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# **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) was prepared in accordance with and in fulfillment of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines). As described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), an environmental impact report (EIR) is a public informational document that assesses the potentially significant environmental impacts of a project. CEQA requires that an EIR be prepared by the agency with primary responsibility for approving and/or carrying out a project (the lead agency). The South Pasadena Unified School District (SPUSD; the District) is the lead agency for the proposed Mission Place Project (the project). Public agencies are charged with the duty to consider and minimize significant environmental impacts of proposed development where feasible and have the obligation to balance economic, environmental, and social factors.

### 1.0.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR prior to approving any project which may have a significant effect on the environment. The District has determined that Mission Place Project is a project under CEQA.

This Draft EIR provides a review of the environmental effects of project implementation. The District has prepared this Draft EIR for the following purposes:

- To satisfy the requirements of CEQA (Public Resources Code, Sections 21000–21178) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 4, Chapter 14, Sections 15000–15387).
- To inform the general public, the local community, and responsible and interested public agencies of the project, its possible environmental effects, recommended measures to mitigate those effects, and alternatives to the proposed project.
- To enable the District to consider environmental consequences when deciding whether to approve the Mission Place Project.
- To serve as a source document for information needed by several regulatory agencies to issue permits and approvals for the Mission Place Project.
- To evaluate the project's potential significant environmental effects.

### 1.0.2 KNOWN TRUSTEE AND RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

For the purpose of CEQA, the term *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. There are no identified trustee agencies identified for the project.

In CEQA, the term *responsible agency* includes all public agencies other than the lead agency that may have discretionary actions associated with the implementation of the proposed project or an aspect of subsequent implementation of the proposed project. The following agencies may have some role in implementing the proposed project and have been identified as potential responsible agencies:

- City of South Pasadena

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.0.3 TYPE OF DOCUMENT

The Mission Place Project Draft EIR is an environmental impact report focusing on environmental topics as determined by the prepared Initial Study (**SCH # 2015071001**) and through the scoping and Notice of Preparation process. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(c)(3), the purposes of an Initial Study are to:

- (3) *Assist in the preparation of an EIR, if one is required, by:*
- (A) *Focusing the EIR on the effects determined to be significant,*
  - (B) *Identifying the effects considered not to be significant,*
  - (C) *Explaining the reasons for determining that potentially significant effects would not be significant, and*
  - (D) *Identifying whether a program EIR, tiering, or another appropriate process can be used for analysis of the project's environmental effects.*

The SPUSD prepared and published an Initial Study for the proposed project (**SCH # 2015071001**). The analysis presented in the Initial Study found that the project could potentially impact the following resource areas:

- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Public Services
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Transportation and Traffic

All other resources were found to have no impact or a less than significant impact as a result of project implementation (**Appendix A**). As such, the District determined that an EIR focusing on the topics above would be prepared.

### 1.0.4 INTENDED USE OF THE EIR

This Draft EIR is intended to evaluate the environmental impacts of project implementation and to help decision-makers in the project approval process. The EIR in its final form may also be considered in the review of any subsequent permit actions, if any, to facilitate the project.

### **1.0.5 ORGANIZATION AND SCOPE**

CEQA Guidelines Sections 15122 through 15132 identify content requirements for Draft and Final EIRs. An EIR must include a description of the environmental setting, an environmental impact analysis, mitigation measures, alternatives, significant irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. The environmental issues addressed in the Draft EIR were established through review of environmental documentation developed for the project, environmental documentation for nearby projects, and responses to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and public scoping meeting comments. This Draft EIR is organized in the following sections:

#### **SECTION ES – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This section provides a project narrative and identifies environmental impacts and mitigation measures through a summary matrix consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15123.

#### **SECTION 1.0 – INTRODUCTION**

This section provides an overview that describes the intended uses of the EIR, as well as the review and certification process.

#### **SECTION 2.0 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This section provides a detailed description of the proposed project and project objectives, along with background information and physical characteristics consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15124.

#### **SECTION 3.0 – ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

This section contains analyses relative to each environmental topic. Included in this section is a comprehensive analysis related to impacts and mitigation measures that correspond to project implementation. Each subsection contains a description of the relevant existing setting. The environmental topics considered in the Draft EIR are as follows:

- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Public Services
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Transportation and Traffic

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

---

### SECTION 4.0 – ALTERNATIVES

This section discusses alternatives to the proposed project, including the CEQA mandatory “No Project” alternative. The alternatives are intended to avoid or reduce significant project environmental impacts.

### SECTION 5.0 – OTHER CEQA ANALYSES

This section contains discussions of significant irreversible environmental changes that would occur if the proposed project is implemented, as well as significant unavoidable environmental effects, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance.

### SECTION 6.0 – REPORT PREPARERS; ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONS CONSULTED

This section lists all authors and agencies that assisted in the preparation of the report by name, title, and company or agency affiliation.

### SECTION 7.0 – REFERENCES

This section contains references used in compilation of the Draft EIR.

### APPROACH TO CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

A cumulative impact is an impact which is created as a result of the combination of impacts caused by the project and related impacts caused by other projects. CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires that EIRs discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts are analyzed in each of the technical sections of this EIR.

### TECHNICAL APPENDICES

The appendices contain all technical material prepared to support the analyses.

## 1.0.6 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The review and certification process for the EIR involves the following general procedural steps:

### INITIAL STUDY

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063, the District prepared an Initial Study for the project (**SCH # 2015071001**). The Initial Study concluded that the project could potentially impact air quality, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, land use and planning, noise, public services, utilities and service systems, and transportation and traffic. The District determined the need for a EIR in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(c)(3).

### NOTICE OF PREPARATION

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the District prepared a Notice of Preparation of an EIR on July 1, 2015. The SPUSD was identified as the lead agency for the proposed project. The notice was circulated to the public, local and state agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the proposed project. A scoping meeting was held on

July 21, 2015, to receive additional comments. Concerns raised in response to the NOP were considered during preparation of the Draft EIR. The NOP and responses by interested parties are presented in **Appendix B**.

### DRAFT EIR

This document constitutes the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR contains a project description, an environmental setting description, project impact identification, and mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant. An analysis of project alternatives is also included. Upon completion of the Draft EIR, the District filed the Notice of Completion (NOC) with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code Section 21161).

### PUBLIC NOTICE/PUBLIC REVIEW

Concurrent with the NOC, the District provided public notice of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review and to invite comment from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties. The public review and comment period for the Draft EIR is January 5, 2016 to February 18, 2016. Public comment on the Draft EIR will be accepted in written form by e-mail or mail. Notice of the time and location of the hearing will be published prior to the hearing. All comments or questions regarding the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

**South Pasadena Unified School District**  
1020 El Centro Street  
South Pasadena, CA 91030  
Attention: David Lubs, Assistant Superintendent

### RESPONSE TO COMMENTS/FINAL EIR

Following the public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared. The Final EIR will respond to written comments received during the public review period.

### CERTIFICATION OF THE EIR/PROJECT CONSIDERATION

The District will review and consider the Final EIR. If the District finds that the Final EIR is "adequate and complete," it may certify the Final EIR. Upon Final EIR review and consideration, the SPUSD may act upon the proposed actions. A decision to approve the project must be accompanied by written findings in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091 and 15093, as applicable. The District is also required to adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, as described below, for mitigation measures that have been incorporated into or imposed on the project to reduce or avoid significant effects on the environment. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program will be designed to ensure that these measures are carried out during project implementation.

### MITIGATION MONITORING

CEQA Section 21081.6(a) requires lead agencies to adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting program to identify measures which have been adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The specific "reporting or monitoring" program required by CEQA is not required to be included in the EIR; however, it will be presented to the decision-making body for adoption and incorporation into the project.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.0.7 COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The District received several comment letters on the project's NOP as well as during the scoping meeting held on July 21, 2015. The District also received comments at the community work shop held on September 10, 2014. A copy of each letter and comment card from the scoping meeting is provided in **Appendix B** of this Draft EIR. The following issues were raised during the comment period and/or during the scoping meeting:

- **Aesthetics:** Comments outlined the visual character of the project area and expressed concern as to how the project would fit into the existing character of the area. The comments also expressed concern regarding the project's massing, materials, and design as being too uniform. As discussed in the Initial Study (**Appendix A**), the project is on an infill site in a transit priority area; consequently, the aesthetic and parking impacts of the project cannot be considered significant impacts pursuant to CEQA. Please see **Appendix A** for a discussion of project impacts on aesthetics.
- **Cultural Resources:** Comments express concern for loss of historic character for the SPUSD Administration Building. The project design is perceived as not containing sufficient historic character, with concerns raised regarding indirect impacts to historic resources. See Section 3.2, Cultural Resources, for an analysis of the project's impact on historic resources.
- **Public Services:** Comments expressed concerns on school capacity and increased demand on the SPUSD. See Section 3.6, Public Services, for an analysis of the project's impact on schools.
- **Land Use:** Comments expressed concern over the lack of affordable housing, the existing empty storefronts and the addition of more retail space, density and city maximum population, improvement of open space, and that South Pasadena would no longer be predominantly a community of single-family residences. See Section 3.4, Land Use and Planning, for an analysis of environmental impacts related to land use.
- **Utilities:** Comments expressed concern about water supply availability. Comments also provided data regarding sewer capacity and the availability of service connections. Data regarding sewer capacity and wastewater flows is provided as **Appendix F**. According to this data, the project would have a less than significant impact on sewer capacity and wastewater, further supporting the conclusions in the Initial Study. Please see Section 3.7, Utilities and Service Systems, regarding water availability for the proposed project.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Comments suggested the installation of solar panels, the usage of grey water, the incorporation of green building practices, use of recycled materials, and water-efficient practices. The project would incorporate water-efficient features as outlined in Section 3.7, Utilities and Service Systems. Further, the project would comply with the City of South Pasadena's adopted green building standards.
- **Traffic:** Comments expressed concern about existing road capacity being able to accommodate project occupancy, increased congestion in the project area, and traffic study contents. Please see Section 3.8, Transportation and Traffic.
- **Tree Removal:** The project would replace all trees removed per City of South Pasadena requirements and as outlined in the Initial Study (**Appendix A**).

- Parking: Comments noted concern regarding parking availability for visitors, SPUSD staff, and volunteers, existing parking availability issues, lack of parking for the farmers market, and loss of parking during construction. Questions were raised regarding bicycle parking. As discussed in the Initial Study (**Appendix A**), the project is on an infill site in a transit priority area; consequently, the aesthetic and parking impacts of the project cannot be considered significant impacts pursuant to CEQA.
- Construction: Comments noted that material export during construction needs to be coordinated with the City. Any construction transportation issues would be addressed during the project permitting process. The project will comply with City of South Pasadena regulations regarding haul routes and construction staging. For a description of construction activities, please see Section 2.0, Project Description.
- Economic issues: Comments noted issues regarding revenue for the SPUSD and efforts to attract business to the newly developed commercial areas. Economic issues are not analyzed in CEQA documents.

These environmental issues raised during the scoping/NOP period have been analyzed and addressed in the appropriate sections of this EIR, as indicated above and as appropriate.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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