

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: 02/10/14		Item Number: <u>A-2</u>	
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM: (1) Adoption of a Resolution Transmitting to the County of Los Angeles the Official City Response to the December 2013 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Proposed Stoneview Nature Center Project Located at 5950 Stoneview Drive and (2) Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding Between the City of Culver City and the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation for the Stoneview Nature Center Operation.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Charles D. Herbertson, Public Works Dept. and Susan Yun, Planning Division		Phone Number: (310) 253-5630 and (310) 253-5755	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒		Date: N/A	
Public Notification: On 01/23/14 a public notice was mailed to property owners and occupants within the Blair Hills Neighborhood in Culver City; Meetings and Agendas – City Council (02/04/14).			
Department Approval: Charles D. Herbertson (02/04/14)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (02/04/14)	
Fiscal Impact Review : Jeff Muir (02/04/14)		City Manager Approval: John Nachbar (02/04/14)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council (1) adopt a Resolution transmitting to the County of Los Angeles the official City response to the December 2013 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed Stoneview Nature Center Project located at 5950 Stoneview Drive and (2) approve the Memorandum of Understanding Between the City of Culver City and County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation for the Stoneview Nature Center Operation. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> The County of Los Angeles (the “County”) has prepared an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, dated December 2013 (“December 2013 MND”), for the Stoneview Nature Center project (the “Project” or “Nature Center”). On December 23, 2013, the County released for public review the December 2013 MND consisting of the environmental review of and mitigation measures for the Project. The public comments to the December 2013 MND are due to the County on February 20, 2014.			

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

A Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was previously prepared by the County for the proposed Project in June 2013 ("June 2013 MND"), and circulated for public review and comment for 60 days. The City Council considered Action Item A-3 on August 12, 2013, which presented staff's recommended comments. At that time, after considering the staff report and public testimony, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2013-R057 transmitting to the County the City's official response to the June 2013 MND. The City's primary concerns were traffic, parking, and other impacts to the neighborhood should the Nature Center be overwhelmingly successful, similar to the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook. The City expressed issues specifically with increased traffic and spillover parking onto adjacent neighborhood streets should the Project site be unable to accommodate all of the parking onsite for users of the Nature Center and the proposed regional Park to Playa Trail, which connects to the Nature Center.

Since the City Council meeting of August 12, 2013, City staff and County staff have been working on a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") to further resolve the issues expressed in the City's comments to the June 2013 MND. The MOU addresses, for the most part, operational issues that were not addressed in the June 2013 MND. The MOU is also presented to the City Council tonight for review and recommended approval (Attachment No. 2).

The County prepared the December 2013 MND to address the public comments received on the June 2013 MND, and re-circulated the December 2013 MND for a second 60-day comment period. The December 2013 MND supersedes and replaces the June 2013 MND.

Below is a summary of revisions to December 2013 MND which are based on comments received from the public during the initial review period for the June 2013 MND. The revised document changes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The rationale for the selection of the County as the Lead Agency for the environmental review of the Project was added, and a description of the land use consultation process on Culver City General Plan consistency for the County project was included.
- The Project description was clarified and detailed for construction and operation activities at the Nature Center.
- The baseline year for impact analysis was changed from 2010, when the facility was occupied by the Ohr Eliyahu Academy (school), to 2013, when the facility was vacant.
- A traffic study and parking analysis for the onsite and off-street planned parking capacity was completed.
- Discussion of the Park to Playa separate trail project was expanded.

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

- Culver City thresholds of significance for traffic and noise were clarified and used to analyze the County project.
- An acknowledgment was added indicating that future exploration and oil field development may occur within the adjacent Inglewood Oil Field south and southeast of the Stoneview Nature Center.
- A discussion was added to address potential hazards to the oil field from potential cigarette smoking and vandals during construction and operations at the Stoneview Nature Center.
- A discussion was added regarding: (1) stormwater runoff quantity and quality that may result from proposed construction and operations at the Stoneview Nature Center, and (2) a buried gasoline pipeline that traverses the property.
- The geotechnical report and revised traffic study were included as appendices.
- Other clarifying language was added throughout the document.

The Project site is situated within the Blair Hills Neighborhood of Culver City and is located on the south side of Stoneview Drive, near Wrightcrest Drive and La Cienega Boulevard. Although the Project site is within the boundaries of the City, the County has determined they are the approving body on the Project, as well as the “Lead Agency” for purposes of conducting the environmental review for this Project under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”). The County Parks and Recreation Department will be operating and maintaining the Project. The Project site is currently owned by the Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority (BHRCA) which, according to the County, plans to transfer the property to the County in the near future.

Culver City received the December 2013 MND on Monday, December 30, 2013, and immediately distributed it to City Departments for review. The purpose of tonight’s meeting is to consider staff’s recommended comments on the December 2013 MND and the proposed MOU, receive public comment, and then accept or modify these comments for transmittal to the County.

DISCUSSION:

Project Description

The Project site consists of five-acres located at 5950 Stoneview Drive in the City of Culver City, adjacent to the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. The Project site was formerly operated as an elementary school (Ohr Eliyahu Academy) from 1995 to 2010, and was acquired by the Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority (BHRCA) in 2011. The proposed Project includes demolition of the existing structures and the construction of a 4,000 square foot, one-story building with a

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

multi-purpose room, staff office, restrooms, and a terrace with an observation area. A trail would connect the one-story building to various outdoor elements including an interpretive signage area, a botanical garden, nature grove, yoga deck, native garden area, demonstration/community garden, seating area, passive meadow, and an exercise area. Access to the Project is proposed from Stoneview Drive. A total of 61 parking spaces on a surface parking lot will be provided with a gate that separates a small 16-space parking area from a larger 45-space parking area.

Adequacy of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

A City staff team consisting of the Planning Division, the Public Works, Fire and Police Departments, and the City Attorney's Office evaluated and prepared proposed comments on the adequacy of the December 2013 MND. Staff's proposed detailed comments are set forth in Exhibit A of the proposed Resolution (Attachment No. 1).

The following is a brief summary of the major issues and concerns with the MND, which are set forth in more detail in Exhibit A of the proposed Resolution:

1. Traffic/Parking/Access:

- The December 2013 MND should include analysis and discussion of alternative routes of access to the proposed park that do not rely on local Culver City residential streets.
- The proposed before and after traffic monitoring program should be expanded to include additional residential streets in the Blair Hills community that potentially could be impacted by the Project.
- If the aforementioned monitoring program shows an increase in vehicle volume of over 120 cars on any residential street, additional measures should be taken to reduce the number of cars and/or mitigate the impact from the additional traffic.

2. Potential Impacts During Construction:

- The December 2013 MND does not indicate any staging plans or routes that trucks will take during construction. The December 2013 MND should include a mitigation that requires all parking related to construction activities to occur on the project site.
- The County should provide the City with the funds required to make the necessary repairs for any wear or tear on City streets as a result of Project construction.
- There is insufficient information as to whether construction impacts to the area in the northwest corner of Project site that has been designated as a landslide hazard zone have been addressed.

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

3. Other Areas of Concern:

- Inadequate estimation of the number of daily visitors to the Project site.
- Incomplete information regarding the abutting parcels that may be owned by BHRCA.
- Lighting impacts are not sufficiently described or addressed.
- Insufficient information regarding landscaping proposed for the Project.
- Project site soil should be tested for any contamination by past oil drilling activities. It is unclear whether a Phase I or Phase II environmental study was performed.
- The Geotechnical report included in the study is inconclusive regarding the location of fault lines in the Project area and does not address the impact of irrigation on the poorly compacted fill over the Project site and related mitigations.
- The City should have an opportunity to review drainage of the Project site since the site drains to City streets. A plan showing the existing and proposed contours needs to be submitted to the City for review during the design phase of the project.

Memorandum of Understanding

Many of the City's concerns relating to the operation of the park have been addressed in the MOU that was developed jointly by the City and the County. Among other things the MOU does the following:

- Allows for review of certain project design documents.
- Limits construction hours.
- Requires construction related vehicles to park on the construction site.
- Clarifies the operation of the County-run shuttle service to the park.
- Prohibits direction signage to the park on major boulevards.
- Provides for funding for traffic mitigation, if needed.
- Establishes a traffic monitoring program for the neighborhood surrounding the park.
- Provides for additional free parking for Park to Playa trail users in Kenneth Hahn Park.
- Provides for quarterly community meetings to discuss the impacts of park operation on the surrounding community.
- Provides for monitoring of parking impacts for larger events held at the park.
- Addresses the limitations on the number of larger events in the event that nuisance issues develop.
- Incorporates all of the mitigation measures from the December 2013 MND.

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The December MND is not specific enough to estimate the potential fiscal impacts to the City from the Project. However, unmitigated and significant impacts from the Project could result in significant costs to the City and its residents in the future. The types of fiscal impacts that the City can expect if the Project is implemented include but are not limited to: increased street infrastructure maintenance, increased demand for emergency, code enforcement and other City staff services due to Project operations.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Resolution, including Exhibit A containing detailed comments on the December 2013 MND
2. Proposed Stoneview Nature Center Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Culver City and County of Los Angeles

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Adopt a Resolution transmitting the official City response to the December 2013 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed Stoneview Nature Center Project located at 5950 Stoneview Drive; and,
2. Approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Culver City and County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation for the Stoneview Nature Center Operation; and,
3. Authorize the City Attorney to review/prepare the necessary documents; and,
4. Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City.