

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared to evaluate environmental impacts associated with the proposed Belmont Pool Revitalization Project (proposed Project) in the City of Long Beach (City). The City is the “public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the project” and, as such, is the “Lead Agency” for this project under the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) (*State CEQA Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA* Section 15367). CEQA requires the Lead Agency to consider the information contained in the EIR prior to taking any discretionary action. This Draft EIR is intended to serve as an informational document to be considered by the City and the Responsible Agencies during deliberations on the proposed Project. The anticipated project approvals associated with the proposed Project are described in Section 3.0, Project Description.

The City prepared an Initial Study (IS) for the proposed Project to determine whether a Categorical Exemption (CE), a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), or an EIR would be the appropriate documentation for compliance with CEQA (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) for the proposed Project. The analysis contained in the IS found that the project may have a significant effect on the environment unless mitigation is included to lessen or avoid the environmental effects of the project. The City staff determined that an EIR was the appropriate environmental document to be prepared for the proposed Belmont Pool Revitalization Project. The IS was prepared and circulated, along with a Notice to Prepare (NOP) an EIR, for public review from April 18 to May 17, 2013. Subsequent to issuance of the IS/NOP, changes were made to the site design that required the City to revise and reissue the IS. The revised IS was recirculated for public review from April 9 to May 8, 2014.

This Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with CEQA (PRC Section 21000 et seq.) and the *State CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.). This Draft EIR also complies with the procedures established by the City for implementation of CEQA.

Questions regarding the preparation of this document and the City review of the proposed Project should be referred to the following:

City of Long Beach  
Department of Development Services  
333 West Ocean Boulevard, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Long Beach, California 90802  
Attention: Craig Chalfant, City Planner  
(562) 570-6368  
craig.chalfant@longbeach.gov

## 2.1 PURPOSE AND TYPE OF EIR/INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This Draft EIR has been prepared to evaluate environmental impacts that may result from implementation of the proposed Project. As the Lead Agency, the City has the authority for preparation of this Draft EIR and, after the comment/response process, certification of the Final EIR and approval of the proposed Project as described in this Draft EIR.

The City and Responsible Agencies have the authority to make decisions on discretionary actions relating to development of the proposed Project. As stated previously, this Draft EIR is intended to serve as an informational document to be considered by the City and Responsible Agencies during deliberations on the proposed Project. This EIR evaluates and mitigates a reasonable worst-case scenario of potential impacts associated with the proposed Project.

This EIR will serve as a Project EIR pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15161. According to Section 15161 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, a Project EIR is appropriate for specific development projects in which information is available for all phases of the project, including planning, construction, and operation.

As previously mentioned, the City is the Lead Agency for this Project under CEQA (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15367) and as such, must consider the information contained in the EIR prior to taking any discretionary action. This EIR provides information to the Lead Agency and other public agencies, the general public, and decision-makers regarding the potential environmental impacts from construction and operation of the proposed Project. The purpose of the public review of the EIR is to evaluate the adequacy of the environmental analysis in terms of compliance with CEQA. Section 15151 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* states the following regarding standards from which adequacy is judged:

“An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among experts. The courts have not looked for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.”

Under CEQA (PRC Section 21002.1[a]):

“The purpose of an environmental impact report is to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided.”

As previously discussed in Chapter 1.0, Executive Summary, an EIR is the most comprehensive form of environmental documentation identified in CEQA and the *State CEQA Guidelines* and provides the information needed to assess the environmental consequences of a proposed project. EIRs are intended to provide an objective, factually supported, full-disclosure analysis of the environmental consequences associated with a proposed project that has the potential to result in significant, adverse environmental impacts.

## 2.2 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

In compliance with the *State CEQA Guidelines*, the City has taken steps to maximize opportunities for the public and public agencies to participate in the environmental review process. The City conducted the scoping process, issued an NOP and an IS for the proposed Project, and determined that an EIR was required to evaluate the potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed Project and related actions.

### 2.2.1 Notice of Preparation

On April 18, 2013, an NOP was distributed by the City for the proposed Belmont Pool Revitalization Project. The State of California Clearinghouse (SCH) issued a project number for the Draft EIR (SCH No. 2013041063). In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15082, the NOP was circulated to the agencies and individuals listed in Appendix A from April 18, 2013, through May 17, 2013, during which time written comments were solicited pertaining to environmental issues/topics that the Draft EIR should evaluate.

Subsequent to issuance of the IS/NOP, changes were made to the site design that required the City to revise and reissue the NOP and the IS. The revised NOP and IS were recirculated for public review from April 9 to May 8, 2014, during which time additional written comments were solicited and received. The recirculated NOP and responses to the NOP from agencies, organizations, and individuals are included in Appendix A of this EIR. Appendix A contains copies of the recirculated NOP comment letters that were received. Written responses to the NOP issued on April 18, 2013, were received from the following:

- South Coast Air Quality Management District
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
- County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County

Written responses to the NOP reissued on April 9, 2014, were received from the following:

- South Coast Air Quality Management District
- County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- Native American Heritage Commission
- Lucy Johnson (member of the public)

### 2.2.2 Areas of Controversy

Key environmental issues and concerns raised in the responses to the NOP included: (1) potential for increased traffic; (2) potential for discovery of cultural resources; (3) potential for air quality impacts; (4) increases in wastewater discharges; (5) potential for impacts to storm drain facilities; and (6) concerns of pool design and amenities meeting the overall desires of the swimming community.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of areas of controversy but rather key issues that were raised during the scoping process. The EIR addresses each of these areas of concern or controversy in detail, examines Project-related and cumulative environmental impacts, identifies significant adverse environmental impacts, and proposes mitigation measures designed to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts. Appendix A includes the recirculated NOP and copies of written comments received.

On June 17, 2014, the City Council conducted a study session on the programmatic requirements and conceptual plans for the proposed Project. The City Council suggested that a community stakeholder committee be convened to prioritize optional components of the conceptual plan for the City Council to consider for approval. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee consisted of representatives from a number of different stakeholders, including residents, business interests, aquatics community, competitive users, recreational users, diving, water polo, swimming, and representatives for the community at large. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee conducted three workshops in July and August 2014 and explored various issues related to the pool in a collaborative discussion. The Stakeholder Committee recommended a conceptual design and held a public meeting on September 17, 2014 at the Rogers Middle School. Approximately 150 to 200 people attended and asked questions and provided comments. Additionally, draft input was sought from the California Coastal Commission (CCC) local staff and, upon initial review the local staff of the CCC was supportive of the direction of the conceptual facility design and emphasized their preference for the facility to have a primarily public recreation focus with the availability to accommodate private/competitive events when public demand is low. Formal comments and approval by the Coastal Commission will occur later in the process. Another public City Council meeting was held October 21 2014, where the City Council unanimously approved the recommended programmatic requirement recommended by City staff, and based primarily on the recommendations of the Stakeholder Committee. Based on input from the City Council, Stakeholders Advisory Committee, the general public, and the CCC, the major common issues of concern raised included: (1) loss of park space; (2) wildlife; (3) parking; (4) noise; (5) aesthetics; (6) geologic stability (7) design features; and (8) cost.

Additionally, the EIR addresses each of the areas of concern addressed in the NOP comment period, examines Project-related and cumulative environmental impacts, identifies significant adverse environmental impacts, and proposes mitigation measures designed to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts of the proposed Project.

### **2.2.3 Public Review Period**

This EIR is being distributed to numerous public agencies and other interested parties for review and comment. The EIR is also available at the following locations throughout the City and on the City's website.<sup>1</sup>

City of Long Beach  
Development Services/Planning Bureau  
333 West Ocean Boulevard, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Long Beach, California 90802

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<sup>1</sup> Long Beach Development Services. Website: [http:// www.lbds.info/planning/environmental\\_planning/environmental\\_reports.asp](http://www.lbds.info/planning/environmental_planning/environmental_reports.asp).

Long Beach Main Library  
101 Pacific Avenue  
Long Beach, California 90802  
For hours of operation, call (562) 570-7500

Bay Shore Neighborhood Library  
195 Bay Shore Avenue  
Long Beach, California 90803  
For hours of operation, call (562) 570-1039

All comments received from agencies and individuals on the EIR will be accepted during the public review period, which will not be less than 45 days in compliance with CEQA. All comments on the EIR should be sent to the following City contact person:

Craig Chalfant, City Planner  
City of Long Beach,  
Development Services/Planning Bureau  
333 West Ocean Boulevard, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Long Beach, California 90802  
Phone: (562) 570-6368  
Email: craig.chalfant@longbeach.gov

Following the close of the review period, the City will prepare responses to all comments and will compile these comments and responses into a Final EIR. Responses to comments submitted on the EIR by agencies will be provided to those agencies at least 10 days prior to certifying the Final EIR. The City will make findings regarding the extent and nature of the impacts as presented in the Final EIR. The Final EIR will need to be certified as complete by the City prior to making a decision to approve or deny the Project. Public input is encouraged at all public hearings before the City.

## **2.3 SCOPE OF THIS EIR**

As required by *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15128, this EIR must identify the effects of the proposed Project determined not to be significant. The scoping process for this EIR included the preparation of an IS. Per *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15063, the City prepared an IS to determine whether the Project could have a significant effect on the environment. The City determined that the proposed Project may have a significant impact on the environment and, as explained in Section 2.2.1 of this EIR, issued an NOP soliciting comments from Responsible and Trustee Agencies and other interested parties, including members of the public. In addition to identifying potentially significant impacts of the Project that required additional study, the IS also identified effects determined not to be significant consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15063(c)(3)(B). Impacts that were determined to be less than significant were discussed and evaluated in the IS contained in Appendix A of this EIR. The analysis determined that the proposed Project would result in no impacts to agricultural resources, public services, population and housing, or mineral resources.

For this reason, potential impacts related to agricultural resources, public services, population and housing, and mineral resources are discussed solely in Appendix A of this EIR. The City's IS and Environmental Checklist Form are discussed in Chapter 4.0 of this document, and a copy of the IS and Environmental Checklist for the proposed Project are included in Appendix A of this EIR.

## **2.4 FORMAT OF THE EIR**

Pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15120(c), this EIR contains the information and analysis required by Sections 15122 through 15131. Each of the required elements is covered in one of the sections described below.

### **2.4.1 Section 1.0: Executive Summary**

Section 1.0 contains the Executive Summary of the EIR, listing all significant Project impacts, mitigation measures that have been recommended to reduce any significant impacts of the proposed Project, and the level of significance of each impact following mitigation. The summary is presented in a matrix (tabular) format.

### **2.4.2 Section 2.0: Introduction**

Section 2.0 contains a discussion of the purpose and intended use of the EIR, a background on Project initiation and the NOP, and areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by the public. A summary discussion of effects found not to be significant and, therefore, not included in the EIR analysis is also included in this section.

### **2.4.3 Section 3.0: Project Description**

Section 3.0 includes a discussion of the Project's geographical setting, the history of the Project site, and the Project's goals, objectives, characteristics, and components.

### **2.4.4 Section 4.0: Environmental Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures**

Section 4.0 includes an analysis of the Project's environmental impacts. It is organized into topical sections, including Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use, Noise, Recreation, Transportation and Circulation, and Utilities and Service Systems. The environmental setting discussions describe the "existing conditions" of the environment on the Project site and in the vicinity of the site as they pertain to the environmental issues being analyzed (Section 15125 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*).

The environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a Lead Agency determines whether an impact is significant (Section 15125[a] of the *State CEQA Guidelines*). In this case, the City, as the Lead Agency under CEQA, has used its discretion with regard to baseline in order to note that the existing pool had been operational for over 45 years, and the closure and demolition of the permanent facility was due to public safety concerns. Furthermore,

it was well-known via the City's website and public discussion that a rehabilitation of the Belmont Pool was being pursued by the City. Had the pool not been closed in an emergency, the EIR for the rehabilitation Project would have occurred while the pool was still operational. Therefore, the City finds that the pre-closure operational levels of the Belmont Pool constitute the appropriate baseline for the CEQA analysis.

The project impact discussions identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of the proposed Project. The direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment are identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects, as necessary (Section 15126.2[a] of the *State CEQA Guidelines*).

Chapter 4.0 also includes within each environmental impact analyzed, a discussion of the cumulative effects of the Project when considered in combination with other projects, as required by Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines. Cumulative impacts are based on the build out of the Project and the surrounding area, including all other known projects in the surrounding area.

The discussions of mitigation measures identify and describe feasible measures that could minimize or lessen significant adverse impacts for each significant environmental effect identified in the EIR (Section 15126.4 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*). The level of significance after mitigation is reported in each section. Unavoidable adverse effects are identified where mitigation is not expected to reduce the effects to less than significant levels.

#### **2.4.5 Section 5.0: Alternatives to the Proposed Project**

In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6, the alternatives discussion in Section 5.0 describes a reasonable range of alternatives that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the Project and that are capable of eliminating any significant adverse environmental effects or reducing them to a less than significant level. Alternatives analyzed in Section 5.0 include the No Project/No New Development Alternative, the Maintain Temporary Pool with Ancillary Uses Alternative, the Outdoor Diving Well Alternative, a Reduced Project - No Outdoor Components Alternative, and Reduced Project - No Diving Well and No Outdoor Components Alternative.

#### **2.4.6 Section 6.0: Long-Term Implications of the Project**

Section 6.0 includes CEQA-mandated discussions required by Section 15126.2 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* regarding: (a) significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed Project, (b) significant adverse environmental impacts for which either no mitigation or only partial mitigation is feasible, and (c) growth-inducing impacts of the proposed Project.

#### **2.4.7 Section 7.0: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program**

PRC Section 21081.6 requires that agencies adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting program for any project for which findings have been made pursuant to PRC Section 21081. Section 7.0 provides a list of all proposed Project mitigation measures, defines the party responsible for implementation of those measures, and identifies the timing for implementation of each control measure.

#### **2.4.8 Sections 8.0 and 9.0: Report Preparers and References**

Sections 8.0 and 9.0, respectively, provide the EIR preparers, the technical report authors, and the organizations and persons contacted during preparation of the EIR; and the references used by the authors.

### **2.5 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE**

As permitted in Section 15150 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, an EIR may reference all or portions of another document that is a matter of public record or is generally available to the public. Information from the documents that have been incorporated by reference has been briefly summarized in the appropriate sections of this EIR, along with a description of how the public may obtain and review these documents. These documents include:

- City of Long Beach General Plan, City of Long Beach, as amended
- City of Long Beach Municipal Code
- Local Coastal Program (LCP), City of Long Beach, 1980
- State Tidelands Grant, City of Long Beach
- City of Long Beach Parks, Recreation and Marine Strategic Plan, City of Long Beach, 2003

Documents that are incorporated by reference are available for review at the City of Long Beach, Department of Development Services, 333 West Ocean Boulevard, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Long Beach, California 90802.