

INTRODUCTION

1. Tiered Initial Study

LLJ Adler WCCI, LLC and LLJ Adler WCCII, LLC (collectively, Applicant) propose to develop the De Soto/Burbank Master Plan Project (Project), a multi-phase, master-planned, mixed-use development on the approximately 24.4-acre Project Site. The Project Site is located within the area governed by the Warner Center 2035 Specific Plan (WC2035 Plan), which became effective on December 25, 2013. The WC2035 Plan replaced the prior 1993 Warner Center Specific Plan and established new districts, use and development standards, mobility requirements and urban design guidelines for Warner Center. A Final Environmental Impact Report was prepared with respect to the WC2035 Plan (ENV-2008-3471-EIR; SCH No. 1990011055), which was certified by the Los Angeles City Council on October 23, 2013 (WC2035 Plan FEIR) (Council File No. 13-0197). The WC2035 Plan FEIR is available for public review at the Department of City Planning's Valley Office (6262 Van Nuys Boulevard, Van Nuys, CA 91401) or on the Department of City Planning's website:

https://planning.lacity.org/eir/WarnerCntrRegionalCore/FEIR/WarnerCenter_FEIR.pdf.

As discussed in more detail below, this Tiered Initial Study (Tiered IS) has been prepared for the proposed Project to determine whether the Project may cause significant effects on the environment that were not adequately addressed in the WC2035 Plan FEIR, in accordance with Section 21094(c) of the California Public Resources Code, which is a provision of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code §§21000 et seq., CEQA), and Section 15152(f) of the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Sections 15000 et seq.).

2. WC2035 Specific Plan and FEIR

The 924-acre WC2035 Plan area is located in the southwestern San Fernando Valley, within the Warner Center area of the City of Los Angeles (City). The WC2035 Plan area is intended for development as an urban transit-oriented district (TOD) in a portion of the City's Canoga Park-Winnetka-Woodland Hills-West Hills Community Plan area. The WC2035 Plan area is bounded generally by the Los Angeles River to the north, the Ventura Freeway to the south, De Soto Avenue to the east, and Topanga Canyon Boulevard to the west. The western border of the WC2035 Plan area extends variably up to 500 feet west of Topanga Canyon Boulevard. In January 2008, it contained an estimated 6,200 residential units, 16.1 million square feet of non-residential (office,

industrial, retail, hotel, hospital, school, etc.) floor area, 13,950 residents, 39,599 employees, and a floor-area ratio (FAR) of 0.66:1 (WC2035 Plan DEIR, pp. ES-1-2, Table ES-1).

The Project is subject to the development standards and other requirements in the WC2035 Plan, which modified the types of uses and permitted development densities in the WC2035 Plan area. The WC2035 Plan allows a balanced mix of uses, with a concentration of employment and housing opportunities to support a sustainable regional center. Several characteristics were identified to attract the desired development for the WC2035 Plan area to support the balanced mix of uses, including providing a variety of job types, a range of housing options, a mix of regional and local-serving retail, and providing entertainment and recreational facilities that can all be within walking distance or accessed by convenient public transportation options.

The WC2035 Plan subdivides the WC2035 Plan area into eight districts (i.e., subareas), specifies permitted land uses and development standards for each district, and includes a set of urban design guidelines for development. A minimum percentage of land uses in each district is assumed to be devoted to non-residential uses, allowing development to occur based on market demand, while ensuring the availability for an appropriate mix of uses in the future.

3. Tiering Process

This Tiered IS is tiered from the WC2035 Plan FEIR, in accordance with Section 21094 of the California Public Resources Code and Section 15152 of the State CEQA Guidelines. The WC2035 Plan FEIR evaluated the environmental impacts associated with a specified level of development under the WC2035 Plan through the year 2035 planning horizon. The WC2035 Plan FEIR recommends mitigation measures that are intended to mitigate the identified significant impacts associated with the assumed level of buildout under the WC2035 Plan. The WC2035 Plan FEIR also recommends project-specific mitigation measures to mitigate project-level significant impacts.

Tiering under CEQA involves the preparation of multiple CEQA documents for a sequence of actions so that the later CEQA document incorporates and builds on the information provided in a "first-tier" environmental impact report (EIR). Put another way, tiering refers to using the analysis of general matters contained in a broader EIR, including one prepared for a specific plan, with later EIRs or negative declarations on narrower projects, incorporating by reference to general discussions from the broader EIR and concentrating the later CEQA documents solely on the issue specific to the later project (State CEQA Guidelines § 15152(a)).

Tiered CEQA documents eliminate the repetitive evaluation of the same environmental issues that were adequately addressed in the first-tier EIR. Section 15152(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines encourages the tiering of environmental documents, thereby streamlining the environmental review process for specific development projects, as follows:

Agencies are encouraged to tier the environmental analyses which they prepare for separate but related projects including...development projects. This approach can eliminate repetitive discussions of the same issues and focus the later EIR or negative declaration on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review. Tiering is appropriate when the sequence of analysis is

from an EIR prepare for a general plan, policy or program to an EIR or negative declaration...to a site-specific EIR or negative declaration.

Section 15152(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines explains how later environmental documents should be limited in scope:

Where an EIR has been prepared and certified for a program, plan, policy, or ordinance consistent with the requirements of this section, any lead agency for a later project pursuant to or consistent with the program, plan, policy, or ordinance should limit the EIR or negative declaration on the later project to effects which: (1) were not examined as significant effects on the environment in the prior EIR; or (2) are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance by the choice of specific revisions in the project, by imposition of conditions, or other means.

A second-tier EIR will be required for the later development project if the project may cause significant effects on the environment that were not adequately addressed in the prior, first-tier EIR. (State CEQA Guidelines § 15152(f)). Significant environmental effects have been "adequately addressed" if the lead agency determines that (1) they have been mitigated or avoided as a result of the prior EIR and findings adopted in connection with that prior EIR, (2) they have been examined at a sufficient level of detail in the prior EIR to enable those effects to be mitigated or avoided by site-specific revisions, imposition of conditions, or by other means in connection with the approval of the later project, or (3) they would not be susceptible to substantial mitigation or avoidance (Cal. Pub. Res. Code § 21068.5, State CEQA Guidelines § 15152(f)(3)). This is consistent with the statutory direction that duplicative analysis of environmental impacts examined in a prior EIR be excluded from a second-tier CEQA document (Cal. Pub. Res. Code § 21093).

If an initial study determines that the later development project will not cause any significant effects on the environment that were not adequately addressed in the prior, first-tier EIR, then a negative declaration shall be required pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15070. If the initial study identifies potentially significant effects that were not adequately addressed in the prior, first-tier EIR, but (1) revisions in the project made by or agreed to by the applicant before the initial study and proposed mitigated negative declaration are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur and (2) there is no substantial evidence that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment, then a mitigated negative declaration shall be required pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15070. (State CEQA Guidelines §15152 (f)).

The environmental review for the proposed Project, as presented in this Tiered IS, will rely on, and tier off of, the WC2035 Plan FEIR with respect to the following:

- A discussion of general background and setting information for environmental topic areas.
- Overall growth-related issues, including issues that are not specific to the proposed Project.
- Environmental topics and issues that were adequately addressed or otherwise evaluated in sufficient detail in the WC2035 Plan FEIR.
- Mitigation measures identified in the WC2035 Plan EIR that apply in whole or in part to the proposed Project.

- Cumulative impacts.

This Tiered IS has been prepared to comply with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines with respect to the Project. Based on the tiering framework described above, this Tiered IS will focus on project-specific impacts and issues in order to determine whether the proposed Project may cause any significant effects on the environment that were not adequately addressed in the WC2035 Plan FEIR. This will entail the analysis of some of the Project's site-specific impacts that could not be addressed in the WC2035 Plan FEIR because specific details regarding the Project were not available at the time the WC2035 Plan FEIR was prepared. The WC2035 Plan FEIR is hereby incorporated by reference into this Tiered IS pursuant to Section 15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

As demonstrated in Attachment B, Explanation of Checklist Determinations, of this Tiered IS, which provides an evaluation of each environmental impact area, the Project would not result in any significant impacts on the environment that were not adequately addressed in the WC2035 Plan FEIR.

4. Project Relationship to WC2035 Plan and WC2035 Plan FEIR

The proposed Project has been designed to comply with all applicable development standards and urban design guidelines in the WC2035 Plan, as well as fulfill the WC2035 Plan's vision to create an "urban center where people can live, work and play" and a "vibrant Transit Oriented District area based on sustainability, community connectedness, accessible public transit, and promotion of innovative businesses, job diversity, and safe and friendly pedestrian environment, " and "to help to concentrate a mix of uses that are within walking distance to one another so people can easily walk rather than drive."

The entire WC2035 Plan area, including the Project Site, has a land use designation of "Regional Center Commercial" in the Canoga Park-Winnetka-Woodland Hills-West Hills Community Plan and has a zoning designation of "Warner Center (WC)". The Project Site is located within the Commerce District, one of eight zoning districts established in the WC2035 Plan. The Commerce District is intended to accommodate new residential opportunities, including work-live uses, while retaining some of its historical light industrial land uses. According to the WC2035 Plan (Section 6.1.2.2), the Commerce District is intended to be the most "jobs-rich" district, and it is intended to provide flexible employment uses with some associated retail uses. Commercial and industrial land use potential is to be maintained at the ground floor throughout the District. A range of land uses is therefore permitted in the Commerce District, including the following: work-live units; multi-family residential dwelling units; certain industrial, manufacturing and research and development uses; hybrid industrial uses; specific service industry and office uses; retail stores; and restaurants. The WC2035 Plan established a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.5:1 for lots within the Commerce District, together with a graduated FAR requirement that defines the minimum allowable non-residential floor area in order to maintain a districtwide balance between commercial and residential development. Building height within the Commerce District is mostly unlimited, with some exceptions.

The proposed land uses (i.e., residential, work-live, commercial office, retail, restaurant and hotel) and physical and operational characteristics of the Project are consistent with the applicable development standards and requirements in the WC2035 Plan, including proposed uses, the graduated FAR requirement for the proportion of residential to non-residential uses, development envelope, building heights, design standards, setbacks, parking and open space requirements in the Commerce District.

It is important to note that the WC2035 Plan FEIR assumed a level of development for the Project Site that exceeds the development intensity associated with the proposed Project. Specifically, the environmental analyses in the WC2035 Plan FEIR assumed development at an overall 3:1 FAR throughout the WC2035 Plan area. By comparison, the overall FAR for the Project is only 2.52:1. Therefore, (1) the Project is consistent with the development assumption in the WC2035 Plan FEIR and (2) the environmental impacts identified in the WC2035 Plan FEIR, as they relate to the Project Site, substantially exceed the Project's actual environmental impacts.

Mitigation measures recommended in the WC2035 Plan FEIR that are applicable to the proposed Project are presented in this Tiered IS with respect to certain environmental topics. Those mitigation measures are initially reproduced verbatim as presented in the WC2035 Plan FEIR, while they are non-substantively modified at the end of specified sections to conform to the Project and account for the fact that the Project includes multiple phases and to correct typographical and other errors.

This is consistent with Section 5.3, Development Review Process–Project Permit Compliance of the WC2035 Plan, which states:

Project Permit Compliance: All Projects (as such term is defined in Section 4 of this Plan, which definition excludes those activities listed below in Sections 5.3.1.1 through 5.3.1.9, inclusive) that are not subject to the Administrative Clearance process shall be subject to the Project Permit Compliance process set forth in Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 11.5.7. A Project Permit Compliance is discretionary in nature and is reviewed in accordance with LAMC Section 11.5.7. Prior to any Project Permit Approval, the Director shall impose any mitigations resulting from identified impacts in a Project specific environmental analysis. Prior to any Project Permit Approval, the Director shall consult with Appendix C (Mitigation Measures Table) and shall impose any mitigations, which apply to the specific Project or, alternatively, if a Project prepares its own Project level environmental review, then the mitigations measures from that environmental analysis and review are applicable to that Project.

5. Public Review and Comment Period

The Tiered IS will be circulated for public review and comment from December 19, 2019 to January 17, 2020, for a period of 30 days. The Tiered IS will be available for public review online at <https://planning.lacity.org/development-services/negative-declaration-public-notice>. Comments made on this Tiered IS must be received by 5:00 pm on January 17, 2020. Comments can be emailed to tim.fargo@lacity.org.

6. Document Organization

The Tiered IS includes this Introduction, the CEQA Environmental Checklist, attachments, and appendices, as follows:

Introduction. This section provides a summary of the Project, describes the CEQA tiering process, explains how and the extent to which the environmental analyses in the Tiered IS will rely on and incorporate the environmental analysis in the WC2035 Plan FEIR and summarizes the organization of the Tiered IS.

CEQA Environmental Checklist. This section contains the City's CEQA Initial Study Checklist, including a brief project description, zoning information, lead agency signatures, and a checkbox summary of impact significance for all environmental topics.

Attachment A: Project Description. This section describes the location, objectives, and physical and operational characteristics of the Project. This section presents an overview of the Project's environmental setting, including onsite and surrounding land uses.

Attachment B: Explanation of Checklist Determinations. This section contains the environmental setting, regulatory framework, methodology, thresholds of significance, project characteristics and/or project design features, project-specific and cumulative impact analyses, mitigation measures, and conclusions regarding the level of significance after mitigation for each of the following environmental issues: (1) Aesthetics – Visual Character, Views, Light and Glare, Shading; (2) Agriculture and Forest Resources; (3) Air Quality; (4) Biological Resources; (5) Cultural Resources – Archaeological and Paleontological Resources, Historical Resources; (6) Geology and Soils; (7) Greenhouse Gas Emissions; (8) Hazards and Hazardous Materials (including Wildfire); (9) Hydrology and Water Quality; (10) Land Use and Planning; (11) Mineral Resources; (12) Noise and Vibration; (13) Population, Housing, and Employment; (14) Public Services – Fire Protection, Police Protection, Schools, Parks, Libraries; (15) Recreation; (16) Transportation and Traffic; (17) Tribal Cultural Resources; (18) Utilities and Service Systems – Water Supply, Wastewater, Solid Waste; (19) Energy; and (20) Mandatory Findings of Significance.

References: A comprehensive list of references cited in this Tiered IS.

The Environmental Analyses in this Tiered IS are supported by the following appendices:

Appendix A – Air Quality – CalEEMod Output Files

Appendix B – Tree Survey

Appendix C – Cultural Resources Assessment (CONFIDENTIAL)

Appendix D – Paleontological Resources Assessment (CONFIDENTIAL)

Appendix E – Geotechnical Reports

Appendix F – Greenhouse Gas Emissions – CalEEMod Output Files

Appendix G – Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

Appendix H – Surface Hydrology and Water Quality Technical Memorandum

Appendix I – Noise Calculations and Measurements

Appendix J – Public Services Responses

Appendix K –Traffic Volume Review

Appendix L – Tribal Cultural Resources Consultation Correspondence

Appendix M – Wastewater and Water Supply Technical Memorandum

Appendix N – Water Supply Assessment

Appendix O – Energy Calculations