



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
AND
NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
SyWest Project**

Date: April 24, 2023

To: Office of Planning and Research, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

From: City of Carson, Community Development Department, Planning Division

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting for the SyWest Project

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been prepared to notify the Office of Planning and Research (OPR), responsible and trustee agencies, organizations, and interested parties that the City of Carson (City), as lead agency, will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with the construction and operation of the proposed SyWest Project (proposed project). The proposed project is briefly summarized below. The City is requesting input from responsible and trustee agencies, organizations, and interested parties regarding (1) the scope and content of the environmental analysis to be included in the upcoming Draft EIR, and (2) the significant environmental issues and reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that should be addressed in the Draft EIR (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15082). Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15083, this NOP also serves to facilitate consultation with any persons or organizations that may be concerned with the environmental effects of the proposed project.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b), the City requests review from public agencies that will need to rely on the EIR prepared by the City when considering any permit or other approval for the proposed project, as to the scope and content of the environmental information in the EIR that is germane to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection therewith. The City also requests comments and concerns from organizations and interested parties regarding the scope and content of the environmental review for the proposed project.

Additionally, this NOP serves as a notice for the public scoping meeting, which will be held on May 4, 2023, to gather public input on the scope and content of the environmental review for the proposed project, thereby further expediting and facilitating this consultation process.

This NOP contains a description of the proposed project and related discretionary entitlement applications, the project site location, and a preliminary determination of the environmental resource topics, as described in the Project Description, to be addressed in the Draft EIR. Because the City has already determined that a Draft EIR is required for the proposed project, as permitted by CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d), the City will not prepare an Initial Study, but instead will commence work directly on the Draft EIR.

PROJECT TITLE: Sywest Project

PROJECT APPLICANT: Southbay-Carson LLC, a California limited liability company

PROJECT LOCATION:

The approximately 24.6-acre project site is located at 20151 South Main Street in the City of Carson, in Los Angeles County, California (Exhibit 1). The rectangular-shaped project site is bounded by a Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) high voltage transmission line easement (west); Francisco Street (north); South Main Street (east); and another LADWP high voltage transmission line easement (south) (Exhibit 2).

Under existing conditions, the project site currently contains a surface parking lot that is used to receive, redeploy, and store new and used vehicle inventory, and the light preparation of new passenger vehicles. The parking lot contains improvements such as office space in ancillary modular buildings, a guard shack, and light standards. The project site is entirely enclosed with fencing. The project site is fully asphalt surfaced, and does not contain any landscaping within its interior although there is some perimeter site landscaping, including mature trees and small shrubs, present along western and southern boundaries of the project site, as well as along South Main Street and Francisco Street frontages.

The project site was previously used as a landfill and was later redeveloped as a drive-in movie theater, and subsequently as an auto auction facility. Since 1982, the project site has utilized an underground landfill gas collection system, which has been upgraded over time. The project site is not included on the Cortese List, which is a listing of hazardous waste and substances sites compiled by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC); however, the project site is a brownfield and is listed on the DTSC EnviroStor database as a voluntary cleanup. In connection therewith, prior to the issuance of this NOP, the project applicant, in coordination with DTSC and the City, had commenced investigation activities (including implementation of an approved preliminary assessment work plan to be followed by remediation pursuant to a remedial action plan, once approved by DTSC) to allow restoration of the project site to its existing site condition as a surface parking lot. This remediation and restoration work is being implemented separate and apart from the proposed project being evaluated in this Draft EIR.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Given the nature of the discretionary land use entitlements being sought for the proposed project (including the related public off-street improvements as described in the analysis) (including a Specific Plan, Design Overlay Review No. 1838-20, Zone Change No. 187-22, Development Agreement No. 25-20, Tentative Parcel/Subdivision Map, and Use Permit(s)) and to ensure a robust and conservative analysis, the Draft EIR will evaluate two potential land use scenarios for the project site:

- Retail Shopping Center (Preferred Land Use Scenario), and
- Commerce Center (Secondary Land Use Scenario).

As shown in Exhibit 3, the proposed Retail Shopping Center Project would consist of an approximately 233,000-square-foot retail shopping center anchored by an approximately 153,000-square-foot warehouse-style big box store. The center would also include an approximately 50,000-square-foot mid-size junior anchor, an approximately 15,000-square-foot small anchor, and three restaurant or retail pads ranging from approximately 4,800 to 5,200 square feet. In contrast, the proposed Commerce Center would consist of an approximately 532,390-square-foot industrial warehouse/distribution facility, including logistic use, spread among two buildings (Exhibit 4).

The project summary for the proposed Retail Shopping Center is shown in Table 1-1, and the project summary for the proposed Commerce Center is shown in Table 1-2.

Table 1-1: Proposed Retail Shopping Center Project Summary

Name	Acres (approx.)	Square Feet (approx.)	Assumed Characteristics/End Uses	Provided Parking Spaces (approx.)
Warehouse-Style Big Box Store	15.76	153,000	General merchandise and grocery sales; Includes fueling facility	875
Mid-Size Junior Anchor	5.35	50,000	Apparel; arts and crafts; new vehicle dealership; sporting goods; or similar use	252
Small Anchor		15,000	Apparel; arts and crafts; drug store; sporting goods; or similar use	
Pad 1	3.49	5,000	Quick-serve restaurant/drive-through	157
Pad 2	5.35	5,200	Quick-serve restaurant/drive-through	
Retail Pad 3		4,800	Multi-tenant retail; in-line food; services; small retail	
Total	24.60	233,000	–	1,284

Source: Southbay-Carson LLC 2022.

Table 1-2: Proposed Commerce Center Summary

Name	Acres (approx.)	Square Feet (approx.)	Anticipated Characteristics/End Uses (approx.)	Parking (approx.)
Building 1	13.02	280,270	38 dock doors; ancillary office (8,000 square feet)	187 automobile stalls; 61 trailer stalls
Building 2	11.58	252,120	38 dock doors; ancillary office (8,000 square feet)	169 automobile stalls; 61 trailer stalls
Total	24.60	532,390	–	356 automobile stalls; 122 trailer stalls

Source: Southbay-Carson LLC 2022.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Environmental Topics Potentially Affected

The Draft EIR will evaluate whether the construction and operation of the proposed project pursuant to either land use scenario may potentially result in one or more significant environmental impacts. The potential environmental effects to be addressed in the Draft EIR will include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- Land Use and Planning

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

The Draft EIR will also address other CEQA-mandated topics, including growth inducement and project alternatives.

Environmental Topics Not Affected

Under Public Resources Code Section 21002.1(e), EIRs must focus their discussion on potentially significant impacts. As noted above, an Initial Study has not been prepared. Instead, the Project Description, above, has been prepared to provide important information about the proposed project and potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project on the project site. Because of the existing condition of the project site, and due to the characteristics of the proposed project, the City, as lead agency, has determined that the proposed project would not be expected to result in significant or potentially significant impacts to certain environmental topic areas. Accordingly, the City has determined, in its discretion, to eliminate the following topic areas from detailed study in the Draft EIR consistent with Section 15060(d).

Agricultural and Forestry Resources

The project site is located in a highly developed part of the City, with the vast majority of the project site containing paved surfaces and manmade structures. No readily available opportunities for agricultural or forestry operations exist on-site. According to the California Department of Conservation (DOC) California Important Farmland Finder, most of Los Angeles County, including the City of Carson, is not mapped as part of the State’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program; thus, the project site does not contain Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of State Importance (collectively “Important Farmland”),¹ nor does it contain any parcels under a Williamson Act Contract.² Additionally, according to the land cover map produced by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), neither the project site nor the surrounding area is identified as forestland or timberland. Therefore, impacts associated with agricultural and forestry resources would not occur and will not require further evaluation in the Draft EIR.

Biological Resources

Under the existing conditions, the project site is predominantly developed with paved surfaces and manmade structures. A limited amount of landscape areas are located along the public rights-of-way, and contain ornamental trees, shrubs, and turf. This vegetation is ornamental in nature, entirely surrounded by urban development, and does not form a cohesive plant community that would provide

1 California Department of Conservation (DOC). 2022. California Important Farmland Finder. Website: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciff/>. Accessed January 25, 2023.

2 California Department of Conservation (DOC). 2018. The Williamson Act Status Report 2016-17. Website: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/wa/Documents/stats_reports/2018%20WA%20Status%20Report.pdf. Accessed January 25, 2023.

quality suitable habitat for candidate, sensitive or special-status wildlife species, nesting birds, or would support wildlife movement. Additionally, given these existing on-site conditions, wetlands or other jurisdictional waters are not found within the project site.³ Further, any development activities conducted pursuant to the proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable federal, State, and local preservation and protection laws and regulations, including, without limitation, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Compliance with the MBTA would protect potential avian species on-site, including nesting birds in existing mature trees along the project site perimeter. Therefore, impacts associated with biological resources would not occur and will not require further evaluation in the Draft EIR.

Mineral Resources

According to the City's General Plan, no known significant mineral resources are located within the City.⁴ No mineral extraction activities occur on or adjacent to the project site, and no known mineral resources are present on-site. Thus, impacts associated with mineral resources would not occur and will not require further evaluation in the Draft EIR.

Wildfire

Based on the CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zones maps, the entire City, including the project site, is not located in or near a State Responsibility Area (SRA) or lands classified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.⁵ Therefore, impacts associated with wildland fire would not occur and will not require further evaluation in the Draft EIR.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b), the City has established a 30-day public scoping period for the Draft EIR for the proposed project, from **April 24, 2023, to May 25, 2023**. Because of the limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. As noted above, the purpose of this NOP is to request input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information that should be included in the Draft EIR. During the scoping period, the City's intent is to disseminate project information to the public for the purpose of soliciting comments from agencies, organizations, and interested parties, including nearby residents and business owners, regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the Draft EIR, including receipt of scoping comments on proposed mitigation measures or project alternatives to reduce potential environmental effects. During this period, the NOP and available project information may be accessed electronically at the following website:

<https://ci.carson.ca.us/CommunityDevelopment/SyWest.aspx>

3 City of Carson. 2022. City of Carson General Plan Hearing Draft. Website: https://www.dropbox.com/s/kk9a62wp5cj1yxo/Carson%20%20202040_General%20Plan_Hearing%20Draft_121622.pdf?dl=0. Accessed January 25, 2023.

4 Ibid.

5 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2022. Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer. Website: <http://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/>. Accessed January 25, 2023.

Public Scoping Meeting

During the 30-day public scoping period, the City will hold a public scoping meeting on **May 4, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.** at the **Juanita Millender-McDonald Community Center, Room 206 AB, at 801 Carson Street, Carson, CA 90745.**

The purpose of the public scoping meeting is to provide an additional opportunity for the City to receive input on potential environmental issues of concern and the scope of analysis to be included in the Draft EIR.

The scoping meeting is not a public hearing, and no decisions on the proposed project will be made at this meeting. It is an additional opportunity for agencies, organizations, and the interested parties to provide scoping comments in person on what environmental issues should be addressed in the Draft EIR. All public agencies, organizations, and interested parties are encouraged to attend and participate in this meeting, who will have the opportunity to present either oral or written testimony.

Scoping Comments

All scoping comments must be received in writing by **5:00 p.m. on May 25, 2023**, which marks the end of the 30-day public scoping period. All written comments should indicate an associated contact person for the agency or organization, if applicable, and reference the project name in the subject line. Pursuant to CEQA, responsible and trustee agencies are requested to indicate their respective statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project when responding. Please mail or email comments and direct any questions to the following contact person:

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