

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CERTIFICATION

The County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors (Board of Supervisors) hereby certifies the Final Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (Final EA/EIR) for the Hall of Justice Repair and Reuse Project, Los Angeles County, State Clearinghouse No. 2003021019 (which consists of Volume I: Draft EA/EIR, dated April 2004, and Volume II: Appendices, dated April 2004) which has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the *CEQA Guidelines*, the County of Los Angeles' *Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines*, and all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, and regulations that govern the management of environmental resources; and that the Board of Supervisors has received, reviewed, and considered the information contained in the Final EA/EIR, all hearings, and submissions of testimony from officials representing the County of Los Angeles and City of Los Angeles, as well as from other agencies, organizations, and private individuals with a particular vested interest in the project.

Having received, reviewed, and considered the foregoing information, and recommendations of County of Los Angeles staff, including the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Public Works, as well as any and all other information in the record and **Section 1.0** herein, the Board of Supervisors hereby makes findings pursuant to and in accordance with Section 21081 of the Public Resources Code as presented in **Sections 2.0** through **10.0** of these Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The County of Los Angeles is proposing to repair and reuse the Hall of Justice for use by County agencies such as the Sheriff's Department, District Attorney, and Department of Parks and Recreation. The primary purpose of the project is to repair and reuse the Hall of Justice by seismically retrofitting the earthquake-damaged building and refurbishing the building interior for modern office use, while preserving and restoring selected historic features. The repair and restoration of exterior elements of the building are also proposed, as is the development of 1,000-car parking garage.

The County of Los Angeles has determined that the Project would occur in eight phases. These would include Phase I Debris Removal (phase has been completed); Phase II Interior Demolition Design (phase has been completed); Phase III Interior Demolition; Phase IV Rehabilitation Design; Phase V Bidding Rehabilitation Work; Phase VI Rehabilitation Adaptive Reuse Construction; Phase VII Tenant Improvements; and Phase VIII Move in/Start Up/Close Out. The Final EA/EIR examined the whole

project, as included within these phases, and has considered the environmental impact of the whole project. However, the County of Los Angeles may implement the project per the phasing scheme and provide funding for each phase of the project individually, as it is needed. It should be noted that while Phase I and II are identified as a part of the project, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that such activities would have significant effect on the environment, and hence are not subject to CEQA. The Los Angeles County Hall of Justice (“Hall of Justice”) was built in 1925 and was at the heart of the County’s justice system for almost 70 years. The building housed 14 courtrooms, 520 two-man jail cells, and a wide range of County office uses including the Sheriff, District Attorney, Tax Collector, and Coroner. The 14-story building was constructed of non-combustible material, including a steel-frame structure encased in concrete, concrete floor slab, granite exterior veneer, with hollow clay tile interior wall partitions. The building was designed in the classic Italianate style—typical of architecture of the early 20th century—and is the oldest surviving government building in the Los Angeles Civic Center. The Hall of Justice has been evaluated by the State Historic Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO) and determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Existing Conditions

The 3.2-acre site currently contains the Hall of Justice building, which has 14 above-grade floors and one basement level. The building contains nine floors of offices and courtrooms, with four floors of jail facilities above the office and courtroom floors. In addition, the building includes a basement and roof-level penthouse facility. The Hall of Justice building is approximately 195 feet high from street grade to the mansard roof parapet. The building footprint is approximately 42,780 square feet. The basement is approximately 41,500 gross square feet, with floors 1 through 14 approximately 35,000 square feet each. Overall, the Hall of Justice has a gross floor area of approximately 537,585 square feet. The building is currently vacant and surrounded by chain-link fencing to prevent access.

The project site is located in a heavily urbanized area. Uses within the downtown Los Angeles Civic Center area predominately include city, county, state, and federal buildings. In the immediate vicinity of the Hall of Justice, the Federal Courthouse is located to the east across Spring Street, the Criminal Courts building to the south across Temple Street, the County of Los Angeles Central Heating and Refrigeration Plant to the west across Broadway, and the 101 Freeway is to the north, across Aliso Street.

Project Objectives

The project includes the repair and reuse of the Hall of Justice building and the construction of a new 1,000-car parking structure. Section 15124 of the *CEQA Guidelines* states that a description of the project

shall contain a statement of project objectives. Major design, functional, and operational objectives of the Hall of Justice project include the following:

- Renovate the Hall of Justice into a modern “Class A” (that is typical of better quality office buildings within the region) government office building, allowing for use by the County Sheriff’s Department, District Attorney, Department of Parks and Recreation, and other County agencies.
- Provide for 325,000 square feet of useable “Class A” modern office space at a cost comparable to other available commercial office alternatives.
- Seismically retrofit the earthquake-damaged building and restore the core and shell elements of the building to alleviate a public safety hazard, while retaining the primary historic features to the extent that preservation efforts are economically feasible.
- Provide a facility that is Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible throughout the building.
- Fulfill the vision of the Civic Center Shared Facilities and Enhancement Plan, which includes the rehabilitation of the Hall of Justice for government office use.
- Allow for the repair and enhancement of a building which is acknowledged to feature exceptional architecture to create a landmark development that reflects and promotes the Los Angeles Civic Center.
- Provide for pedestrian circulation around the site that would allow linkage of the Hall of Justice to other government and private uses within the Los Angeles Civic Center area.
- Remove and/or remediate potentially hazardous building materials contained within the Hall of Justice such as lead-based paint and asbestos-containing materials.

1.3 PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

Building Modifications and Improvements

Exterior

The following presents a description of the repair of the exterior and improvements to be provided to the Hall of Justice building:

- Clean, repair, and re-point joints at exterior of building as required: stone, terra cotta, and unreinforced masonry (URM).
- Clean and refurbish bronze entry doors and frames at Spring Street, Temple Street, and Broadway.
- Replace broken glass at windows and remove air-conditioning (AC) units throughout.
- Refurbish window frames and remove loose flaking paint throughout (1st through 14th floors).
- Provide new vision glass at windows on 10th through 14th floors. Steel frames and light dividers to remain in present configurations.
- Provide concealed pin anchors at each piece of stone.

- Strengthen terra-cotta cornice and repair as required.
- Clean and repair metal and re-point stone spandrels at 12th and 13th floors as required.
- Repair URM at light courts.
- Clean and re-point URM at light courts.
- Strengthen URM at light courts.
- Provide limited exterior building lighting.
- Clean and repair existing sloping copper roof. Green patina to remain.

Interior

The following presents a description of the repair of the interior and improvements to be provided to the Hall of Justice building:

- Provide new concrete sheer wall and seismic-resisting elements at corners of building. Provide drag struts at interior face of exterior wall between sheer walls at each floor slab.
- Remove all interior partitions including hollow clay tile (HCT) partitions, finished with plaster or other materials, including exterior wall furring throughout the building (except at 2nd floor lobby and 1st floor corridor adjacent to loggia). Remove all suspended ceilings, flooring, and equipment, except as noted herein.
- Restore, clean, and refurbish 2nd floor grand lobby/loggia.
- Restore, clean, and refurbish 2nd floor corridor. Remove marble panels, doors, sidelights, HCT, and reinstall marble panels over metal and support partitions (except at 2nd floor lobby and 1st floor corridor adjacent to loggia). Restore/refurbish and reinstall doors, sidelights, base and lighting fixtures, as possible. All ceilings to be new except at grand lobby/loggia, and 1st floor corridor adjacent to loggia, which is to be restored.
- Restore, clean, and refurbish, 8th floor corridor. Remove marble panels, doors, sidelights, HCT, and reinstall marble panels over metal stud support partitions. Restore/refurbish and reinstall doors, sidelights, base and lighting fixtures, as possible. Ceiling to be new and compatible.
- Restore and refurbish Room 819 on the 8th floor. Retain 2-story ceiling and wood wall paneling.
- Retain the historic features of the 8th floor courtroom 816 in accordance with Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Properties.
- Remove existing suspended plaster and metal lath ceiling on all floors throughout building except at 2nd floor grand lobby and 1st floor adjacent to loggia.
- Remove, clean, and refurbish historic stairs. Total of four stairs on 1st through 9th floors.
- Remove marble panels, and reinstall marble panels over metal studs.
- Provide new men's and women's toilets using new compatible materials, including terrazzo floor, ceramic tile, wainscot, marble toilet partitions to match existing, wood toilet partitions doors, stone sink counter, and new compatible lighting fixtures. Re-use existing marble toilet partitions where possible.

- Restore, refurbish, and provide new elevator lobbies on each floor. Use existing wainscot at elevator door wall on 3rd through 8th floors. A combination of new and existing restored and refurbished terrazzo would be provided.
- Remove, restore, and refurbish wood wall panel interior of the six passenger elevator cars. Reinstall into new elevator equipment.
- Extend passenger elevator shafts for elevators 2 and 3 from the 8th to the 14th floor. Provide new elevator system, including machines, guide rails, and control system. Elevators would have stops as follows: High Rise Bank Elevator 1 at the basement, 1st, 2nd, and 8th through 14th floors; Elevators 2 and 3 at the 1st, 2nd, and 8th through 14th floors; Low Rise Bank Elevator 4 at the basement, and 1st through 8th floors; Elevators 5, 6, and 7 at the 1st through the 8th floors; and the Freight Elevator at the basement, and 1st through 14th floors.
- Demolish 11th and 13th existing jail floors and structures at penthouse level.
- Provide compatible ceiling and floor material throughout building.
- Retrofit and refurbish existing stairs "A" and "B" to comply with Code.
- Refurbish/repair existing terrazzo and marble flooring in areas to retained in their historic configuration, such as the corridors on the 2nd and 8th floors, and elevator lobbies.
- Remove all jail ceils, partitions and stairs on the 10th, 12th, and 14th floors.
- Demolish existing non-code-compliant fire escapes at the north and south sides of the building.

Landscpe and Streetscape Improvements

In general, the landscape concept is intended to create a distinct landscape character for the entire site, while providing a visual cohesiveness with the surrounding Civic Center area, throughout the streetscapes and internal areas. Plant species and groupings may vary from area to area but would remain compatible throughout the entire length of the individual streets. The existing planter walls at the southeast portion of the project site would be retained.

Street trees in the right-of-way of the project site include 7 ficus trees and 1 Japanese zelkova tree along Temple Street; 7 magnolia trees and 4 olive trees along North Broadway; 3 Japanese maple trees along Aliso Street; and 11 Japanese maple trees along Spring Street. The ficus trees and Japanese zelkova tree along Temple Street would be removed due to the root systems causing damage to the sidewalk, curbs, and gutters, and, in some instances, the location of the trees are planted too close to the building. Both of these issues pose a safety problem to persons utilizing the building. New street trees would be provided along Temple Street, which would be compatible with the City urban environment.

The 7 magnolia trees along North Broadway would be retained. The 4 olive trees along North Broadway would be removed and replaced with new magnolias. In order to compliment the existing magnolias, the new trees to be planted would be of the same species and would be box specimens of equal size.

The 3 Japanese maple trees along Aliso Street would be relocated to Spring Street to compliment the existing row of Japanese maples. Aliso Street would receive new landscaping compatible with the parking structure and City urban environment.

Eight of the 11 Japanese maple trees along Spring Street will be retained. The 3 trees to be removed are in conflict with the ramp and stairs leading into the new main entrance to the building. Landscaping in the area of the new main building entrance and pedestrian plaza on Spring Street would include various plant species including trees, hedges, lawns, and ground cover plant material.

1.4 EIR PROCESS

The Chief Administrative Office prepared a Draft EA/EIR for the project in accordance with CEQA and the County of Los Angeles *Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines*.

In compliance with the 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 document.

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.

Topics evaluated in the Draft EA/EIR were based on the responses to the Initial Study and NOP, comments received at the scoping meeting on January 14, 2002, and review of the project by the County of Los Angeles and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

CEQA requires that the Draft EA/EIR be made available for public review. Accordingly, the Draft EA/EIR was made available for public review for a period of 45 days. During this period, comments on the accuracy and completeness of the Draft EA/EIR were submitted by public agencies, other groups, and concerned individuals. A notice of the 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.

1.5 GENERAL FINDINGS

The Board of Supervisors has evaluated all environmental issues recommended by CEQA and the *State CEQA Guidelines* during the environmental evaluation of the project.

No Impact

Section 2.0 of these Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations describes the substantial evidence upon which the no impact determinations were made. The Initial Study determined that the project was not likely to result in significant impacts on three environmental issues: socioeconomic issues/environmental justice, visual quality, and public services and utilities.

Significant Impacts Avoided with Mitigation

Section 3.0 of these Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations describes the substantial evidence, including the specified mitigation measures, upon which the incorporation of mitigation determinations were made. The EIR determined that the project is expected to result in significant impacts that can be mitigated to below the threshold for significance by the incorporation of mitigation measures on five environmental issues: geology and soils, traffic/circulation and parking, public health and safety/hazardous materials, biological resources, and cultural resources. Measures GS-1 and GS-2, Measures T-1, T-2, T-3, T-4, T-5, T-6, and T-7, Measures HS-1, HS-2, HS-3, HS-4, HS-5, HS-6, HS-7, and HS-8, Measure BIO-1, Measures PR-1 and PR-2, and Measures AR-1 and AR-2 would reduce the significant impacts to below the threshold of significance.

Significant Unavoidable Impacts

Section 4.0 of these Findings of Fact and Statements of Overriding Considerations describes the changes and alterations that have been required into the project, including the specified mitigation measures and the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations that made the mitigation measures considered to reduce impacts to below the thresholds of significance infeasible. The EIR determined that the project would result in significant impacts on three environmental issues that cannot be reduced below the threshold of significance with the incorporation of mitigation measures: air quality, noise, and cultural resources.

Air Quality

Emissions associated with three criteria pollutants, carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter (PM₁₀) and oxides of sulfur (SO₂), would all be below the adopted threshold levels throughout the duration of construction activities. However, reactive organic gases (ROG) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) emissions

would exceed the adopted threshold established by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). Incorporation of recommended Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-5 would avoid or substantially lessen impacts to air quality resulting from construction of the project. Nonetheless, construction air quality impacts would continue to be significant.

None of the five criteria pollutants (ROG, CO, PM₁₀, SO₂, and NO_x) would exceed the adopted SCAQMD operational thresholds under the Hall of Justice Repair and Reuse Project. Consequently, there are no anticipated significant impacts on air quality related to operation of the proposed project.

Noise

Construction activities for the proposed project include exterior work, interior work, and the construction of an on-site parking structure. All available mitigation measures have been incorporated to minimize impacts to the ambient noise environment from construction noise. Incorporation of Mitigation Measures N-1 through N-4 would minimize the impacts of construction activities. However, the exceedance of standards for noise established by County ordinances will have a significant impact at adjacent off-site commercial uses.

Cultural Resources

Historic Architecture

The County of Los Angeles fully evaluated significant cultural resources through literature and records search. The Hall of Justice has been determined eligible for listing in the NRHP. The proposed project rehabilitates and repairs some of the character-defining features of the Hall of Justice, but demolishes or alters others. Section 21084.1 of the California Public Resources Code states that “A project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.”

Incorporation of Mitigation Measures HS-1 through HS-15 would reduce impacts related to the historical value of the proposed project. However, the impacts are still considered significant.

Alternatives

Section 5.0 of these Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations summarizes the alternatives and the inability to achieve the social benefits of the proposed project. The Board of Supervisors evaluated two alternatives to the project. The No Project Alternative was analyzed, as required by CEQA. Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would remain in its present state. The building will continue to be vacant, and the structure would continue to deteriorate physically. A

program would be required in order to observe and routinely inspect the building to ensure it posed no imminent threat or safety hazard to the surrounding environs. The next alternative analyzed, Adaptive Reuse of the Existing Building to Secretary of Interior Standards, would keep all character-defining historic features and elements of the building intact. This alternative would not allow for the County to maximize the use of the building through the provision of 325,000 square feet of useable space and would render five floors of the building unusable. While the No Project Alternative is considered the environmentally superior alternative, the *CEQA Guidelines* call for identification of the environmentally superior alternative other than the No Project Alternative. In this instance, the Adaptive Reuse of the Existing Building to Secretary of Interior Standards Alternative is considered environmentally superior due to reducing the significant and unavoidable historic architecture impacts.

Mitigation Monitoring Program

Section 6.0 of these Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations documents the adoption of the *Mitigation Monitoring Program* by the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors. In accordance with Section 21081.6(a)(1) of the Public Resources Code (CEQA), the Board of Supervisors has adopted a mitigation monitoring program for those measures required to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Custodian of Documents

Section 7.0 of these Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations specifies the location and custodian of the documents and other materials that constitute the record of decision used in the decision-making process for the project, pursuant to Section 21081.6(a)(2) of the Public Resources Code (CEQA).

Independent Judgment

Section 8.0 of these Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations certifies that the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors has exercised independent judgment in the review and analysis of the EIR and supporting technical reports, the circulation of the EIR and preparation of response to comments, and the certification of the EIR, in accordance with Section 21082.1(c)(1) of the Public Resources Code (CEQA).

Statement of Overriding Considerations

Section 9.0 of these Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations provides the Statement of Overriding Consideration made by the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors regarding the

social benefits of the proposed project that outweigh the significant effects on the environment, in accordance with Section 21081(b) of the Public Resource Code (CEQA). The Board of Supervisors has prepared a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the unavoidable adverse impacts to three environmental resources that cannot be reduced to below the threshold for significance: air quality, noise, and cultural resources.