Executive Summary

Overview

The purpose of the Executive Summary and impact summary tables is to provide the reader with a brief overview of the proposed Athens Sun Valley Material Recovery Facility (Project), the anticipated environmental effects, and the potential mitigation measures that could reduce the severity of the impacts associated with the Project. The City of Los Angeles, Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with CEQA, Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq., the State CEQA Guidelines, 14 CCR Sections 15000 et seq. and the City of Los Angeles, Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (Adopted July 31, 2002).

This EIR is an informational document that is being used by the general public, utility providers, and governmental agencies to review and evaluate the Project. The reader should not rely exclusively on the Executive Summary as the sole basis for judgment of the Project and alternatives. The complete EIR should be consulted for specific information about the environmental effects and the implementation of associated mitigation measures.

The Athens Sun Valley Materials Recovery Facility (ASVMRF) is located on an approximately 4.9 acre parcel in the Sun Valley community within the San Fernando Valley portion of the City of Los Angeles. The facility would process a total of 1,500 tons of solid waste and recyclables per day. Of the total, 1,000 tpd would be municipal solid waste (MSW) and 500 tpd would be construction and demolition (C&D) materials. MSW and C&D would be processed in separate enclosed buildings. The facility currently processes approximately 400 tpd of C&D materials and operates under Conditional Use Permit (CUP) (ZA 98-0427) issued in January 1999.

Following are the major Project components:

- In compliance with the July 29, 2004 Stipulated Judgment, recovery operations, for both C&D and MSW, will take place in covered buildings with misting and forced air ventilation systems.
- The size of proposed buildings and site activities include:
  - Transfer Station Building/MRF Building — 44,200 square feet
  - C&D Processing Building — 18,045 square feet
  - Landscape — 5,026 square feet
  - Hardscape — 149, 457 square feet
- No change in the hours of operation is proposed. In accordance with the existing CUP, the facility will operate from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

- In accordance with the Stipulated Judgment, a 2 kilowatt solar power system will be constructed on the site to provide a portion of the electrical demand for the project.
- In accordance with the State Minimum Standards for Operating C&D and MRF/Transfer Stations, the following environmental control measures will be implemented:
  - Hazardous Materials: A load check program will be implemented by the operator to randomly check one C&D load per day and one MRF/Transfer load per day. Any small quantities of household hazardous waste (HHW) detected in incoming loads will be brought to the existing on-site HHW storage container, segregated by class and manifested in accordance with Federal and State regulations. Only employees with proper training will handle HHW. A spill response kit will be located in the storage container to include absorbent material, brooms, shovels, 55-gallon drums, protective gloves, clothing, boots, goggles and respiratory equipment. Periodic additional random load checks may be required by the regulatory entity, the Local Enforcement Agency, as part of their inspectional procedures.
  - Odor Control: Odor control will be achieved by moving operations indoors within enclosed buildings with forced air ventilation systems. In addition, odors will be limited by the use of an odor neutralizer as part of the misting system and removal of any non-salvageable waste within 48 hours of its receipt on a first-in, first-out basis.
  - Dust Control: Dust control will be achieved by moving operations indoors within fully enclosed buildings with manual and automatic misting systems. In addition, outdoor C&D operations will be halted during periods of extreme wind conditions. As recommended by the SCAQMD, extreme wind conditions are defined as instantaneous wind speeds that exceed 25 mph. In addition, an automatic sweeper will be used to clean the tipping floors, outside the buildings and around the perimeter of the facility on a daily basis.
  - Litter Control: Litter control will be achieved by moving operations indoors within fully enclosed buildings. In addition, a cleanup crew will be assigned to maintain the facility and the ingress/egress street free of litter on a daily basis. All transfer vehicles and trucks utilizing the facility will be required to be covered to prevent material from blowing from vehicles.
  - Vector Control: Moving operations indoors will significantly reduce the attraction and access of rodents, birds and insects to refuse at the existing facility. In addition, any non-salvageable waste will be loaded into transfer trailers and removed from the site within 48 hours on a first-in, first-out basis. AW will contract with a vector control company to eliminate potential vectors on an as-needed basis.
  - Air Quality Control: To reduce air emissions, the applicant will comply with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) requirements to install particulate traps on their refuse collection vehicles.

Environmental Impact Report Scope

This EIR examines potential short-term and long-term impacts of the Project. These impacts were determined through a rigorous process mandated by CEQA in which existing conditions are compared and contrasted with conditions that would exist once the Project was implemented. The significance of each identified impact was determined primarily using either City *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide: Your Resource for Preparing CEQA Analyses in Los Angeles* (*Thresholds Guide*), CEQA Guidelines and/or by use of applicable criteria approved by regulatory agencies (e.g. SCAQMD).

EIRs determine the significance of impacts by measuring or comparing the difference between "baseline conditions" and conditions that would occur with the development of the project. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(a), the existing physical conditions of a site "will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a Lead Agency determines whether an impact is significant." The purpose of establishing a baseline is to ensure that the evaluation of impacts compares what will happen if the project is built with what will happen if the site is left alone. The situation presented by this Project is somewhat different because the Project applicant already has been issued a CUP by the City and has a vested right to operate a facility at the site. The project did not require a state-mandated permit for its recycling activity when the CUP was approved by the City.

The proposition that a lead agency may sometimes choose a baseline other than existing physical conditions is implicit in the *Guidelines* statement that existing physical conditions are "normally" the baseline. And indeed, in special situations, lead agencies have used and courts have upheld the use of, other baselines. In particular, where projects have undergone earlier, final, CEQA review and involve permits that have already been issued or rights that have vested at the time the new project is considered, the "actual physical environment includes that which… [the applicant] has a legal right to build under permits that have already been issued." *Benton v. Board of Supervisors*, 226 C.A.3d 1467, at 1477, fn. 10 (1991). Similar conclusions were reached in *Temecula Band of Liuiseno Mission Indians v. Rancho California Water District*, 43 C.A. 4th 425 (1996) and *Fairview Neighbors v. County of Ventura*, 70 C.A. 4th 238 (1999).

To be comprehensive and thoroughly analyze important impacts from the project this EIR uses two baselines. For each environmental impact topic (such as air quality and noise), the discussion of the environmental setting discusses project impacts in terms of:

- Conditions related to processing 400 tpd of C&D as now occurs on the site. This baseline is referred to as the 400-tpd baseline throughout this EIR.
- The other baseline is referred to as the 1,500-tpd baseline. This baseline characterizes development in accordance with the project's existing entitlements and the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) approved to allow for this throughput in 1999.

The discussion of environmental impacts identifies impacts and mitigation measures associated with measuring the Project against both baselines.

The EIR also presents alternatives to the Project, including the "No Project" alternative, and a qualitative assessment of the impacts that would be associated with the implementation of each. Finally, the cumulative impacts of the Project when added to other local proposed or approved projects were also evaluated. Cumulative impacts are assessed using both methodologies approved in the *CEQA Regulations*, using a list of proposed and recently approved projects obtained from the City and using applicable sections of Sun Valley La Tuna Canyon Community Plan.

Notice of Preparation

On March 13, 2007, the EAD distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) describing the Project for review by affected state, county, and city agencies, utility providers, interested organizations, and the general public. In addition to obtaining written comments on the NOP, a public scoping meeting was held on April 4, 2007. The meeting provided an opportunity for affected public agencies and the public to express concerns about the project and issues that should be addressed in the project EIR. All comments (written, e-mail, and verbal) were considered as part of preparation of this EIR.

Summary of Project Impacts

The significance of each impact resulting from implementation of the Project has been determined according to the City's *Thresholds Guide*, CEQA thresholds or thresholds of applicable regulatory agencies. The EIR identifies the following significant, unavoidable impacts which cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level:

- When measured against the 400-tpd baseline, the project results in significant, unavoidable NO_x and VOC emissions. Using this baseline, the project would also have a potentially significant cumulative impact on ozone concentrations due to VOC and NO_x emissions.
- When measured against the 400-tpd baseline, the incremental increase in diesel particulate emissions would be expected to have a cumulative impact to air quality.

The rest of the Project impacts have been found to be mitigable to acceptable levels, adverse but less than significant, or they have been identified as beneficial impacts. Table ES-1 (Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures), provided at the end of this section, presents a summary of the environmental impacts that would result from the proposed Project. It is organized to correspond with the environmental issues discussed in Section 3.0 Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.

Tables ES-1 is arranged in five columns: (1) each impact is identified using the same impact number used in Section 3 of the EIR, (2) each impact is described, (3) whether or not the impact is significant prior to mitigation is noted; (4) mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce the level of impacts are listed; and (5) the level of significance after implementation of mitigation measures is noted. Where no mitigation is required, it is noted in the table.

Summary of Project Alternatives

Project alternatives were selected to mitigate significant impacts identified in the analysis of environmental impacts. The following alternatives were evaluated in Section 4 of the EIR:

No Project Alternative

CEQA requires that the No-Project alternative be evaluated in all EIRs. Since the project now operates in accordance with a CUP, the no project alternative is the level at which the facility can operate without obtaining a new discretionary impact that require environmental review under CEQA. Under, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 5.9, Section 17383.5 of the Public Resources Code (PRC) the facility could be classified as a Medium-Volume Construction and Demolition and Inerts Processing Facility if the throughput does not exceed 175 tons per day. Accordingly, the no-project alternative is defined as a 175-tpd C&D processing operation.

1,500-tpd MSW Alternative

As indicated above, the project will result in significant unavoidable air quality impacts when compared to the 400-tpd baseline. When compared to the 1,500-tpd baseline the analysis shows that air quality impacts are less than significant because the baseline involves the use of heavy duty vehicles which characterize C&D hauling operations which are replaced with medium-duty vehicles which are typically used in the collection of MSW. Medium duty vehicles typically carry 10 tons per load while the C&D vehicles average 5 tons per load. Accordingly, each MSW vehicle trip eliminates two C&D trips. Since emissions are also a function of vehicle horsepower, the smaller MSW vehicles have lower emission factors than heavy-duty C&D vehicles.

Environmentally Superior Alternative

As discussed in Section 4, the No-Project alternative may result in more emissions than the project because it would result in more long-distance MSW trips traveling greater distances to local landfills. The No Project alternative is, therefore, not considered environmentally superior to the project.

The 1,500-tpd MSW alternative may also result in increased emissions compared to the project as C&D trips are diverted to other existing facilities. Because this alternative does not reduce significant unavoidable project impacts and is not consistent with the project objective to provide both C&D and MSW diversion facilities, this alternative is not considered environmentally superior to the project.

TABLE ES-1
Summary Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact	Impact Summary	Significant	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
VIS-1	During construction, direct lines of sight of equipment will be obstructed by intervening land uses, topography, and vegetation	No	No mitigation required	No Impact
VIS-2	The site is not visible from scenic roadways identified in the San Gabriel/Verdugo Mountains Scenic Preservation Specific Plan area.	No	No mitigation required	No Impact
VIS-3	Project views from north of the site are limited by mature vegetation that will remain with the project. Views from east limited by concrete block wall on project site. Project operations now visible will be indoors with the project.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
VIS-4	Under existing conditions and with the project, lighting limited to poles or wall-mounted security lighting focused downwards.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
AQ-1	Short-term Emissions from Construction would be less than SCAQMD regional and localized significance threshold.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
AQ-2	Diesel fueled collection and transfer trucks utilizing the Sun Valley MRF would be required to comply with mobile source control measures in the SCAQMD's 2007 Air Quality Management Plan.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
AQ-3	Based on results from the traffic study, the project would not significantly increase traffic at intersections near the project site. In addition, the project would not change the distance between the source of vehicle emissions and receptor locations.	No	No mitigation required.	Less than significant
AQ-4	Odors generated by receipt of MSW for the project would be less than significant because waste processed in building with forced air ventilation, filtration and misting system to mask odors. Also, operator required to submit Odor Management Plan for review and approval of LEA under SCAQMD Rule 410.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant

TABLE ES-1
Summary Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact	Impact Summary	Significant	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
AQ-5	Under the 400-tpd Baseline, Long-term Emissions of CO, SO_X, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ will be less than SCAQMD localized and regional significance thresholds.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
AQ-6	Under the 400-tpd Baseline, Long-term Emissions of VOC and NO_X will exceed SCAQMD regional significance thresholds.	Yes	• Implement feasible NO_X emission reduction technologies, such as the Cleaire filter, to determine whether this would be an option for diesel-fueled trucks. • Maintain mobile equipment in tune with the manufacturer's specifications. • Maintain diesel-fueled collection and transfer trucks in tune with the manufacturer's specifications. • To the extent feasible, utilize alternative-fueled or electric mobile equipment.	Significant and unavoidable
AQ-7	Under the 400-tpd Baseline, increased diesel particulates are less than significant. Implementation of mitigation measures listed under AQ-6 would further reduce these emissions. However, with cumulative growth and development, increased diesel particulate emissions would be significant and unavoidable.	No	The mitigation measures listed under Impact AQ-6 would apply to Impact AQ-7. No mitigation measures are needed for diesel particulate matter.	Project impacts are less than significant. Cumulative impacts are significant and unavoidable.
AQ-8	Under the 1,500-tpd Baseline, Long-term Emissions of CO, NO_X, VOC, SOX, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ would be less than under existing conditions and therefore less than SCAQMD localized and regional significance thresholds.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant

TABLE ES-1
Summary Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact	Impact Summary	Significant	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
AQ-9	Under the 1,500-tpd Baseline, Sensitive Receptors would be exposed to a net decrease in diesel particulate emissions that would be less than significant.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
NOI-1	Construction noise from the project site would increase ambient noise by approximately 2.5 dBA CNEL, less than the significance threshold of 5 dBA.	No	Construction contracts shall specify that all equipment must be equipped with mufflers and other applicable noise attenuation devices. Construction shall be restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, and prohibited at anytime on Sunday or a Federal holiday.	Less than significant
NOI-2	With the project, waste processing operations would occur indoors. With the 400-tpd baseline, receptor locations would experience a slight increase in noise but less than would be audible (3 dBA). Under the 1,500-tpd baseline, ambient noise at receptor locations would be slightly less than under existing conditions.	No	No mitigation required	less than significant
NOI-3	Traffic Noise	No	No mitigation measures are necessary because differences in traffic noise levels would not be detectable to people residing in areas near roadways traveled by Project traffic.	less than significant
POP-1	Under the 400-tpd baseline employment at the project site would increase from 32 approximately 65. Under the 1,500-tpd baseline, employment at the site would increase from 62 to 65. It is anticipated that project jobs would be taken by the existing labor force. The project is not expected to attract people from outside the local labor force.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant

TABLE ES-1
Summary Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact	Impact Summary	Significant	Mitigation Measure Summary	Residual Impact
POP-2	Because the project will not induce employment growth, the project will also not increase the demand for housing near the project site.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
WAT-1	During construction, the project will comply with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Requirements to prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to include best management practices to limit surface runoff during construction.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
WAT-2	Under both baselines, the project is not anticipated to change the site topography or increase the amount of impermeable surface to result in increased surface runoff.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
WAT-3	Under both baselines, waste processing operations will be moved indoors reducing potential contact between waste and rainwater. This should reduce loadings of total suspended solids (TSS) and total dissolved solids (TDS) in runoff. Indoor operations will also make it easier to control leakage of fuel, oil, grease from equipment operating at the site.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
TR-1	Under the 400-tpd baseline, with or without the Bradley project, the project does not result in a significant impact at any of the ten intersections assessed in the traffic study.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
TR-2	Under the 1,500-tpd C&D Baseline, the project results in less trips than under existing conditions. With or without the Bradley project, the project impact is less than significant.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant
TR-3	The Congestion Management Plan Impact of the project is less than significant because the project does not add more than 50 peak trips at the nearest CMP arterial monitoring intersection or 150 peak trips at a CMP monitoring location.	No	No mitigation required	Less than significant