

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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## A. PURPOSE OF THE FINAL EIR

The County of Los Angeles (County), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared this Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for the proposed Rowland Heights Plaza and Hotel Project (the Project). This document, in conjunction with the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR), comprises the Final EIR.

As described in Sections 15088, 15089, 15090 and 15132 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Lead Agency must evaluate comments received on the Draft EIR and prepare written responses and consider the information contained in a Final EIR before approving a project. Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15132, a Final EIR consists 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 responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process; and e) any other information added by the Lead Agency.

Accordingly, the Final EIR for the Project comprises two parts as follows:

### Part 1: Draft EIR and Technical Appendices

Volume 1: Draft Environmental Impact Report (Sections 1 to 9)

Volume 2: Draft Environmental Impact Report – Appendices A through C

Volume 3: Draft Environmental Impact Report – Appendices D through H

Volume 4: Draft Environmental Impact Report – Appendices I through J

Volume 5: Draft Environmental Impact Report – Appendix K

### Part 2: Final EIR and Technical Appendices

Volume 6: Final Environmental Impact Report (described in more detail below.)

## B. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Rowland Heights Plaza and Hotel Project would be developed on a 14.06-acre property at 18800 Gale Avenue in the unincorporated Los Angeles County (County) community of Rowland Heights and the contiguous 0.79-acre property located within the City of Industry adjoining the 14.06-acre County property (Project Site or Site). The Project would subdivide the portion of the Project Site within the unincorporated County into three parcels. Parcel 1 (8.75 gross acres/8.18 net acres), comprising the eastern portion of the Project Site, would be developed with approximately 129,926 gross square feet (gsf) of retail, restaurant, and commercial uses (Commercial Center). As part of the Vesting Tentative Parcel Map filed for the Project, 155 commercial condominium units would be created on Parcel 1, the Commercial Center. Parcel 2 (3.38 gross

acres/3.22 net acres) would be developed with a full-service hotel with 270 guestrooms and suites, meeting rooms, and a restaurant, totaling approximately 189,950 gsf. Parcel 3 (1.93 gross and net acres) would be developed with an extended-stay hotel with 202 guestrooms and suites and totaling 130,930 gsf. Project development would result in approximately 450,806 gsf and an average floor:area ratio (FAR) on the portion of the Project Site in the unincorporated County of 0.74:1.

The Project Site would front onto Gale Avenue, with primary vehicular access to be provided by a new shared driveway on Gale Avenue between the commercial uses on Parcel 1 and the hotels on Parcels 2 and 3. A secondary new driveway on Gale Avenue near the western Project Site boundary would provide access to the hotels on Parcels 2 and 3. An additional driveway entrance to Parcel 1 would be also provided from the existing Gale Avenue driveway shared with the Rowland Heights Plaza Shopping Center, along the eastern Project Site boundary; the Project Applicant has designed this road to meet public standards in the event it is dedicated as public in the future at the recommendation of the County. Anticipated parking demand would be accommodated on the Project Site, with 1,203 spaces to be provided on existing parcels in both the County and City of Industry through a combination of subterranean structured parking and surface parking.

### **C. OVERVIEW OF THE CEQA PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS FOR THE DRAFT EIR**

In compliance with the CEQA Guidelines, the County, as the Lead Agency for the project, has provided opportunities for the public to participate in the environmental review process. As described below, throughout the environmental review process, an effort was made to inform, contact and solicit input from the public and various Federal, State, regional, and local government agencies and other interested parties on the Project.

#### **Initial Study/Notice of Preparation**

At the onset of the environmental review process and pursuant to the provisions of Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County Department of Regional Planning circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to State, regional, and local agencies, and members of the public for a 30-day review period, commencing June 5, 2015 and ending July 6, 2015. Early input was sought from other County departments prior to public circulation of the NOP. The purpose of the NOP was to formally convey that the County was preparing a Draft EIR for the proposed Project, and to solicit input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the Draft EIR. The NOP included notification that a public scoping meeting would be held to inform public agencies and other interested parties of the Project and to solicit input regarding the Draft EIR. The meeting was held June 18, 2015 between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. at the Rowland Heights Public Library, 1850 Nogales Street, Rowland Heights, CA 91748. The meeting provided interested individuals, groups, and public agencies the opportunity to provide oral and written comments to the Lead Agency regarding the scope and focus of the Draft EIR, as described in the NOP and Initial Study. The NOP, public comments on the NOP, and Scoping Meeting materials are provided in Appendix A, Notice of Preparation (NOP), Initial Study, Scoping Meeting Materials, and NOP and Scoping Meeting Comments, of the Draft EIR (Volume 2).

#### **Draft Environmental Impact Report**

In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15085, upon completion of the Draft EIR, a Notice of Completion and Availability (NOCA) as well as CD copies of the Draft EIR were submitted to the State Clearinghouse, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, for distribution to State Agencies. The Draft EIR

was circulated for a 45-day public review period between January 26, 2016 and March 11, 2016, in compliance with Section 15105(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines. As required under Section 15086 of the State CEQA Guidelines, a NOCA requesting comments on the Draft EIR and CDs of the Draft EIR were distributed to approximately 32 public agencies, organizations, and cities. In addition, copies of the NOCA and, in some cases, CDs of the Draft EIR were mailed to organizations, or individuals who had previously requested notice or expressed an interest in the Project, commented on the Project during the public review period, or attended the public scoping meeting conducted for preparation of the Draft EIR. Furthermore, copies of the NOCA were mailed to approximately 95 property owners and 524 occupants within a 500-foot radius of the site.

Copies of the Draft EIR were placed at the following locations:

- Los Angeles County, Department of Regional Planning website – <http://planning.lacounty.gov/case/view/r2014-01529>
- Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, Land Divisions Section – 320 West Temple Street, Room 1382, Los Angeles, CA 90012
- Rowland Heights Public Library – 1850 Nogales Street, Rowland Heights, CA 91748
- Diamond Bar Public Library – 21800 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765

During the Draft EIR public review period, the Department of Regional Planning received twelve comment letters on the Draft EIR from agencies, organizations, and individuals through written correspondence and emails. A Hearing Examiner Hearing for the Project, to present Draft EIR findings and accept public comment was held February 25, 2016, starting at 6:00 P.M. and ending after the last testifier spoke, at Nogales High School, 401 South Nogales Street, La Puente, CA 91744. All written and oral comments received during the public review period, including at the Hearing Examiner Hearing, are presented and responses provided in Chapter 2.0, Comments and Responses, of this Final EIR.

## **D. ORGANIZATION OF FINAL EIR**

The Final EIR (Volume 6 of the EIR) consists of the following four chapters:

**Chapter 1.0. Introduction.** This chapter describes the purpose of the Final EIR, provides a summary of the proposed Project, summarizes the Final EIR public review process, and presents the contents of this Final EIR.

**Chapter 2.0. Comments and Responses.** This chapter presents all comments received by the County during the 47-day public review period of the Draft EIR (October 22, 2015 through December 7, 2015) as well as the responses to those comments. Letters received during the public comment period are included in Appendix D.2, Original Comment Letters.

**Chapter 3.0. Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR.** This chapter includes revisions to the Draft EIR that represent minor changes or additions in response to some of the comments received on the Draft EIR and additional edits to provide clarification. Changes to the Draft EIR are shown with ~~striketrough~~ text for deletions and double underline text for additions. These changes are minor and do not add significant new information that would affect the analysis or conclusions presented in the Draft EIR.

**Chapter 4.0. Mitigation Monitoring Program.** The Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) is the document that will be used by the enforcement and monitoring agencies responsible for the implementation of the Project's mitigation measures and "project design features." Mitigation measures and project design features are listed by environmental topic.

## Appendices

Appendix A Updated Project Trip Generation

Appendix B Updated Parking Assessment

Appendix C Revised Water Supply Availability Supporting Information

C.1 Rowland Water District Revised Will Serve Letter – Rowland Water District, July 6, 2016

C.2 Revised Water Demand for Parallax Gale Avenue Hotel/Retail Site – PSOMAS, May 26, 2016

C.3 Review of Water Demand for Parallax Gale Avenue Hotel/Retail Site – RMC Water and Environment, June 15, 2016

C.4 Rowland Water District Recycled Water System, Excerpts from the 2012 Master Plan Update: Chapter 5, 2008 Recommended Expanded System

Appendix D

D.1 Official Transcript of the County of Los Angeles Hearing Examiner Hearing, February 25, 2016

D.2 Original Comment Letters on the Draft EIR

Appendix E

E.1 Market Demand Analysis, prepared by PKF Consulting

E.2 Hotel Commentary, prepared by CBRE Hotels

Appendix F Correspondence from The Rowland Heights Community Coordinating Council, September 29, 2015