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May 7, 2026

Los Angeles City Council  
c/o Office of the City Clerk  
City Hall, Room 395  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

**RESPONSE TO THE WESTERN STATES REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS  
COMMENT LETTER FOR THE BLOC PROJECT, 700 SOUTH FLOWER STREET, 700 WEST  
7<sup>TH</sup> STREET, AND 711 SOUTH HOPE STREET: CF 25-0778, S1, AND S2**

On February 11, 2025, the Deputy Advisory Agency certified The Bloc Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and approved Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 83482-CN-HCA. No appeal was filed. On May 15, 2025, the City Planning Commission (CPC) recommended approval of the requested Transfer of Floor Area Rights, establishment of The Bloc Sign District, and a Development Agreement, and approved the Site Plan Review. No appeal was filed.

On August 26, 2025, Jeremy Herwitt of the Mitchell M. Tsai Law Firm, representing the Western States Regional Council of Carpenters (WSRCC), submitted a comment letter to the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee to Council File No. 25-0778, but citing all three Council File Nos listed above (WRSCC Letter). This letter contained many of the same comments made in a comment letter previously submitted by the Mitchell M. Tsai Law Firm in response to the Draft EIR for The Bloc Project (DEIR Comment Letter), those of which were responded to, in detail, on pages 19-54 of the Final EIR.

Responses to new comments that were not previously addressed in The Bloc Final EIR have been prepared and are attached, confirming that no new substantial evidence was presented or that the City has erred in its actions relative to the EIR and associated entitlements, nor was any new information presented to dispute the Findings of the EIR, or the CPC, PLUM Committee, or City Council's actions on this matter.

PLUM Committee  
CF 25-0778, -S1, -S2  
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Sincerely,

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
Director of Planning

*Kathleen King*

Kathleen King  
City Planner

VPB:LW:MZ:MM

Enclosures

Department of City Planning's Response to WRSCC Letter

# **Responses to Comments Submitted For August 26, 2025 PLUM Meeting**

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At the August 26, 2025 PLUM meeting, Jeremy Herwitt of the Mitchell M. Tsai Law Firm, representing the Western States Regional Council of Carpenters (the “WSRCC”), submitted a comment letter which repeats many of the same comments made in the May 13, 2024 comment letter submitted by the Mitchell M. Tsai Law Firm in response to the Draft EIR for The Bloc Project (“Project”) and responded to as Letter No. 2 of the Final EIR for the Project.

In a Letter of Determination dated February 11, 2025, the City’s Deputy Advisory Agency (DAA) certified the Final EIR, adopted the environmental findings prepared for the Project as well as a Statement of Overriding Considerations and a Mitigation Monitoring Program, and approved the Project’s Vesting Tentative Tract Map. No appeal was filed for the certification of the EIR or any other actions of the DAA. A Notice of Determination was filed on February 25, 2025 with the Los Angeles County Clerk.

The WSRCC letter comments on the analysis in the previously certified EIR, and on the provisions of certain additional entitlement applications that were before the PLUM Committee at its meeting on August 26, 2025, which rely upon the previously certified EIR.

CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387) allow the City to rely on a previously certified EIR unless a subsequent or supplemental EIR is required pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines 15162. As provided in CEQA Guideline 15162, no supplemental or subsequent EIR is required unless a lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record, that major revisions to the EIR are necessary due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effect resulting from changes to the project, changes to circumstances, or the existence of new information which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified. The WSRCC does not assert that any of the conditions described in CEQA Guideline Section 15162 calling for the preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR have occurred, and none have. Accordingly, there is no basis for the preparation of a supplemental or subsequent EIR.

Because WSRCC’s CEQA comments do not relate to the applicable standard of review for reliance on a previously certified EIR, no response is necessary. Nonetheless, responses to comments not included in the commentor’s Draft EIR comment letter are provided below, it should be noted that responses to the WSRCC’s CEQA comments are for informational purposes.

**Comment No. 0-1**

**I. THE CITY FAILED TO PROVIDE REQUIRED NOTICE OF ITS AUGUST 26, 2025, PLUM HEARING FOR THE PROJECT**

As a preliminary matter, WSRCC requests that the City continue its scheduled August 26, 2025, PLUM Committee hearing to a later date as the City did not properly notice WSRCC or our office of this hearing.

Failure to properly notice a hearing on a Project waives the City's defense as to standing or exhaustion pursuant to Public Resources Code ("PRC") § 2177(e).

The Ralph M. Brown Act, Government Code ("Gov't Code") §§ 54950–54963 ("Brown Act"), and specifically section 54953(a) requires meetings of legislative bodies of public agencies to be open and public. Subject to a limited number of exceptions, meetings that are regulated by the Brown Act must be conducted in public and afford the public the opportunity to speak on every item on the agenda, as well as any item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body. Gov't Codes §§ 54953(a), 54954.3(a). Additionally, notice of public hearings regarding planning and zoning decisions must be mailed or delivered at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing to any person who has filed a written request for notice. Gov't Code § 65092(a).

Similarly, PRC § 21092.2 requires that notice be provided to any person who has submitted a request in writing.

On August 18, 2022, and February 6, 2023, our Firm submitted Public Records Act Requests concerning the Project, of which the City acknowledged receipt, that included requests that our Firm be added to the Advanced Notice List for the Project pursuant to PRC §§ 21092.2 and 21167(f) and Gov't Code § 65092. On May 13, 2024, our Firm also submitted written comments concerning the DEIR for the Project, wherein, WSRCC provided reasons why the Project violated CEQA, among other infractions. Additionally, the referenced DEIR comment letter requested again that the City provide notices related to the Project pursuant to PRC §§ 21092.2 and 21167(f) and Gov't Code § 65092. Further still, the City provided our Office with written confirmation on January 3, 2025, regarding our Firm's emails being updated on the Advanced Notice List for the Project, and our Office's contact information is also listed on the Mailing List attached to the Project's July 11, 2025 Planning Department Transmittal Reports associated with today's PLUM Committee hearing.

However, despite having submitted comments on the DEIR, multiple express requests to notify WSRCC and our office regarding the Project and hearings thereon, and the unequivocal listing our Firm's contact information on the Project's Notice List, the City violated the Brown Act and CEQA by failing to send out adequate notice to our Firm and WSRCC regarding today's August 26, 2025 PLUM Committee hearing. In that regard,

neither WSRCC nor our office received any notice of the Project's hearing at this meeting through any medium.

Thus, because the City failed to notify WSRCC or our office of the upcoming PLUM Committee hearing, WSRCC requests the City reschedule the hearing until we have adequate opportunity to be heard in advance of a properly noticed meeting of which we have been made aware.

**Response to Comment No. 0-1**

Contrary to the commenter's statements, the City has met all public hearing noticing requirements for The Bloc Project as well as all required CEQA notices regarding preparation and certification of the EIR. In compliance with LAMC requirements, all interested parties, including the commenter, were notified of the public hearing held for The Bloc Project on January 29, 2025. In accordance with CEQA, the City notified all interested parties, of the Project's Notice of Preparation and Notice of Availability.

Further, the August 26, 2025 PLUM Committee Meeting was agendized in compliance with the Brown Act and included the Project's transfer of floor area request, a proposed ordinance for the establishment of The Bloc Sign District, and a proposed ordinance authorizing the execution of a Development Agreement. Contrary to the commenter's assertions, the legal requirements for the noticing of the PLUM meeting did not require a mailing of the notice to interested parties, such as the commenter. Furthermore, a California Public Records Act (PRA) request does not require jurisdictions to proactively mail, email, or send notices of every new meeting or document created for a project. A PRA request is intended for the inspection or copying of existing, identifiable records in the possession of an agency at the time of the request.

Lastly, it should be noted that the commenter contacted City staff on Monday, August 25, 2025 inquiring about notification for the PLUM Committee Meeting scheduled for August 26, 2025, at which time staff responded that the Project was noticed in compliance with the Brown Act.

**Comment No. 0-2**

**IV. THE CITY SHOULD EXERCISE ITS AUTHORITY IN NEGOTIATING THE PROJECT'S DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY BENEFITS, ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION, AND PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS**

Development agreements are a tool for municipalities to capture and receive community benefits while granting project proponents certainty for project entitlements.<sup>8</sup> The City should exercise its lawful authority to enter into a Development Agreement with the Project applicant to secure additional community benefits (including local hire and apprenticeship requirements to spur local economic development) and additional environmental mitigation

for the impacted community as well as project revisions that ameliorate potential environmental impacts consistent with this comment letter.

<sup>8</sup> Hanson Hom, Vivian Kahn, and Matt Taecker (2017) Best Practices for Implementing a Community Benefits Program California Planning Roundtable, available at [https://cproundtable.org/static/media/uploads/infill/community\\_benefits\\_final\\_07152017.docx.pdf](https://cproundtable.org/static/media/uploads/infill/community_benefits_final_07152017.docx.pdf)

### **Response to Comment No. 0-2**

This comment expresses the commenter's opinion that the Project's Development Agreement should include additional community benefits, including local hire and apprenticeship requirements, as well as environmental mitigation and project revisions that reduce potential environmental impacts. There is no legal requirement for the Project to provide additional community benefits, including local hire or apprenticeship requirements. Additionally, in accordance with CEQA, all feasible mitigation measures have been identified in the previously certified EIR and will be implemented as part of the Project, to reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

### **Comment No. 0-3**

#### **C. The EIR Improperly Omitted Critical Information in Its Analyses of the Project's Cumulative Impacts**

An EIR must discuss a cumulative impact if the project's incremental effect combined with the effects of other projects is "cumulatively considerable." 14 C.C.R. §15130(a). This determination is based on an assessment of the project's incremental effects "viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects." 14 C.C.R. §15065(a)(3)(emphasis added); *Banning Ranch Conservancy v City of Newport Beach* (2012) 211 CA4th 1209, 1228. See also 14 C.C.R. §15355(b).

The CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR implement the provisions of Pub. Res. Code §21083(6)(2), which specifies that the Guidelines must include criteria requiring public agencies to find that a project may have a significant effect on the environment if its possible effects "are individually limited but cumulatively considerable."

The purpose of the cumulative impacts analysis is to avoid considering projects in a vacuum, because failure to consider cumulative harm may risk environmental disaster. *Whitman v. Board of Supervisors* (1979) 88 Cal.App.3d 397, 408 (citing *Natural Resources Defense Council v. Callaway* (2d Cir 1975) 524 F2d 79). Without this analysis, piecemeal approval of several projects with related impacts could lead to severe environmental harm. *Golden Door Props., LLC v. County of San Diego* (2020) 50 Cal.App.5th 467, 527; *San Joaquin Raptor/Wildlife Rescue Ctr. v. County of Stanislaus* (1994) 27 Cal.App.4th 713, 720; *Las Virgenes Homeowners Fed'n v County of Los Angeles* (1986) 177 Cal.App.3d 300, 306. An adequate analysis of cumulative impacts is particularly important when another related

project might significantly worsen the project's adverse environmental impacts. *Friends of the Eel River v. Sonoma County Water Agency* (2003) 108 CA4th 859.

CEQA Guidelines § 15130(b)(1) provides that an EIR's discussion of cumulative impacts "should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impacts to which the identified other projects contribute ...." The City has failed to meet and abide by this standard in deeming the nearby related projects are outside the scope of the Project's environmental baseline. Put another way, it was and is patently **unreasonable** for the City to exclude other nearby projects from the EIR's discussion of the Project's cumulative impacts, particularly given that some of these adjacent projects have been granted final approval by the City prior to the City's final approval of the Project at issue here. Indeed, similar to the fact that the DEIR relied on various studies purporting to reflect the environmental setting of the Project site that were prepared and/ or completed after the Project's NOP, the City was also required to fully consider those other projects known to the City prior to the publication of the DEIR and that are reasonably likely to bear upon the cumulative impacts associated with the Project.

CEQA mandates that a project's impacts be evaluated in a holistic context, including impacts from other nearby projects. While the Project's FEIR acknowledged other "Related Projects," it contained little to no analysis on their independent impacts, and therefore little to no analysis on any potential cumulative impacts as required by CEQA. (FEIR, pp. III-5–7). Specifically, the FEIR acknowledged several other "Related Projects" in the vicinity of the Project site, including other high-scale development projects, such as the Embassy Tower, Metropolis Mixed-Use, and Olympic Tower projects, among others. (FEIR, p. III-8, Table III-1). However, beyond identifying and naming these projects, the FEIR contained scarcely any analysis on their potential impacts. Thus, the FEIR contained insufficient evidence regarding the Project's cumulative impacts, especially in light of other nearby projects. Without an adequate analysis of cumulative impacts as required by CEQA, the public's ability to understand and meaningfully address such impacts has been significantly undermined. Thus, the Project's EIR should be revised and recirculated to adequately address the Project's cumulative impacts, with careful regard and analysis of impacts stemming from other nearby projects.

Further, despite the wide scope of significant impacts presented by the Project both individually and cumulatively, the EIR contained no reference to or consideration whatsoever of nearby past development projects (as required by 14 C.C.R. §15065(a)(3)) that have already been completed. Indeed, Table III-1 of the FEIR lists the projects that the EIR supposedly considered, in conjunction with the proposed Project, as part of its cumulative impacts analysis. However, the EIR's Related Projects list appears to omit a number of previously completed large-scale projects within the applicable radius for the Project, and their associated environmental impacts.

These significant omissions taint and effectively undermine the validity of much of the cumulative impacts analysis set forth in the Project's EIR. Indeed, the failure to consider

these previously completed, significant, large-scale development projects in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Project calls into question the EIR's cumulative impacts analysis in various impact categories. Thus, PLUM should require that the EIR now be revised with respect to each of the foregoing impact categories (and potentially others) to incorporate any significant past projects within the applicable cumulative projects radius in its cumulative impacts analysis. Absent such revision, the EIR in its current form violates CEQA, such that further approval of the Project's entitlements conditioned on the purported adequacy of the Project's EIR will also be violated CEQA.

### **Response to Comment No. 0-3**

The analysis of cumulative impacts within the EIR fully complied with CEQA, including CEQA Guidelines Sections 15130, 15355 and 15065. The EIR's cumulative impact analyses includes past, present, and probable future projects in the Project vicinity based on the information available at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Environmental Impact Report was published in December 2022. While a list of general related projects was included on page III-8 in Table 1 of Section III, Environmental Setting, of the Draft EIR, the cumulative analysis for each environmental topic is more nuanced. This comment ignores the established methodology wherein the geographic scope of a cumulative impact is tailored to the specific nature of the resource being analyzed. The EIR's cumulative analysis appropriately scales the geographic scope to the specific physical characteristics of each environmental resource, rather than applying a singular, arbitrary radius. For instance, air quality impacts are evaluated on a regional air basin level, while noise and vibration analyses are strictly localized to the immediate vicinity where physical effects could actually overlap. By scaling the cumulative study area to the physical reality of each environmental topic, the EIR provides a more accurate and scientifically robust assessment than a singular, arbitrary radius would allow.

With regard to nearby past projects, such projects that have been constructed were already accounted for in the analysis of existing conditions, and projects that have been approved but have not yet been constructed were accounted for in the related projects list. In addition, while this comment asserts that certain related projects were excluded, it does not identify any specific project that was excluded.

. While this comment asserts that the analysis of cumulative impacts within the Draft EIR was inadequate and had been prepared "in a vacuum", no substantial evidence has been provided to support these statements. Rather, the cumulative analysis fully complied with CEQA.

In addition, the case law referred to as part of this comment is not applicable to the Project.

**Comment No. 0-4****D. The EIR Failed to Adequately Analyze the Project's Consistency with the City's General Plan and Housing Element**

General plan consistency is “the linchpin of California’s land use and development laws; it is the principle which infused the concept of planned growth with the force of law.” See *Debottari v. Norco City Council* (1985) 171 Cal.App.3d 1204, 1213.

State law mandates two levels of consistency. First, a general plan must be internally or “horizontally” consistent: its elements must “comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency.” See Gov. Code § 65300.5; *Sierra Club v. Bd. of Supervisors* (1981) 126 Cal.App.3d 698, 704. A general plan amendment thus may not be internally inconsistent, nor may it cause the general plan as a whole to become internally inconsistent. See *DeVita*, 9 Cal.4th at 796 fn. 12. In addition, the Planning & Zoning Law requires “vertical” consistency, meaning that zoning ordinances and other land-use decisions also must be consistent with the general plan. See Gov. Code § 65860(a)(2) [land uses authorized by zoning ordinance must be “compatible with the objectives, policies, general land uses, and programs specified in the [general] plan.”]; see also *Neighborhood Action Group v. County of Calaveras* (1984) 156 Cal.App.3d 1176, 1184. A zoning ordinance that conflicts with the general plan or impedes the achievement of its policies is invalid and cannot be given effect. See *Leshner*, 52 Cal.3d at 544. Finally, the Planning & Zoning Law requires that all subordinate land-use decisions, including conditional use permits, be consistent with the general plan. See Gov. Code § 65860(a)(2); *Neighborhood Action Group*, 156 Cal.App.3d at 1184. A project cannot be found consistent with a general plan if it conflicts with a general plan policy that is “fundamental, mandatory, and clear,” regardless of whether it is consistent with other general plan policies. See *Endangered Habitats League v. County of Orange* (2005) 131 Cal.App.4th 777, 782-83; *Families Unafraid to Uphold Rural El Dorado County v. Bd of Supervisors* (1998) 62 Cal.App.4th 1332, 1341-42 (“FUTURE”). Moreover, even in the absence of such direct conflict, an ordinance or development project may not be approved if it interferes with or frustrates the general plan’s policies and objectives. See *Napa Citizens*, 91 Cal.App.4th at 378–79; see also *Leshner*, 52 Cal.3d at 544 (zoning ordinance restricting development conflicted with growth-oriented policies of the general plan).

Here, the EIR does not sufficiently discuss or analyze the Project’s impacts with respect to potential conflicts with various land use plans, including the City’s General Plan and Housing Element. The EIR must include this analysis and provide a cumulative analysis discussion of projects approved since General Plan adoption and projects “in the pipeline” to determine if the project will exceed the General Plan buildout scenarios.

Instead, the EIR plainly asserts, without demonstrating, that the Project is consistent with the relevant land use plans. For instance, the Department of City Planning Recommendation Report for the April 10, 2025 City Planning Commission hearing on the Project

(“**Recommendation Report**”; Attachment to the July 11, 2025, Planning Department Transmittal Reports for the Project) makes only conclusory statements regarding the Project’s purported “conformance” and “consistency” with land use plans, but without providing much underlying support or analysis that would enable the public to verify the veracity of these claims. Instead, the Recommendation Report, like the EIR, merely identifies the land use plans or relevant portions with which the Project is purportedly in compliance, but without demonstrating how the Project actually achieves such compliance, as required by the CEQA Guidelines. For example, regarding the “General Plan,” the Recommendation Report concludes that the “project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan, applicable community plan, and any applicable specific plan.” (Recommendation Report, p. F-4). The Report then purports to “describe” how the Project is consistent with those land use plans by merely listing and reciting language from those plans, including verbatim “goals” and “objectives” found in those plans. (Recommendation Report, pp. F-5 - 15). Where the Recommendation Report does provide a description, it only restates Project descriptions or specifications that are already known without providing any critical additional analysis.

Overall, the City offers no evidence or data whatsoever in support of these significant conclusions. Simply put, more evidence is required to demonstrate the Project’s required consistency with the City’s long range land use planning efforts as related to local population, employment, and anticipated future residential development.

Accordingly, WSRCC asserts that the EIR has failed to adequately analyze the Project’s impacts (both individual and cumulative) with respect to its consistency with the City’s General Plan and Housing Element, and PLUM should require that the EIR now be revised and recirculated to contain a detailed analysis of these issues. Absent provision of proper analysis, the public and the City’s decisionmakers have not been properly informed regarding the Project’s potential impacts that might otherwise run afoul of the City’s General Plan. As such, the Project cannot be approved by the City until the issues with the General Plan consistency analysis in the EIR have been properly resolved.

#### **Response to Comment No. 0-4**

Contrary to this comment, the Recommendation Report provided sufficient detail to demonstrate that the Project is consistent with applicable land use plans. This comment cites a summary statement on page F-4 of the Recommendation Report that is supported by the subsequent analysis on pages F-4 through F-23. In addition, this comment does not provide any substantial evidence to support the assertion of a lack of analysis. To the contrary, the Recommendation Report specifically listed the project features that would support the specific land use policies, goals, and objectives.

In addition, an even more detailed analysis of the Project’s consistency with the City’s General Plan, including the Housing Element, is provided in Section IV.E, Land Use and Planning, of the Draft EIR (refer to pages IV.E-22 through 34 therein), and a detailed analysis

of consistency with each applicable land use policy, goal and objective is included in Appendix E of the Draft EIR (refer to pages 7 to 43 therein). As also concluded in the Draft EIR, the Project would have less than significant impacts related to conflicts with land use plans, policies and regulations, and, therefore, no mitigation is required. Specifically, as documented by the analysis therein, the Project would not conflict with any of the 110 policies, goals and objectives within the City's land use plans that are applicable to the Project.

With regard to cumulative land use impacts, refer to Draft EIR pages IV.E-45 through IV.E-46 regarding the less than significant cumulative land use impacts associated with development of the Project and the related Projects. With regard to population and growth impacts associated with the Project and related projects, refer to page II-7 of the Initial Study included as attachment A to the Draft EIR as well as pages VI-12 through VI-13 Section VII, Other CEQA Considerations of the Draft EIR regarding how the housing and population generated by the Project would be well within SCAG growth forecasts. It is also important to note that the Project Site is located in a designated Transit Priority Area where housing is encouraged by both local and state policies.