

INITIAL STUDY

DOWNTOWN LANCASTER SPECIFIC PLAN

LEAD AGENCY:

City of Lancaster

44933 North Fern Avenue
Lancaster, California 93534-2461

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PREPARED BY:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The proposed Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan Project (project) encompasses approximately 140 acres generally bounded by Kettering Street on the north, the Union Pacific Railroad line on the east, Milling Street and Newgrove Street on the south and 10th Street West on the west in the City of Lancaster. Project implementation would involve the development of residential, commercial, office, institutional and public uses within Downtown Lancaster. Refer to Section 2.0, *Project Description*, for a detailed description.

Following preliminary review of the proposed project, the City of Lancaster has determined that the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan is subject to the guidelines and regulations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This Initial Study addresses the direct, indirect and cumulative environmental effects associated with the proposed project.

1.1 STATUTORY AUTHORITY AND REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21000 - 21178.1), this Initial Study has been prepared to analyze the proposed project in order to identify any potentially significant impacts upon the environment that would result from construction and implementation of the project. In accordance with Section 15063 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, this Initial Study is a preliminary analysis prepared by the Lead Agency, the City of Lancaster, in consultation with other jurisdictional agencies, to determine whether a Negative Declaration or Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would be required for the proposed Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan project. The purpose of this Initial Study is to inform the City of Lancaster decision-makers, affected agencies and the public of potential environmental impacts associated with construction and implementation of the proposed project.

Following completion of the Initial Study, the City of Lancaster will make a formal determination as to whether the project may or may not have significant unmitigable environmental impacts. A determination that a project may have less than significant effects would result in the preparation of a Negative Declaration. A determination that a project may have significant impacts on the environment would require the preparation of an EIR to further evaluate issues identified in this Initial Study. Based upon the potential environmental effects, the City will require preparation of an EIR to further evaluate issues identified in this Initial Study. Therefore, this Initial Study and Notice of Preparation (NOP) serves as part of the scoping process to determine the appropriate environmental documentation for the project. As indicated in Section 3.3, Lead Agency Determination, the Lead Agency has determined that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment and that preparation of an EIR is required.

The Initial Study and NOP will undergo a 30-day public review period. During this review, comments by the public and responsible agencies on the project relative to environmental issues are to be submitted to the City of Lancaster. The City will review and consider all comments as a part of the projects environmental analysis, as required in Section 15082 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, as amended. The comments received with regard to this NOP and Initial Study will be included in the project environmental document, for consideration by the City of Lancaster.

1.2 CONSULTATION

In accordance with Section 15063 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, as soon as the Lead Agency has determined that an Initial Study would be required for the project, the Lead Agency is directed to consult informally with all Responsible Agencies and Trustee Agencies that are responsible for resources affected by the project, in order to obtain the recommendations of those agencies on the environmental documentation to be prepared for the project. Following receipt of any written comments from those agencies, the City of Lancaster will consider any recommendations of those agencies in the formulation of the preliminary findings. Following execution of this Initial Study, the City of Lancaster will initiate formal consultation with these and other governmental agencies as required under CEQA and its implementing guidelines.

1.3 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The following references were utilized during preparation of this Initial Study. These documents are available for review at the City of Lancaster Planning Department, located at 44933 Fern Avenue, Lancaster, California, 93534.

- *City of Lancaster General Plan (General Plan), 1997.* The purpose of the *General Plan* is to provide a general, comprehensive, and long-range guide for community decision-making. The *General Plan* is comprised of seven elements, as follows:
 - Plan for the Natural Environment;
 - Plan for Public Health and Safety;
 - Plan for the Living Environment;
 - Plan For Physical Mobility;
 - Plan for Municipal Services and Facilities;
 - Plan for Economic Development and Vitality; and
 - Plan for Physical Development.

Existing conditions and policy information from the *General Plan* are cited in several sections of the EIR.

- *City of Lancaster 2020 General Plan Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR), 1997.* The *General Plan MEA* identifies existing conditions in the City of Lancaster including infrastructure capacities and environmental indicators. The *General Plan EIR* assesses potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed *General Plan* update for the City. The issues addressed in the *EIR* are earth resources, biological resources, land use, population, transportation and circulation, air quality, noise, public services (fire and police services, schools, recreation and public facilities), utilities (water, wastewater, storm drainage, solid waste and energy), cultural resources, scenic resources and fiscal resources. The *MEA* and *EIR* are cited in several sections of this EIR regarding existing conditions and environmental impacts in Lancaster and the project area.
- *City of Lancaster Municipal Code (Municipal Code).* The *Municipal Code* consists of all the regulatory, penal, and administrative ordinances of the City of Lancaster. It is the method the City uses to implement control of land uses, in accordance with *General Plan* goals and policies. The City of Lancaster Zoning Ordinance (Title 17 of the *Municipal Code*) identifies land uses permitted and prohibited according to the zoning category of particular parcels.

- City of Lancaster Zoning Map, October 13, 1998(Zoning Map). The *Zoning Map* was used to identify the zoning districts of the Project area and surrounding properties.

- North Downtown Lancaster Neighborhood Revitalization Transit Village Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), June 2003. This *EIR* was prepared to identify the potential environmental effects that could result from the revitalization efforts of approximately 103 acres located within the area generally bounded by Avenue I to the north, Lancaster Boulevard to the south, the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way to the east and 10th Street West to the west and to propose mitigation measures that would offset, minimize or avoid significant environmental impacts. The issue areas addressed in the *EIR* are: traffic and circulation, air quality, noise, cultural resources, public health and safety, population and housing, public services (fire and police services, schools, recreation and library services), and utilities (water, wastewater, solid waste, electricity natural gas and telephone). Significant impacts were identified in the *North Downtown Lancaster Neighborhood Revitalization Transit Village Plan EIR* for noise. On July 8, 2003, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 03-254, which approved the statement of overriding considerations for these impacts.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan (DLSP) project (project) is located in the City of Lancaster, California. The City of Lancaster is located in northern Los Angeles County in the Antelope Valley, which is approximately 70 miles north of Downtown Los Angeles (Exhibit 2-1, *Regional Vicinity*). Lancaster is part of the Mojave Desert basin, which is relatively flat, yet surrounded by the San Gabriel Mountains, Sierra Pelona and Tehachapi Mountains. Downtown Lancaster is generally bounded by Avenue I to the north, Sierra Highway to the east, Avenue J to the south and 10th Street West to the west. Lancaster Boulevard represents the center of Downtown. The DLSP comprises approximately 140 acres generally located south of Kettering Street, east of 10th Street West, west of the Union Pacific Railroad line and north of Newgrove Street between the Union Pacific Railroad line and Date Avenue and north of Milling Street between Date Avenue and 10th Street West within the central portion of Downtown Lancaster (Exhibit 2-2, *Project Vicinity*).

EXISTING CONDITIONS

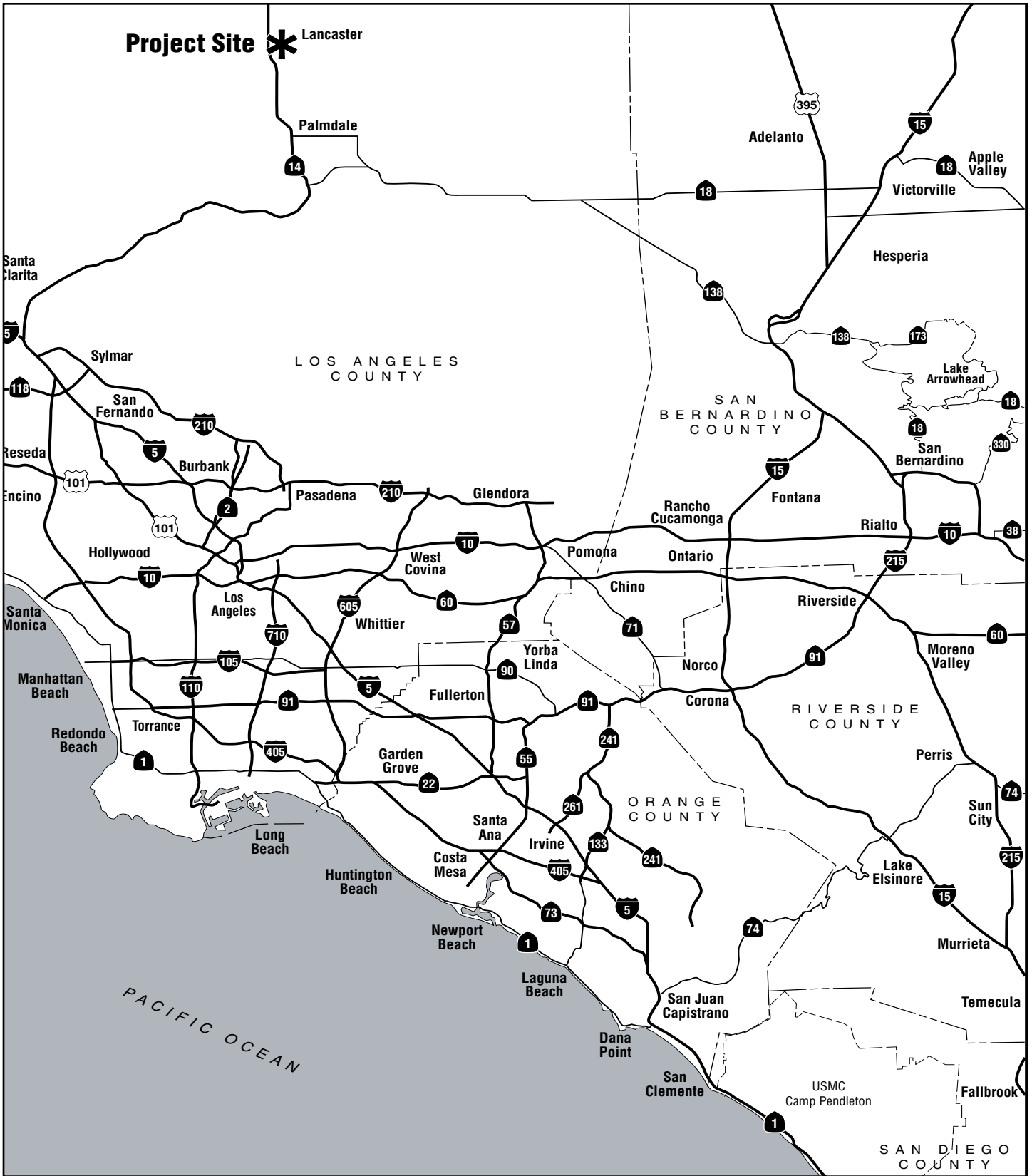
The DLSP area consists mainly of a mixture of civic, cultural, commercial, office and residential uses served by a grid system of local paved streets. The DLSP area contains several prominent uses including Lancaster City Hall, Lancaster Performing Arts Center, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Station and the Metrolink Station. Residential uses within the project area consist of a mix of single- and multiple-family residences primarily in the south along Newgrove Street and east of 10th Street West (refer to Exhibit 2-3, *Project Aerial*).

The age and condition of the buildings vary, as most commercial buildings date from the early to mid 1900s and many of the public buildings date from the 1980s to today. The majority are single- and two-story buildings.

2.2 BACKGROUND

The City of Lancaster initiated a comprehensive planning process for Downtown Lancaster in August 2005, in an effort to revitalize Downtown and create a corridor that is a place of historic, cultural, social, economic and civic vitality for the Lancaster community, as well as the Antelope Valley. The Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan provides policy, regulatory and design guidance for both public and private land that implement the community's vision for the future of Downtown.

The planning process for the Downtown Specific Plan included three distinct phases. Phase 1 involved a review of existing documents and information, background and data research, site reconnaissance and visual observations, by a team of planners and consultants in order to understand downtown Lancaster. The initial phase of the planning process, which occurred from January 2006 to April 2006, allowed the design team to build a baseline understanding of Downtown Lancaster and surrounding neighborhoods.



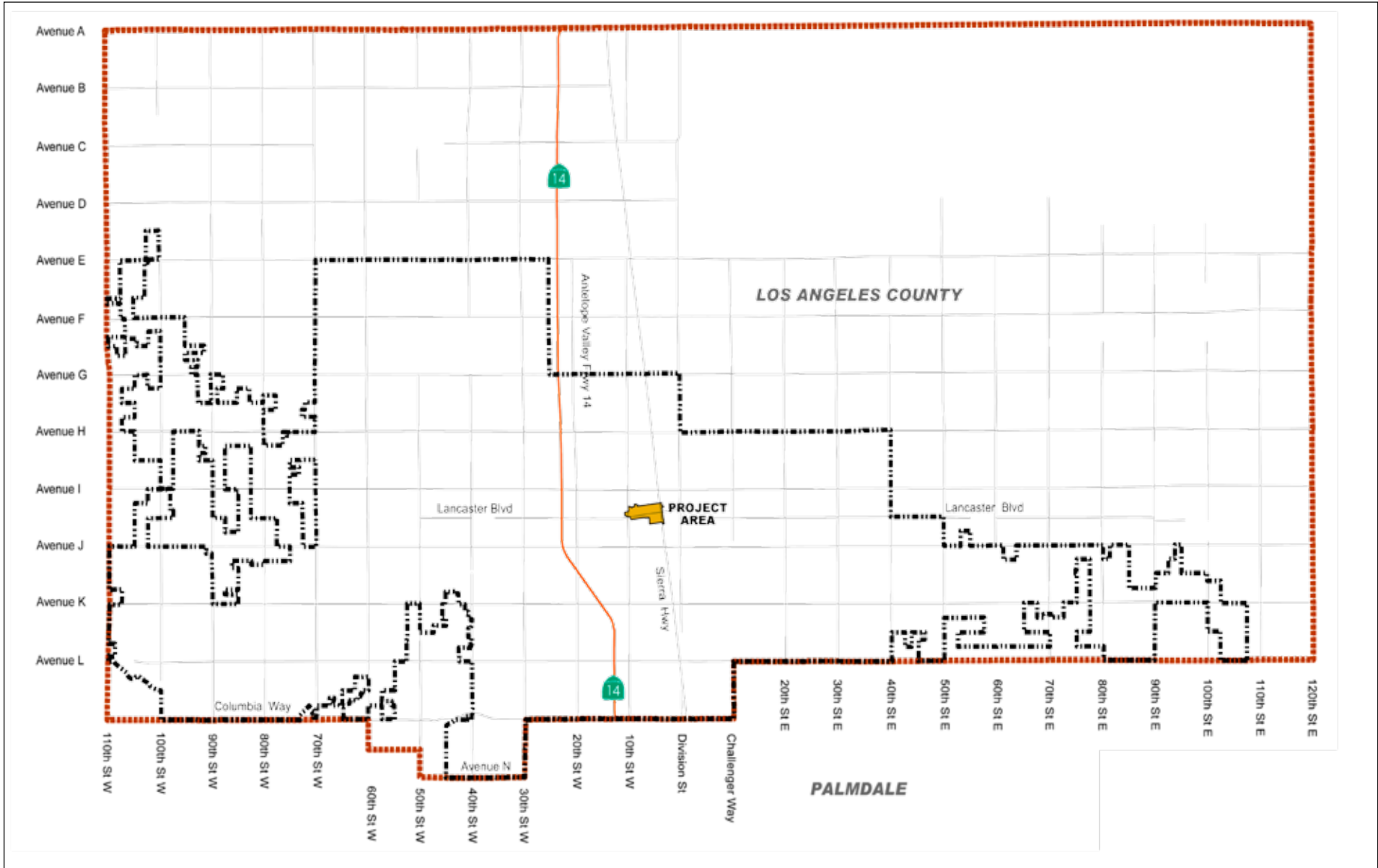
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INITIAL STUDY
DOWNTOWN LANCASTER SPECIFIC PLAN
Regional Vicinity

Exhibit 2-1



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INITIAL STUDY
DOWNTOWN LANCASTER SPECIFIC PLAN

Project Vicinity

Exhibit 2-2



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INITIAL STUDY
DOWNTOWN LANCASTER SPECIFIC PLAN

Project Aerial

Exhibit 2-3

Phase 2 of the process occurred from May 2006 to October 2006 and entailed the creation of community-based preliminary visions, concepts, plans and strategies for Downtown Lancaster based upon an intensive Downtown Immersion process. During this time community members participated in walking tours, community workshops and a design charrette focused on the future of Downtown. The objective of this phase was to arrive at a single vision for Downtown Lancaster that had an optimal level of support from the community and provided the requisite framework for preparing the Specific Plan. On July 20, 2006, the draft Vision Plan to articulate the future of Downtown Lancaster was shared with the community for review, input and feedback. The Vision Plan was modified to reflect the input received.

Phase 3 involved preparations of the DLSP and a Downtown Vision Poster. On May 2, 2007, a workshop was held to present the final vision for Downtown and draft concepts of the DLSP. A presentation of the DLSP components and interactive exercises allowed community members to provide comments, which formed the basis for the final revisions of the DLSP document. On June 5, 2007 a workshop was held to present the DLSP and Vision Poster to the community.

2.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The DLSP serves as a planning and regulatory link between the *City of Lancaster General Plan* and individual, project level development within the specific plan area. The DLSP provides area-specific land use regulations and development guidelines for seven districts within the Downtown (refer to Exhibit 2-4, *District Map*).

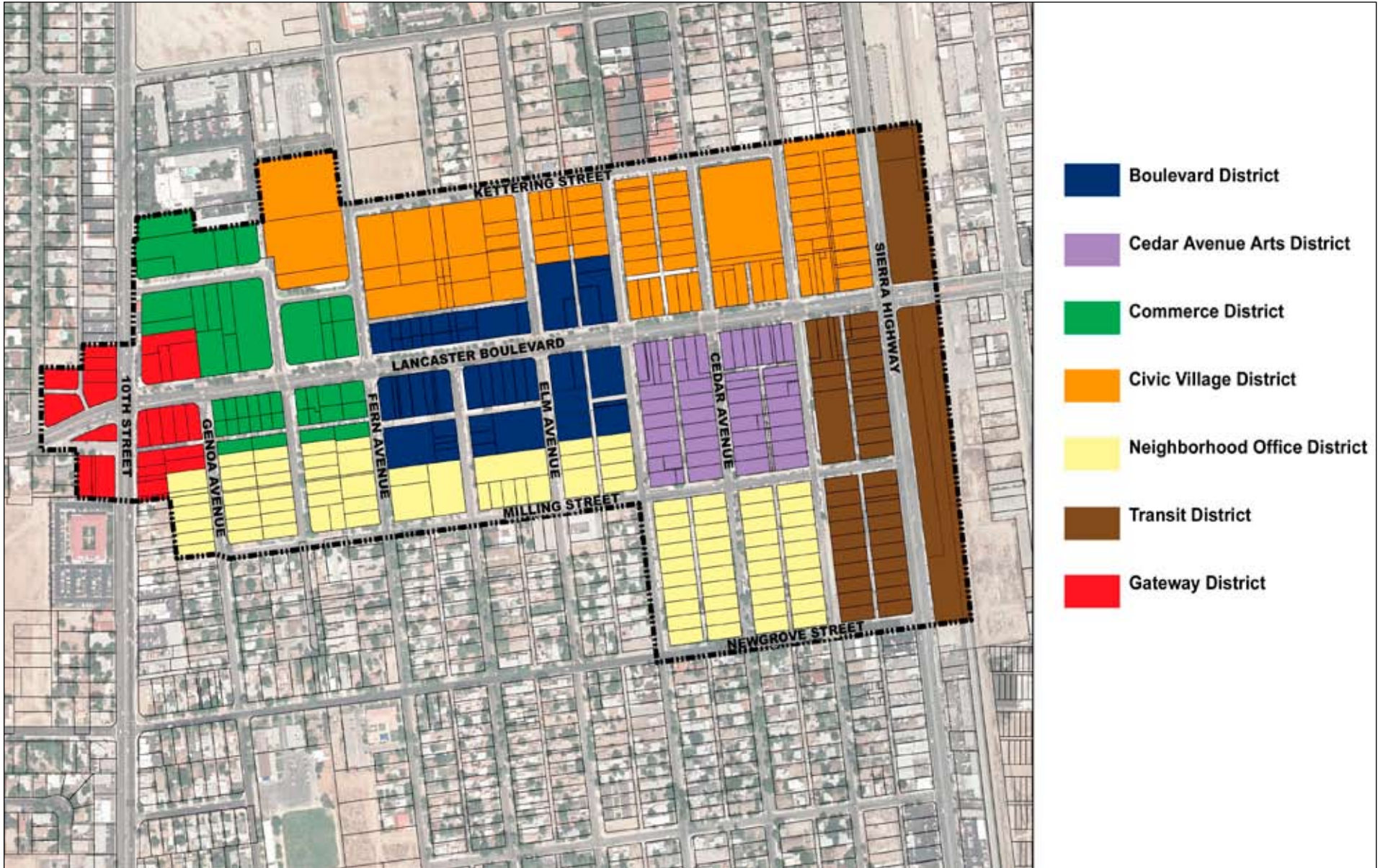
Boulevard District. The Boulevard District would be the core of Downtown Lancaster, providing a variety of entertainment, retail, service and residential uses within existing and new buildings that range from one to five stories in height. Along Lancaster Boulevard, the buildings would be built to the sidewalk to reinforce the street as a pedestrian friendly area. With the Lancaster Performing Arts Center (LPAC) as the anchor to this district, the area would be enhanced with new buildings, a public parking structure, public plazas and an outdoor amphitheater near the LPAC. Parking would be provided on the streets and to the rear of the buildings in surface lots and/or parking structures.

Commerce District. The Commerce District would involve a mix of new and existing office buildings with heights ranging from one to five stories. Buildings built along Lancaster Boulevard would be built to the sidewalk to reinforce the street as a pedestrian-friendly area. Parking would be provided both on the streets and in parking lots located behind buildings. Desired uses in the Commerce District focus on banks, other financial services, professional offices and supporting retail and residential uses.

Transit District. The Transit District would serve as a primary gateway to Downtown from the east. In an effort to connect the Downtown with the MetroLink station, a number of enhanced crosswalks and pedestrian paseos, as well as higher density development with mixed-use commercial and residential structures would occur.

Building heights would range from one to five stories, with parking provided on the streets as well as in parking structures and surface lots behind the buildings.

Gateway District. The Gateway District would serve as a primary gateway to Downtown Lancaster from the west, with a potential roundabout at 10th Street West and Lancaster Boulevard. The District would contain a mix of existing and new buildings ranging from one to four stories in height with primarily office and retail uses.



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INITIAL STUDY
DOWNTOWN LANCASTER SPECIFIC PLAN

District Map

Exhibit 2-4

Neighborhood Office District. The Neighborhood Office District would be largely composed of detached homes and small offices that would provide an opportunity to convert single-family homes to commercial uses or a higher density residential building. This district would provide a transition between the downtown core and the neighborhood to the south. Building heights would be mostly one to three stories and parking would be provided on streets and in private lots and driveways to the side or rear of buildings.

Civic Village District. The Civic Village District would involve a mix of existing civic/public and residential uses at a village scale. The District would have enhanced public plazas, parks and new residential uses. Building heights would range from one to five stories with parking provided on the streets and in surface lots located behind the buildings and a new parking structure near the library.

Cedar Avenue Arts District. The Cedar Avenue Arts District would involve a system of paseos and public spaces winding through a mix of existing and new buildings. The district would include a community theater, arts classes, retail and offices and a complimentary mix of artist live/work lofts, studios and artisan manufacturing buildings ranging in height from one to five stories.

Development of the DLSP would allow for a mix of land uses including retail, office, residential and civic uses within the seven districts. The DLSP would retain existing uses within the specific plan area. Currently, the specific plan area contains approximately 368,980 square feet (s.f.) of retail/service uses, 212,796 s.f. of office/civic/public uses and 250 dwelling units (38 single-family and 212 multi-family). Table 2-1, *Development Plan Buildout Summary*, identifies the maximum buildout potential for each of the seven districts within Downtown Lancaster. As indicated in Table 2-1, the DLSP would allow a maximum of 924,848 s.f. of retail service uses, 973,956 s.f. of office/civic/public spaces and 3,526 dwelling units (single- and multiple-family) in the Downtown.

**Table 2-1
Development Plan Buildout Summary**

District	Retail/Service (s.f.)	Office/Civic/Public (s.f.)	Residential (du)
Cedar Avenue Arts	115,606	73,047	176
Civic Village	115,606	292,187	970
Commerce	138,727	170,442	441
Gateway	69,364	48,698	264
Neighborhood Office	23,121	73,047	264
Boulevard	254,333	146,093	599
Transit	208,091	170,442	811
Total	924,848	973,956	3,526
Assumes 2030 buildout with 25 percent adjustment for future condition, includes existing development plus future.			

The DLSP establishes a Regulating Code, which contains the development specifications, regulations and design guidelines for all development projects within the DLSP area. The Regulating Code focuses attention of the form, placement and appropriate use of buildings. Within the Regulating Code, a Regulating Plan has been established for each of the Downtown Districts. The Regulating Plan is a plan or map that designates how site and building design standards apply to individual properties.

CIRCULATION PLAN

The Circulation Plan in the Downtown provides a “Main Street” environment along Lancaster Boulevard, designed to incorporate traffic calming measures to reduce traffic speeds, enhance pedestrian safety and promote walkability of the area. As part of the Circulation Plan, the City is considering incorporation of a traffic circle at the intersection of 10th Street West and Lancaster Boulevard.

The proposed roadway network would involve a variety of cross-sections to provide opportunities for linkages to the proposed park to the north and the Metro Link station to the east. Traffic calming measures are proposed to slow traffic, reduce traffic noise and improve pedestrian safety. Traffic-calming methods include corner bump-outs, parallel and perpendicular parking areas and enhanced intersection paving areas.

Additionally, the DLSP acknowledges the potential for Lancaster Boulevard to be narrowed from four lanes to a two-lane Main Street between 10th Street West and Sierra Highway.

DOWNTOWN PARKING PLAN

The DLSP area would include a variety of parking opportunities through incorporation of various design solutions from providing on-site commercial and residential parking opportunities from tuck under to structured parking facilities, in addition to parallel and perpendicular parking along the Main Street.

DOWNTOWN WATER SYSTEM PLAN

Based on the anticipated increase in water demand, current-day fire flow standards and the age of existing pipelines, a new looped distribution system would be constructed. Coordination with Los Angeles Department of Public Works Waterworks Division 40 would be necessary to verify transmission capacity and that adequate storage would be available or planned to support development.

DOWNTOWN WASTEWATER SYSTEM PLAN

Development within the North Downtown Transit Village area of the City would involve a reduction in the number of pipelines conveying flow northwest to Avenue I as a result of the proposed park and realignment of Beech Avenue. The proposed system for the DLSP shows a backbone sewer system primarily conveying flow to the Fern Avenue Trunk Sewer. In addition a 10-inch sewer pipeline in Sierra Highway would be constructed between Lancaster Boulevard and Avenue I.

DESIGN REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The DLSP establishes design regulations and design guidelines for all new development projects within Downtown Lancaster. Individual development projects would be required to comply with all applicable design regulations, as they define the minimum or baseline standards for urban design. The design guidelines further define the desired character and image of development in Downtown Lancaster. Design regulations and guidelines address a variety of areas including, but not limited to, building facades, roofs, signs, mechanical equipment, landscaping, lighting, plazas, pedestrian walkways and courtyards and parking.

3.0 INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

3.1 BACKGROUND

1.	Project Title: Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan
2.	Lead Agency Name and Address: City of Lancaster 44933 North Fern Avenue Lancaster, California 93534-2461
3.	Contact Person and Phone Number: Ms. Brigitte Ligons, Assistant Planner 661.723.6100
4.	Project Location: The project area is generally located generally located south of Kettering Street, east of 10th Street West, west of the Union Pacific Railroad line and north of Newgrove Street between the Union Pacific Railroad line and Date Avenue and north of Milling Street between Date Avenue and 10th Street West in the City of Lancaster, California.
5.	Project Sponsor's Name and Address: City of Lancaster 44933 North Fern Avenue Lancaster, California 93534-2461
6.	General Plan Designation: Commercial, Light Industrial, Public, Urban Residential and Medium Density Residential.
7.	Zoning: Central Business District, General Commercial, Commercial Planned Development, Light Industrial, High-Density Residential, Low-Density Residential (R-7000) and Public.
8.	Description of the Project: (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to, later phases of the project, and any secondary support or off-site features necessary for its implementation.) Refer to Section 2.3, <i>Project Characteristics</i> .
9.	Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: The Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan Area is primarily surrounded by residential uses to the north and south, and commercial uses along 10th Street West and Sierra Highway.
10.	Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval or participation agreement). To be determined as part of further review in the Project EIR.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" or "Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated," as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

✓	Aesthetics	✓	Land Use and Planning
	Agriculture Resources		Mineral Resources
✓	Air Quality	✓	Noise
	Biological Resources	✓	Population and Housing
✓	Cultural Resources	✓	Public Services
	Geology and Soils	✓	Recreation
✓	Hazards & Hazardous Materials	✓	Transportation/Traffic
✓	Hydrology & Water Quality	✓	Utilities & Service Systems
✓	Mandatory Findings of Significance		

3.3 LEAD AGENCY DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed use COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared. _____

I find that although the proposal could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described in Section 4.0 have been added. A NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared. _____

I find that the proposal MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required. ✓

I find that the proposal MAY have a significant effect(s) on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets, if the effect is a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated." An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed. _____



Signature

Brigitte Ligons

Printed Name

City of Lancaster

Agency

07-18-07

Date

3.4 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section analyzes the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. The issue areas evaluated in this Initial Study include:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

The environmental analysis in this section is patterned after the Initial Study Checklist recommended by the *CEQA Guidelines*, as amended, and used by the City of Lancaster in its environmental review process. For the preliminary environmental assessment undertaken as part of this Initial Study's preparation, a determination that there is a potential for significant effects indicates the need to more fully analyze the development's impacts and to identify mitigation.

For the evaluation of potential impacts, the questions in the Initial Study Checklist are stated and an answer is provided according to the analysis undertaken as part of the Initial Study. The analysis considers the long-term, direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the development. To each question, there are four possible responses:

- **No Impact.** The development will not have any measurable environmental impact on the environment.
- **Less Than Significant Impact.** The development will have the potential for impacting the environment, although this impact will be below established thresholds that are considered to be significant.
- **Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated.** The development will have the potential to generate impacts which may be considered as a significant effect on the environment, although mitigation measures or changes to the development's physical or operational characteristics can reduce these impacts to levels that are less than significant.
- **Potentially Significant Impact.** The development will have impacts which are considered significant, and additional analysis is required to identify mitigation measures that could reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

Where potential impacts are anticipated to be significant, mitigation measures will be required, so that impacts may be avoided or reduced to insignificant levels.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
1. AESTHETICS. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			✓	
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?			✓	
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	✓			
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	✓			
2. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES. <i>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:</i>				
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				✓
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				✓
c. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?				✓
3. AIR QUALITY. <i>Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:</i>				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	✓			
b. Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	✓			
c. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	✓			
d. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	✓			
e. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?			✓	

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				✓
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				✓
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				✓
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				✓
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				✓
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				✓
5. CULTURAL RESOURCES. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?	✓			
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?	✓			
c. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	✓			
d. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?			✓	
6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
1) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.			✓	
2) Strong seismic ground shaking?			✓	
3) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			✓	
4) Landslides?			✓	
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			✓	
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?			✓	
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?			✓	
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?			✓	
7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			✓	
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	✓			
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?			✓	
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	✓			
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				✓

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				✓
g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			✓	
h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?				✓
8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	✓			
b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?			✓	
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	✓			
d. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	✓			
e. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	✓			
f. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	✓			
g. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				✓
h. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				✓

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
i. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				✓
j. Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				✓
9. LAND USE AND PLANNING. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Physically divide an established community?			✓	
b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	✓			
c. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				✓
10. MINERAL RESOURCES. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				✓
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				✓
11. NOISE. <i>Would the project result in:</i>				
a. Exposure of persons to, or generation of, noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	✓			
b. Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	✓			
c. A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	✓			
d. A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	✓			
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				✓
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				✓

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
12. POPULATION AND HOUSING. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	✓			
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓
c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓
13. PUBLIC SERVICES.				
a. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
1) Fire protection?	✓			
2) Police protection?	✓			
3) Schools?	✓			
4) Parks?	✓			
5) Other public facilities?	✓			
14. RECREATION.				
a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	✓			
b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	✓			
15. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	✓			
b. Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	✓			

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?				✓
d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	✓			
e. Result in inadequate emergency access?			✓	
f. Result in inadequate parking capacity?	✓			
g. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?				✓
16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. <i>Would the project:</i>				
a. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	✓			
b. Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	✓			
c. Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	✓			
d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	✓			
e. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	✓			
f. Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	✓			
g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	✓			
17. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.				
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	✓			

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	✓			
c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	✓			

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The following is a discussion of potential project impacts as identified in the Initial Study Checklist. Explanations are provided for each item.

4.1 AESTHETICS. *Would the proposal:*

- a) *Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?*

Less Than Significant Impact. The *Lancaster General Plan MEA/EIR* does not identify the project area as within or a part of a scenic vista. Scenic resources in the City of Lancaster consist of desert environment as well as long-range views of the San Gabriel, Sierra Pelona, and Tehachapi Mountains. The project area is currently urbanized with a mix of land uses. Development of the project would involve residential, retail/service, office, civic and public uses at a greater intensity than currently exist. However, project implementation would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Impacts would be less than significant in this regard.

- b) *Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?*

Less Than Significant Impact. According to the *Lancaster General Plan MEA/EIR*, no officially designated scenic routes or highways occur within the project area. Mature trees that exist in the area are not designated as scenic resources. No rock outcroppings occur in the project area. Also, there are no historic buildings located within a State scenic highway. As previously stated, the project area is currently urbanized with a mix of uses. Impacts to scenic resources would be less than significant.

- c) *Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The project area and its surroundings are urbanized and contain a mix of land uses with structures of various age and condition. The project would involve the development of new uses with varying heights and massing, increasing the intensity of uses within Downtown Lancaster and altering the existing visual character of the area. Although it is not anticipated that the visual character or quality of the project area or its surroundings would be degraded, views from surrounding sites may be impacted. Additional analysis is required to determine visual impacts as a result of project implementation.

- d) *Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The project area and its surroundings are currently urbanized and contain various forms of on- and off-site lighting. As part of the proposed project, lighting would be included for activity areas involving nighttime uses, parking, security lighting around structures and interiors of buildings. Project implementation would result in the development of the area with new uses at a greater intensity than currently exists. The introduction of new sources of light and glare would potentially

affect views in the area. Additional analysis is required to assess potential impacts related to light and glare.

4.2 AGRICULTURE RESOURCES. *In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:*

- a) *Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?*

No Impact. The project area is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Thus, project implementation would not result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

- b) *Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?*

No Impact. Implementation of the project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract. The project area is currently zoned for commercial, office, industrial, public and residential uses. Although the project would involve rezoning the project area to Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan (SP), it would not involve rezoning from an agricultural use.

- c) *Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?*

No Impact. The proposed project does not involve changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural uses. The project area is urbanized and there are no farmland uses currently occurring within the area.

4.3 AIR QUALITY. *Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:*

- a) *Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The project area is located within the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). Regulatory oversight for air quality in the City of Lancaster rests with the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) at the regional level, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) at the State level, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region IX office at the Federal level. The Antelope Valley portion of the MDAB is designated as a Federal nonattainment area for eight-hour ozone (O₃). Under the California Clean Air Act, the Basin is designated as a nonattainment area for O₃ and PM₁₀. Further review is necessary to confirm the project's status in terms of compliance/conflict with current AVAQMD guidelines.

- b) *Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Construction and buildout of the project area would result in pollutant emissions from three different sources, including: (1) short-term construction emissions, (2) long-term mobile emissions from trucks and vehicles traveling to and from the site once the project is operational, and (3) long-term stationary emissions from power and gas consumption and machinery and equipment on-site.

The greatest potential for air quality impacts from the project would be attributed to mobile emissions. The project's potential air quality impacts on a local and regional level requires an evaluation pursuant to the AVAQMD and California Air Resources Board (CARB) requirements and methodology. Additional analysis is necessary to quantify potential project-related air quality impacts (both short-term and long-term) and identify appropriate mitigation that would be effective in reducing pollutant emissions.

- c) *Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Responses 4.3(a) and 4.3(b).

- d) *Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Sensitive populations (i.e., children, senior citizens and acutely or chronically ill people) are more susceptible to the effects of air pollution than are the general population. Land uses considered sensitive receptors typically include residences, schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, hospitals, convalescent homes and retirement homes. Sensitive receptors in proximity to the project area include existing residences and schools. Construction and operation of the project would increase vehicle trips on area roadways and result in associated air pollutants. Grading and excavation operations may also have air quality impacts in the absence of mitigation. These impacts require additional analysis to assess their level of significance.

- e) *Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?*

Less Than Significant Impact. Construction activity associated with the project may generate detectable odors from heavy-duty equipment exhaust. However, this impact would be short-term in nature and cease upon project completion. In addition, the proposed land uses are not anticipated to create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur in this regard.

4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. *Would the project:*

- a) *Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

No Impact. The project area is predominately urbanized and built-out. The project proposes infill development, rehabilitation and expansion of existing structures. No special status plant or animals species exist in the local vicinity due to the level of past disturbance and non-native plant species in the area.

- b) *Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

No Impact. As previously stated, the project area is predominately urbanized and surrounded with similar urban development. No riparian habitat or natural communities exist on-site. The *Lancaster General Plan MEA/EIR* identifies the project area as consisting of “disturbed lands”, which are urbanized.

- c) *Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, costal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?*

No Impact. No federally protected wetlands occur on-site. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in any impacts in that regard.

- d) *Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*

No Impact. No wildlife corridors or native wildlife nurseries exist in the project area. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in any impacts in that regard.

- e) *Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policy or ordinance.*

No Impact. The project site is urbanized and contains only non-native vegetation. Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances that protect biological resources.

- f) *Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*

No Impact. The project area does not have an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other habitat conservation plan. Therefore, the project would not result in impacts in this regard.

4.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES. *Would the project:*

- a) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The project area is predominately urbanized. The project proposes a combination of infill development through new uses, expansion of certain existing uses and rehabilitation of the existing residential areas with a maximum buildout of 924,848 s.f. of retail/service uses, 973,956 s.f. of office/civic/public spaces and 3,526 dwelling units. According to the *General Plan MEA/EIR*, potential historical resources/structures have been identified in the local area. Further analysis will be required to determine if historic resources occur within the project area.

- b) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The project site is predominately urbanized with land area having been previously disturbed. According to the *Lancaster Central Business District Redevelopment Project EIR*, no archaeological resources are known to exist in the project area. However, further analysis will be required to determine if archaeological resources occur within the project area.

- c) *Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The project site is predominately urbanized. The likelihood unique paleontological resources existing on-site is minimized by the land area having been previously disturbed; however, further analysis will be required to determine if paleontological resources occur within the project area.

- d) *Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?*

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is predominately urbanized with land area having been previously disturbed. No known human remains exist on-site, and due to the level of past disturbance, it is not anticipated that human remains exist within the project site. In the event human remains are encountered during earth removal or disturbance activities, all activities would cease immediately and a qualified archaeologist and Native American monitor would be immediately contacted. The Coroner would be contacted pursuant to Sections 5097.98 and 5097.99 of the Public Resources Code relative to Native American remains. Should the Coroner determine the human remains to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission would be contacted pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. A less than significant impact would occur in this regard.

4.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS. *Would the project:*

a) *Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:*

- 1) *Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.*

Less Than Significant Impact. According to the *City's General Plan MEA/EIR*, Lancaster is located in a seismically active area of the Mojave Desert. The San Andreas Fault is located nine miles south of the City and the Garlock Fault is located twenty miles to the northwest of the City. No active faults are known to traverse the area and the project is not located within, or immediately adjacent to an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. Therefore, rupture of a known earthquake fault would not occur within the project area. Adherence to standard engineering practices and design criteria relative to seismic and geologic hazards in accordance with the *Uniform Building Code (UBC)* is required.

- 2) *Strong seismic ground shaking?*

Less Than Significant Impact. According to the *City's General Plan MEA/EIR*, the project area is located in Zone 1 for seismic shaking. Zone 1 represents an area that would be exposed to the most intense seismic ground shaking. No known faults exist within the project boundary. The San Andreas Fault is located nine miles south of the City and the Garlock Fault is located twenty miles to the northwest of the City. The project area would experience ground shaking from earthquakes generated along active faults located off-site. The intensity of ground shaking would depend upon the magnitude of the earthquake, distance to the epicenter and the geology of the area between the epicenter and the project area. Adherence to standard engineering practices and design criteria relative to seismic and geologic hazards in accordance with the UBC would reduce the significance of potential impacts to less than significant.

- 3) *Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?*

Less Than Significant Impact. In February 2005, the California Geologic Survey completed the update of the Seismic Hazards Zones Maps for the Lancaster area. These maps indicate potential liquefaction zones along the length of Little Rock Wash, in the eastern portion of the City, and in the vicinity of Amargosa Creek, extending from the area north of Quartz Hill to the northeast across the City to the Los Angeles-Kern County line. The project area is not within an area identified as being potentially subject to liquefaction. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to result in, or expose people to potential impacts related to seismic ground failure or liquefaction.

- 4) *Landslides?*

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is located in an existing urban area. The property is flat and surrounding properties are flat, with no unusual geographic features, and therefore, does not have the potential to slide, or experience sliding from

adjacent areas. Project implementation would not expose people or structures to landslides, therefore a less than impact would occur in this regard.

- b) *Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?*

Less Than Significant Impact. The City's General Plan MEA/EIR identifies the project area as being located in an area consisting of desert soils of the Hesperia-Rosamond-Cajon and Pond-Tray-Oband Association. These soils, stable and well drained, are most conducive for development and minimize potential impacts of soil erosion and loss of topsoil.

Clearing and grading for construction may expose soils to short-term wind and water erosion. However, implementation of erosion control measures as required by the City and adherence to all requirements set forth in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for construction activities would be required for all new construction in the DLSP area. Due to soil characteristics in the vicinity of the project and compliance to measures required by the City and Federal government, potential impacts would result in less than significant.

- c) *Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in an on-site or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?*

Less Than Significant Impact. Refer to responses 4.6 (a)(3) and (4). The project site has not been identified as a geologic unit that is unstable, and based upon available references, would not become unstable as a result of project implementation. Most of the City of Lancaster is characterized by soils of low shrink-swell potential, as delineated by the Soil Conservation Service. The DLSP area is located in a location where no data is available; however, it is surrounded by low shrink-swell potential and likely contains similar characteristics. A low potential does not represent a problem for foundation construction. Additionally, all development would be designed in compliance with applicable building codes, reducing impacts to a less than significant level.

- d) *Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?*

Less Than Significant Impact. The City's General Plan MEA/EIR identifies the project area as being located in an area consisting of desert soils of the Hesperia-Rosamond-Cajon and Pond-Tray-Oband Association. These soils are stable, well drained and most conducive for development. Less than significant impacts are anticipated in this regard.

- e) *Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?*

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would include improvements/modifications to on-site sewer systems. It would not be necessary to install septic tanks or other alternative types of wastewater disposal systems. Less than significant impacts are anticipated in this regard.

4.7 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. Would the project:

- a) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?*

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment from the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Small amounts of hazardous materials may be found in solvents and chemicals used for cleaning, building maintenance and landscaping. The materials would be similar to those found in common household products, such as cleaning products or pesticides. Hazardous materials used in construction and operation of the proposed project would be subject to City, State and Federal regulations, reducing impacts to a less than significant level.

- b) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed uses in the project area are not anticipated to result in the creation of health hazards following compliance with health and safety regulations. The proposed uses would not use, generate or dispose of hazardous materials in large quantities. As stated, hazardous materials used in construction and operation of the proposed project would be subject to City, State and Federal regulations. Due to the age of structures located within the area, the potential exists for hazardous materials, including the presence of asbestos and lead-based paint within the existing buildings. Further analysis is required in the EIR.

- c) *Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?*

Less Than Significant Impact. Schools are located within the project and surrounding area. However, hazardous emissions or the handling of hazardous materials, substances and waste are not anticipated to be part of the proposed project, therefore impacts would be less than significant.

- d) *Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?*

Potentially Significant Impact. On July 13, 2007 a search of the Department of Toxic Substance Control database was conducted and determined that environmental conditions are present within the vicinity of the project area. Additional analysis in the EIR will be required to determine the extent of the environmental conditions.

- e) *For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?*

No Impact. The project area is not located within two miles of an airport. The nearest airport is General William J. Fox Airfield, approximately six miles northwest of the project area. Private planes primarily use Fox Field and there is no commercial passenger

capability. Given the distance from Fox Field, a less than significant safety hazard for the people residing or working in the project area.

- f) *For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?*

No Impact. Refer to Response 4.7(e).

- g) *Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

Less Than Significant Impact. According to the *City's General Plan MEA/EIR*, 10th Street West and Sierra Highway are designated evacuation routes that pass through the DLSP area. These roads may be subject to temporary closures during construction within the DLSP project area. However, construction activities, which may result in temporary road closures, would not significantly impair implementation of, or physically interfere with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, as additional roadways would be available for emergency response and evacuation. Additionally, any street closures proposed by the project would be reviewed by the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD), and would be subject to all emergency access standards and requirements, further reducing impacts to a less than significant level.

- h) *Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?*

No Impact. The project area and surrounding areas are urbanized. Future development as a result of project implementation would introduce additional ornamental landscaping, which is not anticipated to create hazardous fire conditions. No impacts would occur in this regard.

4.8 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY. *Would the Project:*

- a) *Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The DLSP would consist of a combination of new uses, expansion of existing uses, and rehabilitation of the existing residential areas, resulting in an incremental increase in the amount of impervious surface in the project area. The drainage paths for the proposed condition would be similar to the existing conditions and the majority of the flows would be contained in the streets. Increased runoff has the potential to increase the pollutant load offsite and negatively impact storm water quality. Further analysis will be required to determine the potential impact on water quality.

New development would be required to comply with the City of Lancaster's Engineering Design Guidelines, which include the following:

- A National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit must be obtained from California State Water Resources Control Board for a site development of one acre or greater in area.

- Applicants shall prepare and submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the Construction General Permit to the California State Water Resources Control Board.
- All dischargers must prepare, retain at the Construction site, and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). This report shall conform to NPDES permit.
- Clarifiers for all non-residential projects are to treat the first flush.

A Water Quality Management Plan would be created to include non-structural source control and structural/treatment BMPs to comply with the City's Storm Water Management Plan and NPDES permit. Since no treatment BMPs are currently proposed on site, storm water treatment under the NPDES permit would require the construction of a combination of treatment BMPs to the maximum extent practicable. The treatment BMPs appropriate for onsite uses are swales, inlet filtration and/or water quality basins.

Construction controls are separated from the rest of the water quality management because the measures are temporary and specific to the type of construction. Construction of the proposed project has the potential to produce typical pollutants such as nutrients, heavy metals, pesticides and herbicides, toxic chemicals related to construction and cleaning, waste materials including wash water, paints, wood, paper, concrete, food containers and sanitary wastes, fuel and lubricants. As part of the NPDES permit requirements a Notice of Intent (NOI) would be prepared and submitted to the California State Water Resources Control Board providing notification and intent to comply with the State of California general permit. Prior to construction, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be required for the construction activities onsite. A copy of the SWPPP would be required to be available and implemented at the construction site at all times. The SWPPP outlines the source control and/or treatment control BMPs that would avoid or reduce runoff pollutants at the construction site to the maximum extent practicable.

- b) *Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?*

Less Than Significant Impact. The DLSP project and surrounding area are currently developed with a variety of uses. Implementation of the proposed project would cause a slight increase in the amount of impervious areas on site. However, this change in imperviousness would not interfere with groundwater recharge since direct rainfall from the Lancaster area makes an inconsequential contribution to overall groundwater recharge of aquifers of the Valley. Refer to Response 4.16(b) for a discussion of water resources.

- c) *Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?*

Potentially Significant Impact. As previously stated, the project area is currently urbanized and adjacent areas are predominately built-out. The drainage pattern for the area flows generally to the north and west towards the intersection of Lancaster Boulevard and 10th Street West. Storm flow conveyance in the project area is generally within the existing streets and within the existing reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) in Lancaster Boulevard from Fig Avenue to 10th Street West.

The drainage paths for the proposed project would be similar to existing conditions; the majority of the flows would be contained in the streets. Implementation of the DLSP is not anticipated to substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area. However, based on field observations conducted for the DLSP, the Lancaster Boulevard storm drain system is inadequate to capture existing storm flows. The hydraulics of the existing RCP in Lancaster Boulevard requires further verification in order to determine whether the additional two cfs of storm flows, which is anticipated from project implementation, would result in upgrades to the system.

- d) *Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.8(c).

- e) *Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Responses 4.8(a) and 4.8(c).

- f) *Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to response 4.8 (a).

- g) *Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?*

No Impact. According to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the DLSP area is located in Zone B, which is defined by FEMA as an area outside of the 100-year floodplain. No impacts are anticipated.

- h) *Place within a 100-year flow hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows.*

No Impact. Refer to Response 4.8(g).

- i) *Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?*

No Impact. Refer to Response 4.8(g). Additionally there are no levees or dams located in the vicinity of the project. No impact would occur in this regard.

- j) *Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?*

No Impact. No significant water features have been identified in the project area. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated in this regard.

4.9 LAND USE AND PLANNING. *Would the project:*

- a) *Physically divide an established community?*

Less Than Significant Impact. The DLSP area contains a mix of civic, cultural, commercial, office and residential uses. Implementation of the DLSP would involve increased development of the Downtown with retail/service, public, office, civic and residential uses at a greater intensity than currently exists. The proposed project would involve development on currently developed sites, as well as infill development on vacant and/or underutilized parcels. The DLSP project would not physically divide an established community, as proposed uses would be consistent with existing uses in the area. Development of the DLSP would serve to enhance the Downtown by increasing development and activity in the area. Impacts would be less than significant.

- b) *Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The DLSP area is currently designated Commercial, Light Industrial, Public, Urban Residential and Medium Density Residential. Adoption of the DLSP would change the existing land use designation from Commercial, Light Industrial, Public, Urban Residential and Medium Density Residential to Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan (SP). The City of Lancaster is currently in the process of a comprehensive General Plan Update. It is anticipated that as part of the General Plan Update, the land use for the DLSP area would be changed to SP. Therefore, a General Plan Amendment would not be required. Additionally, the zoning for the DLSP area would be changed from Central Business District, General Commercial, Commercial Planned Development, Light Industrial, High-Density Residential, Low-Density Residential (R-7000) and Public to Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan (SP). Existing General Plan goals and policies were reviewed as part of the planning process for the DLSP to ensure consistency between the DLSP and the *Lancaster General Plan*. The *Lancaster General Plan* provides a supportive foundation for the Specific Plan and reinforces the goals and policies for the Downtown area. The analysis concluded that the policies contained within the DLSP are consistent with the *General Plan*. The DLSP area is located within the Lancaster Central Business District Redevelopment Project area. Further review is required to determine if the project would conflict with applicable City planning and policy documents.

- c) *Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?*

No Impact. As stated in Response 4.4(f), the project does not conflict with habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans.

4.10 MINERAL RESOURCES. Would the project:

- a) *Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?*

No Impact. According to the *City's General Plan MEA/EIR*, the project area does not contain any mineral deposits or other mineral resources. Therefore, no significant impacts are anticipated in this regard.

- b) *Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?*

No Impact. The *City's General Plan MEA/EIR* does not identify the project area as an important mineral resource recovery site. No significant impacts are anticipated in this regard.

4.11 NOISE. Would the project result in:

- a) *Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Project construction and operation would result in both short-term and long-term noise impacts. Short-term impacts would occur during grading and construction. Long-term noise impacts would be associated with increased vehicular traffic to and from the project site, outdoor activities, deliveries and stationary mechanical equipment on-site. Both short- and long-term noise impacts require further evaluation.

- b) *Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The project may include extensive earthwork and grading to prepare the project area for development. Further review is required to determine the significance of the impacts.

- c) *A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.11(a).

- d) *A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing with out the project?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.11(a).

- e) *For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?*

No Impact. Refer to Response 4.7(e). The project area is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. Therefore, project implementation would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

- f) *For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?*

No Impact. The nearest private airstrip is General William J. Fox Airfield located approximately six miles from the project area. Exposure of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels is not anticipated as a result of project implementation.

4.12 POPULATION AND HOUSING. *Would the project:*

- a) *Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The project proposes the development of residential and employment generating uses in addition to existing uses within the area. Further analysis will be required to determine the growth inducing potential of the project.

- b) *Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

No Impact. Project implementation would not result in the displacement of existing residents, as removal of existing housing within the DLSP area would not occur. The project proposes the development of new housing in addition to the existing housing that occurs within the area. Therefore, no impacts would occur in this regard.

- c) *Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

No Impact. Refer to Response 4.12(b).

4.13 PUBLIC SERVICES.

- a) *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:*

- 1) *Fire protection?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) provides fire protection services to the project area. Due to the location and nature of the project and potential for street closures resulting from new development or street improvements, additional analysis and consultation with the Fire Department will be required.

- 2) *Police protection?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The County of Los Angeles Sheriff's Department provides police protection for the area. Due to the location and nature of the project, police protection needs may be affected. Additional analysis will be required.

- 3) *Schools?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Proposed development of residential uses could result in increased student populations to the area. Additional analysis and consultation with the affected school district is required.

- 4) *Parks?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Proposed development of residential uses would result in an increased demand on park and recreation facilities within the City. The City has adopted a park to population ratio of five acres of recreational open space per 1,000 residents. Project implementation would result in a population increase potentially requiring additional park acreage. Further analysis regarding park facility impacts is required.

- 5) *Other public facilities?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The increased public facilities and landscaping associated with the project may result in greater maintenance requirements. Further review will be required to assess possible impacts to other public facilities.

4.14 RECREATION.

- a) *Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.13(a)(4).

- b) *Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.13(a)(4).

4.15 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC. Would the project:

- a) *Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would increase vehicular movement in the project vicinity. The proposed increase of residential, retail/service, office, institutional and public uses to the area would result in increased traffic volumes to existing roadways. Additionally, the new circulation configuration, which may include reduction in lanes on Lancaster Boulevard and a roundabout at 10th Street West and Lancaster Boulevard, requires further analysis to assess the impact on traffic and circulation in the area.

- b) *Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.15(a).

- c) *Result in change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?*

No Impact. Due to the nature and scope of the proposed land uses, project implementation would not affect air traffic patterns and would not result in safety risks. No impact would occur in this regard.

- d) *Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The DLSP project may involve reduction in lanes on Lancaster Boulevard and a roundabout at 10th Street West and Lancaster Boulevard. Further analysis will be required to assess the impact on traffic and safety in the area.

- e) *Result in inadequate emergency access?*

Less Than Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.7(g).

- f) *Result in inadequate parking capacity?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The project would be required to provide parking for the proposed residential, retail/service, office, institutional and public uses. Further analysis to assess parking conditions within the area is required.

- g) *Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?*

No Impact. No conflicts with any adopted policies supporting alternative transportation are anticipated to occur. The City would impose standard conditions regarding transportation facilities, which may include bus turnouts, bicycle racks and bicycle lanes.

4.16 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. *Would the project:*

- a) *Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The County of Los Angeles Sanitation District, City of Lancaster and the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works provide sanitation service for the project area. Further analysis will be required to determine the impacts associated with the available capacity of the wastewater treatment facility.

- b) *Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Water purchased by Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK) from the State Water Project (SWP) is supplied to the project area. As stated, the County of Los Angeles Sanitation District, City of Lancaster and the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works provide sanitation service for the project area. The project involves development at an increased intensity than currently exists. Further analysis is required to determine the impacts associated with the available capacity of water and wastewater treatment facilities.

- c) *Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.8(a).

- d) *Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.16(b).

- e) *Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.16(b).

- f) *Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed project would generate increased amounts of solid waste, beyond existing conditions. Waste Management of Lancaster

provides disposal of solid waste from the DLSP area. The project's effect upon the landfill capacity will require further evaluation.

- g) *Comply with federal, state and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Refer to Response 4.16(f). The project must comply with adopted programs and regulations pertaining to solid waste. Further evaluation will be required.

4.17 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.

- a) *Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?*

Potentially Significant Impact. Further analysis of potential project impacts on historical resources is required. Refer to response 4.5(a), (b), and (c) under Cultural Resources.

- b) *Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?*

Potentially Significant Impact. A review of cumulative impacts for each issue area that has been identified as potentially significant will be required pursuant to Section 15130 of CEQA.

- c) *Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?*

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed project has the potential to cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. Further review and analysis is required.