

Findings of Fact and the Statement of Overriding Considerations for the Griffith Park Crystal Springs New Baseball Fields Project

SCH#2013011012

Prepared by:

City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Bureau of Engineering, Environmental Management Group
1149 South Broadway, 6th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90015-2213
Attn: Maria Martin

February 2014



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1.0 Introduction

This Findings of Fact (Findings) and the Statement of Overriding Considerations summarize the findings of environmental impacts of the *Griffith Park Crystal Springs New Baseball Fields Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR)* - (City of Los Angeles 2013, SCH No. 2013011012) and presents the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

This section presents an overview of the purpose of this document, summarizes the proposed project (which is the Preferred Project), and presents the organization of this document.

1.1 Purpose of Findings and the Statement of Overriding Considerations

Section 21081 of the California Public Resources Code and Section 15091 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines require a public agency, prior to approving a project, to identify significant impacts of the project and make one or more written findings for each such impact. According to Section 21081, “no public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an environmental impact report has been certified which identifies one or more significant effects on the environment that would occur if the project is approved or carried out unless both of the following occur:

- (a) The public agency makes one or more of the following possible findings with respect to each significant effect:
 - 1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.
 - 2. Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been, or can and should be, adopted by that other agency.
 - 3. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives identified in the environmental impact report.

- (b) With respect to significant effects which were subject to a finding under paragraph (3) of subdivision (a), the public agency finds that specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the project outweigh the significant effects on the environment.”

Section 21081.6 of CEQA also requires public agencies to adopt a monitoring and reporting program for assessing and ensuring the implementation of proposed mitigation measures. The mitigation measures identified in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) for the Griffith Park Crystal Springs New Baseball Fields

Project, which is provided under separate cover, are those identified within this Findings and the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

The Statement of Overriding Considerations is a written statement explaining the specific reasons why the social, economic, legal, technical or other beneficial aspects of the proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts and why the Lead Agency is willing to accept such impacts. This statement shall be based on the final EIR and/or other substantial evidence in the record.

1.2 Overview of the Proposed Project

The proposed project, described in detail in Section 2 of the EIR, would construct two youth baseball fields on approximately four acres in the northeast section of the Crystal Springs Picnic Area. The new baseball fields would be constructed just northeast of the existing Pote Baseball Field and west of the I-5 Freeway.

Each natural-grass baseball field would be sized for youth baseball and would include dugouts, bleachers, fencing, warm-up areas, and scoreboards. Security lighting, landscaping and irrigation systems would also be installed. Up to forty-nine (49) trees would be affected by the proposed project. Thirty-three (33) trees are targeted for removal and twelve (12) trees with trunks less than five (5) inches in diameter may be relocated, if relocation is deemed feasible. However, if relocation is not deemed feasible, up to forty five (45) trees would be removed. Additionally, four trees may require trimming and protection through the use of fencing, barriers, or other applicable Best Management Practices, to prevent permanent damage due to construction activities within the vicinity of their drip line or roots. Removed trees would be replaced according to City policy. Seven picnic tables would be relocated within or near the Crystal Springs Picnic Area and an existing loop driveway would be truncated and a cul-de-sac constructed at each end. An existing restroom would be renovated to comply with current code requirements. Project construction would take approximately two years.

Among the purposes of the project is the provision of high quality, affordable recreational programs for youths in the area, especially at-risk boys and girls from 6 to 12 years of age.

Project funding would be from several sources, including Proposition K and Quimby Act funds.

1.3 Document Organization

This Findings and the Statement of Overriding Considerations are organized in the following way:

- Section 1.0, Introduction, provides background information of the purpose of Findings and the Statement of Overriding Considerations and presents the

organization of this document and provides a brief overview of the proposed project.

- Section 2.0, Statement of Environmental Effects and Required Findings, identifies the issue areas for which the proposed project would have no impact or a less than significant impact, and presents a summary of the significant effects of the proposed project along with the one or more written findings made by the public agency explaining how it dealt with each of the significant effects and mitigation measures.
- Section 3.0, Alternatives Considered, describes the alternatives evaluated in the EIR, and the findings and rationale for selection of the proposed project and rejection of the alternatives, including the Environmentally Superior Alternative.
- Section 4.0, Statement of Overriding Considerations, explains in detail why the social, economic, legal, technical or other beneficial aspects of the proposed project outweighs the unavoidable, adverse environmental impacts and why the agency is willing to accept such impacts.

2.0 Statement of Environmental Effects and Required Findings

This section discusses the impacts and mitigation measures identified for the proposed project, and makes findings for all areas of potential impact.

The EIR focused on those potential effects of the proposed project on the environment that the Lead Agency has determined may be significant. The Notice of Preparation process, including completion of an Initial Study, determined that the proposed project would have no impact regarding the following issues areas:

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Mineral Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Population and Housing
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Public Services
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Land Use and Planning

As described in Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines, and detailed in the EIR, these issues have no potential for significant impacts and required no further environmental review or analysis in the EIR.

The following issue areas analyzed in Section 3.0 of the EIR were determined to result in less than significant impacts:

- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gases
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic

Potentially significant impacts (from construction and/or operation) occurring as a result of implementation of the proposed project that warrant mitigation measures would be in the following resource areas:

- Cultural Resources: Impact to historic, archaeological or paleontological resources during construction of project.
- Noise: Construction activities could impact receptors at adjacent residential areas. Operation of the project could impact users in picnic areas and children's play area.

The issue areas determined in the DEIR to have unavoidable significant impacts from the construction of the proposed project, even after mitigation, include:

- Aesthetics: Because no feasible mitigation measures were identified that would both address resulting impacts on aesthetics and meet the project objectives, significant unavoidable impacts to Griffith Park aesthetic resources would occur as a result of the proposed project.
- Biological Resources (Trees): Based on the conceptual layouts, it is estimated that the proposed project would require the removal of up to 45 trees (and may temporarily impact four [4] additional trees). Among the trees to be removed are protected and heritage trees-such as Black Walnuts, Coast Live Oaks, and California Sycamores that are unique trees located in a sensitive and historic location (Griffith Park) that are uncommon specimens because of their size, maturity and visual quality. Although the project would be designed in compliance with applicable tree protection requirements, it is possible that this impact may not be mitigated to a less than significant level. Therefore, tree removal could cause unavoidable significant impacts relative to biological resources.

Each of the resource areas analyzed in the EIR is discussed in terms of:

- *Descriptions of Potential Effects* are specific descriptions of the environmental effects identified in the EIR as significant or potentially significant.
- *Mitigation Measures* are the proposed mitigation measures for the impacts identified as significant or potentially significant.
- *Findings* are the findings made in accordance with Section 21081 of the Public Resources Code. One of three possible findings is made for each significant or potentially significant impact, in response to Section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines. The significance of the environmental impacts after mitigation is also provided.
- *Rationale* is a summary of the reasons for the findings.
- *References* are notations on the specific section in the EIR or other information sources that support the findings.

2.1 Aesthetics

2.1.1 Description of Potential Effects

The Crystal Springs Picnic Area, as defined in visual terms by road placements, topography, landscaping, culverts and swales, and other pre-1959 structures, is a setting of high visual quality because the visual elements in it possess relatively high degrees of vividness and unity.

The proposed project and its design elements would be considered appropriate in a park setting; however, due to some loss of mature trees and the re-engineering of the ground surfaces within the ball field area, visual quality would be reduced from high to moderate. Given the popularity of the Crystal Springs Picnic Area and the presence of sensitive viewers on the adjacent equestrian trail, the changes would be apparent to sensitive viewing groups and viewer response is expected to be high. The impact on visual quality is considered a substantial adverse effect, thus a significant impact under CEQA.

2.1.2 Mitigation Measures

No feasible mitigation measures were identified that would both address the resulting impacts and meet project objectives.

2.1.3 Findings

For the above impacts to aesthetics, the following finding is made:

- [] Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

2.3.1 Description of Potential Effects

Trees

Construction of the proposed project would result in the removal and direct disturbance of numerous trees considered protected by the City of Los Angeles Tree Preservation Ordinance, RAP Tree Preservation Policy, and the City's Policy for the Installation and Preservation of Landscaping and Trees on Public Property. Protected trees are located in the footprint of ball fields where construction activities including raising and lowering existing grades, trenching for irrigation, and excavation for associated park facility improvements would require tree removal. Additional effects on protected trees could occur during construction as a result of damage to trees located adjacent to the construction footprint.

The removal or harming of protected trees as a result of construction activities would conflict with the City of Los Angeles Tree Preservation Ordinance, RAP Tree Preservation Policy, and the City's Policy for the Installation and Preservation of Landscaping and Trees on Public Property, and this would be a significant effect. However, removed trees would be replaced in accordance with City policy and coordination and authorization from RAP's Urban Forestry Division would be required for any park trees and other vegetation that is removed by the proposed project. Applicable best management practices (BMPs), as described in the RAP Urban Forest Program, would be followed, including planning proactively, installing protective tree fencing, establishing a tree protection zone, installing a root buffer and mulch, maintaining irrigation or adequate soil moisture, establishing erosion control measures, conducting proactive pruning, trenching with alternative methods, and installing alternative types of hardscape.

Wildlife

Construction of the youth baseball fields would result in disturbance and removal of trees as described above. These trees may provide limited nesting habitat for migratory birds, which are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In order to avoid impacts to migratory birds during the nesting season, mitigation would be required.

2.3.2 Mitigation Measures

In order to mitigate potential significant direct and indirect impacts on biological resources, mitigation measure BIO-1 (described in Section 3.4.4 of the DEIR and Section 3. of the MMRP) will be implemented.

BIO-1: Mitigation Measure for Protection of Nesting Birds. Construction activities that involve tree removal or trimming would be timed as much as possible to occur outside the migratory bird nesting season, which occurs generally from March 1 through August 31, and as early as February 1 for raptors.

removal during construction of the proposed project. Among the trees to be removed are unique trees located in a sensitive and historic location (Griffith Park) that are uncommon specimens because of their size, maturity and visual quality. For example, it is anticipated that a California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) with a trunk diameter of 52 inches might be removed. If removed, this tree would be replaced by younger specimens of the same type, but the replacement trees would not initially provide the habitat area or the shade of the removed specimen. Furthermore, removal of these trees was deemed a significant visual impact (see DEIR Section 3.2). For the reasons discussed above, the removal of protected trees at this location could be considered a significant adverse environmental impact to biological resources.

The removal of several unique protected specimen trees by the proposed project could result in significant impacts to biological resources. Removed trees will be replaced in accordance with City policy. However, due to the uncertainties described above, this impact may not be mitigated to a less than significant level. As such, for purposes of this finding, impacts to biological resources from tree removal are assumed to be unavoidable adverse impacts.

2.3.5 References

Section 3.4 of the DEIR addresses the project's biological resource impacts and mitigation measures.

2.4 Cultural Resources

This section discusses the significant or potentially significant cultural resource impacts related to the proposed project.

2.4.1 Description of Potential Effects

Historic Resources

The construction of the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact on the historical resource that is Griffith Park. The youth baseball fields would present a change in use for the picnic area to active recreation, however proposed operational changes to the Crystal Springs Picnic Area would not result in a substantial adverse change to Griffith Park. Griffith Park would not lose its historic integrity, and become ineligible as a locally listed and California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) listed historical resource. Although character-defining features of Griffith Park would be altered and lost, Griffith Park would retain the physical characteristics that convey its historical significance and justify its inclusion as a City Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) and CRHR listed property.

Archaeological Resources

Construction for the proposed project would include activities involving limited amounts of ground disturbance. These may include grading and leveling, and utility

trenching associated with replacing or upgrading electrical and plumbing systems and drainage elements. These activities are likely to be shallow in depth, and overall, the potential for encountering buried archaeological resources is considered to be low. However, trenching excavations could encounter significant archaeological resources. Disturbance of significant archaeological resources, if any were encountered, would result in significant impacts. Mitigation Measure CR-1 described below would reduce such impacts to a less -than -significant level.

With respect to human remains, if any are discovered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall cease in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County Coroner shall be contacted. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner shall notify the NAHC, who shall then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). Further provisions of Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable. Therefore, by complying with existing regulations, impacts related to human remains would be less than significant.

Paleontological Resources

Construction activities for the proposed project would include limited amounts of ground disturbance. These may include grading and leveling, and utility trenching associated with replacing or upgrading electrical and plumbing systems and drainage elements. These activities are likely to be shallow in depth, and overall, the potential for encountering buried paleontological resources is considered to be low. However, trenching excavations could encounter significant fossil resources. Disturbance of significant paleontological resources, if any were encountered, would result in significant impacts. Mitigation Measure CR-2 described below would reduce such impacts to a less -than- significant level.

2.4.2 Mitigation Measures

To minimize potential impacts to archaeological and paleontological resources, should they be encountered, mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2 (described in Section 3.5.4 of the DEIR and Section 3.2 of the MMRP) will be implemented.

CR-1: A qualified professional archaeologist shall monitor all initial phases of ground- disturbing activities of the project. If buried cultural resources – such as flaked or ground stone, historic debris, building foundations, or non-human bone – are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop in that area and within 50 feet of the find until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find and, if necessary, develop appropriate treatment measures. Treatment measures typically include: development of avoidance strategies, capping with fill material, or mitigation of impacts through data recovery programs such as excavation or detailed documentation. A report of findings shall be prepared, and recovered materials curated, if needed, in an approved facility. If during cultural resources monitoring the qualified archaeologist determines that the sediments being excavated are previously

disturbed by construction or are unlikely to contain significant cultural materials, the qualified archaeologist can specify that monitoring be reduced or eliminated.

CR-2: Project plans shall specify that a qualified paleontologist monitor the initial ground disturbance at depths below ground surface greater than ten feet. The qualified paleontologic monitor shall retain the option to reduce monitoring if, in his or her professional opinion, the sediments being monitored were previously disturbed. Monitoring may also be reduced if the potentially fossiliferous units, previously described, are not present or, if present, are determined by qualified paleontologic personnel to have a low potential to contain fossil resources. The monitor shall be equipped to salvage fossils and samples of sediments as they are unearthed to avoid construction delays and shall be empowered to temporarily halt or divert equipment to allow removal of abundant or large specimens. Recovered specimens shall be prepared to a point of identification and permanent preservation, including washing of sediments to recover small invertebrates and vertebrates. Specimens shall be curated into a professional, accredited museum repository with permanent retrievable storage. A report of findings, with an appended itemized inventory of specimens, shall be prepared and shall signify completion of the program to mitigate impacts on paleontological resources.

2.4.3 Findings

For potential impacts to paleontological resources, archaeological resources, and historical resources, the following finding is made:

- Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.**
- Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.
- Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

With mitigation, the potential impacts to archaeological resources, including human remains, if present, from construction of the proposed project are found to be:

- Significant
- Not significant**

With mitigation, the potential impacts to paleontological resources, if present, from construction of the proposed project are found to be:

[] Significant [**XX**] **Not significant**

2.4.4 Rationale

Archaeological Resources

Although no archaeological resources, including human remains, are expected to be encountered at the proposed project sites, in the event that such resources are found during construction, standard practices and implementation of CR-1, which requires a qualified archaeology monitor to be present when native soils are disturbed and to temporarily halt construction should resources be uncovered until the find can be evaluated and a determination made on the best course of action, will reduce any potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Paleontological Resources

Although no paleontological resources are expected to be encountered, in the event that such resources are found during construction, standard practices and implementation of CR-2, which requires development activities to cease in the vicinity of the find until the paleontological resources are properly assessed by a qualified paleontologist, will ensure that any potential impacts are less than significant.

2.4.5 References

Section 3.5 of the DEIR addresses the project's cultural resource impacts and mitigation measures.

2.5 Greenhouse Gases

No significant or potentially significant impacts to greenhouse gases were identified in Section 3.6 of the DEIR.

2.6 Noise

This section discusses the significant or potentially significant noise impacts related to the proposed project.

2.6.1 Description of Potential Effects

Construction activities will increase noise levels at nearby outdoor use areas including the existing ball field, picnic areas and playgrounds in Crystal Springs Picnic Area, and golf course fairways in Griffith Park. Construction noise would be intermittent and temporary, and would cease once construction work is complete. Operation of the proposed baseball fields would include noise from participants and spectators during

games and practice events, and potentially noise from public address systems installed temporarily during game events. Park visitors in Picnic Area #1 could be exposed to significant ambient noise levels while the ball fields are in use.

2.6.2 Mitigation Measures

In order to mitigate potentially significant noise increases at sensitive receptors, the following mitigation measures (described in Section 3.7.4 of the DEIR and Section 3.2 of the MMRP) shall be implemented:

NOI-1a: The City shall require the construction contractor to implement noise – reducing construction practices to ensure that construction noise levels do not increase ambient noise levels by more than 5 dB at adjacent residential areas. Measures used to limit construction noise include the following:

- Locating stationary equipment (e.g., generators, compressors, rock crushers, cement mixers, idling trucks) as far as possible from noise-sensitive land uses.
- Prohibiting gasoline or diesel engines from having unmuffled exhaust.
- Requiring that all construction equipment powered by gasoline or diesel engines have sound-control devices that are at least as effective as those originally provided by the manufacturer and that all equipment be operated and maintained to minimize noise generation.
- Preventing excessive noise by shutting down idle vehicles or equipment.
- Using noise-reducing enclosures around noise-generating equipment.
- Constructing temporary barriers between noise sources and noise-sensitive land uses or take advantage of existing barrier features (e.g., terrain, structures) to block sound transmission to noise-sensitive land uses. The barriers shall be designed to obstruct the line of sight between the noise-sensitive land use and on-site construction equipment.

NOI-1b: Prior to Construction, Initiate a Complaint/Response Tracking Program. The City shall make a construction schedule available to residents living in the vicinity of the construction areas before construction begins, and designate a noise disturbance coordinator. The coordinator shall be responsible for responding to complaints regarding construction noise, shall determine the cause of the complaint, and shall ensure that reasonable measures are implemented to correct the problem when feasible. A contact telephone number for the noise disturbance coordinator shall be conspicuously posted on construction site fences and shall be included in the notification of the construction schedule.

NOI-2: The City shall relocate impacted picnic and play areas so that the noise increase from the new baseball fields is less than 3 dB. To reduce the predicted noise increase of 4 dB to less than 3 dB at the picnic and children’s play areas, it is anticipated these uses would need to be moved a distance of at least 125 feet from the baseball fields.

2.6.3 Findings

For the above noise impacts, the following finding is made:

[XX] Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

[] Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.

[] Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

With implementation of mitigation measures NOI-1a, NOI-1b, and NOI-2, the potential noise impacts from construction and operation of the proposed Griffith Park Crystal Springs New Baseball Fields are found to be:

[] Significant [XX] **Not significant**

2.6.4 Rationale

Construction noise would be intermittent and temporary, and would cease once construction work is complete. To reduce construction noise, mitigation measures NOI-1a would implement equipment noise controls such as mufflers and noise attenuation devices, and NOI-1b would provide a Complaint/Response Tracking Program. Park visitors in Picnic Area #1 could be exposed to significant ambient noise levels when the new ball fields are in use. Mitigation measure NOI-2 would provide sufficient separation so that park visitors in Picnic Area #1 would not be subjected to significant levels of noise from the ball fields. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce noise impacts to a less-than-significant level.

2.6.5 References

Section 3.7 of the DEIR addresses the project’s noise impacts and mitigation measures.

2.7 Recreation

No significant or potentially significant impacts to recreation were identified in Section 3.8 of the DEIR.

2.8 Transportation and Traffic

No significant or potentially significant impacts to recreation were identified in Section 3.9 of the DEIR.

2.9 Cumulative Effects

This section discusses the significant or potentially significant cumulative impacts due to the proposed project.

2.9.1 Description of Potential Effects

Cumulative effects associated with the proposed project would include the following:

Aesthetics

The proposed project could impact the overall visual character and quality of the Crystal Springs area. However, none of the identified related projects are expected to have a cumulative adverse effect on the visual quality of the project area or vice versa, because they are not within close proximity to each other.

Air Quality

As discussed in DEIR Section 3.3, construction and operation of the proposed project would emit less than significant amounts of criteria pollutants on a regional and localized basis. The thresholds used in this evaluation consider cumulative effects of projects throughout the air basin; therefore, the project's cumulative impacts are less than significant.

SCAQMD does not consider diesel-related cancer risks from construction equipment to be an issue because of the short-term nature of construction activities. As such, project-related toxic emission impacts during construction would be less than significant. The proposed project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant exposure to TACs.

The proposed project would place recreational sensitive receptors near an existing pollution source (i.e., the I-5 freeway). As discussed in DEIR Section 3.9, this impact would be less than significant.

As discussed in DEIR Section 3.9, the cumulative effect of the proposed project and the identified related projects would not result in congested conditions on nearby roadways.

Therefore, the cumulative effect of the project and related projects on CO concentrations near affected roadways would be less than significant.

Biological Resources

Based on the conceptual layouts, it is estimated that the proposed project would require the removal of up to 45 trees (DEIR Table 3.4-3) (and may temporarily impact four [4] additional trees). As discussed in DEIR Section 3.4, the removal of protected trees at the Crystal Springs Picnic area could be considered a significant adverse environmental impact even with adherence to the applicable tree preservation requirements. The removal of up to 31 trees having no special status designations would be a less than significant impact. Due to the off-setting effect of the City's "Million Trees Program," the loss of non-protected trees would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant biological impact.

Cultural Resources

The construction of the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact on the historical resource which is Griffith Park. However, the project's impacts could be cumulatively considerable in combination with related projects.

Construction activities could encounter significant archaeological resources (including human remains). Mitigation would reduce such impacts to a less -than -significant level. However, the project's impacts could be cumulatively considerable in combination with related projects.

Construction activities could encounter significant paleontological resources. Mitigation would reduce such impacts to a less -than -significant level. However, the project's impacts could be cumulatively considerable in combination with related projects.

Geology and Soils

The proposed project would not result in significant geotechnical impacts related to ground shaking or ground rupture, potential liquefaction, lateral spreading, subsidence, landslide, or expansive soil hazards. The related projects would be constructed at specific locations and would be subject to site-specific geotechnical requirements based on their applicable soils reports. Because the geotechnical conditions are site specific and because the project would not result in significant geotechnical impacts, the proposed project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant geotechnical impact.

Greenhouse Gases

GHG emissions from the project would be less than significant. The CAPCOA threshold of 900 MTCO_{2e} was developed to implement the State's goal of reducing statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and, therefore, includes consideration of the cumulative effects of projects throughout the State. Therefore, the project's effect on GHG emissions is not likely to be cumulatively considerable.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Construction of the proposed project is not expected to result in significant impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials. As a consequence, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The proposed project is not expected to result in significant impacts related to flooding, surface water movement, surface water quality, or runoff quality. While the related projects would result in runoff from their respective project sites, they would be subject to SUSMP requirements as part of their permitting process, to improve the quality of runoff from their sites and/or reduce the amount of runoff flow from the sites. In addition, the related projects would be developed on specific parcels that would not affect the project site. As a consequence, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant impact related to runoff and water quality.

Land Use

The proposed project would be consistent with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations of agencies with jurisdiction over the project. The related projects could be subject to land use entitlement requirements and with approved entitlements, would be consistent with applicable land use plans and site zoning. As a consequence, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact.

Noise

The proposed project's noise impacts, when mitigated, would be less than significant. None of the identified related projects are close enough to the proposed project to cause cumulatively considerable noise impacts.

Public Services

The proposed project would not require additional police protection beyond what is currently provided. Similarly, the project would not result in an increased demand for police facilities, equipment or officers. The related projects could indirectly result in increased demands for police services; however, they are not expected to result in a need to build new police station facilities, which could result in significant impacts. Furthermore, those developments would result in an increase in local taxes, which contribute to the funding of police services. As a consequence, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant impact to police services.

The proposed project is not expected to result in significant impacts on fire protection and emergency medical services, response time, service intensity, or facilities. Because the proposed project would not generate substantial demand for fire protection or

emergency services, it would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant impact to such services.

Recreation

Temporary impacts associated with changes in park use during the construction period would be less than significant. The anticipated increase in park use occurring as a result of operation of the proposed project would not cause or accelerate substantial physical deterioration of existing recreational facilities, and impacts would be less than significant. The project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant impact to recreation.

Transportation/Traffic

The analysis of the proposed project on transportation and traffic presented in DEIR Section 3.9 includes consideration of cumulative effects from related projects. No significant construction-related traffic impacts or operation-related traffic impacts are anticipated.

Utilities

Although project construction would require water for dust suppression, the amounts are not anticipated to exceed available supplies or distribution infrastructure. The project locations under consideration are currently irrigated. Operation of the improvements would not require additional water for irrigation. The related projects are required to obtain certification from water suppliers that adequate water supplies exist or will be available to support the developments. Therefore, neither construction nor operation of the proposed project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant water consumption or supply impact.

Existing capacity exists to adequately handle project-generated waste. Although the related projects would generate solid wastes during construction and operation, the amount of wastes generated would not exceed existing landfill capacity. Therefore, neither construction nor operation of the proposed project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulatively significant impact to solid waste capacity.

2.9.2 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures BIO-1, CR-1 and CR-2 (described in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the DEIR and Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the MMRP) will be implemented for the project as approved.

2.9.3 Findings

- [] Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

[] Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.

[**XX**] **Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.**

With project-level mitigation, the above potential cumulative cultural resources impacts are found to be:

[**XX**] **Significant** [] Not significant

2.9.4 Rationale

Where feasible, project-specific mitigation has been identified and will be implemented to reduce potential impacts. The construction of the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact on the historical resource that is Griffith Park; however the project's impacts could be cumulatively considerable in combination with related projects. Construction activities could encounter significant archaeological or paleontological resources. Mitigation will reduce such impacts to a less -than - significant level. However, the project's impacts could be cumulatively considerable in combination with related projects.

2.9.5 References

Section 5.1 of the DEIR addresses the potential cumulative effects of the proposed project.

3.0 Alternatives Considered and Preferred Project

Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines requires an evaluation of the comparative effects of a reasonable range of alternatives to the project that would feasibly attain most of the project's basic objectives and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant impacts of the project. A feasible alternative is one that can be accomplished successfully in a reasonable period of time, taking into consideration economic, legal, social, and technological factors. The range of alternatives is governed by the "rule of reason" that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasonable choice. Section 4.0, Alternatives, of the DEIR discusses two project alternatives and the No Project alternative that were carried forward in detailed analyses. DEIR Section 4.0 also discussed several alternatives that were considered but not carried forward.

The broad goal of the Griffith Park Crystal Springs New Baseball Fields project is to provide access to high quality, affordable recreational programs, based on the needs of the community.

The main objectives of the project are to:

- Restore baseball/softball fields to Griffith Park Crystal Springs that served the area prior to the construction of the I-5 freeway,
- Increase access to high quality, affordable recreational programs for youths in the area, especially at-risk boys and girls ranging from 6 to 12 years of age;
- Provide area residents with team-sports programming opportunities;
- Assist Recreation and Parks in meeting their planning goal to elevate the 1 baseball field per 15,449 persons ratio to 1 baseball field per 12,000 persons by 2013¹; and
- Meet the requirements of available funding sources (Proposition K and Quimby Act).

3.1 Alternatives Considered But Not Analyzed in the Draft EIR

Alternatives that were considered but not carried forward in the DEIR included the Headworks site, the Toyon Canyon Landfill, the Los Angeles Zoo Overflow Parking area, the Commonwealth Nursery, and Carpenter Community Charter School. All of these sites are located within the boundaries of Griffith Park, except Carpenter Community Charter School, which is located in Studio City. As explained in the DEIR, none of these suggested locations were determined to be feasible alternatives as defined in CEQA and therefore were not required to be analyzed in detail in the DEIR.

During circulation of the DEIR, a commenter suggested construction of only one new ball field at the Crystal Springs site. This reduced project alternative was not proposed during the scoping phase of the EIR and therefore was not examined in detail. A “reduced project” alternative would have less impact in some areas: depending on the specific location of the one field, it is likely that fewer trees would have to be removed or relocated and noise from project operations would be lessened. However, potential effects on aesthetics and cultural resources would remain. The marginal environmental benefit of a reduced project is not sufficient to outweigh the lost community benefit of one less field. Lastly, a reduced project would require revision of the Proposition K grant that provides the majority of the project funding, which would delay implementation of the project.

¹ City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks. Crystal Springs (Griffith Park)-Ball Fields, 2009 Proposition K Grant Application. 2009. *See also*: City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks. 2009 Citywide Community Needs Assessment, Final Report. 2009.

3.2 Alternatives Analyzed in the Draft EIR

Two project alternatives and the No Project Alternative were identified and analyzed for relative impacts as compared to the proposed project. The following construction elements are common to the proposed project and selected alternatives: each field would include a home plate, bases, pitcher's mound, batters' and catcher's boxes, two dugouts (with two benches with approximately twenty-seats each), two bleachers, 16-foot high outfield/perimeter fencing, natural grass, warm-up areas, scoreboard, security lighting, landscaping, and an irrigation system. Construction at the Crystal Springs site, for both the proposed project and Alternative 1B, includes upgrading the existing restroom for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

Refer to Section 2.8 of the DEIR for a detailed discussion of how the alternatives were selected and refer to DEIR Section 4.0 for a discussion of the relative impacts associated with each alternative analyzed. Below is brief summary of each alternative analyzed.

3.2.1 Alternative 1B (Alternative 1, Option B)

Alternative 1B would contain the same elements as the proposed project. However, one field would be located just southeast of Pote Field and the other would be located southeast of the first field, on the grassy area across the loop driveway and parking lot (DEIR Figure 2-6). Additionally, the circular loop driveway would be maintained. To implement this alternative, approximately fifty-six (56) picnic tables would be relocated within or near the Crystal Springs Picnic Area and sixty-eight trees would be removed and replaced. The replaced trees would be planted at appropriate locations within Griffith Park as determined by Recreation and Parks. No changes in traffic circulation or parking are anticipated with this alternative.

This alternative was not selected because of concerns related to pedestrian traffic (including players moving between fields) and the roadway and parking that would be located between the two fields. Siting the new baseball fields adjacent to the existing field would be more effective in terms of upkeep and maintenance as well as in the development of a comprehensive program. Additionally, although Alternative 1B was deemed to have lesser impacts than the preferred project, the overall difference is relatively minor. Lastly, as indicated in the DEIR, the preferred alternative was selected as the Local Voluntary Neighborhood Oversight Committee's (LVNOC) recommended alternative.

3.2.2 Alternative 2 (North Atwater Park)

Alternative 2 would retrofit an existing softball field at North Atwater Park to youth baseball and a new youth baseball field would be constructed. The existing backstop, bleachers, and players' benches would remain and the softball field would be upgraded or replaced. The new youth baseball field would be constructed just north of the existing softball field. The new bleachers, backstop, and players' benches would match those of the existing softball field. Refer to DEIR Figure 2-7. To implement this alternative, an existing basketball court and sand volleyball court would be removed.

Approximately twenty-six (26) trees would be removed and replaced. The replaced trees would be planted at appropriate locations within Griffith Park as determined by Recreation and Parks. Unlike with the proposed project and Alternative 1B, Alternative 2 would not displace picnic tables. Rather, new picnic tables would be added to the area as part of the project.

This alternative was not selected because of concerns related to traffic intrusion and parking. Additionally, Alternative 2 could potentially conflict with the Recreation and Parks 2009 Citywide Community Needs Assessment because the new youth baseball field located to the north of the existing baseball field at North Atwater Park would displace a basketball court and a volleyball court. Both the outdoor basketball court and volleyball court are identified as higher priorities the youth baseball field in the Needs Assessment. Therefore, the removal of the basketball court and volleyball court could potentially conflict with the Needs Assessment. As with the preferred project, operation activities at the Alternative 2 site would expose sensitive receptors (North Atwater Park users) in the immediate vicinity of the baseball fields to increases in noise levels of up to 10dB above ambient noise levels. Implementation of a mitigation measure to relocate the picnic and children's area an estimated distance of 250 feet from the closest baseball field would reduce this impact to a less than significant level, however, the mitigation was deemed infeasible due to the site configuration. As such, a significant noise impact would remain during operation of Alternative 2. Lastly, as indicated in the DEIR, the preferred alternative was selected as the Local Voluntary Neighborhood Oversight Committee's (LVNOC) recommended alternative.

3.2.3 No Project

The No Project Alternative would result in the improvements proposed under the *Griffith Park Crystal Springs New Baseball Fields Project* not being implemented. Under this alternative, the current uses and conditions of the project site would remain unchanged.

Although the No Project Alternative would result in the fewest environmental impacts, it was not selected because it would not meet the purpose and objectives of the project.

3.3 Preferred Project

This section presents the Preferred Project, which is the proposed project, including a discussion of the rationale for the selection and the benefits of the Preferred Project. All the build alternatives were deemed to be superior to the No Project Alternative because they would meet all the project objectives, which are as follows:

The Preferred Project (described in the EIR as "the proposed project" or "Alternative 1, Option A") is to construct two new youth baseball fields within the north Crystal Springs Picnic Area northeast of the existing Pote Baseball Field. Each baseball field would include a home plate, bases, pitcher's mound, batters' and catcher's boxes, two dugouts (with two benches providing approximately twenty-seats each), two bleachers, 16-foot high outfield/perimeter fencing, natural grass, warm-up areas, and scoreboard.

Refer to DEIR Figure 2-5 for the proposed conceptual project layout (Layout A). Security lighting, landscaping, and an irrigation system would also be installed.

Up to forty-nine (49) trees would be affected by the proposed project. Thirty-three (33) trees are targeted for removal and twelve (12) trees with trunks less than five (5) inches in diameter may be relocated, if relocation is deemed feasible. However, if relocation is not deemed feasible, up to forty five (45) trees would be removed. Additionally, four trees may require trimming and protection through the use of fencing, barriers, or other applicable Best Management Practices, to prevent permanent damage due to construction activities within the vicinity of their drip line or roots. Removed trees would be replaced in accordance with City policy.

The replaced and relocated trees would be planted at appropriate locations within Griffith Park as determined by Recreation and Parks. Additionally, approximately seven (7) picnic tables would be relocated within or near the Crystal Springs Picnic Area. The northeast segment of the access loop driveway which currently allows circulation around the Crystal Springs Picnic Area would be taken out and a cul-de-sac ("hammerhead" turning circle) would be constructed at each terminus of the impacted loop driveway segment (refer to DEIR 2-5). Construction of the northern cul-de-sac would eliminate five (5) parking spaces. And the existing restroom would be upgraded for ADA compliance.

3.4 Environmentally Superior Alternative

The No Project Alternative would result in the fewest environmental impacts, and as such, is considered to be the environmentally superior alternative. However, under CEQA, if the No Project Alternative would be environmentally superior, an EIR is required to determine if an environmentally superior alternative exists among the other alternatives. As indicated in Section 4.0 of the DEIR, Alternative 1B was deemed to be the environmentally superior alternative. However, it should be noted that the difference in impacts between Alternative 1B and the proposed project is relatively minor. Although the No Project Alternative would result in the fewest environmental impacts, it has not been recommended for implementation because it would not meet the purpose and objectives of the project.

4.0 Statement of Overriding Considerations

The Preferred Project (the proposed project) would result in the following unavoidable significant adverse impact after mitigation:

- **Aesthetics:** Because no feasible mitigation measures were identified that would both address resulting impacts on aesthetics and meeting the project objectives, significant unavoidable impacts to Griffith Park aesthetic resources would occur as a result of the proposed project.

- **Biological Resources (Trees):** Based on the conceptual layouts, it is estimated that the proposed project would require the removal of up to 49 trees (and may temporarily impact four [4] additional trees). Among the trees to be removed are unique trees located in a sensitive and historic location (Griffith Park) that are uncommon specimens because of their size, maturity and visual quality. Although the project would be designed in compliance with applicable tree protection requirements, it is possible that this impact may not be mitigated to a less- than -significant level. Therefore, tree removal could cause unavoidable significant impacts relative to biological resources.

The Preferred Project would provide access to high quality, affordable recreational programs, based on the needs of the community, by:

- Restoring baseball/softball fields to Griffith Park Crystal Springs that served the area prior to the construction of the I-5 freeway;
- Increasing access to high quality, affordable recreational programs for youths in the area, especially at-risk boys and girls ranging from 6 to 12 years of age;
- Providing area residents with team-sports programming opportunities;
- Assisting in the attainment of the Department of Recreation and Parks' goal to elevate the 1 baseball field per 15,449 persons ratio to 1 baseball field per 12,000 persons²; and
- Meeting the requirements of available funding sources (Proposition K and Quimby Act).

The City of Los Angeles hereby concludes that the Preferred Project's benefits outweigh and override its unavoidable significant impacts for the reasons stated above. The City reached this decision after having done all of the following: (1) adopted all feasible mitigation measures, (2) evaluated and rejected other project alternatives, (3) recognized all significant, unavoidable impacts associated with the Preferred Project, and (4) balanced the benefits of the project against the impacts that would be significant and unavoidable.

The Preferred Project also maximizes the requirements of available funding sources (Proposition K and Quimby Act), which are instrumental in bringing the project to fruition.

² City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks. Crystal Springs (Griffith Park)-Ball Fields, 2009 Proposition K Grant Application. 2009. *See also:* City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks. 2009 Citywide Community Needs Assessment, Final Report. 2009.

The location and custodian of the environmental documents and/or other material which constitute the record of the proceedings upon which its decision is based is:

Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering,
Environmental Management Group
1149 South Broadway, 6th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90015