

1.0 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This introduction is included to provide the reader with a general overview of: (1) the purpose of an EIR; (2) a description of the environmental review process conducted for this project to date; (3) the lead, responsible, and trustee agencies for the project; and (4) the general format of this EIR.

PURPOSE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY

This Draft EIR evaluates the proposed Glendale Town Center project. The Glendale Town Center was designed to implement the City of Glendale's and the Glendale Redevelopment Agency's (hereafter refer to as the Agency) goals of revitalizing downtown Glendale. Implementation of the Glendale Town Center project would include a maximum of 475,000 square feet of retail-commercial floor area,¹ and a maximum of 425,000 square feet of residential floor area contained in 338 dwelling units. Other components of the project would include development of a new street within the project site which would provide a connection between Orange Street and Brand Boulevard between Colorado and Harvard Streets, and the vacation of portions of Orange and Harvard Streets within the project site, landscape and streetscape improvements, architectural elements and security lighting, building signage, and necessary upgrades to utility systems.

This Draft EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the State *Guidelines* for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act and applicable City of Glendale Redevelopment Agency adopting procedures for implementation of the CEQA and State CEQA *Guidelines* (Resolution R-314), including Section 15120 through 15131 of the *Guidelines* for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and applicable City of Glendale CEQA documentation procedures and requirements. This EIR identifies and discusses potential project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts, which may occur should this proposed project be implemented. The intent of this EIR is to: (1) be an informational document which serves to inform

1 Floor Area is defined in the proposed Glendale Town Center Specific Plan as the sum of the gross horizontal areas of the several floors of the building measured from the exterior faces of the exterior walls excluding exterior balconies, porches, stairways, service corridors, exit corridors, elevators, escalators, shafts, basement storage areas, restroom facilities, police substations, any space where the floor to ceiling height is less than 6 feet, and attics, mechanical penthouses and other rooms housing building-operating equipment or machinery provided there are no useable rooms, no windows and the mechanical penthouse area is used exclusively for mechanical equipment. Floor Area shall not include outdoor eating areas, food service pavilions, kiosks, carts on private property, the public right-of-way or within the Town Center Park. Floor Area also shall not include any parking areas and their associated driveways and ramps or loading spaces, docks, trash compactor areas or loading for motor vehicles.

public agency decision-makers and the general public of the potential environmental impacts of a project; (2) identify possible ways to minimize or avoid any potential significant impacts either through mitigation or the adoption of alternatives; and (3) disclose to the public required agency approvals.

The principal use of an EIR is to provide input and information to the comprehensive planning analysis. Given the important role of the EIR in this planning and decision-making process, it is important that the information presented in the EIR be factual, adequate, and complete. The standards for adequacy of an EIR, defined in Section 15151 of the CEQA *Guidelines*, are as follows:

“An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.”

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Agency determined that an EIR should be prepared for the Glendale Town Center project. As a result, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared and circulated between September 26, 2002 and October 25, 2002 for the required 30-day review period. The purpose of the NOP was to solicit early comments from public agencies with expertise in subjects that will be discussed in the Draft EIR. The NOP and written responses to the NOP are contained in **Appendix 1.0(a)** of this EIR. The City of Glendale also held a scoping meeting on the project to solicit oral and written comments from the public and public agencies. The public scoping meeting was held October 16, 2002. Comments received at the meeting are contained in **Appendix 1.0(a)** of this EIR.

After some modifications to the project, the Agency decided to recirculate the NOP between August 19, 2003 and September 18, 2003 for an additional 30-day period. The recirculated NOP and written comments on the recirculated NOP are contained in **Appendix 1.0(b)** of this EIR.

Topics evaluated in this Draft EIR have been identified based upon the responses to both NOPs, comments received at the scoping meeting, and review of the project by the agency staff. The Agency

determined through this initial review process that impacts related to the following topics are potentially significant and require assessment in this Draft EIR:

- Land Use & Planning
- Aesthetics
- Hydrology & Water Quality
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Public Services
- Recreation.
- Population & Housing
- Geologic and Seismic Hazards
- Traffic and Circulation
- Noise
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Utilities & Services Systems

LEAD, RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

The Agency as the public agency with authority for approval of the Glendale Town Center is the “Lead Agency” of the EIR, as defined by CEQA. As such, the Agency is responsible for ensuring that the EIR satisfies the procedural and informational requirements of CEQA and for the consideration and certification of the adequacy of the EIR prior to making any decision regarding the project.

“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 purpose of CEQA, the term “Responsible Agency” includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency having discretionary approval over the project. The City of Glendale would serve as a Responsible Agency. During the NOP review period, no other public agency identified itself as a Responsible Agency.

“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. During the NOP review period, no public agency identified itself as a Trustee Agency.

EIR REVIEW PROCESS

This EIR is being circulated for a 60-day public review period. During this public review period, written comments concerning the adequacy of the document may be submitted by any interested person and/or affected agency, to the City of Glendale Redevelopment Agency, 633 East Broadway, Room 201, Glendale, California 91205, Attn: Mark Berry, Project Manager.

Following the public review period, all oral and written comments will be responded to in writing, and incorporated into a Final EIR. At least 10 days prior to a hearing to certify the Final EIR, proposed responses to comments on the Draft EIR by responsible agencies will be sent to those agencies. The Final

EIR will be forwarded to the City's Environmental and Planning Board (EPB). The City's EPB will then determine whether the FEIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA and adequately addresses the environmental impacts of the project. The City's EPB will then either recommend or not recommend certification of the EIR to the City Council and Redevelopment Agency Board. Following an EPB determination that the FEIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA, the Planning Commission will consider the information in the FEIR in conjunction with the development plans and the associated approvals and make a recommendation to the Agency and City Council on the entitlement requests.

The FEIR will then be submitted to the Agency and City Council, which will determine whether to certify the documents as reflecting the City's independent judgment and having been properly prepared in accordance with CEQA. No aspect of the proposed project will be approved until after the FEIR is certified. Review of the project may occur at a joint meeting of the City Council, Redevelopment Agency Board and Planning Commission.

REPORT FORMAT

As stated, a principal objective of CEQA is that the environmental review process be a public one. In meeting this objective, the EIR must inform members of the general public, decision-makers, and technically oriented reviewers of the physical impacts associated with a proposed project. To this end, specific features have been incorporated into this EIR to make it more understandable for non-technically-oriented reviewers, yet provide the technical information necessary for agency personnel.

A description of the organization of this EIR and the content of each section is provided below to assist the reader in using this EIR as a source of information about the proposed project. Sections of the Draft EIR following this introduction are organized as follows.

Section 2.0, Summary, includes a general description of the environmental setting, project description and alternatives to the proposed project. Environmental impacts and mitigation measures are summarized in a tabular form.

Section 3.0, Project Description, presents a detailed description of the proposed project as required by the CEQA *Guidelines*. Topics addressed in this section include the project objectives and the characteristics of the project.

Section 4.0, Environmental Impact Analysis, contains analysis of each of the environmental topics addressed in this EIR. Each topic is addressed in separate subsections as follows: environmental setting; project impacts; cumulative impacts; mitigation measures; and residual impacts after mitigation.

Section 5.0, Effects Found Not To Be Significant, discusses those effects identified as not significant during the NOP process.

Section 6.0, Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes, evaluates whether the project would result in the irretrievable commitment of resources or would cause irreversible change in the environment.

Section 7.0, Growth Inducement, discusses the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth in the area.

Section 8.0, Alternatives, provides analysis of alternatives to the proposed project. As required by the CEQA *Guidelines*, a discussion of the reasons for selection of alternatives analyzed is provided with a comparative analysis of each alternative with the project.

Section 9.0, List of EIR Preparers, provides a list of persons involved in the preparation of this EIR.

Section 10.0, References, provides a list of all organizations and persons contacted during preparation of the Draft EIR, and lists all documents used as a basis of information for the Draft EIR.

Appendices to this EIR include the NOP and written responses, as well as selected technical reports and data used generated during the preparation of the Draft EIR.