

# CITY OF VERNON

4305 South Santa Fe Avenue, Vernon, CA 90058

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## Notice of Availability Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the Vernon Westside Zone Change and General Plan Amendment

**TO:** Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

**DATE:** March 30, 2023

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the *State CEQA Guidelines* § 15087 (d), the City, as the Lead Agency, has prepared a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) that identifies and evaluates the environmental impacts of the below-named Project.

### PROJECT TITLE

Vernon Westside Zone Change and General Plan Amendment (previously identified as the Vernon Westside Specific Plan, State Clearinghouse# 2021090474)

### PROJECT LOCATION

The Project Area encompasses 1.2 square miles, or approximately 780 acres of primarily industrial and commercial development, with transportation infrastructure and small pockets of residential. The Project Area roughly corresponds to a 1.75 by 0.75-mile area bound generally to the north by 27th Street; to the east by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and Seville Avenue; to the south by Slauson Avenue; and to the west by the Alameda Corridor. The LA River is located approximately half a mile from the eastern portion of the Project Area.

The Project Area is zoned industrial and contains areas within the Commercial-1, Commercial-2, and Truck and Freight Terminal Overlay Zones. In addition, the Project Area is comprised primarily of industrial land uses, with properties used for warehousing, processing, distribution, and storage. Many properties are in use for light and heavy manufacturing. Limited commercial retail and food service operations also exist largely to serve the workers. Within the Project Area there are 13 residential units including 10 one-story single-family residences adjacent to Vernon City Hall on Furlong Place; one two-story single-family residence on Vernon Avenue; and a two-unit one-story multi-family residence on Vernon Avenue. The single-family residences along Furlong Place were built in the second half of the 20th century, while the two residences on Vernon Avenue were built before 1990.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On April 20, 2022, the City published the Notice of Preparation (NOP) to the State Clearinghouse in the Office of Planning and Research, notifying the general public, responsible and trustee agencies, as well as interested parties that an EIR would be prepared for the Project. The NOP specified that the Project included the development of the Vernon Westside Specific Plan which included land use, zoning, and street improvements. Since the issuance of the NOP, additional public outreach was conducted, and the Project Description was revised to remove the street improvement elements and focus only on the land use and zoning designation changes. The land use and zoning modifications that were included in the Specific Plan will now be presented as Zone Changes and General Plan Amendments. The removal of the street improvement elements does not constitute as significant new information nor were there any changes to the existing conditions at the time of the NOP publication. Therefore, recirculation of the NOP was not necessary.

The Vernon Westside Zone Change and General Plan Amendment (Project) includes a set of targeted zone changes combined with General Plan land use amendments to four specific areas within the Project Area that would allow for additional residential and commercial uses in the form of mixed-use development. The purpose of these proposed zone changes is to implement regulatory standards that address concerns raised during community outreach. This outreach includes input from a 17-member Stakeholders Advisory Committee and City leaders. The Project would reinvigorate the City's competitive advantage as a center of production; strengthen and provide long-term stability to the City's fiscal position; increase the residential population; diversify and reorient the land uses in the Project Area to take advantage of changes in the economic landscape of Southern California; increase amenities available to local residents and workers; and create a physical environment that is supportive of diverse land uses, welcoming to the larger region, and enhancing to the City's image and identity. The Project would rezone the Project Area from the current Industrial and Commercial-2 Overlay Zone into the following zones:

- Mixed Use – City Center (MU-CC);
- Mixed Use – Santa Fe North (MU-N);
- Mixed Use – Santa Fe South (MU-S); and
- Mixed Use – Pacific Hampton (MU-PH)

The Vernon General Plan is the primary policy document that guides future development in the City. The General Plan will be updated to be consistent with the proposed zone changes. Parcels currently located within the Commercial-2 Overlay Zone would be redesignated to their associated mixed-use zone.

In addition to the proposed Mixed-Use zones, the Project includes the addition of the existing Commercial-1 Overlay Zone to the southern portion of the Project Area to provide greater flexibility, including the

potential to bring large regional-serving retail uses to the area. The overlay zone would be applied to the area bound by Alameda Street to the west, East 57<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, South Santa Fe Avenue to the east, and East Slauson Avenue to the south. While the Project would include the addition of the Commercial-1 Overlay Zone to this specific area, there are currently no development assumptions and therefore this particular zone change is not evaluated within this EIR. Therefore, any future projects within the new Commercial-1 Overlay Zone would be subject to additional environmental review.

## **ANTICIPATED SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

Based on the analysis in the Draft PEIR, the Project would result in significant impacts in the following categories:

- Air Quality (construction)
- Cultural Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Noise (construction)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY**

The Lead Agency invites public comment on the Draft PEIR and alternatives in response to this NOA. A 45-day comment period will begin on **March 30, 2023**, and end on **May 14, 2023**.

The Draft PEIR is available on the City of Vernon website at:

**Project Website:** <https://www.reimaginevernon.com/>

**City Website:** <https://www.cityofvernon.org/government/city-administration/westside-project>

Hard copies of the Draft PEIR will also be available at:

**Vernon City Hall:** 4305 South Santa Fe Avenue, Vernon, CA 90058

## SUBMITTAL OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

Written comments may be submitted via:

**Mail:**

ATTN: Daniel Wall, Public Works Director  
City of Vernon, Public Works Department  
4305 South Santa Fe Avenue  
Vernon, CA 90058

**E-mail:** Daniel Wall, [dwall@cityofvernon.org](mailto:dwall@cityofvernon.org)

The Lead Agency has scheduled a public meeting at the time indicated below. The purpose of the public meeting is to receive verbal and written input on the technical adequacy of the Draft PEIR and alternatives. The Lead Agency will consider all comments, written and oral, during the preparation of the Final PEIR.

**Community Meeting Date:** Thursday, April 27, 2023 | Time: 3:00 P.M. Pacific Time

**Meeting Location/Information:** Virtual Meeting via Zoom. Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86355037341?pwd=Uld0OTcyenJWK0lGamEwTTh0aE1hZz09>

Meeting ID: 863 5503 7341 | Passcode: 163921