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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared to evaluate specific environmental impacts associated with the proposed Long Beach Sports Park Project (the proposed project) in the City of Long Beach. This Draft EIR is considered a recirculated draft EIR because an EIR was circulated for a project similar in concept for the same site in January 2000. For purposes of clarity and distinction, this document will be referred to as “Draft EIR” or “recirculated Draft EIR.” The previously circulated draft EIR will be referred to as “DEIR 2000.”

A Lead Agency is required to recirculate an EIR when significant new information is added to the document after public notice is given of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review (in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15087) but before certification. Substantial changes have been made to the project such that the EIR has been rewritten to reflect the new information and analysis. This document, the recirculated Draft EIR, contains a revised project description and original environmental analysis for the amended proposed project.

The City of Long Beach is the Lead Agency with authority to prepare this Draft EIR and, after completion of the public comment/response process, is the Certifying Agency for the Final EIR. This Draft EIR is intended to serve as an informational document to be considered by the City of Long Beach and the Responsible Agencies during deliberations on the proposed project. The project approvals associated with the proposed project are described in Section 3.0, Project Description.

An Initial Study, prepared by the City of Long Beach, indicated that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment and that an EIR would be required to more fully evaluate potential adverse environmental impacts, which may result from development of the project. As a result, this Draft EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq.), and the State CEQA Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.). This Draft EIR also complies with the procedures established by the City of Long Beach for implementation of CEQA.

Questions regarding the preparation of this document and City review of the project should be referred to the following person:

City of Long Beach

Department of Planning and Building
333 West Ocean Boulevard, 7th Floor
Long Beach, California 90802
Attention: Ms. Angela Reynolds, Environmental Officer
(562) 570-6357

History and Evolution of the Proposed Project

The proposed project site plan reflects the intent of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine to meet the recreational facility demand in the community. According to the Department's Strategic Plan (2002), there are currently approximately 5.7 acres of park land within the City of Long Beach for every 1,000 residents, which is substantially below the average of 13 acres per 1,000 residents for other cities compared in the Strategic Plan, and somewhat below the average of 7 acres per 1,000 population for other high-density cities.

The City Council initiated an evaluation of the shortage of sports fields in 1984. In 1986, the Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department proposed to build a sports park on 26 acres known as the "Tree Farm" adjacent to El Dorado Park. In 1988, public opposition to the sports park at this location resulted in the appointment of a Blue Ribbon Task Force of citizens charged by the City Council with selecting a better location. The Task Force reviewed ten sites and unanimously recommended that a sports complex be developed in the northwest corner of Area III of El Dorado Regional Park. Plans were prepared and a Final EIR certified in 1991. Political controversy and community objection to the site resulted in the City Council's direction in 1997 to consider and evaluate the current project site, at the corner of Spring Street and California Avenue, for a sports complex. Previously considered uses for the project site included an auto mall in 1988, a retail center in 1991, a warehouse/storage facility in 1994, and an auto racetrack in 1996. These proposals failed to materialize due to the development constraints of the site, including topography, operating oil facilities, environmental, and geologic issues.

Moffatt and Nichol Engineers (Moffat and Nichol) completed a Feasibility Study on locating a sports park at the corner of Spring Street and California Avenue in June 1999. The Study concluded that it was feasible to use the proposed project site as a Sports Park facility. Soon after the completion of the Feasibility Study, the City Council authorized environmental analysis to be prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and CEQA. An Initial Study was completed and a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was issued to agencies and the public in September 1999. DEIR 2000 was released for circulation and public comment on January 10, 2000, but a Final EIR was never certified. As a result of subsequent site planning refinements and additional site environmental investigations, the City of Long Beach concluded that DEIR 2000 could not be relied upon for CEQA environmental review purposes. As a result, the DEIR 2000 effort was abandoned.

The current master planning and environmental review process was initiated in the summer of 2002. A new feasibility study and refinement of plans for a sports park on the proposed project site was completed by the City and work on this Draft EIR was initiated. The proposed project under discussion in this recirculated Draft EIR is the result of months of iterative design and collaborative effort among various City departments and the City's consultant team. It is not the same site plan or project description that was analyzed in DEIR 2000.

The site plan for the proposed project reflects recreation objectives of the City in a manner that is cognizant of the physical constraints of the site. The recreation components include four soccer fields, six softball/baseball diamonds, a skate park, four volleyball courts, two soccer arenas, a site for future commercial development, and a youth golf-training center. The layout of the recreation uses and parking areas responds to physical site constraints, which include the Cherry Hill fault, topographic and geologic variations across the site, grading constraints, drainage and retention requirements, and the continued operation of 17 on-site oil wells concurrent with operation of the sports facilities.

2.2 PURPOSE AND TYPE OF EIR/INTENDED USES OF EIR

The purpose of this Draft EIR is to inform decision makers and the general public of any significant adverse environmental effects associated with the proposed actions and to identify appropriate and feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that may be adopted to minimize or eliminate any significant project or cumulative effects. This Draft EIR also includes an evaluation of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project, including: (1) No Development/No Build Alternative, (2) No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative, (3) Retail/Light Industrial/Office Mixed Use, and (4) consideration of Off-Site Alternatives.

The analytical approach used in this Draft EIR is consistent with Section 15161 of the State CEQA Guidelines. As a "Project EIR," this Draft EIR focuses primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from transition of the project site in its current condition to development and operation of the proposed project. Therefore, this Draft EIR will examine all phases of the project, including site preparation, construction, and ongoing operation of the project.

This recirculated Draft EIR will be circulated for public comment for a period of sixty (60) days. Due to substantial revisions to the proposed project and the analysis contained in this Draft EIR, the City of Long Beach is requiring reviewers to submit new comments pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5 (f)(1). Comments submitted for previous draft environmental documents for this project, or a similar project, will not receive a response. Response to comments will be provided only for new comments submitted for this 2004 revised and recirculated Draft EIR. Commentators should be aware of the differences between the project description in the previously-circulated DEIR (DEIR 2000) and this Draft EIR.

The following table summarizes the differences between the projects analyzed in the DEIR 2000 and this recirculated Draft EIR.

Table 2.A: Summary of Changes to the Project Description Subsequent to Release of DEIR 2000

DEIR 2000	Recirculated Draft EIR (2004)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document prepared pursuant to NEPA and CEQA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document prepared pursuant to CEQA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three proposed site plans (Development Options). Site plans included a pay-for-play Sport Park along with some combination of areas reserved for future commercial development, areas reserved for future private development, UGI Corporation Land Not a part (NAP), and associated parking areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single proposed site plan that includes a pay-for-play Sports Park, a youth golf center, creation of a separate commercial (retail/office) parcel, and associated parking areas. An outparcel will be created by a Tentative Parcel Map for the existing office building and associated parking at 2901 Orange Avenue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Plan 1: 42.5 acres Site Plan 2: 43.5 acres Site Plan 3: 45 acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 55.5-acre project site Approximately 53 acres of the total project site are to be dedicated in perpetuity as public open space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend City of Long Beach General Plan, Land Use District (LUD) #9G to LUD #11, Open Space and Park. Future commercial development would require an additional General Plan Amendment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend City of Long Beach General Plan, Land Use District (LUD) #9G, Industrial, to LUD #11, Open Space and Park, and LUD #8A, Traditional Retail Strip Commercial.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Long Beach Zoning Code, Medium Industrial and Institutional (IM and I) to Park (P). Future commercial development would need to be rezoned at a later date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Long Beach Zoning Code, Medium Industrial and Institutional (IM and I) to Park (P) and Community Commercial Automobile Oriented (CCA).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No lot line adjustments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tentative Parcel Map to create commercial parcel and outparcel for existing office building and to consolidate remaining parcels.
<p>The recreation components of the proposed site plans included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six softball/baseball diamonds Four soccer fields (one with bleachers) Sand volleyball courts Two multipurpose arenas (basketball, soccer, or roller hockey) A skate park 	<p>The recreation components of the proposed Sports Park include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six lighted, full-size softball diamonds Four lighted soccer fields Two lighted sand volleyball courts Two large indoor soccer arenas Skate Park Nine station batting cages

DEIR 2000	Recirculated Draft EIR (2004)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Batting cages • Concessions • Two playgrounds • Maintenance building • Gate entrance • Amphitheater • A neighborhood park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Concession building • Two restaurants/2,390 square feet of indoor seating • Two children’s play areas • One maintenance building • Gate entrance and administrative structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Youth Golf Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Golf Center with classroom building, driving range, and chip-and-putt green
<p>Utility improvements and relocations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 36-acre-feet capacity detention basin in the southwest corner of the project site • Extended 108-inch RCP storm drain • New 54-inch RCP line • Removal of 200,000 linear feet of abandoned pipeline • Install an outlet forebay 	<p>Utility improvements and relocations includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 36-acre-feet capacity detention basin in the southwest corner of the project site • 21-inch vitrified clay pipe (VCP) trunk sewer • 69-inch reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) storm drain • 78-inch RCP storm drain • 108-inch RCP storm drain • 54-inch RCP • Relocation and/or undergrounding of existing overhead utilities • Relocation of pipes and overhead electrical lines that support oil extraction and transportation activities • Maintain pipeline corridor across southern site boundary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the time of DEIR 2000 preparation there were 23 active and idle oil wells and 25 abandoned wells on the project site. Active oil wells (13 or 14 wells) were to be maintained and secured during project implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 46 oil wells on the project site (and two adjacent to the project site), 25 are previously abandoned, 15 are currently operating, and 8 are idle. After project implementation 17 on-site wells and 2 adjacent to the project site are expected to operate concurrent with the proposed project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reclaimed water is unavailable and extension of service was not included in the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project includes extension of reclaimed water line to the project site.

DEIR 2000	Recirculated Draft EIR (2004)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Plan 1: 650 parking spaces located in the southwest quadrant with secondary parking in northern part of the project site • Site Plan 2: 650+ parking spaces located in the southeast corner with secondary parking in the northern part of the project site • Site Plan 3: 770 parking spaces located in the northeast corner with secondary parking provided via a reciprocal parking agreement between the project and privately developed commercial property. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sports Park will include 612 parking spaces located in the east-central portion of the project site. • The youth golf facility will have 134 additional parking spaces. • The outparcel and commercial parcel will have separate parking facilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange Avenue right-of-way will increase 20 feet to accommodate new lane and parkway. • California Avenue right-of-way will be extended to include an additional six feet of sidewalk. • Widen and/or restripe Cherry (at Willow Street) to add an exclusive southbound right-turn lane and a second northbound left-turn lane • Provide a single eastbound left-turn lane and westbound left-turn lane on Spring Street • Widen and/or restripe Cherry (at Spring Street) to add an exclusive northbound right-turn lane • Install a two-phase traffic signal at I-405 SB ramps at Orange Avenue • Restripe 32nd Street (at Orange Avenue) to provide a separate westbound left-turn lane and a right-turn lane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange Avenue at 28th Street: Install a five-phase traffic signal with protected northbound and southbound left-turn lane phasing on Orange Avenue. • Atlantic Avenue at Spring Street: Widen Atlantic Avenue to provide separate northbound right-turn lane to proceed eastbound on Spring Street. • Orange Avenue at Spring Street: Convert the existing southbound right-turn lane to provide a second through lane on Orange Avenue and restripe Orange Avenue south of Spring Street to provide two southbound departure lanes. Provide a separate eastbound right-turn lane on Spring Street to proceed southbound on Orange Avenue. • I-405 southbound ramps at Orange Avenue: Install a three-phase traffic signal. • 32nd Street at Orange Avenue: Restripe Orange Avenue to provide a separate northbound right-turn lane. • Orange Avenue: Widen and improve Orange Avenue bordering the project site in accordance with City of Signal Hill Secondary Highway Street Standards and streetscape concepts in this Draft EIR • California Avenue: Widen and improve California Avenue bordering the project site in accordance with City of Signal Hill Secondary Modified Highway Street Standards and streetscape concepts in this Draft EIR.

2.3 INITIAL STUDY, NOTICE OF PREPARATION, AND AREAS OF CONTROVERSY

On January 23, 2004, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was distributed by the City of Long Beach via the State Clearinghouse for the proposed Long Beach Sports Park project. The State of California Clearinghouse issued a project number for the Draft EIR (SCH No. 1999091108). In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the NOP was circulated to the agencies and individuals listed in Appendix A for a period of 30 days, during which time written comments were solicited pertaining to environmental issues/topics that the Draft EIR should evaluate. Responses to the NOP were received from the following agencies:

City of Long Beach Agencies

- Long Beach Airport Bureau
- Long Beach Fire Department
- Long Beach Public Library
- Long Beach Transit
- Long Beach Water Department

ARCO Terminal Services Corporation

California Department of Fish and Game

California Earth Corporation

City of Signal Hill

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works

County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles

El Dorado Audubon Society

Long Beach Unified School District

Regional Planning Commission, Airport Land Use Commission

South Coast Air Quality Management District

Southern California Association of Governments

United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

The City of Long Beach held a public scoping meeting on February 9, 2004, to present the proposed project and to solicit input from interested individuals regarding environmental issues that should be addressed in this Draft EIR. Major issues and concerns raised at the scoping meeting included: (1) changes to topography and existing views from the site; (2) potential loss of habitat and impacts on biological species; (3) potential impacts to archaeological resources; (4) potential health risks associated with development of an oil field; and (5) opportunity to develop other sites with recreation facilities.

The Draft EIR addresses each of these areas of concern or controversy in detail, examines project-related and cumulative environmental impacts, identifies significant adverse environmental impacts, and proposes mitigation measures designed to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts.

Appendix A includes the NOP, a summary of the verbal comments at the scoping meeting, and copies of written comments received.

2.4 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

As required by CEQA Guidelines, Section 15128, this Draft EIR must identify effects of the proposed project determined to be significant. The Initial Study prepared by the City of Long Beach (see Appendix A) determined that the following environmental effects of the proposed project will not be significant: Agricultural Resources and Population and Housing. These issues are briefly discussed below along with reasons they were determined not to be significant. For further information and additional discussion, please refer to the Initial Study and Notice of Preparation in Appendix A of this EIR.

Agricultural Resources

The project site is located in an urbanized area and is not used for agricultural purposes. The project is not designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Since agricultural uses are not present, the proposed project does not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural uses or any use protected by a Williamson Act contract. The proposed project would not convert farmland to a nonagricultural use. Likewise, the proposed project site would not contribute to environmental changes that could result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use. Therefore, this issue will not be discussed in the Draft EIR.

Population and Housing

No housing units are located on the project site, and housing displacement impacts will not occur. The proposed project is an in-fill development in an urbanized area on a site that was planned and zoned for industrial development. The project is not the type of land use that would possibly induce population growth. Rather, the proposed project is expected to serve the existing and future recreational demands of the community.

The proposed project will include new businesses. With the exception of an unknown commercial enterprise to be located in the northwest corner of the project site, these businesses will be associated with the recreation components of the project (i.e., the Sports Park and Youth Golf Center). The businesses do not represent substantial direct new growth, and they are not anticipated to create indirect growth in the City due to their limited employment capacity; however, potential impacts to the City of Long Beach employment base are considered in Section 4.2 of this Draft EIR. Because employment trends are often tied to changes in housing and population, these subjects are also briefly discussed in Section 4.2.

The proposed project will include roadway improvements to adjacent public streets and the extension of a reclaimed water line. The project is an in-fill project within an existing developed community, and no significant extension of roads and infrastructure to development “fringe” areas is proposed. Extension of reclaimed water to the project site is not considered a growth-inducing impact of the project.

2.5 FORMAT OF THE EIR

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15120(c), this Draft EIR contains the information and analysis required by Sections 15122 through 15131. Each of the required elements is covered in one of the chapters described below.

As previously stated, the project evaluated in this Draft EIR differs substantially from the project proposed in 2000, and the environmental analysis in this Draft EIR is unique to this proposed project and this document. For this reason redline/strikeout is not used to track changes between the two documents.

Chapter 1.0—Executive Summary

Chapter 1.0 contains the Executive Summary of the Draft EIR document, listing all significant project impacts, mitigation measures that have been recommended to reduce any significant impacts of the proposed project, and the level of significance of each impact following mitigation. The summary is presented in a matrix (tabular) format.

Chapter 2.0—Introduction

Chapter 2.0 contains a discussion of the purpose and intended use of the Draft EIR, background on project initiation and the Notice of Preparation, and areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by the public. A summary discussion of effects found not to be significant and, therefore, not included in the Draft EIR analysis is also included in this chapter.

Chapter 3.0—Project Description

Chapter 3.0 includes discussion of the project's geographical setting, the site's previous use as an industrial and oil production use, and the project's goals, objectives, characteristics, components, and phasing.

Chapter 4.0—Environmental Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Chapter 4.0 includes an analysis of the project's environmental impacts. It is organized into topical sections including Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural and Paleontological Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Population and Housing, Land Use, Noise, Public Services and Utilities, Transportation and Circulation, and Recreation. The environmental setting discussions describe the "existing conditions" of the environment on the project site and in the vicinity of the site as they pertain to the environmental issues being analyzed (Section 15125 of the CEQA Guidelines).

The project impact discussions identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of the proposed project. The direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment are identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects, as necessary (Section 15126.2[a] of the CEQA Guidelines).

Cumulative impacts are based on the build out of the project and the surrounding area, including all other known proposed projects in the surrounding area.

The discussions of mitigation measures identify and describe feasible measures that could minimize or lessen significant adverse impacts for each significant environmental effect identified in the Draft EIR (Section 15126[c] of the CEQA Guidelines). The level of significance after mitigation is reported in each section. Unavoidable adverse effects are identified where mitigation is not expected to reduce the effects to insignificant levels.

Chapter 5.0—Alternatives to the Proposed Project

In accordance with CEQA, the alternatives discussion in Chapter 5.0 describes a reasonable range of alternatives that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project and that are capable of eliminating any significant adverse environmental effects or reducing them to a level of insignificance. On-site alternatives analyzed in Chapter 5.0 include: No Project/No Development, No Project/Existing General Plan, and Retail/Light Industrial/Office Mixed-Use.

Chapter 6.0—Long-Term Implications of the Project

Chapter 6.0 includes CEQA mandated discussions required by Section 15126 of the State CEQA Guidelines A) of the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment, B) significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project, and C) growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project.

Chapter 7.0—Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Chapter 7.0 provides a list of all proposed project mitigation measures, defines the party responsible for implementation, and identifies the timing for implementation of each control measure.

Chapter 8.0—Inventory of Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Chapter 8.0 describes those significant adverse environmental impacts for which either no mitigation or only partial mitigation is feasible.

Chapters 9.0, 10.0, and 11.0

Chapters 9.0, 10.0, and 11.0 provide the organizations and persons contacted during preparation of the Draft EIR, the Draft EIR preparers and technical report authors and other experts included in preparation of the Draft EIR, and the references used by both.

2.6 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

As permitted in Section 15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this Draft EIR has referenced several technical studies, analyses, and reports. Information from the documents that have been incorporated

by reference has been briefly summarized in the appropriate section(s) of this Draft EIR along with a description of how the public may obtain and review these documents. The documents and other sources that have been used in the preparation of this Draft EIR are identified in Chapter 11, References.

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