

January 16, 2020

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND14-19) (SCH# 2019119026) and approve a Site Plan Review (SPR19-036) for the 6-acre expansion of the existing 5.5-acre Davenport Park (2910 East 55th Way), located directly east of the project site, to an abutting undeveloped parcel at 5550 North Paramount Boulevard in the Park (P) Zoning District. The proposed project would expand the existing park for total park size of approximately 11.5 acres. Features proposed as part of the park expansion include a sports field, bleachers, six fitness equipment pads, a skate park, parking spaces on the northern portion of the site, and shaded picnic facilities. The park would include landscaping, irrigation, walking paths, security lighting, seating, and trash receptacles. (District 8)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach Department of Public Works
c/o Monica Der Gervorgian
411 West Ocean Boulevard, 5th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
(Application No. 1809-16)

DISCUSSION

The site is located at the intersection of Paramount Boulevard and East 55th Way (Exhibit A - Vicinity Map). The project site is bordered by East 55th Way to the north with residential uses and industrial storage tanks beyond, the Davenport Park site to the east, the Friendly Village Mobile Home Park to the south, and North Paramount Boulevard to the west. The project site encompasses the existing 5.5-acre Davenport Park and the adjacent 6-acre undeveloped parcel to the west (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APNs] 7157-006-902, -903, -904, and -905).

The project site and existing Davenport Park consists of four parcels. The approximately 6-acre project site and the adjacent 5.5-acre existing Davenport Park site were formerly occupied by a municipal waste landfill and later by the Cal Coast Packing Crating Company. The industrial use is no longer in operation on the site, and the landfill has since been closed and capped in compliance with the California Department of Resources, Recycling, and Recovery (CalRecycle) Closed, Illegal, and Abandoned Disposal Site (CIA) program and the CalRecycle Solid Waste Cleanup Program (Assembly Bill [AB] 2136). Under existing conditions, the project site is characterized by the presence of a walking trail and scattered vegetation and soil.



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The site is in the Park (P) Zoning District and designated as the Open Space (OS) PlaceType in the 2019 General Plan Land Use Element.

Project Description

The proposed project would expand the existing 5.5-acre Davenport Park by approximately 6 acres, for total park size of approximately 11.5 acres. The City is proposing to expand Davenport Park in an effort to meet the City's General Plan Open Space (2002) goal of providing 8 acres of recreational open space for every 1,000 residents.

The planned park expansion would include a sports field located on the central and western portion of the site, four sets of three-level bleachers on each side of the sports field, six fitness equipment pads scattered around the site (future phase), a 5,000-square-foot skate park (future phase), a shaded gathering area, and 31 diagonal parking spaces along the northern boundary of the site on East 55th Way (Exhibit B – Conceptual Site Plan). In addition, a portion of the parking lot for the existing Davenport Park would be redesignated as a school bus drop-off location.

As specified in the City's General Plan Open Space and Recreation Element (2002), amenities typically found in neighborhood parks include landscaping, irrigation, walking paths, seating areas and picnic facilities, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, recreation fields, and parking and drive aisles. Similar amenities would be provided throughout the project site. In addition, security lighting would be provided throughout the project site along the walking paths. Areas surrounding the sports field would include landscaped open space with ornamental trees and shrubbery. To the extent feasible, passive open space areas would include drought-tolerant vegetation and other noninvasive plantings. Pedestrian and bicycle access will also be provided from existing sidewalks along Paramount Boulevard, sidewalks along East 55th Way, and pedestrian pathways surrounding the project boundaries.

In compliance with current regulations, a Post-Closure Land Use Proposals (PCLUP) were prepared for both Phase I and II of Davenport Park and was approved by the County of Los Angeles Solid Waste Management Program/LEA. Due to the site's prior use as a landfill, and as required in the closure documents, the proposed project would include a carbon treatment unit with venting system to provide safe venting of low-level methane emissions. The vent would be located at the carbon treatment unit and would not exceed 15-feet in height. The carbon treatment unit and vent would be installed aboveground and enclosed by chain-link fencing, just west of the existing parking lot, between the proposed park and the existing park. The system would connect to the below grade portion of the venting system on Phase I of the park, and to the subgrade piping system installed in 2017 under the project site. The system will be installed and inspected in compliance with the PCLUP and all post-closure regulations. As conditioned, the City will amend and submit the amended PCLUP to the LEA for approval with plans that reflect the current final design proposal for the Phase II park expansion (Exhibit C – Conditions of Approval).

Site Plan Review

No new buildings would be constructed as part of the project. The overall site design would maintain the existing walking path, while introducing new active and passive park uses. While Site Plan Review and Planning Commission approval is typically reserved for the construction of new building

area in the P Zoning District, staff is requesting Planning Commission approval to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the project.

Due to the former use of the site as a landfill, construction would not extend downward further than approximately 2-feet and would not disturb native soils. Clean soil will be imported to the site to provide a minimum 2-foot thick layer of vegetative soil. In areas with trees proposed, berms will be placed so that the cover thickness is a minimum of 4 feet in depth. Limited passive open space areas will include drought-tolerant vegetation and other non-invasive plantings to protect the landfill cover.

Based on positive findings that the proposed project is harmonious and consistent within itself and compatible with the surrounding community, staff is supportive of the project design (Exhibit D – Findings). General characteristics, such as, site orientation and vehicle circulation have been taken into consideration with the overall design of the site and improvements.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 1,652 notices of public hearing were distributed on December 27, 2019, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Zoning Regulations. As of the preparation of this report, no correspondence has been received by staff in response to the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared for the project. The IS/MND provides mitigation measures related to Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, and Utilities and Service Systems. The measures specifically relate to the preparation of a final hydrology study, and measures to reduce construction noise impacts.

Chapter 532, Statutes of 2014 (i.e., Assembly Bill [AB] 52), requires that Lead Agencies evaluate a project's potential to impact "tribal cultural resources." In compliance with AB 52, consultation letters were sent out to eight tribal councils in October 2019 based on a list provided by the Native American Heritage Commission. Copies of the letters have been included as Appendix E to the IS/MND (Exhibit E – Final and Draft IS/MND [MND 14-19] with Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program). One response letter was received from Andrew Salas of the Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation. A consultation meeting was held on December 19, 2019.

Due to the information regarding the site being a capped landfill and no ground disturbance will be conducted within native soils but only landfill soils, the tribal representative concluded that the project has a low to no potential to impact Tribal Cultural Resources (TCR) as part of your ground disturbance activities, and, therefore, the tribe has no further concerns with the proposed project. A condition of approval has been added that if a tribal cultural resource is inadvertently discovered during construction, the construction contractor shall contact the Tribal Government if any inadvertent finds are discovered.

The IS/MND was circulated for a 30-day public review period between November 7, 2019 and December 6, 2019. During the circulation of the IS/MND, three comment letters were received during the public review period. Written responses to the comments are provided in Exhibit E.

