



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Resolution certifying an Addendum to the Kroc Community Center Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2008071085) for proposed improvements to the athletic facilities at Chittick Field, located at 1900 Walnut Avenue. (District 6)

APPLICANT: Derek Wieske
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DISCUSSION

Overview

Chittick Field, a facility located at 1900 Walnut Avenue in the center of the City of Long Beach, serves more than one purpose. While it functions as a dry detention basin for the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, it also functions as available open space to the surrounding community for recreational activities. The Salvation Army obtained entitlements from the City in 2009 to develop a Kroc Community Center at Chittick Field. However, the plans to develop the ambitious project were eventually abandoned by the applicant due to a lack of available funding and support. At this time the City is set to pursue its goal of improving the athletic facilities at Chittick Field for the enjoyment of the greater Long Beach community.

History of Chittick Field

Chittick Field is an approximate 19.0-acre site located northeast of the intersection of East Pacific Coast Highway and Walnut Avenue. Surrounding land uses include commercial properties fronting on Pacific Coast Highway to the south, the Long Beach City College Pacific Coast Campus west of Walnut Avenue, the City boundary to the north/northeast and an alley and mixed density neighborhood to the east (refer to Exhibit A – Local Vicinity Map).

In 1936 Chittick Field was developed by the County of Los Angeles as a dry detention basin. Its function is to collect and pump out the peak flow of seasonal storm water runoff to pumping facilities located downstream as they are able to handle the volume of water. The facility was

developed to support the cities of Long Beach and Signal Hill. It was originally called Hamilton Bowl after Hamilton Junior High School, which was located nearby at the time. Listed below are milestones in the evolution of the facility:

- 1950** Los Angeles County Flood Control District gave permission for the City to improve the flood control basin for recreational purposes. The City developed four irrigated baseball fields.
- 1962** Approvals were granted for a fifth baseball field and an overlay soccer field.
- 1975** Approvals were granted for soccer field irrigation and an unpaved parking area.
- 1977** Approval was granted for lighting for the four original baseball fields.
- 1983** The facility was renamed Chittick Field after Brian Chittick, a local softball enthusiast who organized leagues through the Long Beach Elks Club and advocated the use of the facility for practices, games and other recreational purposes.
- 1993** Soccer field lights were added as a payment for Park Impact Fees.
- 1995** Sports lights for the original four baseball fields were upgraded with funds from the Los Angeles County Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond Act of 1992.
- 2000** League play was discontinued at the facility due to the deteriorated condition of the irrigation system that supported the four original baseball fields. The fields had returned to dirt and the facility exhibited "dust bowl" conditions.
- 2005** A portion of the former Pacific Electric Railway right-of-way (0.75 acres) was acquired with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to expand and redevelop the facility.
- 2006** The Salvation Army proposed the development of a \$60 million Kroc Community Center on the site of the facility.

Kroc Community Center Project

The Kroc Community Center proposed by the Salvation Army would have been a multi-purpose facility comprised of 170,536 square feet of structures developed on seven acres of raised building pads. Amenities would have included a recreation and gymnasium center, an administration and education building and a chapel and auditorium. Outdoor facilities would have included a 25,000-square-foot aquatics area, four acres of playing fields, an amphitheater, walking paths and children's play areas. The facility was intended to provide programs and services for children, adults, seniors and families.

On June 18, 2009, the Planning Commission certified the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the project, voted to recommend approval of a General Plan Amendment from

Open Space and Park District (LUD#11) to Institutional and School District (LUD#10) and a Zone Change from Park (P) to Institutional (I), and approved a Site Plan Review for the project. On July 21, 2009, the City Council reviewed the Planning Commission's actions and recommendations and approved the General Plan Amendment and Zone Change. More than a year after receiving approval of entitlements for the project, the Salvation Army informed the City that the necessary funding and support for development of the Kroc Community Center was not adequate and that the project would not be going forward.

Proposed Improvements to Athletic Facilities at Chittick Field

As the City is desirous of improving the athletic facilities at Chittick Field, a reduced and modified design has been proposed for the site. The modified design would include the following improvements: two youth soccer fields, one adult soccer field, a regulation football field surrounded by a 400-meter all-weather track and facilities for javelin, pole vault, shot put, discus, hammer, long jump and triple jump. Improvements would also include a 134-space at-grade parking lot and restroom facilities located adjacent to Walnut Avenue.

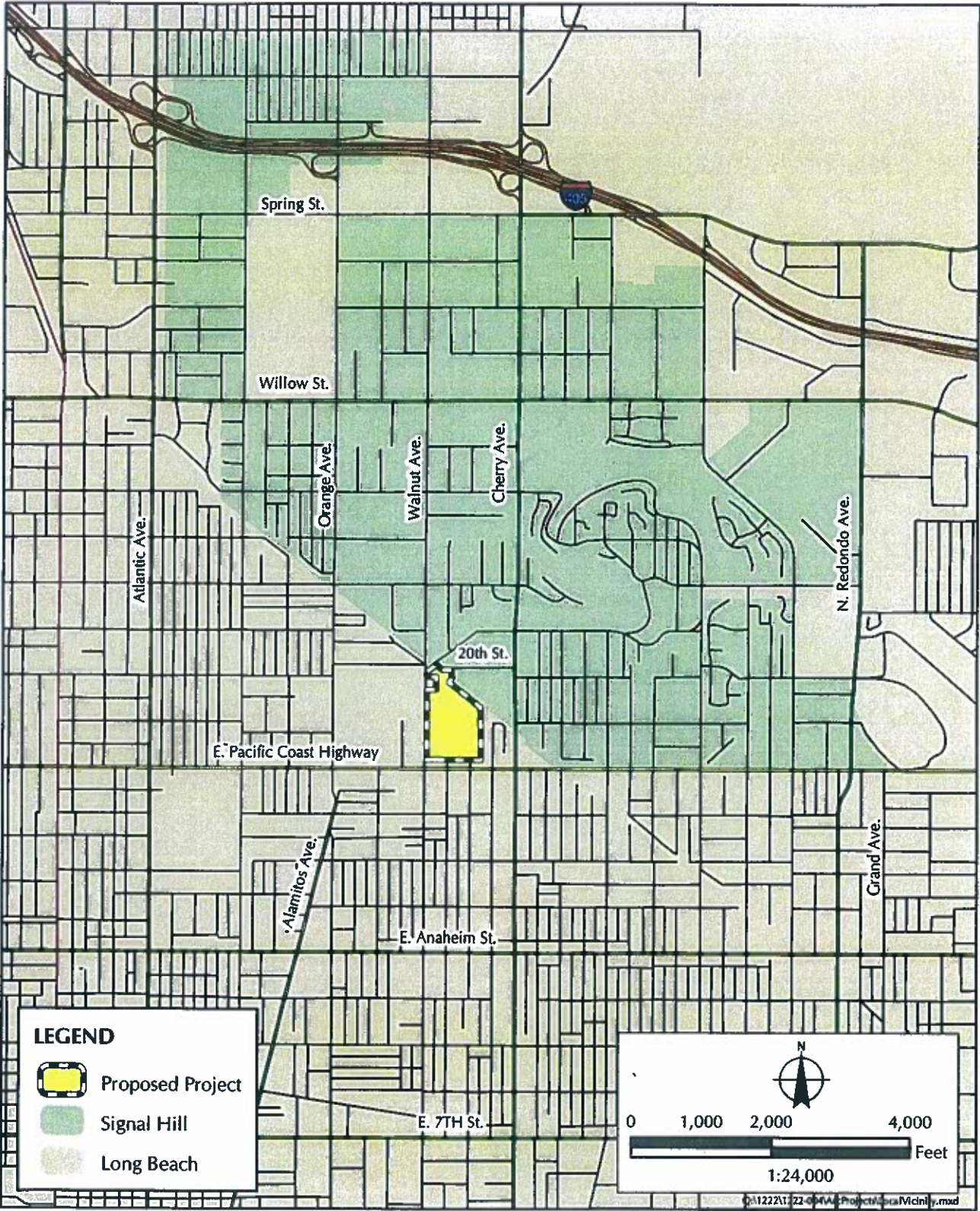
At the direction of the City Attorney, the City had an Addendum to the Kroc Community Center EIR prepared to assess the impacts of the reduced and modified design. The Addendum documents the differences between the approved project and the reduced and modified design and incorporates the mitigation measures from the certified EIR's Mitigation Monitoring Program. The approved project and the reduced and modified design would both result in the removal of the Low-flow Pump Station structure located near the western edge of the site adjacent to Walnut Avenue. The certified EIR identified the structure as a cultural resource and concluded that removal of the structure would result in a significant and unavoidable impact to historical resources.

The Addendum reiterates the impacts that were identified as significant and unavoidable in the certified EIR for the approved project and would remain as such for the reduced and modified design. Those impacts include: Aesthetics, Cultural Resources, Land Use and Planning, Noise and Recreation. The reduced and modified design would not create any new significant impacts beyond those previously identified in the certified EIR for the approved project.

The applicant is requesting that the Planning Commission approve a Resolution with Findings, a Statement of Overriding Considerations and the Mitigation Monitoring Program to certify an Addendum to the Kroc Community Center EIR for the reduced and modified design. (refer to Exhibit B – Resolution, Exhibit C – Addendum and Exhibit D – Kroc Community Center EIR).

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The proposed certification of the Addendum was public noticed in accordance with the provisions of the Long Beach Municipal Code. As of the writing of this report, no responses were received.



Local Vicinity Map