

April 15, 2021

**CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

City of Long Beach

California

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt Addendum NDA 01-21 to the Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater Treatment (LB-MUST) Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) (ND 03-17) (State Clearinghouse No. 2017071068);

Approve modification MOD21-003 to the previously approved LB-MUST Project (App No. 1807-12) to relocate the proposed wetlands to a 1.23-acre site across the street from the LB-MUST Treatment Facility at 901 De Forest Avenue in the Light Industrial (IL) Zoning District. (District 1)

**APPLICANT:** City of Long Beach Department of Public Works  
c/o Colin Averill  
411 W Ocean Blvd, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
(Application No. 2102-40)

**DISCUSSION**

The Long Beach Municipal Stormwater Treatment (LB-MUST) Facility (App. No. 1807-12) was approved by the Planning Commission on March 7, 2019, and included the construction of a 9,680-square-foot stormwater treatment facility on an undeveloped 1.19-acre site (Attachment A - March 7, 2019 Planning Commission Staff Report). The proposed wetlands are essential to the function of the LB-MUST facility at 901 De Forest Avenue (Attachment B - Vicinity Map). The Treatment Facility is the first phase of the overall LB-MUST Project, which includes construction of a treatment facility and conveyances to carry urban runoff to the LB-MUST facility for treatment. The facility is a centralized mechanical treatment facility for the treatment of urban stormwater which would be conveyed from the LB-MUST Treatment Facility to the wetlands. As part of the LB-MUST Facility approval, the facility will include drought tolerant landscaping that will function as a demonstration garden with interpretative signage for the public. On January 16, 2020, the Planning Commission approved the Tentative Tract Map and General Plan Conformity (App. No. 1912-01) to facilitate the site consolidation and construction of right-of-way improvements (Attachment C - January 16, 2020 Planning Commission Staff Report).



The overall LB-MUST project site consists of six (6) separate parcels (Assessor Parcel Numbers: 7271-003-904, 7271-020-902, 7271-020-903, 7271-020-904, 7271-020-905, 7271-020-906) that were assembled of 15 separate lots. The tentative tract map consolidated the area into two (2) parcels. The wetlands would be located on the lot directly across De Forest Avenue from the LB-MUST Treatment Facility at 901 De Forest Avenue (APN: 7271-020-906).<sup>1</sup> The area surrounding the overall site consists of open space, residential, and industrial land uses. The project site is bounded by the Los Angeles River and bicycle path to the west, residential uses to the east, Shoreline Drive and a bus yard to the south, and Drake Park to the north.

The majority of the LB-MUST Treatment Facility site (901 De Forest Avenue) is vacant land with sparse ornamental/non-native vegetation, utility poles, and an advertising/billboard sign (Attachment D - Site Photos). The modified location of the wetlands (Project site) is developed with a one-story industrial building and surface parking. The single-family and multi-family residential uses located east of the industrial building (Project site) are in the Drake Park/Willmore City Historic District.

The Project site is located in the Light Industrial (IL) Zoning District, which allows a wide range of industries whose primary operations occur entirely within enclosed structures and which pose limited potential for environmental impacts on neighboring uses. The site is located within the General Plan Land Use Open Space (OS) PlaceType. Permitted uses in the OS PlaceType include utilities and/or infrastructure and uses that contains environmentally sensitive resources. The LB-MUST Facility approval included a drought tolerant landscape demonstration garden for the public, a Los Angeles River Bicycle Path access point, and a bus loading area for future public educational opportunity access. The proposed wetlands would function as both a component of the stormwater treatment facility and as a passive open space area. The wetlands would also feature drought-tolerant landscaping and connections to abutting open space resources and the LB-MUST Facility across the street.

As shown on Figure 1, Modified Project, under the original LB-MUST Master Plan, the proposed wetlands, were originally to be located at a 2.5-acre site south of the LB-MUST Facility across the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Shoreline Drive Bridge (Attachment E - Modified Project Figures). This site conflicts with the preferred alternative selected for the Shoemaker Bridge Replacement Project. As a result, an alternate location (Project site) closer to the LB-MUST treatment facility has been identified as the proposed location in the modified project. The modified project and the subject Site Plan Review (SPR) modification is limited to the relocation of the wetlands. The relocated wetlands additionally involve the demolition of an existing building that is currently located on that site, as shown in Figure 1, below.

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<sup>1</sup> The subject lot is presently addressed as 903 Fairbanks Avenue, but site addressing is subject to change due to the Tentative Tract Map.

Figure 1: Modified Project



Table 1, Project Components under Approved and Modified Project, provides a summary of the project changes. The alternate site is a 1.23-acre site and would require less soil removal to construct the wetlands. As a result of this location change, a 4-inch forcemain would be installed from existing pump station SD-02 to the LB-MUST Treatment Facility and to the new wetland location, but this work would be below grade and not visible after project completion. The addition of the forcemain is included in the environmental analysis prepared for this project scope but is not subject to the SPR approval. Dry weather flows, which accumulate at SD-02

would be conveyed via this new pipeline to the LB-MUST Facility. The original alignment routed stormwater to the LA-01/LB-MUST conveyance, but this connection will not be constructed as part of the modified project.

Table 1: Project Components under Approved and Modified Project

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Approved Project</b>	<b>Modified Project</b>
Pretreatment Wetlands Area	2.5 acres	1.23 acres
Building Demolition for Pretreatment Wetlands	None	8,250 CY
Excess Soils related to Pretreatment Wetlands Construction	20,315 CY (24,378 CY bulked)	9,995 CY (11,994 CY bulked)
Stormwater Conveyance to Pretreatment Wetlands	SD-01/SD-02 Conveyance – 72 ft	SD-02 Conveyance - 693 ft

The relocated wetlands would feature a passive walking/bicycle path along the perimeter of the wetland, seating areas, pedestrian lighting, bicycle rack, and trash receptacles (Attachment F - Wetland Plans). The combined walking/bicycle path along the perimeter of the wetland area would connect to adjacent sidewalks and access points to the abutting park connection and a crosswalk to the LB-MUST Facility and Los Angeles River bicycle path access point. The drought-tolerant landscaping at the wetlands would function as an extension of the demonstration garden at the LB-MUST Facility and include interpretive signage describing the treatment process. The relocation of the wetlands would provide greater connectivity to the public educational component at the LB-MUST Facility and provide better integration and transition between the abutting open space facilities at Drake Park and the nearby residential uses.

Because the project complies with the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and other applicable regulations, Staff is able to make positive findings for the Modification to the Approved Permit (Attachment G - Findings). Staff also included Conditions of Approval to ensure that the objectives of consistent, high-quality design for this project will be met, and the interests of the City will be protected (Attachment H - Conditions of Approval).

### **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

A total of 554 notices of public hearing were distributed on March 29, 2021 in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Zoning Regulations. No comments have been received as of the preparation of this report.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15164), an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) Addendum (NDA 01-21) was prepared to review the potential project changes included in the Modified Project (relocation of the wetlands and forcemain changes) (Attachment I - IS/MND Addendum NDA 01-21). The overall LB-MUST Project was analyzed as part of the previously adopted IS/MND (Attachment J - Negative Declaration ND 03-17). The IS/MND Addendum analyzed the proposed project in accordance with the LB-MUST IS/MND (SCH No. 2017071068) and determined that the project changes will not result in any new significant impacts that exceed those analyzed in the IS/MND, with mitigation measures included. Additionally, the development is subject to the LB-MUST IS/MND Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP). The MMRP is designed to ensure compliance with adopted mitigation measures during project implementation. For each mitigation measure recommended in the IS/MND that applies to the modified project proposal, specifications are made that identify the action required and the monitoring that must occur. In addition, the party for verifying compliance with individual mitigation measures is identified.

The IS/MND provided mitigation measures addressing potential impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, population and housing, and transportation/traffic. These mitigation measures are included as conditions of approval. The 2017 IS/MND was distributed to public agencies and made available for public review and comment for a CEQA-required 30-day review period that started on July 31, 2017 and ended on August 29, 2017. Comments were received during the review period. The Long Beach City Council carried out the approval of the overall LB-MUST Project on January 23, 2018.

The IS/MND and IS/MND Addendum determined that the project, in compliance with all recommended mitigation measures, would not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts. The preparation and public availability of the IS/MND and IS/MND Addendum has been carried out in compliance with the provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

Staff therefore recommends the Planning Commission approve the Modification to an Approved Permit (Site Plan Review) that would allow the relocation of the wetlands included in the overall Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater Treatment (LB-MUST) Project.

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

April 15, 2021

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Respectfully submitted,



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PROJECT PLANNER



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CURRENT PLANNING OFFICER



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PATRICIA DIEFENDERFER, AICP  
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



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Attachments: Attachment A - March 7, 2019 Planning Commission Staff Report  
Attachment B - Vicinity Map  
Attachment C - January 16, 2020 Planning Commission Staff Report  
Attachment D - Site Photos  
Attachment E - Modified Project Features  
Attachment F - Wetlands Plans  
Attachment G - Findings  
Attachment H - Conditions of Approval  
Attachment I - IS/MND Addendum NDA 01-21  
Attachment J - Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration ND 03-17