

APPROVED

MAR 19 2008

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 08-76

DATE March 19, 2008

BOARD OF RECREATION  
and PARK COMMISSIONERS

C.D. 12

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: SEPULVEDA BASIN SPORTS COMPLEX (W.O. #E170217A) -  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/MITIGATED NEGATIVE  
DECLARATION

R. Adams	_____	J. Kolb	_____
H. Fujita	_____	F. Mok	_____
S. Huntley	_____	K. Regan	_____
V. Israel	_____	*M. Shull	<i>MS</i>

*[Signature]*  
General Manager

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Review, consider and adopt the Final Environmental Assessment/Mitigated Negative Declaration (EA/MND) prepared for the proposed Sepulveda Basin Sports Complex, finding on the basis of the entire record of proceedings in the project, including the EA/MND and any comments received, that all potentially significant environmental effects of the project have been properly disclosed, evaluated and mitigated in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and State and City CEQA Guidelines and reflects the Department of Recreation and Parks' independent judgment and analysis;
2. Review, consider and adopt the Mitigation Monitoring Plan, published under separate cover, that specifies the mitigation measures designed to reduce or eliminate the potentially significant environmental impacts identified in the EA/MND, in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15074 (d));
3. Direct Staff to file the Notice of Determination (NOD) for the project with the Los Angeles City and County Clerks within five working days of the Board's action; and,

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4. Authorize the Department's Chief Accounting Employee to issue a check in the amount of \$1,926.75 from the available Proposition K funding, payable to the Los Angeles County Clerk, for the NOD filing fee and California Department of Fish and Game Fee.

### SUMMARY:

The proposed project would be located in the San Fernando Valley within the Sepulveda Dam Flood Control Basin and Recreation Area on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and leased to the City of Los Angeles for recreational development. It would be located on a parcel of approximately 65 acres of open space at Balboa Boulevard south of Victory Boulevard. The proposed project was initiated as a result of Proposition K, "Los Angeles for Kids Program," passed by City voters in November 1996, which provides a budget of \$25 million per year for 30 years to fund acquisition and capital improvements for parks and recreational facilities in Los Angeles. The development of the proposed project would provide a much needed recreational amenity to the community and would ensure safe, informed patronage of the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin and Recreation Area. The proposed action would maximize the use of the City's Proposition K and State Proposition 40 funds for recreational development.

The project will be phased, depending on availability of funds. It will construct improvements within a portion of the 65 acre site to include, but not be limited to, soccer and baseball/softball fields, walking/bicycle trails, American Disability Act (ADA) accessible restrooms, fencing, lighting, parking lot, landscaping and appurtenant structures. The project is currently anticipated to start construction in October 2008.

The project would satisfy the COE mission to help provide recreation at water resource projects, as consistent with the 1981 Sepulveda Basin Master Plan, by providing a regional sports complex, as well as, in future phases of the project, passive recreational amenities including walking trails and picnic areas adjacent to the LA River. The site is currently leased from the COE by a sod farm, and is used to cultivate sod for private use and sales.

The new Sepulveda Basin Sports Complex project would serve three main purposes: (1) to provide additional public active recreational amenities in an area that contains congested, intensively over-used recreational facilities; (2) to provide public passive recreational amenities that would add open space to a region lacking in these resources; and (3) to serve as vital linkage in promoting restoration of the Los Angeles River corridor vis-à-vis provision of habitat, runoff filtration, enhanced public access to the River and protection of its riparian ecology. Additionally, Department of Recreation and Parks personnel would manage the facility's operation and maintenance providing a public oversight function that does not currently exist within the area.

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The sports complex facility is intended to serve a variety of functions, including the hosting of organized sports (e.g., softball and soccer in designated fields), picnicking (at tables and on the open space lawns), walking (via pedestrian trails), bicycling (via bicycle paths along the River and connecting to those in the project vicinity) and enjoyment of local flora and fauna (while using benches along the pathways or by observing and exploring the planted riparian buffer area). As of April 2006, design details have not been finalized for the entire project build-out since it is being constructed in phases and is subject to funding limitations.

The Bureau of Engineering's Environmental Management Group, in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, prepared a proposed Environmental Assessment/Mitigated Negative Declaration (EA/MND) for the construction of the new Sepulveda Basin Sports Complex.

A public notice was published in the Los Angeles Times on June 22, 2006, announcing the availability of the draft EA/MND for public review. The draft EA/MND was circulated to governmental agencies and the public for review and comments for a 45-day period from June 23, 2006 to August 7, 2006. A final EA/MND has been prepared, consisting of the Draft EA/MND, public and agency comments received, and staff responses to all relevant environmental issues raised. The final EA/MND and Initial Study is attached to this report for the Board's review, consideration, and adoption.

In accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a joint Environmental Assessment/Mitigated Negative Declaration (EA/MND) was prepared based on an Environmental Assessment/Initial Study, which determined that all potentially significant environmental effects would be mitigated to a level less than significant. The EA/MND was circulated to all interested parties and responsible agencies for a 45-day review and comment period from June 23 to August 7, 2006. All comments received during the public and agency review period have been responded to in the separately bound Public Review Record. Based on the review of all comments received, the Department concluded that no fair or reasonable arguments have been made that identified new environmental impacts from the project or that would require additional mitigation measures. In addition, City environmental staff has determined that there have been no substantial changes in the environmental conditions at the park or in the design of the project since the preparation of the MND. Therefore, no revisions to the MND, or additional public review and re-circulation are required. A separately bound Mitigation Monitoring Program, that specifies all of the mitigation measures identified in the EA/MND, which would either reduce or eliminate the potentially significant environmental impacts of the project has been prepared and is attached hereto. It was determined that the project, as proposed, could individually or cumulatively have an adverse effect on wildlife resources or their habitats as defined by Fish and Game Code 711.2. This required a formal review of the EA/MND by the Department of Fish and Game and will require the payment of a \$1,926.75 fee, as described previously herein, at the time the Notice of

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Determination (NOD) is filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk. The EA/MND, along with the Public Review Record and Mitigation Monitoring Program documents, the originals of which are in the custody of the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering located at 1149 South Broadway, have been provided to both this Board of Commissioners and the Commission for Fish and Game for their review, consideration and adoption.

Subsequent to this Board's approval, review of the EA/MND, and staff's filing of the NOD with the City and County Clerk's, assuming there are no challenges to same, BOE will prepare the final plans and specifications, and return to this Board to request authority to advertise the project for bid and award. It is anticipated that this process shall begin same time in April or May 2008.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

There is no fiscal impact to the Department's General Fund at this time.

This Board Report was prepared by Cathie Santo Domingo and Meghan Aldrich, Recreational and Cultural Facilities Program, and Catalina Hernandez, Environmental Management Group, Bureau of Engineering. Reviewed by Neil Drucker, Program Manager, Recreational and Cultural Facilities Program; Deborah Weintraub, Acting Chief Deputy City Engineer, Bureau of Engineering; and Michael A. Shull, Superintendent, Planning and Development Division, Department of Recreation and Parks.