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2.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all state and local governmental agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority before taking action on those projects. This draft environmental impact report (DEIR) has been prepared to satisfy CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The environmental impact report (EIR) is the public document designed to provide decision makers and the public with an analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed Project, to indicate possible ways to reduce or avoid environmental damage and to identify alternatives to the Project. The EIR must also disclose significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided; growth inducing impacts; effects not found to be significant; and significant cumulative impacts of all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Pursuant to CEQA Section 21067, the lead agency means “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project which may have a significant effect upon the environment.” The City of Long Beach has the principal responsibility for approval of the Southeast Area Specific Plan Project. For this reason, the City of Long Beach is the CEQA lead agency for this Project.

The intent of the DEIR is to provide sufficient information on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project to allow the City of Long Beach to make an informed decision regarding approval of the Project. Specific discretionary actions to be reviewed by the City are described later in Section 3.6, *Intended Uses of the EIR*.

This DEIR has been prepared in accordance with requirements of the:

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.)
- State Guidelines for the Implementation of the CEQA of 1970 (CEQA Guidelines), as amended (California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et seq.)

The overall purpose of this DEIR is to inform the lead agency, responsible agencies, decision makers, and the general public of the environmental effects of the development and operation of the proposed Project. This DEIR addresses the potential environmental effects of the Project,

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including effects that may be significant and adverse; evaluates a number of alternatives to the Project; and identifies mitigation measures to reduce or avoid adverse effects.

2.2 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

The City of Long Beach determined that an EIR would be required for this Project and issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study in October 2015 (see Appendix A). In addition, a scoping meeting was held at Best Western Golden Sails, 6285 Pacific Coast Highway, Long Beach, CA 90803 on November 4, 2015. Comments received during the public review period— from October 22, 2015, to November 20, 2015—and during the scoping meeting are contained in Appendix B. A summary of the comments and locations in the EIR where comments were analyzed are also detailed in Table 1-3, *NOP and Scoping Meeting Comment Summary*.

The NOP process is used to help determine the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the DEIR. Based on this process and the Initial Study for the Project, certain environmental categories were identified as having the potential to result in significant impacts. Issues identified as Less Than Significant or No Impact are included in Chapter 8, *Impacts Found Not to Be Significant*. Refer to the Initial Study in Appendix A for discussion of how these initial determinations were made.

2.3 SCOPE OF THIS DEIR

As described in Section 1.2.2 of this DEIR, this is a full-scope Program EIR that addresses all environmental issues in the City's initial study. The scope of the DEIR was determined based upon the City's initial study, comments received in response to the NOP, and comments received at the scoping meeting conducted by the City. Pursuant to Sections 15126.2 and 15126.4 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the DEIR shall identify any potentially significant adverse impacts and recommend mitigation that would reduce or eliminate these impacts to levels of insignificance.

The information in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, establishes the basis for analyzing future, Project-related environmental impacts. However, further environmental review by the City may be required as more detailed information and plans are submitted on a project-by-project basis.

The City's general plan policies and programs, existing regulations, and mitigation measures have been identified that either reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts. In addition, Chapter 7, *Alternatives*, describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the Project while substantially avoiding or lessening any of the significant impacts of the proposed Project. Chapter 7 also evaluates the comparative merits of the alternatives and the proposed Project.

2.3.1 Impacts Considered Less Than Significant

One environmental impact category, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, is identified here as not being significantly affected by the proposed Specific Plan. This determination was made by the City of Long Beach in its preparation of the Initial Study. While the initial study also identified Mineral Resources as no impact, this topic area was analyzed in greater detail based on comments received during the scoping process.

2.3.2 Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts

Sixteen environmental factors were identified during the scoping process as being potentially significantly impacted if the proposed Project is implemented. These factors are:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

2.3.3 Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts

This DEIR identifies significant and unavoidable adverse impacts under five environmental topical areas, as defined by CEQA, that would result from implementation of the proposed Project. Unavoidable adverse impacts may be considered significant on a project-specific basis, cumulatively significant, and/or potentially significant. If the City, as the lead agency, determines that unavoidable significant adverse impacts will result from the Project, the City must prepare a “Statement of Overriding Considerations” before it can approve the Project. A Statement of Overriding

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Considerations states that the decision-making body has balanced the benefits of the proposed Project against its unavoidable significant environmental effects and has determined that the benefits of the Project outweigh the adverse effects, and therefore, the adverse effects are considered to be acceptable. As described in more detail in Chapter 6, *Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts*, of this DEIR the environmental topic areas that were found to be significant and unavoidable are:

- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Cultural Resources (Historical Resources)
- Noise
- Transportation and Traffic

2.4 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The following documents are incorporated by reference in this DEIR, consistent with Section 15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines, and are available for review at the City of Long Beach Development Services, 333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 4th Floor, Long Beach, CA 90802.

- City of Long Beach General Plan
- City of Long Beach Municipal Code

In each instance where a document is incorporated by reference for purposes of this report, the EIR shall briefly summarize the incorporated document or briefly summarize the incorporated data if the document cannot be summarized. Chapter 13, *Bibliography*, provides a complete list of references utilized in preparing this DEIR.

2.5 FINAL EIR CERTIFICATION

This DEIR is being circulated for public review for a period of 60 days. Interested agencies and members of the public are invited to provide written comments on the DEIR to the City address shown on the title page of this document. Upon completion of the 60-day review period, the City of Long Beach will review all written comments received and prepare written responses for each comment. A Final EIR (FEIR) will be prepared that incorporates all of the comments received, responses to the comments, and any changes to the DEIR that result from the comments received. This FEIR will be presented to the City of Long Beach for potential certification as the environmental document for the Project. All persons who commented on the DEIR will be notified of the availability of the FEIR and the date of the public hearing before the City.

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This DEIR is available to the general public for review at the following locations:

- City of Long Beach Development Services
333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 4th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
- Main Library
101 Pacific Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90802
- Bay Shore Neighborhood Library
195 Bay Shore Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90803

The DEIR can also be viewed on the City of Long Beach website at the following address:
http://www.lbds.info/planning/environmental_planning/environmental_reports.asp.

All comments received from agencies and individuals on the DEIR will be accepted during the 45-day public review period. All comments on the DEIR should be sent to:

Craig Chalfant, Senior Planner
City of Long Beach Development Services
333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 5th Floor
Long Beach, California 90802
craig.chalfant@longbeach.gov

All public agencies that submit comments during the 60-day public review period on the DEIR will receive written responses to their comments at least 10 days prior to final action on the proposed Project. If the City Council decides to certify the FEIR, it will make the necessary findings required by CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines regarding the extent and nature of the impacts as presented in the FEIR. The FEIR must be certified by the City prior to making a decision to approve the proposed Project. Public input is encouraged at all public hearings and meetings before the City Council and Planning Commission concerning the proposed Project.

2.6 MITIGATION MONITORING

Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 requires that agencies adopt a monitoring or reporting program for any project for which it has made findings pursuant to Public Resources Code 21081. Such a program is intended to ensure the implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the preparation of an EIR.

The draft Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program is included in Appendix M, and the final MMRP for the Project will be completed concurrently with the Final EIR, prior to consideration of the Project by the Long Beach City Council.

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