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## I. INTRODUCTION

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### PROJECT APPLICANT

The project applicant for Vesting Tentative Tract No. 61553 is DS Ventures, LLC, 8383 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1000, Beverly Hills, CA 90211.

### PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project is the urban in-fill subdivision of a 6.19-acre, irregularly shaped property into two lots and the subsequent development of 37 detached, single-family condominium homes. Three single-family unit types are envisioned: Units A, B and C. Each unit would have three or four bedrooms and would have a maximum height of three stories or 36 feet, as established by the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan Inner Corridor regulations. Each unit would include a two-car garage. There would be no basements, subterranean floors and no stepped pads. Architectural style has not yet been determined.

Of the project site's 6.19 acres of total area, building footprint coverage would account for approximately 1.17 acres (or 18.9% of the total project site). An additional area of 0.86 acres (or 14.0% of the project site) would be covered by other forms of impervious surfaces, driveways, patios and walkways. A total area of 0.86 acres (or 13.9% of the project site) would be covered with landscaping. In addition, there would be 2.37 acres (or 38.27% of the project site) of undisturbed open space and 0.93 acres (or 17.7% of the project site) of private open space. A homeowners' association would be responsible for the maintenance of the open space.

For site access, the project proposes to construct an internal private drive, 30 feet in width, that would connect two points of offsite vehicular access located on Mulholland Drive and San Feliciano Drive. All lighting would be designed to be consistent with the applicable Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan objectives and policies and objectives. No street lighting would be provided on the private drive between Mulholland Highway and San Feliciano Drive. Rather, the project would seek to use low intensity exterior lighting to minimize potential glare and night sky illumination. The project would provide a total of 74 covered parking spaces (two per unit in garages) and 19 guest parking spaces.

Grading for the proposed project would involve the excavation of approximately 10,700 cubic yards. All excavated material would be used as fill on the project site. Grading would be balanced onsite - there would be no import or export of graded materials. All manufactured slopes would have a maximum horizontal to vertical ratio of 2 to 1. The project would utilize retaining walls in lieu of slopes to preserve additional oaks.

## **PURPOSE OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)<sup>1</sup> was enacted in 1970 with the objective to inform the public and decision makers of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed project. CEQA requires agencies to avoid or reduce the environmental effects of a project by implementing feasible project alternatives or mitigation measures. As provided by the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a):

*An EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The public agency shall consider the information in the EIR along with other information which may be presented to the agency.*

CEQA applies to all discretionary activities proposed to be carried out or approved by California public agencies, including state, regional, county, and local agencies. The proposed project requires discretionary approval from the City of Los Angeles and, therefore, is subject to CEQA. For purposes of CEQA compliance, the City of Los Angeles is identified as the Lead Agency for this project. The Lead Agency is responsible for preparing this EIR in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. As mandated by the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR has been subject to the City's internal review process and reflects the Lead Agency's independent judgment and objectivity with regard to the scope, content, and adequacy of analysis.

## **EIR ADEQUACY**

The principal use of an EIR is to provide input and information to the comprehensive planning analysis. The standards for adequacy of an EIR, defined in Section 15151 of the CEQA Guidelines, are as follows:

*An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for the perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.*

This EIR has been prepared by the City of Los Angeles in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> *Public Resources Code (P.R.C.) Division 13 § 21000 et seq.*

## EIR SCOPE AND CONTENT

To determine which environmental topics should be addressed in this EIR, the City of Los Angeles prepared an Initial Study, which is included in Technical Appendix A of this Draft EIR. The results of the Initial Study indicated that the proposed project would have potentially significant impacts with respect to the following environmental concerns;

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use Planning
- Noise

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) was initially circulated from November 8, 2005 to December 8, 2005 in order to receive input from interested public agencies and private parties. Subsequently, the comment period was extended for an additional two weeks, until December 22, 2005, in order to give interested parties ample time to submit their comments. Copies of the Notice of Preparation and the NOP comment period extension letter are included in Technical Appendix B of this Draft EIR. Input from interested public agencies and private parties were received in written form, copies of which are also presented in Appendix B of this EIR. In addition, a number of comment letters were received prior to the circulation of the NOP. These letters are included in Technical Appendix C. When the same comment letter was submitted more than once, prior to and after the circulation of the NOP, or when the same letter was addressed to more than one individual, only the comment letter with the earliest date is included in the Appendices. A total of 78 unique comment letters were received either prior to or during the circulation of the NOP. No public scoping meetings were held on this project.

In addition to the environmental concerns previously identified by the Initial Study, the comment letters also identified the following concerns:

- Traffic
- Police Services
- Utility Infrastructure

The issue of project traffic generation was added to the list of concerns addressed in this Draft EIR. The issues of school-related traffic hazards, police services and utility infrastructure were determined not to be potentially significant by the Initial Study and therefore are not assessed in this Draft EIR. However, the basis for this determination is provided both in the Initial Study and in Section V.A of this Draft EIR.

The environmental analysis for each issue areas identified above is contained in Section V. of this EIR. For each environmental issue area, the EIR identifies the environmental setting (i.e., baseline environmental conditions – a more comprehensive Existing Conditions discussion is provided in Section IV), defines the methodologies and significance thresholds utilized to determine significant environmental impacts, identifies significant environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the project, and provides recommended mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid potential significant impacts. This Section also provides under each environmental topic a cumulative impact analysis of the project when combined with other known projects which have been recently proposed within the surrounding area.

Section VI includes additional impact categories as mandated by CEQA. This Chapter provides a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes which would be involved in the proposed project should it be implemented and addresses the project's potential for growth-inducing impacts (population, housing and employment impacts) (State CEQA Guidelines, P.R.C. § 15126).

Section VII of this EIR provides an analysis of project alternatives that may produce the effects of the proposed project. As required by CEQA, this Chapter evaluates a No Project Alternative, which evaluates the environmental consequences if this project does not go forward. This Section also analyzes the following alternatives: a traditional subdivision consistent with the project site's R1 zoning; and development of a public park combining the project site and the Girard Reservoir site.

References, Organizations and Persons Consulted and Preparers of the EIR are identified in Section VIII. of this EIR.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Public participation is an essential part of the CEQA process. To provide full public disclosure of potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of a proposed project, CEQA requires the Draft EIR be circulated during the public review period to all responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and to the general public. The Draft EIR for Vesting Tentative Tract No. 61553 will be circulated for a period of 45 days (in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines § 21091 (a)). During this review period, all public agencies and interested individuals and organizations are encouraged to provide written comments addressing their concerns with the adequacy and completeness of the EIR. When providing written comments on the subject matter of the EIR, the readers are referred to State CEQA Guidelines, 151204(a), which state:

*In reviewing Draft EIRs, persons and public agencies should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate the*

*significant environmental effects. At the same time, reviewers should be aware that adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible, in light of factors such as the magnitude of the project at issue, the severity of its likely environmental impacts, and the geographic scope of the project. CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commentors. When responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR.*

All comments on the Draft EIR should be submitted in writing to the City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, at the following address:

David Somers  
LA City Planning Dept.  
200 North Spring Street  
Room 750  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

A copy of the Draft EIR will be made available to the general public at the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning at the address listed above.

Following the public review period and receipt of all public and agency comments, the Lead Agency will prepare a Final EIR. The Final EIR will include additions and corrections to the Draft EIR as applicable, written responses addressing the comments and recommendations received by individuals and entities during the public review period, and a final mitigation monitoring and reporting program. The Lead Agency's responses to comments on the Draft EIR must demonstrate a good faith and well responded analysis, and may not be conclusory.<sup>2</sup> However, when responding to comments on the Draft EIR, the Lead Agency need only respond to significant environmental issues and does not need to provide all information requested by reviewers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> CEQA, P.R.C. § 21091 (d), and State CEQA Guidelines, C.C.R. § 15088 (b).

<sup>3</sup> State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15204(a).