

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 09-106

DATE April 28, 2009

C.D. 4

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: GRIFFITH PARK - FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE AUTRY NATIONAL CENTER'S GRIFFITH PARK CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT; THIRD AMENDMENT TO LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE AUTRY NATIONAL CENTER OF THE AMERICAN WEST (ANC) FOR THE USE OF CERTAIN LAND IN GRIFFITH PARK REQUIRING RELOCATION OF THE BRIDLE TRAIL AND CORRAL AND PROVIDING CONDITIONAL APPROVAL OF THE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT SUBJECT TO ANC OBTAINING THE REQUIRED CITY REGULATORY APPROVALS

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



 General Manager

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Acknowledge that the Autry Museum of Western Heritage has been legally re-named the Autry National Center of the American West (ANC);
2. Review and consider the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR or FEIR) and the Errata to the FEIR for the proposed Autry National Center's Griffith Park Campus Improvements Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2007051084 and City Document No. EIR-RP-013-07) and:
 - a. Certify that the Final EIR was completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and State and City CEQA Guidelines; that it reflects the City's independent judgment and analysis; and that the information contained in the Final EIR was reviewed and considered prior to approving the project.

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- b. Adopt the Statement of Environmental Effects and Findings of Fact.
 - c. Adopt the Statement of Overriding Considerations.
 - d. Adopt the updated Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
 - e. Direct the Department of Recreation and Parks to file a Notice of Determination with the Los Angeles City Clerk and County Clerk.
3. Approve the proposed third amendment to the Land Lease Agreement No. 209 (Lease) substantially in the form on file in the Board Office between the ANC, and the City of Los Angeles (City), which modifies the legal boundaries of the lease as shown in Exhibit A, requires relocation of the bridle trail and corral, and gives conditional approval to construct the improvements on the leased premises, subject to:
- a. The mitigation measures listed in the updated Mitigation and Monitoring and Reporting Program unless modified by the City during the permitting process;
 - b. Adding a provision for each of the two phases of construction separately that requires that each phase of construction may not commence until the ANC provides a financial program for review and approval by the General Manager that includes the following:
 1. An executed contract for the construction of the respective project phase on customary terms and that specify the maximum fixed price that the ANC would be required to pay for such construction and that includes sufficient contingency to complete the project phase; and
 2. Provisions by the ANC for the payment of such maximum fixed price, either through the issuance of bonds by or on behalf of Autry, or by the enforceable pledges of Autry donors in an aggregate amount at least equal to such maximum fixed price, or any combination thereof; and
 3. Documentation from the ANC that demonstrates that the ANC has secured the bonds (Initial Resolution and Final Resolution), financial lender backing (letter of credit), and an executed fixed price contract necessary to complete the project phase as designed, subject to General Manager approval, and
 - c. Subject to the ANC obtaining all necessary permits and entitlements for the construction and use of the proposed physical improvements, as more fully described herein.
4. Direct the Board Secretary to transmit the proposed third amendment to the Mayor in accordance with Executive Directive No. 3 for review and approval, and concurrently to the City Attorney for review and approval as to form, and to the City Council for approval;

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5. Authorize the General Manager to execute the amendment upon receipt of the aforementioned approvals;
6. Authorize the General Manager or his designee to review and approve construction plans for the first and second phases of development submitted by the ANC upon the recommendation for approval from the Bureau of Engineering, provided they are consistent with the Lease, the preliminary designs conditionally approved by this action and with all land use permits and entitlements necessary for the project.

SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND

Ground Lease No. 209

In September of 1986, the Board of Referred Powers (BRP) approved Land Lease Agreement No. 209 (Lease) for a term of fifty (50) years with the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum. The purpose of the Lease was to provide for the construction, operation and maintenance of a museum in Griffith Park. On August 24, 1988, the BRP approved the first amendment to Land Lease No. 209 (First Amendment), which redefined the boundary, addressed the construction of an earthen berm, and the placement of the bridle trail outside the leased premises area.

On May 7th 1997, the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners (Board) approved a second amendment to Land Lease No. 209 (Second Amendment). The purpose of the Second Amendment was to address the following: the relocation of the Zoo's wastewater treatment facility; the renaming of the museum to the Autry Museum of Western Heritage; the replacement of the legal description of the leased premises; and the need for an emergency access road to the new waste water treatment facility. Amendment to the Lease was necessary to address the realignment of the premises boundary brought about by the relocation of the Zoo's wastewater treatment facility outside of the leased premises area. As a result of the changes to the existing boundary, the legal description of the leased premises was revised. The Second Amendment also provided for an emergency access roadway to the new wastewater treatment facility through the leased premises area to allow the City to have emergency ingress and egress.

With the execution of the proposed Third Amendment, the City and ANC propose to do the following:

1. Revise the legal description.
2. Acknowledge the renaming of the entity formerly known as "Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum" or "Autry Museum of Western Heritage" to the "Autry

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National Center of the American West,” short-titled as the “Autry National Center.”

3. Provide conditional approval for the construction of the improvements of the ANC’s Phase I and Phase II development on the leased premises, subject to ANC acquiring all regulatory approvals, including final design approval from the Cultural Affairs Commission.

Merger of the Autry Museum of the Western Heritage with the Women of the West Museum and the Southwest Museum of the American Indian

In 2002, the Autry Museum of Western Heritage merged with the Women of the West Museum, and in 2003 it merged with the Southwest Museum of the American Indian (Southwest Museum) resulting in the establishment of ANC. The ANC refers to the Museum of Western Heritage as the Griffith Park Campus and the Southwest Museum as the Arroyo Campus. The Southwest Museum is not connected with the proposed Phase I and Phase II development plans for the Griffith Park Campus but was considered in the CEQA alternative analysis. Prior to the merger, the Southwest Museum was for many years plagued by inadequate storage and exhibit space and other physical constraints, structural problems, and substandard indoor environmental controls and conditions, resulting in only a small percentage of the Museum’s substantial collection being displayed, and artifacts/objects being subject to damage and deterioration and otherwise being put at risk. The ANC, however, has expressed great interest in preserving the historic integrity of the Southwest Museum and in protecting and displaying the collection. The ANC has expended over seven and a half million dollars to date for earthquake retrofit and stabilization as a result of damage incurred during the Northridge earthquake; to repair water leaks; and to provide disabled access improvements. After completion of the Griffith Park Campus project, a portion of the collection will continue to be stored at the Southwest Museum and exhibited in at least two galleries.

ANC’s operation of the Griffith Park Campus

Meanwhile, the ANC has continued to maintain, operate and make improvements to the leased premises area at the Griffith Park Campus in accordance with the Lease. In 2007, ANC made improvements to the museum building by replacing two 20-year-old Ajax steam boilers (humidity supply) with 2 Ajax force draft steam boilers equipped with micro-processing controllers. ANC also replaced two 220 ton reciprocating York chillers with two 220 ton Trane Central Ventilation and Heating Centrifugal chillers and it also replaced two 220 ton galvanized cooling towers with two 220 ton stainless steel cooling towers equipped with variable frequency drive motors. The total cost for the improvements was \$669,000. There was no cost to the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) for this improvement. Other costs that RAP does not have to incur include the cost for operation and maintenance for the grounds and building, and costs for utilities. ANC’s annual costs for operation and maintenance for 2008 were \$89,014.44

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through October, 2008. ANC utility costs for that period totaled \$441,709.33. These are cost savings to RAP, in that the museum's programs in Griffith Park are being provided to visitors at no cost to the City.

THE PROJECT

The Project Goals

In an effort to modernize and renovate the museum and allow for greater access to larger segments of the museum's collection, and to enhance its research and education programs, ANC has recently presented plans to RAP for the renovation and expansion of the museum in two phases that will further enhance the museum experience and improve the surrounding landscape. The proposed two phased project is scheduled for the grand opening of Phase I to occur around spring of 2013. There is no scheduled start date or finish date for Phase II. ANC has a comprehensive funding campaign plan in place to fund the construction of Phase I. ANC plans to raise \$185 million as part of their overall Heart of the West Campaign. Some of the funding raised for the Heart of the West Campaign will be used for the Phase I expansion and renovation of the museum building and some will be used for the support of the Southwest Museum.

The ANC's environmental friendly improvement redesign plan will also create a broader and richer opportunity to segments of the community like the equestrian community and others to fully enjoy the new amenities being offered. Some of those new amenities will include the relocation of the horse corral to an area that is more visible, user friendly, and safe. The relocation of the horse corral is supported by the equestrian community. Outdoor art exhibits and a new ethno-botanical garden are also planned along with the replacement of non-native plants, trees, and shrubs, with native species. At least a 2:1 ratio will exist when replacing trees. Other improvements will include some landscaping of the park trails, as well as, the development of new walking trails. All of these improvements will make for a fuller and friendlier open space/park environment. The renovation of the building will create a richer museum experience that will not only provide improved access to exhibits, but will also contribute more to the community by offering a large community meeting room and four new classrooms. Children will be enriched further by programs at the new Children's Archaeology Discovery Center, which will have a "dig it" program where children can experience within the museum the science of archaeology by participating in hands-on archaeology, requiring intensive in-class teacher participation.

The new proposed renovation and modernization plan of the existing building and improvement of the surrounding leased premises area, has presented the City and ANC the opportunity to continue with a successful partnership that will expand the ANC's focus on the American West experience through a redesign of its existing facility creating a more welcoming building, the architecture of which will reflect the theme of respect for the land and the convergence of

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cultures. It is hoped that with the use of natural light, earth colors and its horizontal lines, a universal building concept will emerge rich in aesthetic beauty, centered in a community friendly, and environmentally sustainable park setting.

One of ANC's goals is to create an environmentally sustainable museum by using grey water, installing drip irrigation, and using permeable landscape and water retention systems. By the end of the construction project, ANC hopes to have Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Certification. LEED Certification is a point rating system that credits or applies points for implementing LEED aspects in several categories such as: sustainable sites; water efficiency; indoor environmental quality; energy and atmosphere; materials and resources; and innovation and design process. By including LEED aspects in the design and building of the project, ANC maximizes its energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. ANC will focus on several of these categories like water efficiency and indoor environmental quality efficiency.

Phase I Funding and Project Scope

Construction of Phase I is expected to begin in 2010 and to be completed by 2013. The total cost of the Phase I expansion project is estimated at \$124 million. The project will be implemented and financed by ANC through multiple sources: fund raising, obtaining a bond through the state, bridge financing, and utilizing a fixed price contract.

Of the expected \$185 million fund raising Heart of the West Campaign goal, ANC has raised a total of \$122,375,891. ANC also lists \$9,529,000 in other funds in addition to the \$122,375,891 which ANC indicates brings the total raised to date to \$131,904,891. ANC has indicated that they have sufficient funds to complete the building construction which according to the ANC budget is currently listed at \$94,970,767. Project approval should be conditioned upon ANC certifying that the ANC has secured sufficient funds, loans or letters of credit with sufficient contingency to complete the project. It is recommended that the City require that no construction may commence on either Phase I or Phase II until the ANC provides information that demonstrates that ANC has secured bonds, financial lender backing, and an executed fixed priced contract necessary to complete the respective project phase as designed, which shall be subject to the General Manager's approval, in order to guarantee completion of the respective phase so that construction of this two phased development does not become a burden on the City during this economic downturn.

Phase I of development will consist of the renovation to the existing museum building that will be comprised of the following features: reconfiguration of galleries, exhibition and collection areas; addition of education classrooms; a new community room; and, the relocation of the parking area. One of the highlights of the renovation will be a new welcoming entrance to be known as convergence canyon. The new entrance will create for visitors a canyon like setting, lined with new trees that will bring the public into the ANC's American West experience as soon

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as they enter the leased premises area. The redesign of the existing museum building calls for the outward expansion of both the east and west portions of the existing building. This will add approximately 79,000 gross square feet of new building space. The outward expansion of the building will expand into the current parking areas.

Parking Demand and Improvements

Some of the goals of the proposed project are to rearrange and design onsite parking facilities to provide an optimal number of parking spaces to meet times of peak demand, and to ensure that these facilities do not detract from the visual aesthetics of the leased premises. Currently, there are two surface parking lots on the leased premises that provide a total of 368 visitor parking spaces. Implementation of the project will require more parking spaces to be provided, the total of which is based on the amount of floor area, as defined in Section 12.03 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), in the modified and new museum buildings. Floor area calculations indicate that 456 parking spaces would be required at the completion of Phase I and an additional 90 spaces would be required at the completion of Phase II, for a total of 546 spaces.

However, the proposed building improvements include the provision of major storage space that was factored in as part of the floor area calculations in determining parking demand. The ANC believes that these areas should be treated as “basement storage areas” as identified in the LAMC, which are allowed to be excluded from floor area calculations since they do not generate parking demand. ANC has requested a variance which, if approved, would reduce the number of required parking spaces by 34 for both Phases I and II. Thus, the number of parking spaces required at the completion of Phases I and II would be 422 and 512, respectively.

The ANC believes a further reduction in the parking requirements is justified based on an updated parking demand study conducted in 2008. This study determined that the peak weekday and weekend parking requirements for Phase I could be adequately met with 311 parking spaces and an additional 69 spaces for Phase II, for a total of 380 spaces. Overall, this amounts to 166 less parking spaces than would be required by the LAMC at the completion of Phase II (546 spaces minus 380 spaces). The ANC has requested a variance to allow for 380 parking spaces to be available at the completion of phase II of the proposed project. This reduction in code – required parking, if granted, would have the added environmental benefit of preventing the loss of several trees and approximately one-half acre of open space that would have occurred from construction of the surface parking lot.

Provision of Signage

Existing signage within the Griffith Park campus includes 15 pole signs, 4 wall signs and several small information signs. As part of the proposed project, all of these signs, with the exception of one pole sign, will be removed and the following new signs are anticipated to be installed: 11

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pole signs, 4 wall signs, a 200 square foot "L"-shaped monument sign (consisting of two faces), and several small information signs. The new signage improvements will reduce the number of pole signs from 15 to 11, complement the architecture of the museum buildings and the park environment, and provide visitors important information on museum features, directions and events.

The number and size of signs allowed for the proposed project is regulated by the LAMC and is primarily dependent on the amount of the project site's street frontage. Western Heritage Way fronts the project site on the west, and the I-5 Freeway is adjacent to the project site on the east, which the ANC believes should be considered as part of the street frontage calculations. For example, the number of pole signs allowed is based on one pole sign for every 200 feet of street frontage, and the size of the monument sign is based on 1.5 square feet of signage per foot of street frontage, not to exceed 75 square feet for the sign face visible to the same direction of traffic.

All of the signage anticipated to be needed for the proposed project, with the exception of the pole signs, would be satisfied via consideration of the Western Heritage Way frontage alone. However, if the I-5 Freeway is not allowed as part of the street frontage calculations, only 5 poles signs would be allowed. In anticipation of this, the ANC has requested a variance to install the additional 6 pole signs. The monument sign would consist of two 100 square foot faces (totaling 200 sq. ft.), oriented for viewing by motorists. Although this is well within the aggregate square footage for monument signs allowed by the LAMC, the 75 square foot limit per sign face would be exceeded. The ANC has requested a variance from this code requirement.

Phase II Funding and Project Scope

The start of Phase II will depend on the development of funding for Phase II and the timing of Phase I development. Phase II will include a new Institute Building that will contain a reading room, collection storage rooms, and staff work areas. Below the Institute Building, a two level semi-subterranean parking facility will be constructed. The subterranean parking lot will also feature open space landscaping to half of the area visible above level. Funding for Phase II is not in place yet, but ANC expects that it will be easier to raise funds for Phase II once the approval for expansion and renovation of the museum is obtained and the project is under construction.

Benefits to the City

The City understands that there is a growing need for more cultural enrichment. ANC offers various programs that can be used for the benefit of the general public and help meet the need for more cultural programming. These ANC programs reach out to the underserved areas of the City. Currently, ANC offers free admission to the general public on the second Tuesday of every month as well as free admission to various segments of the community on specified days

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throughout the year. ANC also participates in providing Title I schools with free bus transportation to the museum; free curriculum materials for teachers; free outreach kits rentals for teachers to use in classrooms; and, free teacher workshop scholarships. The ANC continues to be a good neighbor as it exemplifies this through its actions, one of which is its willingness to spend \$124 million on the proposed museum improvements project and another is by participating in the Department of Water and Power's recycling program for apartment buildings by offering two for one admission coupons to thousands of apartment residents. For the City, approval of the proposed lease amendment and improvements will demonstrate the City's interest in working with private entities that use sound environmental designs that result in cost savings and increased cultural and recreational experiences for the City with minimal impact to the City's budget. Staff believes that ANC is a positive presence in the community.

Approval of construction plans for Phase I and Phase II

The plans for the museum improvement project are pending approval. The Bureau of Engineering (BOE) staff and RAP staff will review the plans presented by ANC and will make recommendations for approval or changes. If there are no issues with the design of the project, BOE staff will make recommendations for departmental approval. Staff also recommends a sound financial plan be in place prior to approval and commencement of the project that includes information on the fixed rate contract, available contingency, approved bridge financing documentation (letter of credit) and/or bond financing that includes an inducement/initial resolution and final resolution or agreement.

This project has support from the ANC and the Councilmember for the Fourth District. In addition, the Assistant General Manager and Superintendent for the Griffith Region have been consulted and concur with staff's recommendations.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act

In May 2007, the Department of Recreation and Parks acting as the Lead City Agency pursuant to the CEQA, determined that an EIR should be prepared for the proposed project based on its review of an Initial Study/Environmental Checklist, and relevant documents in Department files. The Initial Study and the EIR were prepared for the Department by PCR Services Corporation, an environmental consulting firm.

Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meetings

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) announcing that an EIR would be prepared was circulated to government agencies, organizations and individuals for a 30 day review period from May 14-June 13, 2007. A much broader notification process was undertaken than recommended by State CEQA Guidelines and the Los Angeles City Planning Department guidelines. More specifically,

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property owners within 500-foot radius of the Griffith Park boundary, rather than from just the project site boundary, were identified, resulting in over 3,000 copies of the NOP being mailed. During the NOP review period, a scoping meeting was held on May 29, 2007, and, at the request of individuals, community organizations and Council District 4, a second scoping meeting was held on June 11, 2007. Both meetings were held at the Autry National Center's Griffith Park Campus.

Preparation, Circulation and Review of the Draft EIR

A Draft EIR (DEIR), consisting of two volumes, was completed in August 2007. Based on the information in the Initial Study (DEIR, Volume II, Appendix A), and on comments received during the NOP review period and the scoping meetings, the proposed project was identified as having potentially significant impacts on the following environmental resource areas: aesthetics, air quality, cultural resources, hydrology/surface water quality, land use, noise, public services (fire protection), and transportation and circulation. The extent and magnitude of the impacts of the proposed project on these environmental resources during construction and operations were analyzed in detail in the DEIR.

A Notice of Availability for the DEIR was published in the *Los Angeles Times* on August 16, 2007. Copies of the DEIR were provided on CDs to various agencies, individuals, and organizations, and made available in three public libraries. The DEIR was also posted on the Department's environmental management web site (www.laparks.org/environmental/environmental.htm). The review period for the DEIR was 47 days, from August 16-October 1, 2007. The DEIR was submitted to the State Clearinghouse to facilitate review by State agencies. A public meeting was held on September 18th at the Griffith Park Campus and the proceedings were recorded by a stenographer. The review period was extended to October 18th in response to several written requests received by the Department, thereby making the total length of the review period 64 days.

Fifty-two (52) written comments were received during the public review period: 8 from government agencies, 13 from neighborhood organizations, such as neighborhood councils and homeowner associations, and 31 from other organizations and individuals; an additional five (5) comments were received after the close of the review period. Copies of all the comments in their entirety have been provided in the Final EIR (FEIR). Issues raised in the comments have been systematically identified and catalogued and corresponding written responses prepared. For those environmental issues and other project-related matters that received the greater interest and inquiries, such as the Southwest Museum and its collection, seven detailed Topical Responses (A through F) were prepared.

Cultural resources and transportation/circulation received the greatest number of comments. Following is a summary of the concerns surrounding these environmental resources.

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Cultural Resources

The primary area of concern was the potential impact of the proposed project on the Southwest Museum, a landmark of significant historic value founded by Charles Fletcher Lummis in 1903 and designed by the prominent Los Angeles architect, Summer Hunt. Opened in August 1914, the Southwest Museum building is located on a 12-acre hillside site in the Mount Washington community, which the ANC calls its Arroyo Campus. The museum is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historic Resources, and is designated as City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #283. Other structures situated on the Arroyo Campus include the Casa de Adobe and the Braun Library.

The ANC's Arroyo Campus is not a part of the proposed project, but was analyzed as an off-site project development alternative under the CEQA process. Portions of the Southwest Museum's collections would be moved to the new facilities at the Griffith Park Campus if the proposed project is approved and constructed. The cultural resources impact analysis section in the DEIR and the Topical Responses provided in the FEIR stated that the proposed project would not physically alter or adversely impact the Southwest Museum, nor would it threaten the historic integrity or significance of the Southwest Museum, or its National Register and California Register listings (DEIR, Volume 1, Section IV.C; FEIR, Volume 1, Section III, Topical Responses E and F). Furthermore, the project would not adversely affect the ANC's current and future plans for the preservation and conservation of the Museum's collection.

Transportation and Circulation

The DEIR, based on a traffic study prepared by Fehr & Peers/Kaku Associates (August 2007) and approved by Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), determined that the proposed project, with the incorporation of mitigation, would not have any significant adverse traffic circulation or parking impacts (DEIR, Volume 1, Section IV.H, and Volume II, Appendix F). Concerned with this determination, the Neighborhood Councils of Greater Griffith Park, Hollywood United, and Greater Cypress Park jointly funded a professional peer review of the DEIR traffic study by Minagar & Associates, Inc., a professional traffic engineering and transportation planning firm based in Irvine, CA. The Minagar Report, completed in February 2008 (FEIR, Volume II, Appendix 1, following Letter No. 55), identified 19 deficiencies in the DEIR traffic study.

The three Neighborhood Councils felt that the results of the Minagar Report strongly pointed to the need to revise and recirculate the DEIR. Independently, Fehr and Peers/Kaku Associates and the LADOT evaluated and responded to each of the deficiencies stated in the Minagar Report, and both determined that the DEIR traffic study was prepared in accordance with the required protocols and methodologies and that its findings were correct (FEIR, Volume 1, Section IV). Generally, recirculation is only required by CEQA when new information arises which shows a

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substantial increase in the severity of existing impacts or new significant impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. In the opinion of the Department, these conditions did not exist; therefore, recirculation of the DEIR was not required.

Environmental Impact Analysis and Significance Determination

With the exception of the potentially unavoidable adverse impacts identified below, the impact analyses conducted for aesthetics, air quality, cultural resources and the other environmental resource areas analyzed in the Initial Study and the Draft EIR determined that the proposed project would have no significant adverse impacts on the environment. Potentially significant impacts, individually or cumulatively, were either avoided or reduced to a less-than-significant level through the incorporation of mitigation measures in the project construction phases or in operations.

Unavoidable Adverse Project-Specific Impact on Air Quality

The proposed project would have a short-term, significant and unavoidable adverse impact on air quality as a result of nitrogen oxide emissions (NO_x) exceeding the SCAQMD daily significance threshold. This adverse impact would potentially occur if demolition, grading and excavation activities overlap during Phase II construction, even with implementation of all feasible mitigation measures.

Cumulatively Considerable Air Quality, Traffic Circulation and Noise Impacts

Implementation of the proposed project concurrently with the three closest related projects could potentially result in the following cumulatively considerable impacts, particularly since there is no assurance that feasible mitigation measures will be implemented for the related projects:

- Short-term local and regional construction-related air quality impacts;
- Short-term construction-related noise impacts;
- Short-term construction-related traffic impacts; and
- Traffic impact on intersection operations

Alternatives to the Proposed Project

As required by CEQA, the DEIR considered a range of reasonable, feasible alternatives to the proposed project that would attain most of the project objectives and that would avoid or substantially reduce the significant adverse air quality impact (NO_x emissions) during project construction. Alternatives that did not meet these criteria were not considered in the DEIR. The following five alternatives were evaluated further in the DEIR (DEIR, Volume 1, Section V (A thru E), pages 272-305).

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- Alternative A, No Project Alternative: This alternative assumes that the proposed project would not be implemented and that the project site would remain unchanged.
- Alternative B, Reduced Program Alternative: This alternative consists of the proposed project, but with the density reduced by excluding the Phase II Institute Building and the semi-subterranean parking structure.
- Alternative C, Above Ground Parking Alternative: This alternative consists of the proposed project, but with an above ground parking structure being constructed in Phase II instead of the semi-subterranean parking structure.
- Alternative D, Off-Site Parking Alternative: This alternative involves the construction of an off-site parking structure instead of the Phase II semi-subterranean parking structure on the project site.
- Alternative E, Arroyo Campus Expansion Alternative: This alternative involves utilizing only the ANC's Arroyo Campus, where the Southwest Museum is located to achieve the project objectives. Through various physical modifications to the site, new buildings would be constructed that would roughly double the amount of space at the Southwest Museum for exhibits and galleries, retail uses, and research, education and community activities. The new building space would be developed to the north of the historic Southwest Museum on those portions of the site already containing buildings and/or surface parking areas.

The No Project Alternative was identified as the environmentally superior alternative. When the environmentally superior alternative is the "no project" alternative, CEQA requires that an environmentally superior alternative be identified among the remaining alternatives. After comparing these alternatives, Alternative B, Reduced Program Alternative, was identified as the environmentally superior alternative (DEIR, Section V(F), p. 306).

The Reduced Program Alternative was rejected for it would not enable the ANC to attain several project objectives, many due to the Phase II Institute Building not being constructed. These include: establishing the additional building space needed to properly store and manage the ANC's collections in the future; providing unique education and research programs and services to scholars and visitors alike; creating a synergy between the museum's interpretation, conservation and education functions; enhancing the visitor experience as well as the Griffith Park Campus as a visitor destination; and providing opportunities for researchers, curators and the public to interact. Furthermore, this alternative would not meet the land use and site improvement objectives and policies of the Hollywood Community Plan. Lastly, by not constructing the Phase II Institute Building, a surface parking lot may need to be developed on the South Lawn to meet the Phase I parking demand. This parking lot would be open to public view, thereby causing a negative aesthetic impact; the proposed project eliminated or avoided this impact through site design considerations.

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Preparation of Final EIR and Errata to the Final EIR

The Final EIR (FEIR) was completed in August 2008, and consists of the DEIR, which is incorporated by reference, and the three volumes of the FEIR described below.

- Volume 1: Revised Executive Summary; corrections and additions to the DEIR; list of persons, organizations and agencies commenting on the DEIR; responses to written comments received during and after the review period; response to verbal comments raised during the public meeting on September 18, 2007; and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
- Volume 2: Copies of the letters and other written comments received on the DEIR; and the public meeting transcript.
- Volume 3: Contains all the appendices referenced in the DEIR and FEIR.

The corrections and additions to the DEIR that are identified in Volume 1, Section II of the FEIR were done to clarify, correct or add to the environmental impact analysis of the proposed project as a result of public and agency comments received during the review period. Because no new and significant environmental information, impacts, or mitigation measures were identified that would change the impact analyses and findings in the DEIR, recirculation of the document was not required.

An Errata to the FEIR was prepared in January 2009 to provide other corrections and additions to those indicated in the FEIR in order to clarify, correct, or add to the environmental impact analysis for the proposed project. In addition, in order to ensure that all areas of concern regarding the proposed project are adequately reviewed and addressed, the Errata to the FEIR provides responses to thirteen (13) comment letters regarding the proposed project that were received after release of the Final EIR in August 2008. None of the comments raised concerns that would result in new significant environmental impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of significant impacts already disclosed in the FEIR. Thus, Department staff believes that recirculation of the FEIR is not necessary.

Related CEQA Documents for Board Consideration and Action

In addition to the FEIR, other CEQA documents the Board must consider prior to approving the proposed project include:

- The Statement of Environmental Effects and Findings of Fact, which explains how the Lead Agency dealt with each significant impact and the alternatives in the DEIR (copy attached as Exhibit B to this report);

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- The Statement of Overriding Considerations, which explains why the City is willing to approve the proposed project in light of its unavoidable, adverse air quality impact, setting forth in the process the specific social, economic, legal, technical and other beneficial aspects of the project that outweigh the unavoidable, adverse environmental effects (copy attached as Exhibit C to this report); and
- The updated Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), which describes all the mitigation measures identified in the DEIR and FEIR and indicates at what point in the project they must be implemented, and by whom (e.g., contractor, City agency). The original Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program can be found in Volume 1, Section VI, of the FEIR. Because some of the mitigation measures used “where feasible”, “where they are feasible” and other similar language, Section III of the Errata to the FEIR, contains the updated Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program with this language removed in order to provide greater specificity and certainty with regard to the project’s mitigation measures (a copy of the revised MMRP is attached as Exhibit D to this report).

Prior to approving the Third Amendment to the Lease, the Board should take the actions described in the Recommendations Section at the beginning of this report, e.g., review the FEIR, adopt the attached CEQA Findings of Fact, the Statement of Overriding Considerations, and the updated Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program as a condition of its approval of the third amendment to the lease.

All the relevant documents have been provided to the Board and are on file in the Board Office of the Department of Recreation and Parks. The Department, located at 221 North Figueroa Street, Suite 1510, Los Angeles, is the custodian of the documents and other materials which constitute the record of proceedings upon which the City’s decision is based.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

There will not be any additional fiscal impacts as a result of these recommendations. The Department will save on park operation and maintenance costs.

This report was prepared by John Barraza, Management Analyst II, Real Estate and Asset Management, and reviewed by Cid Macaraeg, Director of Real Estate and Asset Management, and David Attaway, Environmental Supervisor II.