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TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

Project Title

PUBLIC NOTICE/POSTING: MEETING FOR THE VILLAGE SANTA ANA
SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT

Check Document being Filed:

- Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or Negative Declaration (ND)
- Notice of Exemption (NOE)
- Other (Please fill in type): POSTING

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE ORANGE
COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER ON November 3, 2023
Posted for 30 days
DEPUTY CARINA CORTES

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California Environmental Quality Act NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING MEETING

Date: November 3, 2023

To: Responsible Agencies and Interested Persons

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report and Public Scoping Meeting for The Village Santa Ana Specific Plan Project

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Santa Ana (City) will prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed The Village Santa Ana Specific Plan Project (proposed project or The Village) located on the northeast corner of West Sunflower Avenue and Bear Street, transected by South Plaza Drive. The City has determined that a Supplemental EIR to the City's General Plan Update (GPU) Final Program EIR (GPU FEIR) (SCH # 2020029087) is necessary pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15163 to evaluate the potential environmental impacts from the proposed project. The City is the Lead Agency for the proposed project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15050. The purpose of this notice is: (1) to serve as a Notice of Preparation of a Supplemental EIR pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15082; (2) to advise and solicit comments and suggestions regarding the scope and content of the forthcoming Supplemental EIR to be prepared for the project; and (3) to serve as a notice of the public scoping meeting. Copies of the Notice of Preparation are available for review at the following locations:

City of Santa Ana, Planning Division
20 Civic Center Plaza, M-20
Santa Ana, CA 92701

City of Santa Ana Public Library
26 Civic Center Plaza
Santa Ana, CA 92701

The documents can also be accessed on the City's website and on the CEQAnet webportal at: <https://www.santa-ana.org/the-village-santa-ana-specific-plan/> and <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/>.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION: Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.4 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the City has prepared a Notice of Preparation to solicit comments related to the scope and content of the Supplemental EIR. The 30-day public comment period for the Notice of Preparation is from Friday, November 3, 2023 to Monday, December 4, 2023. The City, as the Lead Agency, requests that responsible and trustee agencies respond in a manner consistent with Section 15082(b) of the CEQA Guidelines. **All environmental related comments to the Notice of Preparation should be submitted in writing by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 4, 2023 to:**

Jerry C. Guevara, Senior Planner
City of Santa Ana, Planning and Building Agency
P.O. Box 1988 (M-20)
Santa Ana, CA 92702
Email: JGuevara@santa.ana.org

SCOPING MEETING: The City will conduct a public scoping meeting in conjunction with this Notice of Preparation in order to receive public comments and suggestions regarding the scope and content of the Supplemental EIR. The meeting will be held on:

Date: Wednesday, November 15, 2023
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Location: McFadden Institute of Technology
2701 South Raitt Street, Santa Ana, CA 92704

PROJECT TITLE:

The Village Santa Ana Specific Plan Project

PROJECT LOCATION:

The project site comprises approximately 17.2 acres located on the northeast corner of West Sunflower Avenue and South Bear Street, transected by South Plaza Drive. The project site comprises seven parcels (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 412-451-01 through -04 and 412-131-10, -20, -21). (Refer to Figure 1, Project Site.)

PROJECT SITE DESCRIPTION:

The project site is currently occupied by the South Coast Plaza Village commercial center on both sides of South Plaza Drive which consists of approximately 164,049 square feet of retail shops and restaurants, offices, and the Regency Theatres cinema building. The property also provides surface parking, a variety of trees and a half-acre open space lawn area. Surrounding properties include South Coast Plaza, to the south across Sunflower Avenue in the City of Costa Mesa; the multi-family housing communities of Versailles on the Lake and St. Albans to the north; a retail shopping center to the east; and the Village Creek condominium community to the west across Bear Street in the City of Costa Mesa. The project site is located within 2 miles of the John Wayne Airport, approximately 1.2 nautical miles northwest of the airport.

The City's GPU Land Use Element designates the project site as District Center-High (DC-5) within the South Bristol Street Focus Area. Development in the DC-5 designation is intended to provide urban retail, residential, mixed-use, and employment centers with an intensity of up to 5.0 floor area ratio (FAR) and/or 125 dwelling units per acre. Mixed-use projects may be vertical or horizontal. The DC-5 designation also has a maximum height of 25 stories. The project site is currently zoned as Specific Development Plan Number 48 (SD-48) which was adopted in 1989 and was last amended in 1997.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Village Santa Ana Specific Plan Project would provide for redevelopment of the approximately 17.2-acre site with a mix of residential and commercial uses. The Village is proposed as a mixed-use community that allows for vertical and horizontal mixed uses across the site. The proposed project would include mixed-use commercial and residential, residential only, and commercial only buildings. A central commercial area would include a variety of commercial uses, such as restaurants and neighborhood retail uses, with additional commercial uses extending through the ground floor of adjacent residential buildings. Stand-alone residential and mixed-use buildings would provide housing opportunities for residents in the City's South Bristol Street Focus Area.

In total, The Village would include approximately 1,583 residential units (encompassing approximately 1,850,000 square feet of building space), 80,000 square feet of retail space, 300,000 square feet of office space, and over 3.6 acres of open space. The residential-only buildings are anticipated to include a range of heights from 5 to 25 stories and the commercial-only buildings are anticipated to include a range of heights from 1 to 20 stories. The mixed-use commercial/residential buildings are anticipated to include a range of heights from 5 to 25 stories. The proposed Specific Plan includes a maximum height of 25 stories with a minimum of 1 story for commercial/office only buildings. No minimum height is included for residential or mixed use buildings. Parking would be provided in tower and podium buildings and underground building levels with up to four levels below grade.

At full buildout, the project is anticipated to provide a minimum of 3.6 acres of publicly accessible open space and common areas. Public open spaces at The Village would consist of active spaces, outdoor seating, garden paseos, a fitness loop, recreational lawn, and the incorporation of architectural features. The project would also provide private open space amenities which would consist of outdoor balconies and patios, pools and spas, outdoor kitchens, and communal gathering spaces. The proposed project would also include roadway and streetscape modifications and improvements along Sunflower Avenue, Bear Street, and South Plaza Drive in addition to new access points throughout the project site. (Refer to Figure 2, Conceptual Land Use Plan.)

Construction of the proposed project is anticipated to begin January 2026 and would be built out in phases, each with access, public facilities, and infrastructure connections. The Village would be developed in a series of five phases with full buildout occurring in approximately 20 years. Phase one is anticipated to include 360 residential units and 73,175 square feet of commercial space. Phases two and three would consist of further development of 513 and 177 residential dwelling units respectively. Phase four would include the development of approximately 264 residential dwellings units, 300,000 square feet of office space, and the remaining 6,825 square feet of commercial space. The final phase five would complete the project with 269 residential units. (Refer to Figure 3, Conceptual Phasing Plan.)

The construction period would include demolition of the existing buildings, excavation, grading, trenching, installation of utilities, building construction, architectural coating, paving activities, and installation of landscaping and hardscape elements. Demolition of the existing site would primarily occur during Phase 1 (west of S. Plaza Drive) for approximately 3 months and Phase 4 (site east of S. Plaza Drive) for approximately 2 months. The maximum excavation would occur where up to four levels of subterranean parking is proposed during Phase 4, where excavations would reach approximately 52 feet below grade. Approximately 420,000 cubic yards of material would be excavated and hauled away from the project site. An estimated daily average of 150 and maximum of 300 construction workers would be employed.

DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS:

The project would require the following entitlements, which will be considered at the discretion of the City: the Village Santa Ana Specific Plan to regulate future development at the site; certification of a Supplemental EIR: an Amendment Application (zone change) to change the zoning of the site from Specific Development Plan Number 48 (SD-48) to The Village Santa Ana Specific Plan District (SP No. 6); a Tentative Tract Map (TTM) to delineate parcel boundaries and public rights-of-way; and a development agreement detailing development rights and public benefits pursuant Government Code Section 65864 et seq.

Consideration by outside agencies such as the John Wayne Airport's Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) is also required.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT:

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15060(d), the City has determined that the project will require a Supplemental EIR and will work directly on preparation of the Supplemental EIR without conducting an initial study. The Lead Agency will focus the Supplemental EIR on the potentially significant effects of the project and briefly indicate its reasons for determining that other effects would not be significant or potentially significant.

Based on the City’s preliminary analysis, the probable environmental effects of the project would be related to the following environmental topics and will be further evaluated in the Supplemental EIR:

- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems

EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT:

As detailed below, it is determined that the project’s effects related to the environmental topics listed below would not be significant based on the project’s environmental setting and development characteristics. No new significant impacts and no substantial increase in the severity of previously identified impacts of the GPU FEIR associated with the proposed project would occur. Likewise, there would be no changed circumstances involving new or more severe impacts and no new information of substantial importance requiring new analysis, verification, or mitigation measures. Therefore, the project would not trigger the need for a Supplemental EIR analysis related to the following environmental topics:

- **AESTHETICS:** Public Resources Code Section 21099 states that “aesthetic and parking impacts of a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project on an infill site¹ within a transit priority area shall not be considered significant impacts on the environment.” A Transit Priority Area (TPA) is defined as “an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop that is existing or planned, if the planned stop is scheduled to be completed within the planning horizon included in a Transportation Improvement Program or applicable regional transportation plan.” As the proposed project is a mixed-use project located on an infill site within a TPA as identified by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) (2022),² aesthetics-related impacts would not be considered significant. Therefore, no impacts related to aesthetics would occur, and no further analysis is required in the Supplemental EIR.
- **AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES:** The GPU FEIR found that according to the California Resource Agency’s Department of Conservation,³ the City does not have any significant agricultural resources, has no land designated or zoned for agricultural use, forest land, or timberlands, and does not have any land subject to a Williamson Act contract.⁴ As such, no farmland, forest, or timberland exists on the project site. The City is also almost completely built out and the GPU would allow for development in highly urbanized areas. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of agricultural or forest uses, convert farmland/forest land to non-agricultural/non-forest use, or conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, forest or timberlands. No impacts to agricultural or forest lands would occur, and no further analysis is required in the Supplemental EIR.

¹ Public Resources Code Section 21099 defines “infill site” as a lot located within an urban area that has been previously developed, or on a vacant site where at least 75 percent of the perimeter of the site adjoins, or is separated only by an improved public right-of-way from, parcels that are developed with qualified urban uses.
² Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), 2022, Connect SoCal 2024: The Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, Local Data Exchange Process Data/Map Book for the City of Santa Ana, pp 48-49.
³ California Department of Conservation, California Important Farmland Finder, available at: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciff/>, accessed October 2023.
⁴ City of Santa Ana, 2022, General Plan Update Final Program Environmental Impact Report - SCH # 2020029087, April.

- **BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:** According to the GPU FEIR, parcels with a proposed land use designation that allows for development under the GPU (i.e., not an open space designation) currently have ruderal vegetation and no sensitive vegetation. The GPU FEIR states that buildout under the GPU would be required to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations governing the protection and preservation of wildlife, plants, and habitat.⁵ The project site is fully developed with existing commercial uses, surface parking, and limited, ornamental landscaping, including grass lawns and trees. The surrounding area is heavily urbanized with residential and commercial uses. As such, the project site would not warrant further investigation for biological resources as no natural, vegetated areas that could support candidate, sensitive, or special status species, or habitat for such species; riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community; wetlands; wildlife corridors; or Natural Community Conservation and Habitat Conservation Plan areas exist on the project site.^{6,7} The proposed project would involve infill development within an already highly disturbed urban environment. Additionally, the proposed project would comply with the City's Municipal Code pertaining to trees within parkways and rights-of-way and would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.⁸ Therefore, the proposed project would result in no impacts or less than significant impacts related to biological resources, and no further analysis is required in the Supplemental EIR.
- **MINERAL RESOURCES:** The project site is not delineated as a locally important mineral resource recovery site in the GPU or other land use plan and is located entirely within an area designated as MRZ-3, indicating that the significance of mineral deposits cannot be determined from the available data.⁹ The project site is currently developed with existing commercial retail and surface parking lot uses. No mineral extraction, mineral resource sectors, or mines occur within or near the project site, and no mineral extraction would occur with implementation of the proposed project. Thus, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state or of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. No impact would occur, and no further analysis is required in the Supplemental EIR.
- **WILDFIRE:** The GPU FEIR identified that the nearest very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ) to the City in a state responsibility area is about four miles east along the western edge of Loma Ridge.¹⁰ The nearest VHFHSZ in a local responsibility area is about 3.8 miles east at the southern tip of the Peters Canyon Regional Park.¹¹ Therefore, the City is not in or near a state responsibility area or lands classified as VHFHSZs. Likewise, the project site, which is located within the City, is not located in or near a state responsibility area or lands classified as a very high fire hazard severity zone. No impact would occur, and no further analysis is required in the Supplemental EIR.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory, available at: <https://fwsprimary.wim.usgs.gov/wetlands/apps/wetlands-mapper/>, accessed October 2023.

⁷ California Department of Fish and Wildlife, NCCP Plan Summary – County of Orange (Central/Coastal) NCCP/HCP, available at: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/NCCP/Plans/Orange-Coastal>, accessed October 2023.

⁸ City of Santa Ana, Municipal Code Chapter 33, Article VII. Regulation of the Planting, Maintenance, and Removal of Trees.

⁹ California Department of Conservation, 1995, Open File Report 94-15. Update of Mineral Land Classification of Portland Cement Concrete Aggregate in Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties, California, Part III – Orange County.

¹⁰ City of Santa Ana, 2022, General Plan Update Final Program Environmental Impact Report - SCH # 2020029087, April.

¹¹ California Department of Forestry & Fire, FHSZ Viewer, available at: <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/>, accessed October 2023.

Figure 1: Project Site



Figure 2: Conceptual Land Use Plan



Source: Gensler, PlaceWorks

Figure 3: Conceptual Phasing Plan

