
IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. IMPACTS FOUND TO BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Through the preparation of an Initial Study, and after reviewing the input received as a result of processing the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and conducting the public scoping meeting (see Section I [Introduction/Summary] of this Draft EIR), the City of Los Angeles has determined that the Project would not result in potentially significant impacts related to the environmental topics listed below. Section 15128 of the State CEQA Guidelines states:

An EIR shall contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR. Such a statement may be contained in an attached copy of an initial study.

As discussed in detail below, it has been determined that there is no substantial evidence that the Project would cause significant environmental effects in the following areas: Aesthetics, Agricultural Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, and Mineral Resources. Therefore, no further environmental review of these issues is necessary. For further analysis of each issue, see the Initial Study that was prepared for the NOP, which is contained in Appendix I-1 to this Draft EIR.

The Initial Study also determined that some issues may have potential adverse impacts on the environment, including: Air Quality; Biological Resources; Hazardous Materials and Risk of Upset; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Noise; Population and Housing; Public Services; Transportation and Traffic; and Utilities and Service Systems. Analyses of these issues are not included below, as each issue is analyzed in greater depth in Section IV (Environmental Impact Analysis) of this Draft EIR.

1. AESTHETICS

The Project would change and upgrade the visual character of the property's frontage along Western Avenue by replacing existing dilapidated one-story buildings, overgrown landscaping, and fences with new gated entrances, landscaping, and four-story residential buildings (set back approximately 20 feet from Western Avenue), as well as an approximately six-acre public park area. As such, the Project is not expected to substantially degrade the visual character of the Project site or its surroundings.

The Project would not adversely affect scenic vistas of the Pacific Ocean or Harbor area. The Pacific Ocean is located approximately three miles from the Project site, and vistas of the ocean are limited by distance, the horizon, and intervening topographical features.

Generally, views towards the Harbor area from Western Avenue across the Project site are presently obstructed due to topography, existing vegetation, dilapidated buildings, and fencing, although there are some intermittent views across the property to the Harbor area at the very northerly upper elevations of the property and where gaps exist in the existing improvements and vegetation along Western Avenue. These intermittent views are principally characterized by storage tanks, industrial (refinery) infrastructure,

and distant views of harbor cranes and the Vincent Thomas Bridge. Views toward the Harbor area across the southern portion of the Project site from Western Avenue are generally not available due to topography, adjacent development, and existing vegetation.

The elevation of the Project site ranges from approximately 101 to 249 feet above mean sea level (msl), sloping downward to the southeast as mentioned above. Although the Project may be visible from elevated vantage points west of Western Avenue, some of which are at elevations of up to 280 feet above msl, it would not block easterly views of the Harbor area from these locations, but rather would appear as an element in the viewshed. This is the case because the Project site slopes downward to the southeast, and because structures adjacent to Western Avenue would be limited to four-stories and set back approximately 20 feet from the right-of-way. Views across the southwest portion of the Project site towards the Harbor area would continue to be available after the Project is completed because this area would be improved with a public park area and potential little league fields.

Views of the Harbor area are not generally available across the Project site from the single-family residential neighborhood immediately west of the Project site because this neighborhood is configured as an internally-oriented subdivision that generally faces north and south rather than eastwards towards Western Avenue. Scenic vistas are not available looking north, west, or south across the Project site. Finally, the Project site is not located within the view corridor of a city-designated scenic highway. For these reasons, although the visual appearance of the Project site would change, impacts related to scenic vistas would be less than significant.

The Project site is located in an urban area with an ambient light environment that is typified by artificial lighting. Implementation of the Project would introduce new sources of light, including four- to six-story buildings with interior and exterior building lighting, low-level security/courtesy lighting for parking areas, street lighting, vehicle headlights, reflective surfaces such as windows and light-colored paint, and nighttime lighting for the potential little league baseball fields. All new light generated by the Project's operation would be similar to that generated by typical multi-family communities and would not significantly affect light-sensitive land uses by introducing new sources of light or glare that could have substantial adverse effects on day or nighttime views in the area. The proposed nighttime lighting for the potential little league baseball fields would introduce a substantial new source of light to the Project site, but conditions proposed as part of the Project, such as directing on-site lighting fixtures (including those for the potential little league baseball fields) toward the interior of the site and shielding them in order to avoid light spillover on neighboring residential uses, and limiting the operation of the baseball field lighting fixtures to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on Sundays through Thursdays, extending to 10:00 P.M on Fridays and Saturdays, have been included as mitigation measures in this Draft EIR (see mitigation measures below and Mitigation Measure G-10 in Section IV.G [Noise]).

Because potential environmental impacts have been evaluated with respect to aesthetics, and the Project would not result in significant adverse aesthetic environmental impacts, no further analysis of this issue is required in this Draft EIR.

Mitigation Measures (Aesthetics)

As discussed above and in the Initial Study, excessive illumination on the Project site from outdoor lighting fixtures within the Project (particularly the proposed park area) could cause environmental impacts to the adjacent residential properties. The following mitigation measures will avoid excessive illumination and thereby mitigate any impact to a level of insignificance:

- (A-1) All outdoor lighting within the Project shall be designed and installed with shielding, so that the light source cannot be seen from adjacent off-site residential properties.
- (A-2) In accordance with Mitigation Measure G-10 in Section IV.G (Noise) of this Draft EIR, use of the little league baseball fields in the public park area shall be restricted to between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M. on Sundays through Thursdays, extending to 10:00 P.M. on Fridays and Saturdays.

2. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

The Project would not result in the conversion of designated farmland to non-agricultural use because there is no agricultural land located on the Project site or in the vicinity of the Project site. The Project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use because the Project site is not zoned for agricultural use. Finally, because the City of Los Angeles does not currently participate in the Williamson Act, the Project would not conflict with a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, the Initial Study determined that the Project would have no impact on agricultural resources.

Because potential environmental impacts have been evaluated with respect to agricultural resources, and the Project would not result in significant adverse agricultural resource environmental impacts, no further analysis of this issue is required in this Draft EIR.

3. CULTURAL RESOURCES

No known historic resources are located within the boundaries of the Project site. The existing on-site structures are less than 45 years old and are not architecturally or historically significant. There are no unique geological features on the Project site. The Project site has been extensively graded, filled in locations, and improved with roadways, utilities, and buildings. In addition, no known archaeological or paleontological sites are located on the Project site (see cultural/archaeological and paleontological records search results in Appendix IV.A-1 and Appendix IV.A-2, respectively, to this Draft EIR). Nonetheless, precautionary mitigation measures are recommended that would avoid adverse impacts in the event that archeological and/or paleontological resources are unexpectedly encountered during construction of the Project. Finally, the Project site is not occupied by a cemetery or known burial grounds. Because potential environmental impacts have been evaluated with respect to cultural resources, and the Project would not result in significant adverse cultural resource environmental impacts, no further analysis of this issue is required in this Draft EIR.

Senate Bill (SB) 18 (Government Code §65352.3) requires local governments to consult with California Native American tribes identified by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) for the purpose of protecting and/or mitigating impacts to cultural places. These consultation and notice requirements apply to projects proposing adoption and amendment of both general plans (defined in Government Code §65300 et seq.) and specific plans (defined in Government Code §65450 et seq.). As required by Government Code Section 65352.3, the City of Los Angeles requested from NAHC contact information for tribes with traditional lands or cultural places located within the Project area. On May 26, 2006, the NAHC responded with a consultation list of such tribes and recommended that cultural records searches be done to determine if any cultural places are located within the Project area and could be affected by the Project (see Appendix IV.A-3 to this Draft EIR). The City of Los Angeles will contact each tribe identified in the NAHC's May 26, 2006 response letter and notify them of the opportunity to consult, in addition to providing them with copies of the cultural records searches that have previously been conducted for the Project site. As discussed above, cultural records searches have been conducted for the Project site and have indicated that there are no known cultural places on the site.

Mitigation Measures (Cultural Resources)

While no significant impacts are anticipated, the following mitigation measures are recommended in the event that archaeological or paleontological resources are unexpectedly encountered:

- (A-3) If any archaeological materials are encountered during the course of the Project development, the Project shall be halted. The services of an archaeologist shall be secured by contacting the Center for Public Archaeology – Cal State University Fullerton, or a member of the Society of Professional Archaeologist (SOPA) or a SOPA-qualified archaeologist to assess the resources and evaluate the impact.
- (A-4) If any paleontological materials are encountered during the course of the Project development, the Project shall be halted. The services of a paleontologist shall be secured by contacting the Center for Public Paleontology – USC, UCLA, Cal State Los Angeles, Cal State Long Beach, or the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum to assess the resources and evaluate the impact.
- (A-5) Copies of the archaeological survey, study or report shall be submitted to the UCLA Archaeological Information Center.
- (A-6) Copies of the paleontological survey, study or report shall be submitted to the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum.
- (A-7) A covenant and agreement shall be recorded prior to obtaining a grading permit.
- (A-8) In the event that human remains are discovered, there shall be no disposition of such human remains, other than in accordance with the procedures and requirements set forth in California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. These code provisions require notification of the County Coroner and the Native American Heritage Commission, who in turn must notify the those persons believed to be

most likely descended from the deceased Native American for appropriate disposition of the remains. Excavation or disturbance may continue in other areas of the project site that are not reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent or additional remains.

4. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The Project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone, and therefore would not be directly impacted by a known earthquake fault on the Project site. Drainage from the Project would be directed to the local storm drainage system and would not encounter unpaved or unprotected surfaces, thereby avoiding the potential for substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. The Project does not propose the use of septic tanks, which would require soils capable of adequately supporting the use of alternative wastewater disposal systems.

A Preliminary Geotechnical Engineering Exploration (“Geotechnical Report”) has been prepared for the Project by the J. Byer Group, Inc. and is included as Appendix IV.A-4 to this Draft EIR. The Geotechnical Report indicates that there are no risks on the Project site related to seismic hazards, liquefaction, landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, collapse, and expansive soils that cannot be mitigated by compliance with currently applicable engineering and construction requirements (see discussion below). The Geotechnical Report concludes that the Project is feasible from a geotechnical engineering standpoint provided the advice and recommendations contained in the Geotechnical Report are included in the Project plans and are implemented during construction. The Project applicant has agreed to include the advice and recommendations contained in the Geotechnical Report in the Project plans and implement such advice and recommendations during Project construction.

Pursuant to existing law and applicable regulations, design and construction of the Project will also be required to incorporate measures to protect against risks related to seismic ground shaking, liquefaction, landslides, and geologic instability. These measures include compliance with the City of Los Angeles Uniform Building Code (UBC), the City’s building permit requirements, and site-specific engineering recommendations based upon the recommendations of a licensed geotechnical engineer and a geotechnical report approved by the City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety. Compliance with existing applicable laws and regulations, which is already mandated and will be required through the City’s project review and Building and Safety review process, will mitigate potential geologic risks to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the Initial Study determined that the Project would have a less-than-significant impact on geology and soils.

The potential environmental impacts of the Project have been evaluated with respect to geology and soils. The Geotechnical Report indicates there are no risks on the Project site related to seismic hazards, liquefaction, landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, collapse, and expansive soils that cannot be mitigated by compliance with building code requirements required as a matter of law, as well as the recommendations of the Geotechnical Report. These requirements and recommendations will be required as conditions of the Project, as reflected in Mitigation Measure A-9, below. Accordingly, there is no substantial evidence that the Project would result in significant adverse geology and soils environmental impacts, and no further analysis of this issue is required in this Draft EIR.

Mitigation Measures (Geology and Soils)

- (A-9) The advice and recommendations contained in the June 2005 Preliminary Geotechnical Engineering Exploration prepared for the Project site by the J. Byer Group, Inc. shall be included in the Project plans and implemented during Project construction.

5. MINERAL RESOURCES

The Project site is not known to be the likely source for any mineral resources of value to the region, residents, or the State. The Project site is not located within a locally-important mineral resource recovery area delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. Furthermore, as the site is currently developed, the Project would not alter its status with respect to the availability of mineral resources. Therefore, the Initial Study determined that the Project would have no impact on mineral resources, and no further analysis is required in this Draft EIR.