

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 07/23/07		Item Number: <u>A-3</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Discussion of the Los Angeles County Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for Oil and Gas Production Activities in the Baldwin Hills Oil Field.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Thomas Gorham/Planning; Charles Herbertson/Public Works; Heather Iker/City Attorney; Martin Cole/City Manager		Phone Number: 310-253-5727; 310-253-5635; 310-253-5660; 310-253-6000	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☐	
Public Notification: Master Notification List (07/18/07).			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld (07/18/07); Charles Herbertson (07/18/07); Carol Schwab (by H. Iker) (07/18/07); Jerry Fulwood (07/18/07)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Iker) (07/18/07)	
City Controller Approval: Marlee Chang (07/19/07)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (07/19/07)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council discuss and comment on the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report, dated June 28, 2007, for Oil and Gas Production Activities in the Baldwin Hills Oil Field. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> On June 28, 2007, the County of Los Angeles (the lead agency), issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) that would assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the future oil and gas production activities in the Baldwin Hills. The DEIR will evaluate the environmental impacts associated with the planned activities at the oil field over the next 10 to 20 years. A copy of the NOP document was provided to the City Council under separate cover through the City Manager's Office. Plains Exploration and Production Company (PXP), the operator of the Inglewood Hills Oil Field and the Applicant, has submitted an application to the County of Los Angeles to establish a Community Standards District (CSD) for the portion of the Inglewood Oil Field located in the Baldwin Hills Zoned District, an unincorporated			
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area of LA County. For the purpose of the NOP, the Inglewood Oil Field is referred to as the Baldwin Hills Oil Field.

The County of Los Angeles is proposing to implement a CSD in the Baldwin Hills that will update the zoning regulations as they relate to oil and gas production activities at the oil field. The CSD will establish permanent development standards, operating requirements and procedures for oil and gas operations in the Baldwin Hills. The development standards in the CSD will be guided by the analysis contained in the DEIR.

The purpose of the NOP is to solicit initial input on the content and scope of the DEIR. Two public scoping meetings will be held by the County:

- **July 24, 2007**, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Complex, Culver City.
- **July 26, 2007**, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church at 5840 La Tijera Boulevard, Los Angeles CA 90056

Staff plans on attending the July 24th scoping meeting. The 30-day NOP review period ends **Tuesday, July 31, 2007** and staff will submit written comments on the NOP by that date.

DISCUSSION:

A City staff team consisting of members from the City Manager's Office, the City Attorney's Office, and the Public Works and Community Development Departments is working collaboratively to review and comment on all documents pertaining to the Oil Field project.

As stated in the NOP, the purpose of the County's notice:

"...is to obtain agency and the public's views as to the scope and content of the environmental information and analysis that should be included in the EIR..."

Therefore, it is expected that the City's "views" provided to the County on the NOP would be of a broad nature. More detailed comments can be provided to the County based upon the DEIR ultimately produced by the County.

For the broad purposes of the NOP document, staff has identified some key issues that should be addressed in the Draft EIR when it is ready for public review:

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Planning

The preliminary scoping analysis conducted by the County of Los Angeles identifies fourteen environmental issue areas that could have significant impacts as a result of oil and gas development activities. The NOP further notes each of these issue areas will be comprehensive studied to identify all appropriate mitigation measures. In addition to these potentially significant impacts, there are three areas related to land use and project construction that should be addressed as part of the scope of the EIR. These potentially significant impacts include:

Grading:

The EIR must evaluate the potentially significant impacts that may result from project grading as it relates to adjacent properties. The NOP project description refers to “limited grading” as part of the scope of work, but does not define what limited grading entails and the design guidelines for the Community Standards District (CDS) in Baldwin Hills should indicate precisely how much grading can be expected in connection with each drill site and how such limited grading will not create hazardous slope conditions for adjacent properties that must be mitigated. Section 3.1.5 -- Geological Resources refers only natural geological hazards that are to be addressed but does not indicate how the EIR will address man-made geological hazards resulting from grading operations in connection with the project.

Future Drilling Over the Next 10 – 20 Years:

The NOP indicates that over the next 20 years approximately 53 wells per year could be drilled for a total of 1,065 wells. These wells will require site preparation and grading. The NOP notes that “it is not possible to identify the exact locations of each well”. The EIR should address how grading operations, problems of subsidence and other geological hazards will be addressed and mitigated relative to adjacent properties, if it is not possible to identify the precise location for each well. Further, the EIR should look at proposed projects in surrounding areas, including, but not limited to, current and future drilling in Culver City and include a complete analysis of cumulative effects.

Impacts to Land Use:

The NOP indicates that threats to public health and safety due to accidental gas releases and noise and vibration occurrences are the most likely impacts to land use and quality of life. The EIR should address how impacts upon property values and quality of life that result from noxious odors due to accidental gas release will be addressed in the EIR and mitigated as required.

Due to the sensitivity of the issues related to the oil field to Culver City, staff requests the County provide the City, at minimum, a 60-day review period of the Draft EIR. The minimum State requirement for public review of a Draft EIR is 45-days. The 60-

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day review period will provide City staff and elected officials with the time necessary to complete a comprehensive and community inclusive review of the Draft EIR.

General Comments

Following are some of the areas staff suggests be included as part of the City's comments on the NOP. Although some categories are covered in the NOP, staff would like to have input, for example, regarding some of the methodologies to be used in the DEIR's analysis. If the Council concurs, staff will add more details to these and related categories before submittal on July 31st.

- Noise impacts from oil field operations – both short term drilling operations and on-going pumping operations. The City wants to ensure the most appropriate and accurate methods are used to collect data for optimal analysis.
- Impacts from odors and other air quality resulting from drilling or pumping operations including gas releases that may occur (monitoring programs should be instituted).
- Impacts from settlement of ground surfaces as the result of drilling, pumping or related operations. This is especially important for areas underneath inhabited areas of Culver City.
- Aesthetic impacts from drilling and pumping operations including impacts to the view from surrounding residential areas of Culver City.
- The NOP indicates that there will be several new "plants" being proposed (water treatment, water softening and steam generation with regeneration wastes being "injected back into an onsite formation". The DEIR should fully describe those plants and operations and address any discuss any impacts from such operations (i.e. what may be expelled into the air by the steam plants, noise issues, whether these plants will also be used for the pumps and wells located in Culver City).
- The DEIR should also analyze current problems/risks of the existing operation and how the new regulations will address these concerns.

In summary, staff recommends the City Council direct staff to prepare more detailed comments based on the general topics to submit to the County by the July 31, 2007 deadline.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

There is no fiscal impact at this time for the discussion and direction recommended in this item.

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ATTACHMENTS:

None

MOTION:

That the City Council:

Discuss the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report, dated June 28, 2007, for Oil and Gas Production Activities in the Baldwin Hills Oil Field and direct staff as deemed appropriate. .