1 to C2-1.
- Zone Change at the Add Area properties from MR2-1 and P-1 to C2-1.
- General Plan Amendment over the Project Site and Add Area properties from Light Manufacturing to Community Commercial.
- Major Project Conditional Use Permit (CUP) by the LADCP.
- Haul Route approval from the Building and Safety Commission.
- Grading and building permits and other minor permits including, but not limited to, Department of Public Works permits.
- Street Improvement Permits from the Bureau of Engineering.
- Off-site public improvements.
- Utility extensions and excavation permits from the Bureau of Engineering.
- Site Plan Review for individual buildings on the Project Site and Add Area.
- Building and demolition permits from the Department of Building and Safety.
- Building Permits and Code modifications, if necessary, from the Department of Building and Safety.
- Building line removal incident to a Zone Change.
- Other approvals or permits necessary for the project, including, but not limited to, a vesting tentative tract map, parcel map, or other subdivision, tree removal permits, conditional use permits, lot line adjustments, public works permits and variances, and conditional use permits for alcohol service.