

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This environmental impact report (EIR) has been prepared by the City of Long Beach (City) as the Lead Agency in conformance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Sections 21000 et seq.) and the *CEQA Guidelines* (14 California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et seq.), to analyze the environmental effects of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Oil Consolidation and Restoration Project (proposed project).

1.1 Project Overview

Beach Oil Minerals Partners (BOMP, the Applicant) proposes to consolidate its existing oil operations and implement a wetlands habitat restoration project that would provide new public access opportunities to this portion of the Los Cerritos Wetlands. The proposed project would occur on four individual sites that together comprise the project site. These individual sites are commonly known as the Synergy Oil Field site, the City Property site, the Pumpkin Patch site, and the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA) site. Existing oil operations on the Synergy Oil Field and City Property sites would be phased out over time, and new oil production facilities would be constructed and operated on the Pumpkin Patch and LCWA sites. The northern portion of the Synergy Oil Field site would be remediated, if necessary, and restored to a natural wetland area, and oil operations on the southern portion of the Synergy Oil Field site and on the City Property site would continue for a fixed period of time of up to 40 years, but would ultimately be phased out as new operations are established on the Pumpkin Patch and LCWA sites. The proposed project also includes the construction of a new office building and storage structure on the Pumpkin Patch site to support the oil operations. Once the offices are relocated to the Pumpkin Patch site, the proposed project will relocate the existing office building on the Synergy Oil Field site to another location on the Synergy Oil Field site, repurpose it for use as a visitors center, construct a small parking area and construct a perimeter trail to provide public access to a portion of the Los Cerritos Wetlands restored as part of this project.

The proposed project comprises four individual sites. The four individual sites total approximately 195 acres. Each site's location and ownership is provided in more detail below:

- **Synergy Oil Field site:** The Synergy Oil Field site consists of an approximately 150-acre property located at 6433 East 2nd Street. The site is bound by the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) to the west, 2nd Street to the south, Studebaker Road to the east, and the Los Cerritos Channel to the north. The site is owned by Los Cerritos Wetlands, LLC.
- **City Property site:** The City Property site is an approximately 33-acre site located at 2nd Street and Shopkeeper Road. The site is bound by Shopkeeper Road to the west, 2nd Street to the north, undeveloped land to the east, and the San Gabriel River to the south. The site is owned by the City of Long Beach. LCW Oil Operations, LLC, holds rights to operate oil production facilities on the City Property site subject to a surface use agreement and easement.

- **Pumpkin Patch site:** The Pumpkin Patch site comprises an approximately 7-acre property located at 6701 East PCH. The site is undeveloped except for an oil well and associated pipeline and is used seasonally as a pumpkin patch and Christmas tree lot. The site is bounded by PCH to the west, San Gabriel River to the south, commercial-retail uses at the Marketplace to the north, and undeveloped land associated with the City Property to the east. A Lyon Living affiliate owns the site.
- **LCWA site:** The LCWA site consists of an approximately 5-acre parcel located at the northeast corner of Studebaker Road and 2nd Street. The site is bound by 2nd Street to the south and Studebaker Road to the west and is adjacent to industrial development to the north and east. The site is owned by the LCWA.

1.2 Purpose of the EIR

According to CEQA, the purpose of an EIR 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” (PRC Section 21002.1). As defined in *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15382, a “significant effect on the environment” is:

“A substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.”

In accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15125, an EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project as they exist at the time of the Notice of Preparation (NOP), or, if no NOP is published, at the time the environmental analysis begins. This environmental setting will typically constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a Lead Agency determines whether an impact is significant. For each topical area evaluated in this EIR, the date or period that constitutes the baseline conditions is identified. This EIR evaluates the project’s environmental effects at a project level of detail and examines all phases of the project, including planning, construction, and operation as well as the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that might result.

As stated in *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15121(a), an EIR is an informational document intended to inform the Lead Agency and other public agencies that may have discretionary authority over aspects of the project, the general public, the local community, and other organizations, entities, and interested persons of the scope of the project, significant environmental effects of the project, possible measures to avoid or minimize the significant effects, and a reasonable range of feasible alternatives to the project. The City must consider the information in this EIR and make certain findings with respect to each significant effect identified in this EIR. The City will use the information in the EIR, along with other information available through the public review processes, to determine whether to approve, modify, or disapprove the project, or a project alternative, and to specify applicable environmental mitigation measures as part of the project approvals.

1.3 Environmental Review Process

1.3.1 Purpose and Legal Authority

CEQA and the *CEQA Guidelines* provide a process that (1) informs governmental decision makers and the public about the potentially significant environmental effects of proposed activities; (2) identifies ways that environmental

impacts can be avoided or significantly reduced; (3) prevents significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governmental agency finds the changes to be feasible; and (4) discloses to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

1.3.2 EIR Adequacy

The principal use of an EIR is to disclose information regarding the environmental ramifications of the project for consideration by the decision makers when reviewing the project. The standards for adequacy of an EIR, defined in *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15151, are as follows:

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 the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

This EIR has been prepared by the City, as the Lead Agency, and its consultants in accordance with the *CEQA Guidelines* for the implementation of CEQA.

1.3.3 Scope of Analysis and Mitigation Measures

To determine the appropriate scope of analysis for this EIR, the City prepared and circulated an NOP and Initial Study (IS) (NOP/IS) from April 28, 2016, through May 27, 2016, as required by *CEQA Guidelines* Sections 15082 and 15063. The NOP/IS was circulated to solicit input from interested public agencies (e.g., responsible and trustee agencies) and interested individuals on the scope and content of this EIR. A copy of the letters and comments received during the NOP/IS comment period are provided in Appendix A to this EIR. The City held a scoping meeting during the 30-day scoping period on May 11, 2016, to solicit comments and inform the public of this EIR.

This EIR addresses the environmental issues determined to be potentially significant as identified and disclosed in the Initial Study and based on input from agencies and interested individuals provided during the Scoping Meetings and comment letters on the NOP.

1.3.3.1 Scope of Analysis

Based on the NOP/IS, the following 18 resources areas were carried forward for further evaluation in the Draft EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Seismicity, and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality

- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Employment
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Energy Consumption

The NOP/IS determined that the project would not have impacts associated with agricultural resources because the project site is located within a highly urbanized area currently in use as an oil field; no farmland, forest land or timberland, agricultural uses, or related operations are present within the project site or surrounding areas; and the project site is not zoned for forest land or timberland or agricultural use, nor is it subject to a Williamson Act Contract (CDC 2013). Thus, no impacts related to agricultural resources would occur, and this topic is not evaluated in the EIR. The full discussion for this determination is provided in the NOP/IS in Appendix A of this EIR.

1.4 Public Review of the Draft EIR

This Draft EIR has been distributed to relevant state agencies, surrounding cities, and interested parties for review in accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15087. In compliance with the provisions of *CEQA Guidelines* Sections 15085(a) and 15087(a)(1) and the City's environmental review procedures, the City, serving as the Lead Agency, (1) published a Notice of Availability (NOA) of a Draft EIR that indicated that the Draft EIR was available for review at the City's Planning Bureau, Development Services Department, 333 West Ocean Boulevard, 5th Floor, Long Beach, CA 90802; (2) provided copies of the NOA and the Draft EIR to the Long Beach Public Library at 101 Pacific Avenue; (3) posted the NOA and the Draft EIR on the City's website (<http://www.lbds.info/planning/>); (4) prepared and transmitted an NOA to the State Clearinghouse; (5) sent an NOA to all property owners at least 300 feet of the project site; and (6) sent an NOA to the last known name and address of all organizations and individuals who previously requested such a notice in writing or attended public meetings about the project. Proof of publication is available at the City Planning Division Counter. Review the published NOA for the comment period deadline.

The public comment period began on Monday July 24, 2017. Written comments on this Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Craig Chalfant
Planning Bureau, Development Services Department
City of Long Beach
333 West Ocean Boulevard, 5th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

Written comments can also be provided via email to craig.chalfant@longbeach.gov or via fax to 562.570.6068. Written comments on this Draft EIR must be received by the deadline in the published NOA, which is no later than 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday September 6, 2017.

1.5 Organization of the EIR

The EIR is organized into chapters as identified and briefly described below. The chapters are further divided into sections (e.g., Section 3.2, *Air Quality*).

- **Executive Summary:** This chapter presents a summary of the proposed project and the identified environmental impacts. It describes mitigation measures that would be implemented and the level of significance both before and after mitigation (as fully analyzed in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures*). It also provides a summary of alternatives to the proposed project, a summary of known controversial issues, and a summary of issues to be resolved.
- **Chapter 1, Introduction:** This chapter presents a project overview; a discussion of the purpose and use of this EIR; a discussion of the environmental process; and the organization of this EIR.
- **Chapter 2, Project Description:** This chapter provides a detailed description of the proposed project and its location. It also identifies project objectives, project characteristics, the development schedule, and the intended uses of the EIR, including permits and approvals that would be required to implement the project.
- **Chapter 3, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures:** For each environmental issue listed in Section 1.3.3, Scope of Analysis and Mitigation Measures, this chapter describes the existing environmental and regulatory settings, evaluates and reaches significance conclusions for project-specific and cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project, identifies mitigation for impacts determined to be significant, and discusses the level of significance after implementation of those mitigation measures.
- **Chapter 4, Other CEQA Considerations:** This chapter identifies impacts considered to be significant and unavoidable. In addition, the growth-inducing effects and significant irreversible environmental changes associated with construction or operations of the proposed project are also identified.
- **Chapter 5, Alternatives:** This chapter provides information regarding project alternatives to be considered by decision makers in compliance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6. The alternatives analysis evaluates a range of reasonable alternatives to the project or to the location of the project that would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. In addition, this chapter summarizes the alternatives that were considered but rejected from further consideration because they did not meet project objectives, were determined to be infeasible, or did not avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.
- **Chapter 6, Report Preparers:** This chapter lists the individuals involved in preparing this EIR.
- **Chapter 7, Abbreviations/Acronyms and Glossary:** This chapter lists and defines abbreviations and acronyms as well as technical terms used in this EIR.
- **Appendices:** This EIR includes appendices that provide either background information or additional technical support for the analysis.

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