

Section 1

Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared by the City of Oakland to disclose potential environmental effects of the proposed Wood Street Project, generally located between West Grand Avenue and 10th Street and between the Interstate 880 frontage road and Wood Street, in West Oakland. The Draft EIR included a description of the proposed project, an assessment of its potential effects, a description of possible mitigation measures to reduce significant effects that were identified in the Draft EIR, and a consideration of alternatives that could address potential impacts. The Project involves a General Plan amendment and rezoning of the Wood Street Project Area from business mix to mixed-use developments consisting of residential, live/work and retail uses, along with non-retail commercial space, as specified in a proposed Wood Street Zoning District. The Project also proposes to facilitate the restoration and adaptive reuse of the historic 16th Street Train Station. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Draft EIR was distributed for public review and comments.

The public review period for the Draft EIR began September 20, 2004 and ended November 8, 2004. City staff extended the public review period by one week to November 15, 2004. During this time frame, the document was reviewed by various state, regional, and local agencies, as well as by interested organizations and individuals. Written comments were received from 13 public agencies (federal, state, regional, and local), 27 organizations, and 15 individuals. A public hearing was also held in the City of Oakland before the Planning Commission on October 20, 2004 to obtain oral comments on the Draft EIR. Thirty-six members of the public delivered comments during the public hearing. Comments were also received from the members of the Oakland Planning Commission. In addition, a public hearing before the Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board was held on October 18, 2004 to received comments on the Draft EIR. Comments were received from ten speakers, as well as from Advisory Board members.

This document responds to comments on the Draft EIR that were raised during the public review period, and contains revisions intended to correct, clarify, and amplify the Draft EIR. The responses and revisions in this document substantiate and confirm the analyses contained in the Draft EIR. No new substantial environmental impact and no increase in the severity of an earlier identified impact have surfaced in responding to the comments. Together, the previously released Draft EIR and this document constitute the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR). As the lead agency, the City must certify the Final EIR before action can be taken on the Project. Certification requires that the lead agency make findings that the Final EIR complies with CEQA.

The City and its consultants collaborated in preparing the responses to comments. Consultant team members and their roles include:

- EIP Associates – overall document production and review; technical responses to comments concerning the project description, the development scenarios used to evaluate the range of development permitted by the proposed Wood Street Zoning District, land use compatibility, visual quality, noise, air quality, cultural resources, hazardous materials, soils and geology, hydrology and water quality, utilities, and public services.
- Dowling Associates – technical responses to comments concerning transportation, circulation, and parking.
- Alan Dreyfuss – technical responses concerning the historic significance of structures in and around the Project Area.
- Hausrath Economics Group – technical responses to comments concerning the Oakland cumulative growth scenario, the future jobs-to-housing ratio, the projected type and relocation of jobs as a result of the General Plan amendment from Business Mix to Urban Residential, and the conformance of the cumulative growth scenario with ABAG’s forecasts.
- Bay Area Economics – technical review of comments concerning potential effects of displacement.
- Mundie & Associates – technical responses to comments concerning direct and indirect gentrification.

1.2 HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

This document consists of six sections: (1) Introduction, (2) List of Commentors, (3) Master Responses, (4) Responses to Written Comments, (5) Responses to Oral Comments, and (6) Staff-Initiated Text Changes. Section 1 reviews the purpose and contents of the Final EIR. Section 2 lists the public agencies, organizations, and individuals who submitted comment letters on the Draft EIR or spoke at the public hearings on the Draft EIR. Section 3 contains master responses to frequently raised comments regarding:

- a description of the Project and its components;
- circulation and pedestrian and bicyclist safety in the Project Area vicinity;
- air quality and public health concerns;
- the history of the Project Area vicinity and the preservation of the 16th Street Train Station; and
- social and economic considerations related to the Project.

Section 4 contains individual responses to comments not addressed by a master response. Section 5 contains responses to oral comments made at the Planning Commission and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board public hearings. Finally, Section 6 consists of text and graphics changes to the Draft EIR requested by the City of Oakland staff to correct inaccuracies.

Specific comments from each comment letter have been enumerated in the margin of the letter, which is reproduced in Section 4 of this document. Comments are denoted using a numbering system that identifies the comment letter and the comment number within the comment letter. Thus, Comment 13.2 refers to the second comment in Comment Letter #13. Responses to each of these comments follow each comment letter and follow the same numbering scheme. Thus, Response 13.2 addresses Comment 13.2. This same numbering scheme is used to identify and respond to oral comments. A two-letter code is used as a prefix for each comment/response number to distinguish between speakers at the Planning Commission hearing (SP) and speakers at the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board hearing (SL). For the most part, the responses provide explanation or additional discussion of text in the Draft EIR. In some instances, the response supersedes or supplements the text of the Draft EIR for accuracy or clarification. New text that has been added to the Draft EIR is indicated with underlining. Text that has been deleted is indicated with ~~striketrough~~.