

1.1 Background and Project Overview

The proposed Project is a Citywide program to modify the manner in which sidewalk repair projects are undertaken pursuant to the City of Los Angeles' (City) obligations under the *Willits* Settlement Agreement (Settlement), which includes various City actions that provide improved access to persons with mobility disabilities in accordance with local, state, and federal accessibility requirements. Currently, the City is complying with the Settlement using existing ordinances and policies. The existing process requires case-by-case review and approval of each sidewalk repair project funded as a result of the Settlement.

With the Project, the City is proposing to adopt a new ordinance to revise the way sidewalk repairs undertaken pursuant to the *Willits* Settlement are reviewed and approved, with a primary goal of streamlining the Settlement implementation process. The key components of the ordinance include:

- Specific parameters to enable most sidewalk repairs to proceed as ministerial approvals under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), not subject to further environmental review applicable to discretionary actions;
- A streamlined discretionary approval process under CEQA for sidewalk repair projects falling outside the specific parameters allowed for a ministerial sidewalk repair approval;
- A revised Street Tree Retention, Removal and Replacement Policy establishing a 2:1 street tree replacement to removal ratio requirement for the first 10 years (starting from July 2017), a 3:1 ratio for years 11 to 21, and a 2:1 ratio for the last 9 years of the 30-year program; and
- Mandatory Project Design Features (PDFs) generally consisting of regulatory compliance measures and standard construction conditions.

1.2 Purpose and Intended Use of This EIR

The purpose of this environmental impact report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the potential environmental impacts that could result from the proposed Project. An EIR is the most comprehensive form of environmental documentation under CEQA. EIRs are intended to provide an objective, factually supported full-disclosure analysis of the environmental consequences associated with a project that has the potential to result in significant, adverse environmental impacts.

CEQA requires the decision-making body to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, or other benefits of the project against the unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. The EIR is prepared by and under the direction of the Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering (LABOE), which also has primary responsibility for recommending approval of and implementing the proposed Project. A detailed description of the proposed Project is provided in Chapter 2, *Project Description*.

The proposed Project requires certain discretionary approvals from the City and other public agencies (see below and Chapter 2). The City is the lead agency under CEQA for the proposed Project.

As shown in Figure 1-1, EIR Process Overview, an EIR is prepared in three key stages. The CEQA process is initiated when the lead agency identifies a project. The lead agency then normally prepares an Initial Study to identify the preliminary environmental impacts of the project. The Initial Study for the proposed Project determined that the proposed Project could have significant environmental impacts that would require further study and implementation of mitigation measures. Therefore, the lead agency has decided to prepare an EIR.



Figure 1-1. EIR Process Overview

1.3 Scope and Content of the Draft EIR

In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the City prepared an Initial Study (see below), dated July 27, 2017, which identified the topics to be analyzed in the EIR. The Initial Study is contained in Appendix A (Notice of Preparation/Initial Study and Public Comments on the Notice of Preparation/Initial Study) of this Draft EIR.

Because the analysis contained in the Initial Study determined that the proposed Project would result in less-than-significant or no impacts related to agriculture and forestry resources, mineral resources, population and housing, and recreation, no further analysis is required in the EIR. Therefore, the focus of this EIR has been limited to the following environmental impact areas:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Public Services
- Transportation/Traffic
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Energy
- Wildfire Hazards
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

1.4 Public Outreach Efforts

1.4.1 Notice of Preparation

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study (IS) were circulated from July 27, 2017 to September 15, 2017. During this extended 45-day review period, the lead agency requested comments on the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the Draft EIR.

Copies of the NOP/IS were made available for review at 35 library locations and mailed to more than 500 governmental and agency stakeholders. During the extended 45-day public review period, six digital announcements were sent to approximately 567 email addresses consisting of community residents, stakeholders, and interested constituents from the NOP/IS process; public agencies; non-profit groups; and others. Electronic advertisements on the public meetings and the Project were posted via Facebook, EmpowerLA, Los Angeles Sentinel, La Opinion (digital), and LA Times (digital). Public notices were printed in *Los Angeles Times*, *Daily Breeze*, and *La Opinion* newspapers. Staff attended 11 neighborhood council meetings prior to the end of the scoping period to invite stakeholders to comment on the NOP and attend the scoping meetings. All 15 City of Los Angeles Council Offices were contacted to post announcements about the environmental review process via their communications channels, and nine council offices posted announcements. Three public scoping meetings were held to obtain input on the NOP/IS and the scope and contents of the EIR:

- August 9, 2017, 6 p.m.–8 p.m., Ronald F. Deaton Civic Auditorium, 100 W 1st St (Main), Los Angeles, CA 90012
- August 14, 2017, 6 p.m.–8 p.m., Mid-Valley Senior Citizen Center, 8825 Kester Ave, Panorama City, CA 91402
- August 24, 2017, 6 p.m.–8 p.m., Westchester Senior Citizen Center, 8740 Lincoln Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90045

Approximately 300 written comments were received. The comments primarily discussed alternative designs and materials for sidewalk repair; dual function like sidewalk and stormwater capture; a higher street tree ratio; public participation, aesthetics of City tree canopy; funding questions, etc. Commenters included Los Angeles Metro, Native American Heritage Commission, South Coast Air Quality District, neighborhood councils, environmental groups, and non-profit organizations. Comments on the NOP/IS were considered by BOE during preparation of the Draft EIR, and are available in Appendix A3 along with the comments on the NOP/IS.

1.4.2 Review of Draft EIR

CEQA requires a Draft EIR to be submitted to the State Clearinghouse for circulation and for a 45-day review and comment period. This provides agencies and the general public an opportunity to review and comment on the adequacy of the analysis and the findings regarding potential environmental impacts of a proposed Project. The circulation period for the Draft EIR is December 26, 2019 through February 26, 2020 which is an extended 60-day review and comment period. A total of seven public meetings will be held on the dates and times and at the locations below:

- **January 29, 2020 – Sunland – Tujunga Branch Library**
7771 Foothill Blvd., Tujunga, CA 91042, 5:00–7:00 p.m.
- **January 30, 2020 – Watts Senior Citizen Center**
1657 E. Century Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90002, 6:00–8:00 p.m.
- **February 5, 2020 – Lafayette Multipurpose Community Center**
625 S Lafayette Park Pl., Los Angeles, CA 90057, 6:00–8:00 p.m.
- **February 6, 2020 – Reseda Recreation Center**
18411 Victory Blvd., Reseda, CA 91335, 6:00–8:00 p.m.
- **February 12, 2020 – Westchester Senior Citizen Center**
8740 Lincoln Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90045, 6:00–8:00 p.m.
- **February 13, 2020 – Normandale Recreation Center**
22400 Halldale Ave., Torrance, CA 90501, 6:00–8:00 p.m.
- **February 15, 2020 – Robert Louis Stevenson Branch Library**
803 Spence St., Los Angeles, CA 90023, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

After the close of the 60-day review and comment period, responses to all comments received on the Draft EIR are prepared. The lead agency prepares a Final EIR, which incorporates the Draft EIR or a revision to the Draft EIR, Draft EIR comments and a list of commenters, and responses to comments. In addition, the lead agency must prepare the Findings of Fact; the Statement of Overriding Considerations, if there are significant impacts that cannot be mitigated; and a Mitigation Monitoring Program, if applicable. These are components of a Final EIR.

The Board of Public Works will consider the Final EIR and make a recommendation to the City Council, as the governing body of the City, regarding certification of the Final EIR and the approval of the proposed Project. Approval of the Final EIR and the proposed Project are at the discretion of the City Council.

1.5 Organization of the Draft EIR

A list of the document's chapters, including and a brief description of their content, is provided here to assist the reader in locating information.

Executive Summary: Located at the front of this document, the Executive Summary provides a brief description of the proposed Project, including an overview of the impact analysis, recommended mitigation measures, and net residual impact.

Chapter 1: Introduction: The Introduction provides general background information regarding project development and the need for the proposed Project, along with information regarding the purpose of CEQA and this Draft EIR, including the Draft EIR scoping process; the availability of documents; and the Draft EIR review process.

Chapter 2. Project Description: Chapter 2 presents a statement of the proposed Project's objectives, a description of the location and setting of the proposed Project, a detailed description of the proposed Project's characteristics, and related information on phasing and implementation.

Chapter 3. Environmental Impact Analysis: This chapter analyzes the potential impacts (direct and indirect) that could occur as a result of implementation of the proposed Project. The impact discussion is organized by topical issue (i.e., issues that have been found to have the potential to result in significant impacts).

Chapter 4. Alternatives: The comparison of Alternatives includes a discussion of the proposed alternatives and provides the comparative merits of each alternative.

Chapter 5. Other Environmental Considerations: Chapter 5 summarizes effects not found to be significant, significant and unavoidable adverse environmental impacts, and significant irreversible environmental changes. It also evaluates the contextual impacts related to growth-inducing effects.

Chapter 6. Persons Consulted: This chapter lists those persons who were consulted to obtain the information that was used in the preparation of this Draft EIR.

Chapter 7. List of Preparers: This chapter lists the persons who prepared this Draft EIR.

Chapter 8. References: This chapter lists the sources of information that were referenced for the analyses contained within this Draft EIR.

