



Legislation Text

File #: 06-0468, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to authorize City Manager to transmit comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Los Angeles Unified School District South Region High School No. 4, located near the northeast corner of Santa Fe Avenue and Carson Street. (District 8)

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is proposing to build a new high school on a 13.7-acre parcel in the City of Long Beach near the northeast corner of Santa Fe Avenue and Carson Street. The school is intended to serve students residing in the City of Carson, but is proposed to be located in the City of Long Beach due to a discrepancy between the City boundaries and the school district boundaries.

This proposed high school, known as South Region High School No. 4, would provide 182,000 square feet of facilities with approximately 67 classrooms to serve 1,809 students in grades 9 through 12 (see attached map). The project would include a library/media center, a performing arts center, two gymnasiums, administrative offices, a police/security facility, and space for ancillary uses. Athletic facilities and recreational space would include a lighted stadium to accommodate various sports fields as well as separate basketball, tennis and handball courts. Additionally, a proposed joint use agreement with the City of Carson would permit the construction and use of a softball field in Dominguez Park, which abuts the project site northern boundary. A total of 168 parking spaces would be provided in an underground on-site structure for school faculty and staff only. There would be no on-site student or visitor parking areas.

The subject property is currently improved with industrial buildings that are used for industrial purposes. This property has both industrial zoning (IM, Medium Industrial) and General Plan land use (9G, General Industry) designations.

The City of Long Beach has objected to the selection of this site since hearing that it was being considered. The reasons for this objection include the facts that the school will not serve students residing in the City of Long Beach, the project will create demands on Long Beach fire, police, gas and water services, and the project will impact traffic and parking in the surrounding areas. Establishment of a high school on an industrial property will also mean the loss of available industrial property that could support trade and technology-related job production. Since the public rights-of-way along Santa Fe Avenue and Carson Street are within the City of Long Beach, the Department of Public Works would be responsible for all street maintenance and improvement projects.

At its regular November 1, 2005 meeting, the City Council directed the City Manager to prepare comments in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for this proposed high school and agendaize the issue for City Council consideration prior to transmittal of comments to the LAUSD.

The comments on this Draft EIR are attached to this Council letter for City Council consideration. The major issues and recommendations are as follows:

- There is no Land Use analysis chapter in the Draft EIR. Given the impact of this project on the economic viability of the surrounding industrial areas, the Draft EIR should be recirculated to provide a full evaluation of the project's impacts on local land use planning and economic development;
- The Preliminary Environmental Assessment currently under review with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control contains significant project information and should be incorporated into a recirculated Draft EIR;
- Since no on-site parking areas are provided for students or visitors, a high school intended to serve over 1,800 students will endanger student safety and create enormous parking demands in both the surrounding residential and industrial areas. The pedestrian analysis in the Draft EIR is flawed and provides misleading information;
- The traffic study is based on incorrect calculations and does not properly consider the requirements of the Long Beach City Traffic Engineer in the proposed street and crosswalk improvements. A revised traffic, parking and pedestrian analysis must be included in a recirculated Draft EIR;
- The project would negatively impact both Long Beach Police and Fire Department protective services;
- Pursuant to State law, a Water Availability Assessment must be prepared by the Long Beach Water Department since the project site is within its service area. This Assessment should be included in the recirculated Draft EIR; and
- The range of project alternatives is inadequate and the approach to alternative sites is limited to conclusory statements lacking supporting evidence. A revised Alternatives chapter must be included in the recirculated Draft EIR to properly disclosure the criteria used in evaluating alternative project sites.

City Council action on this matter is requested immediately as the deadline for submitting comments to the LAUSD is May 28, 2006. Since May 28, 2006 is actually a Sunday, comments should be received by the LAUSD, no later than Friday, May 26, 2006.

The project is expected to have a substantial adverse fiscal impact to the City. All municipal services, including fire, police, emergency medical response, gas and water, would be the responsibility of the City of Long Beach.

In addition to the cost impacts of providing municipal services, the high school would remove an economically viable property from future industrial uses to a tax-exempt use. Surrounding properties would also be subject to the South Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 1401 .I, which restricts the type of land use permits that can be granted within 1,000 feet of an existing school. Therefore, the high school would not only limit the economically productive use of the project site, but also the potential use of nearby industrial properties.

Approve recommendation.

NAME
TITLE

APPROVED:

GERALD R. MILLER
CITY MANAGER