

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

This environmental impact report (EIR) examines the potential effects of the proposed South Glendale Community Plan (SGCP) within the City of Glendale (City). The proposed SGCP defines a vision and establishes standards and strategies for the long-term physical development and enhancement of South Glendale using the principles of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). The proposed SGCP includes four components: the proposed SGCP, amendments to the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the Glendale General Plan to reflect the Community Plan, an amendment to the boundaries of the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP), and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to apply zoning consistent with the proposed SGCP.

The proposed SGCP area is located within the City, approximately 5 miles north of downtown Los Angeles. South Glendale is located between unincorporated La Crescenta and Montrose, and the cities of Burbank and La Cañada Flintridge to the north; the city of Pasadena to the east; the city of Los Angeles to the south; and portions of the city of Burbank to the west. The proposed SGCP area comprises all of the neighborhoods within the City south of State Route 134 (SR-134), including Downtown Glendale, Adams Hill, and Tropic. The SGCP area includes 2,952 acres and includes one of the main retail hubs in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area, featuring the Glendale Galleria, a major regional mall, and The Americana at Brand, a flagship mixed-use lifestyle center.

The City is preparing a series of individual community plans to provide development policies for separate community plan areas. The proposed SGCP is the second of four community plans proposed for the City. The first was the North Glendale Community Plan that was adopted by the City Council in November 2011. As part of the Glendale General Plan, the community plans work in tandem with general plan elements, providing additional development policies to guide future development.

The City is the lead agency for this project. As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this EIR: (1) assesses the expected individual and cumulative impacts of implementation of the proposed SGCP; (2) identifies means of avoiding or minimizing potential adverse environmental impacts; and (3) evaluates a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project, including the No Project Alternative.

1.1 PURPOSE OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The purpose of an EIR is to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant impacts can be mitigated or avoided (California Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21002.1). A detailed description of the proposed SGCP, also referred to as the proposed project, is provided in Chapter 3 (Project Description) of this EIR.

The proposed project requires the discretionary adoption of the proposed SGCP by the City. Adoption of the proposed SGCP is considered a project under the CEQA and is, therefore, subject to review under CEQA.

In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), the purpose of this EIR is to serve as an informational document that:

... will inform public agency decision makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.

This EIR has been prepared as a Program EIR pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. A Program EIR may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project. As stated in the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 (b), the use of a Program EIR can provide the following advantages:

1. Provide an occasion for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on an individual action;
2. Ensure consideration of cumulative impacts that might be slighted in a case-by-case analysis;
3. Avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations;
4. Allow the lead agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program wide mitigation measures at an early time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts; and
5. Allow reduction in paperwork.

According to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c), subsequent activities in the program must be examined in the light of the Program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental documentation must be prepared. If a later activity would have effects that were not examined in the Program EIR, an initial study would need to be prepared followed by a Negative Declaration or an EIR. Such subsequent environmental documentation would be “tiered” from the Program EIR. As discussed in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15152, tiering refers to coverage of general matters and environmental effects in an environmental impact report prepared for a policy, plan, program, or ordinance followed by narrower or site-specific environmental clearance documents that incorporate, by reference, the discussion in any prior environmental impact report and which concentrate on the environmental effects that are (a) capable of being mitigated, or (b) were not analyzed as significant effects on the environment in the prior environmental impact report. However, if any subsequent activities would not result in new environmental effects or the need for new mitigation measures, the subsequent activity could rely on the environmental analysis provided in this EIR, and minimal additional environmental documentation would be required.

This EIR has been prepared in conformance with CEQA (PRC Sections 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, California Code of Regulations [CCR] Sections 15000 et seq.). State CEQA Guidelines Section 15151 defines the standards for adequacy of an EIR 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 the 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 serves as an informational document that is ultimately used by the City of Glendale Planning Commission and City Council when considering whether or not to approve the proposed project.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE EIR

This EIR addresses the potential environmental effects of implementation of the proposed project within the proposed SGCP area. The scope of this EIR includes environmental topics determined to be potentially significant by the Notice of Preparation (NOP), responses to the NOP, and scoping discussions among the public, consulting staff, and City staff. The NOP, including comment letters received during the NOP review period, are contained in Appendix A. The following environmental topics are analyzed in this EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources (includes Tribal 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/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

This EIR evaluates the issues referenced above and identifies potentially significant environmental impacts, including direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the project, in accordance with the provisions set forth in the State CEQA Guidelines. In addition, the EIR recommends feasible mitigation measures, where possible, that would reduce or eliminate adverse environmental effects.

In preparing the EIR, pertinent City policies and guidelines, existing EIRs, the Glendale General Plan, and background documents prepared by City staff were all evaluated for their applicability to the proposed project. A list of references is provided at the end of each environmental topic section.

Chapter 5 (Other CEQA Considerations) of this EIR summarizes the environmental issue areas where the proposed project would result in effects found not to be significant. Chapter 5 also discusses growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project.

Chapter 6 (Alternatives to the Proposed Project) of this EIR has been prepared in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, which requires an evaluation of a reasonable range of alternatives, including the No Project Alternative. It also identifies the “environmentally superior” alternative among the alternatives assessed.

1.3 LEAD, RESPONSIBLE, AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

Per the State CEQA Guidelines, this EIR defines lead, responsible, and trustee agencies. The City is the lead agency for the proposed project because it holds principal responsibility for approving the project. As such, the City 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. During preparation of the EIR, agencies, organizations, and persons who might have an interest in the proposed project were specifically contacted.

“Responsible Agency” means a public agency that 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 proposed SGCP does not contemplate a specific development plan, and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the only responsible agency for the proposed project identified at this time. Except for proposed land uses that would be allowed by right, subsequent development projects will be subject to discretionary approval by the City and potentially other public agencies. In addition, future projects within the City may require approval from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) regarding air quality; the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regarding water quality, as well as potential discharges into surface waters; the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regarding biological resources; and the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) regarding hazardous materials and hazardous waste.

A “Trustee Agency” is 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. As discussed above, the proposed SGCP is a planning document for the City and does not address a specific or proposed development plan. As such, no trustee agencies are identified at this time.

1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

As the Lead Agency for the proposed project, the City is responsible for administering the environmental review for the proposed SGCP. The City determined that an EIR would be prepared in conformance with CEQA, State CEQA Guidelines, and Glendale CEQA Guidelines. This EIR analyzes the potential environmental effects of the proposed SGCP under all environmental topics listed above in Section 1.2 (Scope of the EIR). In compliance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, a NOP was issued to announce its intent to prepare an EIR for the proposed SGCP. The NOP was distributed on September 12, 2016, to the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR), various public agencies, and other interested parties for the required 30-day public review period to solicit comments on the scope and content of the environmental information that should be addressed in the EIR. Additionally, a Public Scoping meeting was held on September 19, 2016, at the Pacific Community Center to solicit public comments on the proposed project. The NOP, comments received on the NOP, and the Scoping Meeting comments are contained in Appendix A. Agencies or interested persons who did not respond during the NOP public review period will have an opportunity to comment during the public review period for this EIR, as well as at subsequent hearings on the proposed SGCP.

This EIR was prepared under the direction and supervision of the City of Glendale Community Development Department (CDD). This EIR is subjected to a 60-day public review period as mandated by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15105. During the 60-day public review period, this EIR is available for public review on the city website (<http://www.glendaleca.gov/environmental/>) and at the following locations:

- City of Glendale Planning Division
633 E. Broadway, Room 103
Glendale, CA 91206
- Glendale Central Library
222 E. Harvard Street
Glendale, CA 91205

Interested parties may submit written comments on this EIR to the City by March 9, 2018. Comments should be addressed to the following:

Mr. Erik Krause, Interim Deputy Director of Planning
City of Glendale Community Development Department
633 East Broadway, Room 103
Glendale, California 91206
Telephone: 818.937.8156 Facsimile: 818.240.0392
Email: ekrause@glendaleca.gov

Upon completion of the 60-day public review period, written responses to all comments raised with respect to environmental issues discussed in the Draft EIR will be prepared and incorporated into the Final EIR. The comments and their responses will be available, as part of the Final EIR, for consideration by the City Council prior to certification of the Final EIR and subsequent approval of the SGCP.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE DRAFT EIR

This EIR has been designed for easy use and reference. A brief summary of the contents of each chapter of the EIR is provided to assist the readers in locating information, and includes the following:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction**—This chapter provides an introduction and a description of the intended uses of the EIR and the review and certification process.
- **Chapter 2: Summary**—This chapter includes a summary of the project description, environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project and implementing ordinances, proposed mitigation measures where applicable, and the level of significance of the impact before and after mitigation.
- **Chapter 3: Project Description**—This chapter presents a complete description of the proposed project, including plan location, plan characteristics, and plan objectives. This section also provides an overview of the environmental setting within the study area, including a description of existing and surrounding land uses, history and background of the project and project area, and a discussion of recommendations and revisions to be analyzed in the EIR.
- **Chapter 4: Environmental Analysis**—This chapter is the primary focus of this EIR. Each environmental issue is considered in a separate section and contains a discussion of existing conditions for the project area, including the regulatory framework, analysis methodology, thresholds of significance, and an assessment and discussion of the significance of impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project.
- **Chapter 5: Other CEQA Considerations**—This chapter provides analysis including effects found not significant, growth-inducing impacts, and significant irreversible change to the environment. This chapter also summarizes any significant and unavoidable impacts.
- **Chapter 6: Alternatives to the Proposed Project**—This chapter analyzes a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed SGCP, including No Project Alternative, and two Reduced Density Alternatives.
- **Chapter 7: Report Preparers**—This chapter identifies the individuals responsible for the preparation of this EIR.

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