III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. OVERVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This section provides a brief overview of the project site’s regional and local setting. Additional descriptions of the environmental setting as it relates to each of the environmental issues analyzed in this EIR are included in the environmental setting discussions contained within Sections IV.A through IV.D. Also provided in this section is a list of related projects, which is used as the basis for the discussion of cumulative impacts in Section IV., Environmental Impact Analysis.

Regional Setting

The project site is located in the Bay Area region within the City of Berkeley (see Figures III-1 and III-2). Regional access is provided by Interstate 580 (I-580) and Interstate 80 (I-80), which is located approximately one-half of a mile west of the site.

Local Setting

The project site is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Heinz Avenue and 9th Street. Photos of the project site are shown in Figures III-3 and III-4. The relatively-flat project site comprises two parcels equaling approximately 2.3 acres. This smaller parcel is currently occupied by Gardner Asphalt to process asphalt and store asphalt-processing materials and is developed with an asphalt storage/parking area and an 8,705-square foot (sf) warehouse structure. Previous uses of the parcel include single-family residential housing and a sand, gravel, and cement company. The larger 2.0-acre parcel has been primarily vacant since approximately 2001. This parcel is largely characterized as an open, weedy area occupied with one, small dilapidated shed. Gardner Asphalt currently uses a portion of the eastern side of the parcel for outdoor materials storage. Previous uses of the parcel include the Hawthorne School, the Heinz Corporation (used the former school as a warehouse), and a truck dispatching station. Most recently, the northwestern portion of the parcel along Heinz was used as an organic farm.

The project site is located in an area of West Berkeley that contains a mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses (refer to Figure III-5). Figure III-5 depicts the existing land use context, including generalized land uses, existing zoning, and businesses surrounding the project site. Photos of the surrounding area are shown in Figures III-6 and III-7. Two buildings used by the Wooden Duck furniture factory are located south of the project site on the west side of 9th Street, and Anthony Street (a one-way street) is located to the south of these buildings. Office uses are located on the west side of 9th Street south of Anthony Street and are separated from the street by a parking lot. A mixed-use development, which includes ground-floor retail/gallery space with artists’ lofts above, is proposed on the east side of 9th Street at the intersection with Ashby Avenue. The western boundary of the project site abuts the parking lot for Scharffen Berger Chocolate Maker, Fresenius Medical Care Dialysis Services of
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View 1: View to the south across the project site.

View 2: View to the east of shed structure on the project site.

View 3: View to the west across the project site towards the Scharffen Berger facility.
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View 1: View to the northwest of onsite warehouse use.

View 2: View to the east of warehouse use, and entrance to developed part of site.

View 3: View to the southwest of onsite warehouse use.
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Map of Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses

Legend:
- MU-R: Mixed Use Residential
- MM: Mixed Manufacturing
- CW: West Berkeley Commercial
- MU-LI: Mixed Use Light Industrial

Source: Kava Massih Architects, 2005

Figure III-5
Map of Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses
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View 1: View to the southeast of light industrial uses adjacent to the project site.

View 2: View to the east of medical office uses near the project site.

View 3: View to the northeast of retail uses near the project site.
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View 1: View to the southwest of mixed-commercial uses near the project site.

View 2: View to the east of northeast of the Ecole Bilingue de Berkeley near the project site.

View 3: View to the northeast of light industrial uses near the project site.
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Berkeley, and the Wooden Duck furniture store on 7th Street. The northern boundary of the project site abuts Heinz Avenue. Office uses are located across Heinz Avenue to the northwest of the site; Hustead’s Tow Yard and the offices of Kava Massih Architects are located directly north of the site; and the Ecole Bilingue de Berkeley is located to the northeast of the site. The eastern boundary of the project site abuts 9th Street. Across 9th Street to the east is the parking lot for the Orchard Supply Hardware, the John F. Kennedy Arts Annex and Gallery, and Dharma Publishing.

The Ecole Bilingue de Berkeley serves 400 students from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The school currently conducts a drop-off and pick-up operation that causes traffic congestion during two periods of the day: from approximately 8:00 AM to 8:35 AM and from approximately 3:00 PM to 3:45 PM. The operation involves cars queuing up along Heinz Avenue and then turning north onto 9th Street where there is a carpool lane for pick-up and drop-off. Drivers then exit the carpool lane back onto 9th Street and continue to their destination. Students also cross 9th Street during school hours to the playground located on the west side of the street. Although school traffic is concentrated during drop-off and pick-up hours, there are also traffic trips to the school for certain after-school programs that occur at other times. City staff is currently working with the school to address these issues.

The project site is located adjacent to the proposed 9th Street Bicycle Path, which is part of a proposed regional bicycle trail system that will connect the City of Berkeley to the City of Emeryville. The Bicycle Plan includes development of a bicycle path along 9th street from Heinz Avenue and the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way to Ashby Avenue.

The project site is currently designated as a “Manufacturing” area in the City’s General Plan Land Use Diagram and zoned as “Mixed-Use – Light Industrial (MU-LI)” on the Zoning Ordinance Map (refer to Figures III-8 and III-9). The site is adjacent to an area designated as “Avenue Commercial” and zoned “West Berkeley Commercial (C-W).”

**B. RELATED PROJECTS**

Section 15130 of the 2004 CEQA Guidelines stipulates that EIRs must consider the significant environmental effects of a proposed project as well as “cumulative impacts.” A cumulative impact is defined as an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts (CEQA Guidelines §15355). As stated in CEQA Guidelines §15130(a)(1), the cumulative impacts discussion in an EIR need not discuss impacts which do not result in part from the project evaluated in the EIR. Cumulative impacts may be analyzed by considering a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts [CEQA Guidelines §15130(b)(1)(A)].

All projects that are proposed (i.e., with pending applications), recently approved, under construction, or reasonably foreseeable that could produce a cumulative impact on the local environment when considered
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in conjunction with a proposed project are required to be evaluated in an EIR. These projects can include, if necessary, projects outside of the control of the lead agency. If a concise list of related projects is not available, cumulative impacts may be analyzed using the regional or area-wide growth projections contained in an adopted or certified General Plan or related planning document.

In this EIR, cumulative impact analyses are provided for each environmental issue discussed in Section IV., Environmental Impact Analysis, and can be found in each respective subsection (e.g., Hydrology & Water Quality, Transportation/Traffic, etc.). The cumulative analysis in Section IV.D, Transportation/Traffic, considers future traffic conditions as affected by the proposed project and other reasonably-foreseeable projects in the cities of Berkeley and Emeryville. A list of all these assumed projects is included in Appendix III of this EIR. Table III-1 lists all reasonably-foreseeable projects within the City of Berkeley. In total, six projects have been identified, including residential, retail, and laboratory land uses.

### Table III-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jubilee Village</td>
<td>San Pablo, north of Ashby</td>
<td>Residential, Retail</td>
<td>64 units 1,720 sf</td>
<td>Proposed: Project returned to applicant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3132 Martin Luther King</td>
<td>Martin Luther King/Adeline</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>42 units</td>
<td>Proposed: Pending ZAB action in fall 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001 Ashby</td>
<td>Ashby/9th</td>
<td>Residential, Retail</td>
<td>55 units 6,590 sf</td>
<td>Approved 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garr Building</td>
<td>Heinz/5th</td>
<td>Laboratory</td>
<td>80,000 sf</td>
<td>Proposed: Project application is incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700 University</td>
<td>700 University</td>
<td>Residential, Retail</td>
<td>212 units 20,000 sf</td>
<td>Proposed: Project application is incomplete; pending ZAB action in early 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: City of Berkeley, 2005.*

### C. PROJECT APPLICANT

Berkeley Bowl Produce, Inc.
2020 Oregon Street
Berkeley, CA 94703
D. PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed project includes demolition of the existing 8,575-sf structure, site preparation, and development of a full-service grocery marketplace (i.e., the Berkeley Bowl), including a general grocery store, ancillary office, storage, adjacent prepared food service area, a community room, and above- and below-ground parking (refer to Figures III-10, III-11, and III-12). Two buildings would be developed on the project site to house the proposed uses: Building 1 is an 83,900-sf grocery marketplace building that would include retail, administrative offices, associated storage space, and an underground parking garage, and Building 2 is a 7,070-sf food services building that would include limited seating and a community room.

Both buildings would be two stories and 40 feet in height. The marketplace in Building 1 would have two levels with 51,065 sf of retail space on the ground and second floors and 28,805 sf of ancillary storage space and 4,120 sf of office space on the second floor. In Building 2, the ground floor would house a 3,670-sf prepared-food area offering food to go and limited seating. On the second floor of Building 2, the community room would provide 3,400 sf of assembly space to be used periodically for meetings or events by the Berkeley Bowl and members of the community. An approximately 45-foot-wide portico would create a pedestrian plaza between the grocery marketplace and the prepared-food area.

The proposed hours of operation for the marketplace would be 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday through Saturday, and 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Sunday.

Access, Parking, & Circulation

Parking would be provided in both the 99-space underground parking garage beneath Building 1 and a 102-space surface parking lot. Primary vehicle access to the project site would be from 9th Street via Ashby Avenue with additional site access from 9th Street via Heinz Avenue. Additionally, the project includes installation of a controlled traffic signal and pedestrian cross-walk at the Heinz Avenue/San Pablo Avenue intersection. The proposed on-site circulation and delivery truck access are shown in Figures III-13 and III-14, respectively.

The applicant of the proposed project has set aside an approximately 16-foot-wide area for use as a bicycle path to connect Heinz Avenue to Ashby Avenue via 9th Street. Similar to the original Berkeley Bowl, the proposed project is expected to be a bicycle destination, and therefore, the project includes 66 bicycle parking spaces near the proposed bicycle path.

Proposed Land Use Designations & Zoning

The project’s proposed uses, hours of operation, and design conform to the Zoning Ordinance requirements applicable to the proposed C-W and MU-LI zoning. The project also includes a proposed amendment to the General Plan Land Use Diagram and the Zoning Ordinance Map to designate a
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Source: Kava Massih Architects, 2005

Figure III-14
Delivery Truck Access
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1.9-acre portion of the site as “Avenue Commercial” and rezone the same 1.9-acre portion as C-W. The portion of the site that is warehouse would remain designated MU-LI but would require a zoning ordinance text amendment to allow the proposed storage area to serve both the existing and proposed Berkeley Bowl. The proposed land use designation and zoning are shown in Figures III-15 and III-16.

**Landscaping**

The proposed project includes landscaping the site with a variety of drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, and grasses. The proposed landscaping is shown in Figure III-17.

**Grading**

The proposed grading plan is shown in Figure III-18. The details of the project grading are as follows:

*Total Site Area*

- North Lot: 86,900 sf
- South Lot: 14,595 sf
- Total: 101,495 sf

*Grading at Parking Structure*

- Area: 44,000 sq. ft.
- Average Depth (garage floor elevation 27.0’): 6.5 ft.
- Total cubic feet: 44,000 x 6.5 = 286,000
- (1 cubic feet: 0.037037037 cubic yard)
- Total Cubic yard: +/- 10,590

*Remainder of Site*

- Area: 58,385 sf
- Depth: average: 1.5 feet
- Total cubic feet: 58,385 x 1.5 = 87,578
- (1 cubic feet: 0.037037037 cubic yard)
- Total Cubic yard: +/- 3,240

*Total Cubic Yards of Grading to be Removed*

10,590 + 3,240 = +/- 13,830 cubic yards

**Schedule**

Project construction would occur over a 12-month period and is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2006. The initial construction activities would include mobilization, existing warehouse demolition, and site grading. Once site preparation is final, construction of the marketplace buildings would occur. During
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the final phase of building construction, the utilities would be installed, off-site work completed, and on-site landscaping completed. The project is anticipated to be fully operational by the fall of 2007.

**Measures Incorporated into the Project Description from the Initial Study**

The project applicant has agreed to incorporate the following measures into the design of the proposed project:

A. Prior to excavation and construction of the proposed project, the prime contractor and any subcontractor(s) shall be cautioned on the legal and/or regulatory implications of knowingly destroying cultural resources or removing artifacts, human remains, bottles, and other cultural materials from the project site.

B. If during any phase of project construction, any cultural materials are encountered, construction activities within a 50-meter radius shall be halted immediately, and the project applicant shall notify the City. A qualified archaeologist (as approved by the City) shall be retained by the project applicant and shall be allowed to conduct a more detailed inspection and examination of the exposed cultural materials. During this time, excavation and construction would not be allowed in the immediate vicinity of the find. However, those activities could continue in other areas of the project site.

C. All cultural materials recovered from the site would be subject to scientific analysis, professional museum curation, and a report prepared according to current professional standards.

D. If fossil remains are encountered during grading and excavation activities, no further disturbance of the fossil remains shall occur until a vertebrate paleontologist approved by the University of California, Berkeley Paleontology Department has been retained by the project developer to evaluate and recover the remains and/or implement other appropriate mitigation measures, if necessary.


F. Prior to site preparation, the project applicant shall inform all construction workers who could potentially come in contact with subsurface soils of the types of and potential for contamination that could occur on the project site (based on the Phase I and a limited Phase II ESA prepared by GRIBI Associates). If contaminated soils are identified during project construction, the project applicant shall prepare and implement a soil management plan that outlines the standard measures required for construction in contaminated soil.
G. The construction contractor shall implement feasible noise controls to minimize equipment noise impacts on nearby sensitive receptors. Feasible noise controls include improved mufflers, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures, and acoustically-attenuating shields or shrouds.

H. Equipment used for project construction shall be hydraulically or electrically powered impact tools (e.g., jack hammers) wherever possible to avoid noise associated with compressed air exhaust from pneumatically-powered tools. Where use of pneumatically-powered tools is unavoidable, an exhaust muffler on the compressed air exhaust shall be used. A muffler could lower noise levels from the exhaust by up to about 10 dB(A). External jackets on the tools themselves shall be used where feasible; this could achieve a reduction of five dB(A). Quieter procedures shall be used (such as drilling rather than impact equipment) wherever feasible.

I. The construction contractor shall implement appropriate additional noise reduction measures that include shutting off idling equipment and notifying adjacent residences (at least one time) in advance of construction work.

J. All mechanical equipment, such as refrigeration and HVAC equipment, shall have the lowest feasible noise rating and shall be shielded to ensure compliance with the Berkeley Noise Ordinance and General Plan.

K. Project parking and deliveries shall take place on the south side of the project site, within an existing high-noise area and away from sensitive receptors. All delivery trucks and the majority of other vehicles shall enter and exit the project site through the southern 9th Street connection to Ashby Avenue.

E. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the proposed project are as follows:

- To create a project consistent with the purposes and goals of the City of Berkeley General Plan and West Berkeley Plan by contributing to a full range of land uses and economic activities.

- To “improve the level of neighborhood serving retail in West Berkeley” (Goal 3 of the Economic Development section of the West Berkeley Area Plan) by providing a supermarket, the key deficiency identified by the Plan.¹

- To provide for the expansion of an existing, locally owned business, the Berkeley Bowl. To provide a new location in West Berkeley where a full service supermarket can provide a wide

¹ West Berkeley Area Plan, p. 84, 90.
• To ensure that new West Berkeley Bowl will provide sufficient space for convenient and cost effective store layout so that patrons can be served in an efficient and timely manner.

• To relieve in-store congestion and parking problems at the existing 2020 Oregon Street store by serving customers from West Berkeley, Oakland and other areas.

• To ensure adequate warehouse space to serve both the existing and the new West Berkeley Bowl stores so that the total number of delivery trips will be reduced at the existing store and impacts to residential neighbors will be minimized.

• To complement the surrounding uses, including the nearby mixed-use area across Heinz Avenue, by providing a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly full-service grocery marketplace to serve community needs.

• To complete an unfinished segment of the Ninth Street Bicycle Path adjacent to the project.

• To prevent adverse impacts on the mixed-use neighborhood to the north, and on commercial uses to the east and west, by placing the primary access point at the south so that deliveries and most other vehicular traffic will enter and exit the site via Ashby Avenue.

• To minimize the West Berkeley community's automobile dependence by providing both jobs and fresh food within walking or biking distance of residences, a school, and major public transit lines.

• To create a landscaped visual corridor between Heinz Avenue and the Ashby Avenue commercial node, promoting bicycle and pedestrian travel between Heinz Avenue and Ashby Avenue.

• To promote community cohesiveness and provide a neighborhood focal point by offering a community room for periodic meetings and events.

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The West Berkeley Area Plan notes that surveys had shown that area residents wanted food stores, and states that “the southern residential areas” was the area that needed a supermarket. However, the Plan suggested that “West Berkeley’s population may be too small (and too low income) to attract one.” The Plan notes that “a West Berkeley supermarket might be feasible if it could capture some of the traffic from outside West Berkeley which use West Berkeley arterials.” (West Berkeley Area Plan, p. 90) From both the standpoint of need and economic feasibility, then, the project appears to be well located according to criteria identified in the West Berkeley Area Plan.
• To design a project that is similar in scale and mass to surrounding structures and that will enliven the urban streetscape without adding visual clutter.

• To furnish an appropriate transition between the more intensive development in the Ashby Avenue commercial node and the less intensive development in the mixed-use districts across Heinz Avenue.

• To promote the economic development of West Berkeley by converting two underutilized lots into a business that will generate tax revenue for the City while providing basic goods and jobs to nearby residents, workers, and industries.

• To develop pedestrian and bicycle pathways at the Project that connect to its surroundings and improve non-vehicular access between Heinz Avenue and Ashby Avenue.

• To increase the linkages between West Berkeley businesses and to promote a sustainable economy by buying products from nearby bakeries, farmers, and manufacturers, and providing fresh food and other basic goods to area residents, restaurants, caterers, and other businesses.

F. DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS

The EIR will be used in conjunction with one or more discretionary actions that will be considered by the City of Berkeley. The discretionary approvals requested by the applicants include the following:

• An amendment to the General Plan Land Use Diagram to change the land use designation of a 1.9-acre portion of the site from “Manufacturing” to “Avenue Commercial.”

• Zone change to rezone a 1.9-acre portion of the site from MU-LI to C-W.

• Zoning ordinance text amendment to the MU-LI use table 23E.80.030 to provide an exemption so that the intended storage area could serve both the existing Central Berkeley Bowl and the proposed West Berkeley Bowl.

• Use Permit per Section 23E.28.080B to allow parking within 20 feet of Ninth Street.

• Use Permit per Section 23E.64.030 to establish a retail sales use (grocery store).

• Use Permit per Section 23E.64.030 to establish a community center.

• Use Permit per Section 23E.64.030 to establish a quick serve restaurant.

• Use Permit per Section 23E.64.050.B to construct more than 5,000 sf of gross floor area.
G. OTHER CITY DEPARTMENT & AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Other City departments and agencies who will also be involved in the review of the proposed project include the following:

- City of Berkeley Fire Department: approval of site plan for fire code compliance.
- City of Berkeley Police Department: for emergency access and safety compliance.
- City of Berkeley Public Works Department: approval of drainage and utility infrastructure design.
- City of Berkeley Building Department: approval of grading permit, building permit, and occupancy permit.
- Regional Water Quality Control Board: approval of a stormwater pollution prevention plan.
- Caltrans: approval of the proposed traffic signal.
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