

1.0 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This introduction is intended to provide the reader with important information regarding (1) the purpose of an environmental impact report (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 organization of this EIR.

PURPOSE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY

This draft EIR evaluates the Mitaa Plaza project (the Project). The Project is proposed to implement the goals of the City of Glendale (the City) and the Glendale Redevelopment Agency (the Agency) as outlined in the San Fernando Road Corridor Redevelopment Project Area. The Project consists of a five-level commercial building, one level of which is subterranean, with an attached nine-level parking structure, two levels of which are subterranean. Specifically, the Project includes a 25,000-square-foot day spa facility, a 36,000-square-foot market, approximately 26,880 square feet of additional retail commercial space, 11,210 square feet of restaurant space, 32,000 square feet of professional office, 32,000 square feet of medical office space, and 597 parking spaces. The medical office space may consist of commercial condominiums to enable individual ownership of the tenant space. The commercial building would be five stories above grade and the parking structure would be six stories above grade. The maximum height of the structures would be approximately 76 feet above grade.

The construction period for the Project is anticipated to last approximately 24 months with construction scheduled to begin in December 2010. The Project is anticipated to be ready for occupancy in 2012.

This draft EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the *State CEQA Guidelines*, and applicable Agency procedures for implementing CEQA and the *State CEQA Guidelines* (Resolution R-314), including applicable City CEQA documentation procedures and requirements. This EIR identifies and discusses potential Project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts that may occur should the Project be implemented. The intent of this EIR is to (1) be an informational document, which serves to inform public agency decision makers and the general public of the potential environmental impacts of the 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 undertaken for this Project. 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 *State 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.

This EIR has been prepared in accordance with the above standards for adequacy of an EIR under CEQA.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Agency determined that an EIR should be prepared for the Project after conducting preliminary review of the Project in accordance with Section 15060 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. Following this determination, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared and circulated by the Agency for public and agency review between December 9, 2008, and January 7, 2009, for the required 30-day review period. A revised NOP was prepared and circulated between December 15, 2009, and January 13, 2010, 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 would be discussed in the draft EIR. The NOP and comments received during the NOP review period are contained in **Appendix 1.0** of this EIR. The Agency also held a public scoping meeting on the Project to solicit oral and written comments from the public and public agencies. The public scoping meeting was held on December 15, 2008.

Topics evaluated in this draft EIR have been identified based upon the responses to the NOP and Agency staff review of the Project. 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:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Traffic, Circulation, and Parking
- Utilities and Services Systems

LEAD, RESPONSIBLE, AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

The public agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project is designated as the Lead Agency under CEQA. For this Project, the Glendale Redevelopment Agency is the Lead Agency, and is responsible for ensuring that the EIR satisfies the procedural and substantive requirements of CEQA and for considering and certifying the adequacy and completeness 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 the Lead Agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or Negative Declaration. For purposes of CEQA, the term Responsible Agency includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency having discretionary approval authority over the project. The City of Glendale serves 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 will be circulated for a 45-day public review and comment period. During this period, written comments concerning the adequacy of the draft EIR may be submitted by any interested person and/or affected agency, to the City of Glendale Redevelopment Agency, 633 East Broadway, Suite 201, Glendale, California 91206, Attention: Annette Vartanian, Administrative Analyst.

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 all public agencies will be sent to those agencies as required by CEQA. The final EIR will then be considered by the Agency and City Council, which will determine whether to certify the adequacy and completeness of the document in accordance with CEQA. No aspect of the Project would be approved until after the final EIR is certified. Review of the Project may occur at a joint meeting of the City Council and Redevelopment Agency Board.

REPORT FORMAT

As stated, a principal objective of CEQA is that the environmental review process be public. 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 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 Project. Environmental impacts and mitigation measures are summarized in a tabular form.

Section 3.0, Project Description, presents a detailed description of the Project as required by the *State 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; these are, environmental setting, Project impacts, cumulative impacts, mitigation measures, and residual impacts after mitigation.

Section 5.0, Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes, evaluates whether the Project would result in the irretrievable commitment of resources or would cause irreversible changes in the environment.

Section 6.0, Growth Inducement, discusses the ways in which the Project could foster economic or population growth in the area.

Section 7.0, Alternatives, provides analysis of alternatives to the Project. As required by the *State CEQA Guidelines*, the reasons for selecting the analyzed alternatives are discussed, in addition to a comparative analysis of each alternative with the Project.

Section 8.0, Effects Found Not to be Significant, provides an overview of those environmental topics for which the City has determined the Project would not result in a significant impact.

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

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

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