

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE FINAL EA/EIR

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## 1.1 PURPOSE

This document, along with the Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (Draft EA/EIR) represents the Final Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (Final EA/EIR) for the Hall of Justice Repair and Reuse Project (SCH No. 2003021019). This Final EA/EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and its implementing guidelines, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA. The County of Los Angeles Chief Administrative Office (CAO) is the Lead Agency under CEQA and the EIR portion of the document. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the lead agency under NEPA and the EA portion of the document. The County of Los Angeles will consider this Final EA/EIR in its capacity as Lead Agency under CEQA before it approves, denies, or recommends changes to the Hall of Justice Repair and Reuse Project. The Findings of Fact and any Statement of Overriding Consideration would be made after the County has considered the information contained in this Final EA/EIR. Likewise, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) is adopted at the time the findings are adopted and would also be included in the public record. FEMA will consider the Final EA/EIR under its capacity under NEPA before it approves, denies, or recommends changes to the Hall of Justice Repair and Reuse Project.

As required by Section 15132 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, a Final EIR shall consist of the following:

- The Draft EIR or a revision of the Draft EIR
- Comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR either verbatim or in summary
- A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR
- The responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process
- Any other information added by the Lead Agency

The evaluation and response to public comments is an important part of the CEQA process as it allows the following: (1) the opportunity to review and comment on the methods of analysis contained within the Draft EIR; (2) the ability to detect any omissions which may have occurred during preparation of the Draft EIR; (3) the ability to check for accuracy of the analysis contained within the Draft EIR; (4) the ability to share expertise; and (5) the ability to discover public concerns.

## 1.2 PROCESS

In compliance with CEQA, the County of Los Angeles prepared an Initial Study and Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Hall of Justice Repair and Reuse Project. The Initial Study and NOP were circulated between February 4, 2003, and March 5, 2003, for the required 30-day review period. The purpose of the Initial Study and NOP was to solicit early comments from public agencies with expertise in subjects that are discussed in the Draft EA/EIR. A copy of the Initial Study and NOP are included in **Appendix 1.0** of the Draft EA/EIR.

Two scoping meetings were held on January 14, 2003, to receive comments from public agencies, other groups, and concerned individuals, and to determine the issues to be discussed in the Draft EA/EIR. These meetings were held in downtown Los Angeles at the County Hall of Administration and Bradbury Building. A notice of the scoping meetings was placed in the Los Angeles Times, Downtown Los Angeles News, and posted on the Hall of Justice site.

The Draft EA/EIR was then prepared and circulated for a 45-day public review period, as required by state law, beginning on April 8, 2004, and ending on May 24, 2004. A Notice of Availability of the Draft EA/EIR was placed in the Los Angeles Times, Downtown Los Angeles News, and posted on the Hall of Justice site.

## 1.3 RECIRCULATION OF DRAFT EA/EIR

Section 15088.5 of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR be recirculated for public review and comment when “significant new information is added to the EIR after public notice is given of the availability of the draft EIR for public review.” The definition of “significant new information” is clarified under subsections 1 through 4 of this guideline. They include disclosure of a new significant environmental impact, a substantial increase in the severity of an impact, identification of a feasible project alternative or mitigation measure considerably different from those previously analyzed, and fundamental and basic inadequacy in the Draft EIR. For this EA/EIR, none of the comments received require the provision of significant new information or analysis. In addition, although the Draft EA/EIR was circulated approximately two years ago, none of changes in the conditions in the downtown area would result in a new significant environmental impact, or a substantial increase in the severity of an impact. Consequently, the need for recirculation of the Draft EA/EIR by the County of Los Angeles is not warranted.

## 1.4 CONTENTS OF THE FINAL EIR

As discussed above, the primary intent of the Final EIR is to provide a forum to raise and address comments pertaining to the analysis contained within the Draft EIR. Pursuant to Section 15088 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, the County of Los Angeles, as the Lead Agency for this project, has reviewed and addressed all comments received on the Draft EA/EIR prepared for the Hall of Justice Repair and Reuse project. Included within the Final EA/EIR are written comments that were submitted during the required public review period. Responses to oral testimony received at the public meeting are also incorporated. These comments are included in the interest of providing a complete public record for this project.

In order to adequately address the comments provided by interested agencies and the public in an organized manner, this Final EIR has been prepared in four parts.

**Section 2.0, Executive Summary**, provides a brief project description and presents a summary of probable environmental effects of the project and alternatives.

**Section 3.0, Comments and Response to Comments**, on the Draft EA/EIR provides a list of commenters, copies of written comments (coded for reference), and the responses to those written comments.

**Section 4.0, Minor Edits to the Draft EA/EIR**, consists of minor text changes made to the Draft EA/EIR as a result of comments raised during the public review process.

**Appendices** to the Final EIR includes information used in the preparation of the Final EA/EIR.

