

October 21, 2021

**CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

City of Long Beach  
California

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept Categorical Exemption CE21-110 and approve Site Plan Review SPR20-003 for a Long-Range Development Plan to demolish and rebuild an existing off-site athletic field for a private high school located at 4832 Clark Avenue within the Institutional (I) Zoning District. (District 5)

**APPLICANT:** St. Anthony High School  
620 Olive Avenue  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
(Application No. 2002-05)

**DISCUSSION**

The site is located on the border between the City of Long Beach and the City of Lakewood, at the southeast corner of Clark Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard. The site is within the Institutional (I) Zoning District and has a Founding and Contemporary Neighborhood (FCN) General Plan PlaceType. The surrounding land uses include single-family residential across Clark Avenue, to the west and beyond the Los Angeles County flood control channel to east; an elementary school and religious assembly use to the south; and the city of Lakewood Civic Center to the North, across Del Amo Boulevard (Attachment A – Vicinity Map).

The overall site is approximately 9.6 acres (432,089 square feet) in area and developed with athletic fields, a parking lot, caretaker unit, weight room, locker rooms, restrooms, concession stand, bleachers, football field/track, batting cages and a baseball field. Most of the buildings on site were built in the late 1940s, and have been upgraded over time, the care taker unit was relocated to the site in 1965. The main user of the athletic field is St. Anthony High School, located 8 miles from the subject site, in downtown Long Beach. The land was donated and has been used as an athletic field and for school activities for St. Anthony's High School since the 1940s. Schools are allowed by right within the Institutional zone; the athletic facilities located at the subject site are an integral component of St. Anthony's High School educational facilities and program and are therefore allowed by right in the zone. However, based on the size of the site, the zoning district standards require approval of a Long-Range Development Plan for any development of or improvements to the site.



## **Proposed Project**

The proposed project is planned over two phases: Phase 1 includes building a new six-lane rubberized track and synthetic turf field for football, soccer and lacrosse; a 1,200-seat grandstand; a press box; new sports lighting; a new 1,600-square-foot restroom, concession and ticketing building; and a new 6,000-square-foot multi-purpose and locker room building with an outdoor fitness area. Phase 2 includes the renovation of the existing baseball field and the addition of a softball field on the north end of the property. The proposed project does not materially change the uses on the site, which has been a long-standing use, and generally involves the upgrade rather than an expansion of existing facilities.

Within the Institutional Zoning District, any site with a lot area of forty thousand (40,000) square feet or greater requires a long-range development plan that includes all anticipated development over the next twenty (20) years (Long Beach Municipal Code Section 21.34.020). The existing athletic field precedes this requirement, and there are no past long-range development plans approved for the site. The applicant is requesting approval of a Site Plan Review for a Long-Range Development Plan to upgrade and modernize the overall athletic complex (Attachment B – Long-Range Development Site Plan and Description). The Long-Range Development Plan requires the Planning Commission's review and approval through the Site Plan Review procedures and findings.

The Long-Range Development Plan is proposed to occur in two phases (Attachment - C Long-Range Development Plan). Phase 1 involves rebuilding the track and athletic field roughly situated in the existing location. It also incorporates a combined restroom/concessions/ticketing building and a centralized 6,000 square foot team building that will replace the existing team building which will be demolished in Phase 2. The new team building will feature men's and women's locker rooms, coed training room, coaches' offices, equipment storage, a multi-purpose room and attached outdoor weight studio and student patio. Site improvements include re-pavement and re-stripping of the parking lot, new entry plaza, pathways, lighting, fencing, landscaping and upgraded utility services.

Phase 2 of the Long-Range Development Plan will include renovation of the existing baseball field and the addition of a softball field on the north end of the property to accommodate women athletes on the site. Phase 2 includes seating, backstops, dugouts, bullpens and batting cages.

## **Technical Studies**

While the proposed project does not represent an intensification of existing uses, a number of technical studies were prepared to ensure that the proposed project will operate in a manner that is compatible with the surrounding uses. Technical studies related to historical resources, lighting, noise, parking and circulation were conducted and are summarized below.

### Historical Resources

A historic assessment was prepared for the existing caretaker building that is proposed to be demolished as part of the project, given that the structure is over 40 years old. A historic resource assessment (dated January 2021) of the structure found that the building would not be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources nor

for local designation as a City of Long beach Historic Landmark. Originally located near Olive Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Long Beach in a residential neighborhood, the building was moved to the subject site in 1965. Archival research did not uncover any associations with the lives of persons significant to our past in national, state or local contexts. Architecturally, the structure does not distinctively embody the Spanish Revival-style or any other architectural style nor does it appear to contribute to any potential or known historic districts. As such, the caretaker's residence is not considered a historical resource (Attachment D – Historic Assessment).

#### Lighting

A Nighttime Lighting Study was conducted as part of this review, because of the proposed upgrade in lighting and proximity to residential uses. The study, dated August 9, 2021, was prepared to assess whether the proposed lighting will affect surrounding properties. Existing field lighting is provided by eight lights that are approximately 30-40 feet high. These lights are older technology, and the lower poles heights likely create significantly higher glare due to the more horizontal angle of the lights. The proposed lights will be on poles 90 -100 feet in height, which allows the light to be better directed downward onto the field where and away from adjacent properties. The modern lighting technology also provides glare shields, which provides additional protection for adjacent residences, and the LED lighting minimizes spillover light and glare. Finally, the new technology allows greater control to reduce light levels when the main event or competition ceases and while attendees exit the stands. The proposed lighting would be a reduction compared to the existing lighting (Attachment E – Nighttime Lighting Study).

#### Noise

A Noise Technical study, dated August 16, 2021, was conducted as part of this review, because of the proximity to residential uses. Both construction and operational noise was analyzed. Construction can generate varying degrees of ground vibration depending on the construction techniques and equipment. The nearest structures to the proposed building construction are single-family homes approximately 120 feet to the west. The nearest structure to the proposed parking lot improvements is the church/school building near the project's southern property line and single-family homes to the west at approximately 100 feet. The analysis conducted found that construction associated with the subject project would not create or cause any significant vibration impacts.

Implementation of the proposed project could generate periodic increases in noise levels above existing use of the sports field for games and events. All games and events would end by 10:00 p.m. A maximum of four Public Address system speakers directed to the bleachers is proposed with estimated heights of 25 to 30 feet. Two speakers are proposed on the press box and two on poles at the back of bleachers. Future noise levels from maximum-capacity games are predicted to increase hourly average noise levels by up to 3.9 dBA  $L_{eq}$  at the closest residential property lines to the west where the existing ambient noise is modeled to be 58.9 dBA during existing games and up to 62.8 dBA, with implementation of the proposed project. Per Section 8.80.280, *Exemption – Entertainment Events*, the noise ordinance exterior noise standards do not apply to occasional outdoor gatherings, public dances, shows, and sporting and entertainment events, such as the proposed project. These events however are still subject to City oversight and corrective action would be taken if event-related noise reached nuisance levels. Because the noise ordinance exterior noise standards do not apply to the occasional events and the noise increase would be up to 3.9 dBA with implementation of the proposed project and not exceed the threshold of 5 dBA,

impacts from the proposed project would be less than significant (Attachment F – Noise Technical Study).

#### Parking/Circulation

Parking and Circulation analysis was conducted as part of this review in order to evaluate any potential impact that the proposed project might have on circulation in the surrounding area and to ensure that adequate parking to support the use can be accommodated. No increase in bleacher seats are proposed with the improvements to the football field and thus capacity would remain the same as it is currently. As such, the study found that the proposed improvements at the St. Anthony High School Field would not result in an increase in trips beyond what exists today for full capacity events such as high school football games. However, pursuant to the Long Beach Municipal Code (LBMC), each use must provide parking in compliance with the Zoning Code at the time a new use is constructed or established (LBMC 21.41.160). In the case where the Zoning Code does not have a rate for that specific use, a parking demand study may be prepared by a qualified engineer to determine the appropriate parking rate subject to staff's review and approval. In accordance with this requirement, a parking demand study was prepared that estimated that peak parking demand is 276 parking spaces. The proposed site plan provides a total of 116 parking spaces (90 standard, four accessible spaces, and two bus parking spaces equivalent to 22 parked cars), resulting in a parking deficiency of approximately 160 spaces. To address the 160-parking space shortfall on-site, St. Anthony would be required to maintain an off-site parking agreement at the adjacent St. Cyprian Church and School, located immediately south of the athletic field. St. Cyprian Church and school has a total of 169 spaces (165 regular and four accessible spaces) for use during St. Anthony Field Events. With the shared use of the 169 off-site parking spaces on the adjoining property to the south, the proposed project will be in compliance with Zoning Code required parking.

Additionally, a trip generation study was conducted to identify any potential impacts to intersections in the vicinity of the subject site as a result of event traffic and to identify strategies that will ensure safe circulation in the vicinity of the project for various transportation modes. In accordance with the City's June 2020 Traffic Impact Guidelines, Level of Service (LOS) analysis is conducted solely as part of the development review process and not for purposes of environmental review. As it relates to the subject project, a vehicular circulation analysis was prepared for the immediate vicinity of the project, and the analysis showed that the LOS during full capacity events at the three study area intersections would not be impacted by the traffic associated with the athletic complex use. For added safety, a number of conditions of approval are proposed that would require the school to provide crossing guards during events, improve nearby crosswalks and extend the left turn pocket at East Arbor Road and Clark Avenue. Additionally, the school will also ensure detailed information on parking resources at St. Cyprian Church and the athletic field is provided as part of event promotions (Attachment G - Conditions of Approval). In conclusion, the proposed athletic complex improvement project can be implemented with no significant impacts to parking, circulation, or traffic (Attachment H – Complex Parking and Circulation Analysis).

#### **Site Plan Review Findings**

The Site Plan Review Committee reviewed the Long-Range Development Plan on September 8, 2021 and recommended it move forward to the Planning Commission for public hearing. In accordance with the Institutional "I" Zoning District, the proposed project requires Site Plan Review approval of long-range development plan by the Planning Commission, and the subject project and any future projects must be consistent with the approved long-range development plan. Although

the use is replacing the existing use, the site is within the Institutional Zoning District which triggers the requirement of the long-range development plan, before any building permit can be approved by the Planning Bureau (LBM 21.34.020).

Overall, the project will be developed in a manner consistent with the standards for the Institutional Zoning District. Approval of the Long-Range Development Plan is consistent when it carries out the intent of the General Plan, and otherwise complies with the required findings for the applicable zoning regulations. Staff finds that positive findings can be made regarding compliance with the General Plan and Specific Plan, and findings (Attachment I - Findings). The project's architectural design has been reviewed by the Site Plan Review Committee and found to be of the appropriate high quality that is expected of institutional developments. The FCN PlaceType encourages the use of schools, parks and other compatible public uses. Land Use Policy 10-1 ensures neighborhoods contain a variety of functional attributes, including schools. The proposed renovations guarantee the athletic fields will continue to serve St. Anthony High School, and therefore complies with the FCN PlaceType. Additionally, the project as designed and conditioned complies with the general goals and policy objectives of the Urban Design Element of the General Plan, which emphasizes the importance of street character and the pedestrian experience within the right-of-way. The project as proposed includes a landscaping buffer along the property perimeter along with decorative wrought iron fencing. Additionally, the project has been conditioned to require the incorporation of bike racks and street trees. The overall project as conditioned is consistent with and carries out the goals and policies of the General Plan. Conditions of approval include street trees, bicycle parking, wrought iron or other high-quality fencing along Clark Avenue, lighting timing, and noise limits.

### PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 519 public hearing notices were distributed on September 27, 2021 in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. At the time of writing this report, staff has received no comments in response to the hearing notice.

### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the Guidelines for the implementation of the of California Environmental Quality Act the project consists of the demolition and reconstruction of improvements to an existing off-site high school athletic field and is exempt from further environmental review in accordance with the following sections: 1) Class 1 (Existing Facilities) which exempts the operation, repair maintenance or minor alterations to existing facilities; 2) Class 2 (Replacement or Reconstruction) which exempts the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced; 3) Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) which exempts the construction of small facilities or structures including accessory structures; and 4) Class 14 - Section 15314 (Minor Additions to Schools) which exempts minor additions to schools within school grounds where the addition does not increase student capacity by more than 25 percent or ten classrooms. Furthermore, none of the exceptions for the Class 3 Exemption in Section 15300.2 are applicable. The project is not located on a mapped environmentally sensitive area and the project is limited to retaining existing features and

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programming, with no net increase in floor area and there is no modification or intensification beyond the existing use limitations.

Respectfully submitted,



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PROJECT PLANNER



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Attachments:

- Attachment A - Vicinity Map
- Attachment B - Long-Range Development Site Plan and Description
- Attachment C – Long-Range Development Plan
- Attachment D - Historic Assessment
- Attachment E - Nighttime Lighting Study
- Attachment F - Noise Technical Study
- Attachment G - Conditions of Approval
- Attachment H - Complex Parking and Circulation Analysis
- Attachment I - Findings