



2.0 Introduction and Purpose



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The proposed Canyon City Business Center (Project) is located within the City of Azusa (City), in the eastern portion of Los Angeles County, approximately 27 miles northeast of Downtown Los Angeles. The project site is located at the former Colorama Wholesale Nursery site located at 1025 North Todd Avenue and is comprised of Assessor's Parcel Numbers 8617-001-029 and 8900-763-710. Refer to Section 3.0, *Project Description*, for an expanded discussion.

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The City of Azusa is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required for the Canyon City Business Center Project (Project) (State Clearinghouse No. 2018021059). This EIR has been prepared in conformance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.); *CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.); and the rules, regulations, and procedures for implementation of CEQA, as adopted by the City of Azusa. The principal *CEQA Guidelines* sections governing content of this document include Article 9 (Contents of Environmental Impact Reports) (Sections 15120 through 15132), and Section 15161 (Project EIR).

The purpose of this EIR is to review the existing conditions, analyze potential environmental impacts, and identify feasible mitigation measures to avoid or lessen the Project's potentially significant effects. This EIR addresses the Project's environmental effects, in accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15161. As referenced in *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15121(a), the primary purposes of this EIR are to:

- Inform decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effects of a project;
- Identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects of a project; and
- Describe reasonable alternatives to a project.

The mitigation measures that are specified shall be adopted as conditions of approval to minimize the significance of impacts resulting from the Project. In addition, this EIR is the primary reference document in the formulation and implementation of a mitigation monitoring program for the Project.

The City (which has the principal responsibility of processing and approving the Project) and other public (i.e., responsible and trustee) agencies that may use this EIR in the decision-making or permit process will consider the information in this EIR, along with other information that may be presented during the CEQA process. Environmental impacts are not always mitigatable to a level considered less than significant; in those cases, impacts are considered significant unavoidable impacts. In accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093(b), if a public agency approves a project that has significant impacts that are not substantially mitigated (i.e., significant unavoidable impacts), the agency must state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project, based on the Final EIR and any other information in the public record for the project. *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093 requires a "statement of overriding considerations" where the Agency specifies the findings and public benefits for the project that outweigh the impacts.



This EIR analyzes the Project's environmental effects to the degree of specificity appropriate to the current proposed actions, as required by *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15146. The analysis considers the activities associated with the Project to determine the short- and long-term effects associated with their implementation. This EIR discusses the Project's direct and indirect impacts, as well as the cumulative impacts associated with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

2.2 COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRAFT EIR

In accordance with Sections 15087 and 15105 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, this Draft EIR will be circulated for a 45-day public review period, beginning on May 17, 2018. Interested agencies and members of the public are invited to comment in writing on the information contained in this document. Persons and agencies commenting are encouraged to provide information that they believe is missing from the Draft EIR and to identify where the information can be obtained. All comment letters received before the close of the public review period will be responded to in writing, and the comment letters, together with the responses to those comments, will be included in the Final EIR.

Comment letters should be sent to:

City of Azusa
213 East Foothill Boulevard
Azusa, California 91702
Attn: Mr. Edson Ibañez, Assistant Planner
eibanez@ci.azusa.ca.us

CERTIFICATION OF THE FINAL EIR

Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15132, Contents of Final Environmental Impact Report, the Final EIR will consist of:

- a) The Draft EIR or a revision of the Draft;
- b) Comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR either verbatim or in summary;
- c) A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR;
- d) The Lead Agency's responses to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process; and
- e) Any other information added by the Lead Agency.

Additionally, pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15088, Evaluation of and Response to Comments, after the Final EIR is completed, and at least ten days prior to the certification hearing, a copy of the response to comments made by public agencies on the Draft EIR will be provided to the commenting agencies.

PROJECT CONSIDERATION

After Final EIR certification, the City Council may consider approval of the Project. A decision to approve the Project would be accompanied by specific, written findings, in accordance with *CEQA*



Guidelines Section 15091, and if required, a specific written statement of overriding considerations, in accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093.

2.3 NOTICE OF PREPARATION/ EARLY CONSULTATION (SCOPING)

In compliance with the *CEQA Guidelines*, the City has provided opportunities for various agencies and the public to participate in the environmental review process. During Draft EIR preparation, efforts were made to contact various Federal, State, regional, and local government agencies and other interested parties to solicit comments on the scope of the review in this document. This included the distribution of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to various responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and interested parties. In addition, a public scoping meeting was held on March 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Azusa Civic Auditorium located at 213 East Foothill Boulevard, Azusa, California 91702. The scoping meeting's purpose was to:

- Inform the public of the Project and the City's intent to prepare an EIR;
- Present an overview of the CEQA EIR process;
- Review the topics to be addressed in the EIR; and
- Receive public comments on issues of concern and environmental topics to be addressed in the EIR.

Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15082, as amended, the City circulated an NOP directly to public agencies (including the State Clearinghouse Office of Planning and Research), special districts, and members of the public who had requested such notice. The NOP was distributed on February 21, 2018, with the 30-day public review period concluding on March 23, 2018. The purpose of the NOP was to formally announce the preparation of a Draft EIR for the Project, and that, as the Lead Agency, the City was soliciting input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. The NOP provided preliminary information regarding the anticipated range of impacts to be analyzed within the EIR. The NOP and NOP comments are provided as [Appendix 11.1, *Notice of Preparation and Comment Letters*](#), and have been addressed in each appropriate topical area of this EIR. The NOP comments included the following:

- The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) provided information to the City pertaining to historical resources, Assembly Bill 52, and Senate Bill 18. The NAHC also recommended preparation of a Cultural Resources Assessment for the project. Refer to [Section 5.4, *Tribal and Cultural Resources*](#), for an analysis pertaining to potential historical resources and potential Tribal Cultural Resources (pursuant to Assembly Bill 52. It is acknowledged that, as the project does not propose an amendment to the general plan or a specific plan, or an amendment to the designation or proposed designation of open space, Senate Bill 18 is not applicable. Refer to [Appendix 11.3, *Cultural/Paleontological Resources Assessment*](#), for the cultural resources assessment prepared for the Project.
- The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) provided information regarding considerations and methodologies for the Project's air quality analysis, including data sources and recommendations for truck trip rates for a high-cube warehouse project and mitigation measures. Should the EIR determine that the Project results in significant and unavoidable air quality impacts, the SCAQMD requests consideration of a reasonable range



of potentially feasible alternatives. The SCAQMD acknowledges that the Project may require a permit and provides additional information on the SCAQMD permit process. The air quality analysis for the Project can be found in Section 5.9, *Air Quality*, and Appendix 11.8, *Air Quality, Health Risk, and Greenhouse Gas Analyses*.

- The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) recommended the Project incorporate transit-oriented development measures, as well as project design features which would encourage active transportation alternatives instead of private automotive transportation. Metro also noted that the Project would require a transportation impact analysis with roadway and transit components pursuant to the State of California Congestion Management Program. The traffic impact analysis for the Project can be found in Section 5.8, *Traffic and Circulation*.

2.4 FORMAT OF THE EIR

The Draft EIR is organized into the following sections:

- Section 1.0, *Executive Summary*, provides a brief project description and summary of the environmental impacts and mitigation measures.
- Section 2.0, *Introduction and Purpose*, provides CEQA compliance information.
- Section 3.0, *Project Description*, provides a detailed project description indicating project location, background, and history; project characteristics, phasing, and objectives; as well as associated discretionary actions required.
- Section 4.0, *Basis of Cumulative Analysis*, describes the approach and methodology for the cumulative analysis.
- Section 5.0, *Environmental Analysis*, contains a detailed environmental analysis of the existing conditions, existing regulatory setting, potential project impacts for two development options, potential cumulative impacts, recommended mitigation measures, and significant unavoidable impacts (if any) for the following environmental topic areas:
 - Land Use and Relevant Planning;
 - Aesthetics/Light and Glare;
 - Biological Resources;
 - Tribal and Cultural Resources;
 - Geology and Soils;
 - Hydrology and Water Quality;
 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials;
 - Traffic and Circulation;
 - Air Quality;
 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
 - Noise; and
 - Public Services and Utilities.



- Section 6.0, *Other CEQA Considerations*, discusses long-term implications of the proposed action. Irreversible environmental changes that would be involved in the proposed action, should it be implemented, are considered. The project's growth-inducing impacts, including the potential for population growth, and energy conservation impacts are also discussed.
- Section 7.0, *Alternatives to the Proposed Project*, describes a reasonable range of alternatives to the project or its location that could avoid or substantially lessen the project's significant impact and still feasibly attain the basic project objectives.
- Section 8.0, *Effects Found Not To Be Significant*, explains potential impacts that have been determined not to be significant and which were scoped out of detailed analysis in this EIR.
- Section 9.0, *Organizations and Persons Consulted*, identifies all Federal, State, and local agencies, other organizations, and individuals consulted.
- Section 10.0, *Bibliography*, identifies reference sources for the EIR.
- Section 11.0, *Appendices*, contains the project's technical documentation.

2.5 RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

Certain projects or actions undertaken by a Lead Agency require subsequent oversight, approvals, or permits from other public agencies in order to be implemented. Such other agencies are referred to as Responsible Agencies and Trustee Agencies. Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Sections 15381 and 15386, as amended, Responsible Agencies and Trustee Agencies are respectively defined as follows:

- “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 purposes of CEQA, the term “responsible agency” includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency which have discretionary approval power over the project. (Section 15381)
- “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. Trustee Agencies include; The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, The State Lands Commission; The State Department of Parks and Recreation and The University of California with regard to sites within the Natural Land and Water Reserves System. (Section 15386)

Responsible and Trustee Agencies and other entities that may use this EIR in their decision-making process or for informational purposes include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Azusa Light and Water Department;
- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board;
- Department of Conservation;
- Department of Toxic Substances Control; and
- South Coast Air Quality Management District.



2.6 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Pertinent documents relating to this EIR have been cited in accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15150, which encourages incorporation by reference as a means of reducing redundancy and the length of environmental reports. The following documents are hereby incorporated by reference into this EIR. Information contained within these documents has been utilized for each section of this EIR. These documents are available for review at the City of Azusa Community Development Department, Planning Division, located at 213 East Foothill Boulevard, Azusa, California, 91702.

- *City of Azusa General Plan*. The City Council adopted the *City of Azusa General Plan* (General Plan) in April 2004. The General Plan provides a general, comprehensive, and long-range guide for community decision-making. The General Plan covers the seven State-mandated elements as well as optional elements organized in three key themes or “Elements of Place.” Each element contains a brief introduction, several goals and related policies, and a description of implementation programs to accomplish said goals and related policies. Specifically, the General Plan is organized as follows:
 - The Built Environment
 - City Design
 - Mobility
 - Housing
 - Historical and Cultural Resources
 - Infrastructure
 - Economy and Community
 - Economic Development
 - Public Services
 - Natural Environment
 - Open Space and Biological Resources
 - Geological Hazards
 - Mineral Resources
 - Air Quality
 - Noise

Existing conditions and policy information from the General Plan are cited throughout this EIR.

- *City of Azusa General Plan Environmental Impact Report*. The *City of Azusa General Plan Environmental Impact Report* (General Plan EIR) was certified by City Council in 2004. The General Plan EIR analyzed the environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the General Plan and associated Development Code Amendment. The General Plan EIR was prepared as a Program EIR, which is intended to facilitate consideration of broad policy directions, program-level alternatives, and mitigation measures consistent with the level of detail available for the plan. The General Plan EIR concluded significant and unavoidable impacts regarding air quality, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems.



- City of Azusa Municipal and Development Code (codified through Ordinance No. 2017-08 enacted July 17, 2017). The *City of Azusa Municipal and Development Code* (Municipal Code) consists of all the regulatory, penal, and administrative ordinances of the City of Azusa. The Municipal Code is the primary method the City uses to control land uses, in accordance with General Plan goals and policies. The City's Development Code, adopted as Municipal Code Chapter 88, is intended to protect and promote the public health, safety, comfort, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the City's residents and businesses. The City's Building and Building Regulations, adopted as Municipal Code Chapter 14, specify rules and regulations for construction, alteration, and building of structures for human occupancy.



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