

December 19, 2019

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the City Council take the following actions for the proposed Belmont Beach and Aquatics Center:

- 1) Accept the EIR Addendum (EIRA-03-19) to the previously-certified Belmont Pool Revitalization Project EIR 01-16 (SCH#2013041063);
- 2) Approve a General Plan Amendment (GPA19-001) to the Local Coastal Program Element of the General Plan;
- 3) Approve a Zoning Code Amendment (ZCA19-010) modifying the Belmont Pier Planned Development District (PD-2) ordinance text to create a new subarea for the project development site and establish associated zoning standards;
- 4) Approve a Zone Change (ZCHG19-005) from the Park (P) zoning district to the PD-2 planned development district for portions of the project site;
- 5) Approve a Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCPA19-005);
- 6) Approve a Modification to Site Plan Review (SPR19-027) for previously-approved Site Plan Review Application No. 1405-01, for the redesigned Belmont Beach and Aquatics Center Complex; and
- 7) Approve a Local Coastal Development Permit (LCDP19-023) for the portion of the project within the City's Coastal Zone Appealable Area jurisdiction;

All located at 4200 East Ocean Boulevard in the Belmont Pier Planned Development District (PD-2) and P (Park) zoning district. (District 3)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach, Department of Public Works
411 W. Ocean Blvd., 5th floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
(Application No. 1910-05)

DISCUSSION

The project is located at the site of the former Belmont Plaza Olympic pool, a City facility that opened in 1968 and closed in 2013. Located at 4200 East Ocean Boulevard, the project site is composed of 5.8 acres of City land between Termino Avenue to the west, and the beach parking lot to the east; the beach bike path to the south, and the commercial buildings on the south side of Ocean Boulevard to the north. The site includes the entire Olympic Plaza right-of-way up to the south property line of the commercial properties fronting on Ocean Boulevard. The site also contains the existing pool that replaced the former Belmont Pool (Exhibit A – Location Map).

Project History and Entitlements

On March 2, 2017, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on Application No. 1405-01 for the construction of a new Belmont Beach and Aquatics Center (BBAC) to replace the former Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool, which was closed in January 2013 and demolished in February 2015. This design featured a large indoor natatorium for the main pool, with several outdoor pools and accompanying features; Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve the entitlements for this project. The Planning Commission recommendation was appealed to the City Council. On May 16, 2017, the City Council denied the appeals and approved the project's local entitlements. Several parties appealed the City Council's approvals to the California Coastal Commission (CCC). On August 9, 2018 the Coastal Development Permit application was submitted to the California Coastal Commission and a Notice of Incomplete Application was received on September 7, 2018. The Department of Public Works, which functions as the project manager for the City, has been working to redesign the facility to address the concerns expressed by the CCC.

Therefore, design changes have been made to the project approved by the City Council. These changes were made in response to the appeal to the CCC, as well as CCC staff requests and requirements. The modified design accommodates stakeholder needs and desires while reducing scope and associated costs. Additionally, the CCC has changed procedural requirements for the project's full entitlement package. As a result, the redesigned BBAC project must return to the Planning Commission for a new set of entitlements, to be followed by City Council approval, and then resubmittal of the project to the CCC.

Project Design

The new BBAC project will consist of a raised outdoor plinth containing a large Olympic-sized main pool, a diving well, a teaching pool, a spa, a recreational pool, and a spray garden, as depicted on plans attached to this report (Exhibit B – Plans). An approximately 1,500-seat bleacher structure will face the main pool, and the bleachers will be covered by a shade awning reaching up to 50 feet above grade, with architectural and support elements rising to 60 feet (the same height as the former building). All these outdoor aquatic resources are served by approximately 15,500 square feet of support buildings, including locker rooms, staff rooms, changing rooms, pool/guard office, department offices, and building maintenance spaces. The site currently contains a large temporary pool on the eastern portion of the site, which will become a permanent feature of the BBAC project as an outdoor pool and will be served by approximately 2,000 square feet of support building space. The project also contains approximately 400 square feet of outbuildings for beach access restrooms, and a trash enclosure area for the complex. Access to the facility on the raised plinth will be through a main entrance off Olympic Plaza, with a six-foot-tall transparent windscreen surrounding the perimeter of the plinth. Parking for the redesigned facility would be provided by the two existing pay lots adjacent to the site. The Pier parking lot located west of the site and accessed from Termino Avenue, and the Granada Beach parking lot, located east of the site and accessed from Bennett Avenue, which will serve as the primary parking facility for the pool complex, consistent with historical use. Together, both parking lots contain a combined total of approximately 1,050 parking stalls. The Ocean Boulevard entrance to the Granada Beach parking lot would be reconfigured to provide a safe and suitably-sized primary drop-off and loading area for automobiles and buses.

Also, the site has been designed using a comprehensive sustainability strategy. Site design, building material selections, pool equipment and lighting selections, and other project features were carefully studied to maximize energy efficiency and lower water consumption. The site intends to meet Leadership in Energy

and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification status. All transparent surfaces will have bird-strike prevention treatment.

Review of Revised Design

The major changes from the previous design of the project approved by the City Council on May 16, 2017 are summarized below:

- **Creation of an Outdoor Facility:** The project has been changed from an indoor natatorium to a fully-outdoor facility.
- **Existing Pool to Remain:** Public Works has determined that maintaining the existing temporary pool in its current location, and adding permanent restrooms, showers, and check-in areas, will best serve the needs of the City, the community, and the aquatics stakeholders.
- **Concessions:** The previously-proposed stand-alone beach café has been removed from the project in favor of a small concession area within the pool complex nearby the recreational pool and family open space.
- **Dive Well:** The diving well has been reconfigured to meet Olympic specifications. This configuration can potentially accommodate up to 10,000 temporary seats to host Olympic diving.
- **Increased Open Space:** The modified design provides approximately 141,000 square feet of open space, of which approximately 92,000 square feet is green space. This is a significant increase in green space from the previous facility which had approximately 136,000 square feet of open space, of which approximately 47,000 square feet was green space.
- **Increased Spectator Seating:** The modified design increases permanent spectator seating from 1,250 to 1,555.
- **25-meter vs 25-yard pool:** In 2014, it was determined that one 25-meter wide pool and one 25-yard wide pool would be provided. However, the Public Works project management team has studied widening the pool width from 25 yards to 25 meters, in response to stakeholder requests. The EIR Addendum has analyzed the potential impacts of the larger 25-meter-wide pool, which may provide added flexibility for programming.
- **Support Building:** The support building including the lockers and shower areas has been reduced and is now a single level.

These changes have been made as a result of public input, City Council direction, and requests from California Coastal Commission staff. In addition, to reduce potential traffic-related impacts, events with more than 450 spectators would be required to provide an Event Traffic Management Plan, which would include active traffic management strategies such as off-site parking procurement and shuttle services to these locations. The project site is also served by Long Beach Transit and the Class I off-street bicycle path that spans from the Los Angeles River on the City's western end to 54th Place on the Alamitos Bay Peninsula. The project would include new bicycle parking locations north of the pool facility entrance and adjacent to the cafe building to encourage various modes of travel to the facility.

Concerns have been raised regarding the level of crowd and public address system noise that could emanate from the pool area. Conditions of approval have been incorporated to ensure the City's daytime exterior noise level standards are not exceeded (Exhibit C - Conditions of Approval). Since the project is not expected to be used after 10:00 p.m., no nighttime operational noise would occur, in compliance with the City's noise ordinance (Chapter 8.80, LBMC).

Response to City Council and CCC Concerns

Upon approval on May 16, 2017, City Council provided direction to the Public Works Department, which is managing the project, to address specific community and CCC concerns. A summary of the efforts made to address each concern are noted below:

- **Increased Recreational Components:** To ensure that this is not exclusively a competitive facility, Public Works reviewed options to enhance the size and features of the recreational area. The modified design includes water components specific for play including; a vortex pool, a zip line, cascading waterfalls, splash pads, fountains, and an open family gathering space. A small concession area has also been included directly adjacent to the family gathering lawn and recreational pools.
- **Increased Connection to Disadvantaged Communities:** To ensure that this is a facility enjoyed by the entire Long Beach community, Public Works Department implemented a City department task force comprised of representatives from various departments, including, the Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department, Long Beach Transit, and the Health Department, to enhance programs and amenities that will increase and help maximize Citywide and underserved areas' access to the facility. The Coastal Development Permit (CDP) application details the current pool usage, the expanded capacity, identification of the underserved areas, after school and weekend programs, summer swim programs, family fun activities, partnership programs, 50 and over programs, water exercise programs, aquatics day camp, along with several transportation options. These measures ensure that programming, marketing, and access is provided for the entire community.
- **Sea Level Rise:** Concerns related to sea level rise have been addressed via revisions to the modeling using the most recent sea level rise projections, but more significantly by moving all structures northward out of the predicted sea level rise-impacted zones. The modified facility is now out of the area of projected sea level rise.
- **Height:** Concerns related to height have been addressed by removing the high-roof enclosed building from the project design. This significantly reduces the overall height of the facility. While the previously-approved height variance was factually supported and consistent with the Local Coastal Plan (LCP), CCC staff expressed concerns with the use of a variance for the redesigned project. Therefore, the LCP is being amended to fully encompass the modified project's building envelope and parameters instead.
- **Parking:** An analysis of available parking was conducted to determine if the proposed parking is adequate to serve the facility and the community. The parking requirements for the modified project is 614 spaces. The required parking for the prior demolished pool, using the same criteria, would have been 834 spaces. Accordingly, the proposed project requires 220 fewer spaces. At the closure of the previous facility, there were 1,116 spaces available in City parking lots and on adjacent right-of-way. Since the closure of the previous facility, the temporary pool was constructed, the Ocean Boulevard complete streets project was implemented, and the Granada/Belmont parking lot was resurfaced. These efforts, in conjunction with the modified project, will add a net 36 parking spaces to the area, for a total of 1,152 spaces.

Entitlements and Recommendation

The redesigned BBAC project needs six entitlements at the local level, in addition to the EIR Addendum required for the project's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance. These entitlements are discussed individually below.

- **General Plan Amendment:** By amending PD-2, which is an implementing ordinance of the Local Coastal Program, the City thereby amends the LCP Element of the General Plan, beginning at page III-c-1 of the LCP, where PD-2 is recited verbatim. This General Plan Amendment is listed first for statutory reasons. Staff finds that the General Plan Amendment is appropriate for the project and the neighborhood, is in conformance with the General Plan and the certified Local Coastal Program.
- **Zoning Code Amendment:** The Belmont Pier Planned Development District (PD-2) will be amended to create a new subarea (Subarea 5) encompassing the entire project site, which is currently split-zoned between PD-2 and the P (Park) zoning district. Additionally, the project has unique zoning and development standards needs, which are not accommodated by either the existing PD-2 or the P district. Accordingly, the development standards of PD-2 are being amended to accommodate this unique public facilities project. These include project-specific setbacks, a height limit of 60 feet to match the previous facility, and revision to parking standards to allow the needed parking to be provided in public parking lots and the right-of-way. A draft of the amended PD-2 ordinance is attached to this report (Exhibit D – PD-2 Draft Ordinance). Staff finds that the Zoning Code Amendment will not adversely affect the character, livability or appropriate development of the surrounding area, and the proposed change is consistent with the goals, objectives and provisions of the General Plan.
- **Zone Change:** A Zone Change is necessary to apply the above Zoning Code Amendment to the zoning map, since the area of PD-2 will be expanded and will replace the P (Park) zoning on a portion of the project site (Exhibit E – Rezoning Map). Staff finds that the Zone Change will not adversely affect the character, livability or appropriate development of the surrounding area, and the proposed change is consistent with the goals, objectives and provisions of the General Plan.
- **Local Coastal Program Amendment:** Amending PD-2, which is an implementing ordinance of the certified Local Coastal Program, necessitates an LCP Amendment. As discussed earlier in this report, the project furthers the goals of the LCP and the Coastal Act. The project will not be able to move forward until the California Coastal Commission approves the LCP Amendment, which will be pursued with the CCC following City Council approval of the project's other entitlements. CCC staff has agreed to consider the pending project approval and the proposed LCP Amendment together at a future hearing date.
- **Modification to Site Plan Review:** Modification to Site Plan Review is the main entitlement for the physical development of the BBAC project, consisting of review and approval of the site plan, programming, building design and architecture, and compliance with the General Plan and zoning standards. This entitlement modifies the Site Plan Review approved under Application No. 1405-01. Staff finds that the design is harmonious, consistent and complete within itself and is compatible in design, character and scale, with neighboring structures and the community in which it is located; the design conforms to PD guidelines and the General Plan; the design will not remove significant mature trees or street trees, unless no alternative design is possible; there is an essential nexus between the public improvement requirements established by this ordinance and the likely impacts of the proposed development; the project conforms with all requirements set forth in Chapter 21.64

(Transportation Demand Management), and that the approval is consistent with the green building standards for public and private development, as listed in Section 21.45.400.

- **Local Coastal Development Permit:** For the portion of the project area that is within the City's Appealable Area Coastal Zone jurisdiction, a Local Coastal Development Permit is required to find that all entitlements and the proposed development conforms to the certified LCP, and that the proposed development conforms to the public access and recreation policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. For the portion of the project that is in the CCC's original permit jurisdiction, a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) from the CCC will be required following City approval.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council approve all the above entitlements. These analyses and recommendations are presented in further detail in the findings for the project entitlements (Exhibit F – Findings). Staff has included appropriate conditions of approval to ensure the proposed project will be consistent with the requirements of the findings and will operate without negative impacts upon the surrounding community.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 1,844 Public hearing notices were distributed on November 26, 2019, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. No public comments were received at the time the report was prepared.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, an Environmental Impact Report (the Belmont Pool Revitalization Project EIR (BPRP EIR), EIR 01-16, State Clearinghouse No. 2013041063) previously was prepared and certified for the prior version of the project (Exhibit G – BPRP EIR 01-16). An EIR Addendum (Exhibit H – EIRA-03-19) was prepared for the redesign of the BBAC project. The purpose of the EIR Addendum is to evaluate the potential differences in environmental impacts due to changes in the project and determine whether any new or greater impacts would occur (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15164). While the redesigned project contains a larger site area than previously analyzed, there are no new or increased environmental impacts from those analyzed in the previously-certified EIR. The revised project remains subject to the original Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) from the BPRP EIR, which established 18 mitigation measures pertaining to Aesthetics, Biology, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Resources, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, and Transportation and Traffic.

Respectfully submitted,



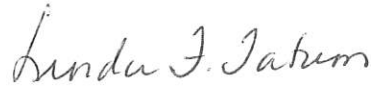
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DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Attachments:

- Exhibit A – Location Map
- Exhibit B – Plans
- Exhibit C – Findings
- Exhibit D – PD-2 Draft Ordinance
- Exhibit E – Rezoning Map
- Exhibit F – Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit G – Belmont Pool Revitalization Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR 01-16)
- Exhibit H – EIR Addendum (EIRA-03-19)