

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This chapter provides a description of the LASHP Master Development Plan Phase I Implementation (proposed project) evaluated in Chapter 3 of this EIR. The project background, project location, existing environmental setting, and project objectives are described, followed by a description of project characteristics, construction scenario, and a summary of project approvals that would be required with the implementation of the proposed project. Additional descriptions of the environmental setting as it relates to each of the environmental issue areas analyzed in this EIR are included in the environmental setting discussion contained within Chapter 3, Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation. This information is provided pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15124.

2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project site occupies a critical nexus within the geographical and cultural history of the City of Los Angeles (City). LASHP is located at the foot of the Elysian Hills on the former site of the historic Southern Pacific Railroad Company's River Station railroad yard. CDPR acquired the project site in December 2001, which is currently operated as part of the Angeles District of the CDPR parks system. In 1971, 30 years prior to CDPR purchase, the City of Los Angeles recognized the local significance of the site and dedicated the site as Historic-Cultural Monument No. 82, for its role as the Southern Pacific Railroad Company's River Station railroad yard.¹ However, the cultural significance of the property and adjacent areas dates back much further in time than just to the site's use as a railroad yard, and forward to its establishment as a public park.

2.1.1 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Shortly after CDPR purchased the project site in December 2001, CDPR established and implemented the Cornfield State Park Advisory Committee (the Committee). The Committee was legislatively mandated by Senate Bill (SB) 1177. The Committee was made up of 36 key community leaders and professional advisors representing the diverse interests of those that had fought to create the park, many of whom looked to the property as part of greater plans for the revitalization of the Los Angeles River corridor. The Committee's Recommendation Report of April 2003 provided CDPR with a vision for the goals of the future state park. In July 2003, CDPR prepared the Cornfield Interim Public Use Plan Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration as part of this initial phase in the LASHP planning and public use process. The Cornfield Interim Public Use Plan enabled the public to utilize the project site while long-range planning commenced with the LASHP General Plan.² The second planning phase included the preparation of a General Plan for approval by the CDPR Commission (Commission). During the course of these initial planning processes, CDPR held over 50 public and stakeholder meetings to gain input for the guidance of the park's development and use. The LASHP General Plan/EIR was prepared by CDPR

¹ City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, Cultural Heritage Commission, Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) Report for Central City North Community Planning Area, Last Updated April 6, 2011, available at: <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/designated-sites>, accessed: November 1, 2011.

² CDPR, *Cornfield Interim Public Use Plan Final Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration*, July 2003.

2.0 Project Description

and subsequently adopted by the Commission on June 10, 2005. With the Commission's adoption of the LASHP General Plan/EIR, the project site was also classified as a State Historic Park in order to recognize the significant cultural values of the property and guide its development (Cal. Pub. Res. Code Section 5019.59). Consistent with Cal. Pub. Res. Code Section 5002.2(e), interim park uses have been provided for immediate public use of LASHP as permanent and long-range plans for the project site are developed. The proposed project synthesizes the LASHP General Plan/EIR goals and guidelines into design concepts that would be implemented in phases as funding becomes available.

LASHP includes a broad historical significance and location, which provides an unparalleled opportunity for education and interpretation of the greater trends, movements, and events that shaped Los Angeles' past and present. This direction comes from LASHP General Plan, which emphasizes that the entire park is to be considered an interpretive site, and should be designed to function as an interpretive and cultural facility, as well as an inviting open space and gathering place for the local community and visitors.

Completed on August 23, 2006, the LASHP Interpretive Master Plan is based extensively on direction provided in the LASHP General Plan. It provides a conceptual roadmap for developing and delivering interpretive programs and services. Specific interpretive plans are provided with recommendations for interpretive facilities, structures, and sites, ensuring that historical research, environmental reviews, thematic development, visitor studies and flow plans, exhibit designs, curriculum standards, etc., are current, accurate, relevant and consistent with the vision for LASHP as outlined in the General Plan.³

Additionally, the project site is located within the Draft Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan (CASP) area. This document was circulated for public review in November 2010. In addition, the EIR process for the CASP is currently underway. Under the CASP, the project site is located within Sub-Area One and is designated as "Greenway."⁴ The CASP area comprises approximately 663 acres north of downtown Los Angeles, and includes the communities of Lincoln Heights, Cypress Park, and Chinatown. The purpose of the CASP is to facilitate the transformation of the area from vehicle-oriented and primarily industrial uses, to a mixed-use community oriented toward pedestrian and multimodal uses that would ultimately accommodate up to 10,000 residential units and 24.7 million square feet of light industrial and commercial uses. The Greenway District designation primarily allows for recreation or open space uses, and limited development providing for recreational, arts, educational, and/or community-related activities. Upon adoption by the City, the CASP's land use designations would become effective and govern development of the project site regardless of the underlying zoning established by the Community Plan.

Finalized in April 2007, the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan provides both a long-term vision and implementation guidance for revitalizing the Los Angeles River. This document is a framework with the purpose of establishing the vision and guidelines for implementation, yet allowing for the details of specific projects to be crafted through community and neighborhood planning processes. Developed through an extensive community involvement process, the vision represents what residents'

³ CDPR, *Los Angeles State Historic Park Interpretive Master Plan*, August 23, 2006.

⁴ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, *Draft Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan*, November 2010.

value about the Los Angeles River, and what they would like to see it become. The Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan area includes all 32 miles of the Los Angeles River as it flows through the City of Los Angeles, from its point of origin at the confluence of Arroyo Calabasas and Bell Creek in Canoga Park, to the City limits south of downtown Los Angeles. The Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan recommends improvements along the entire 32 miles, and for five Opportunity Areas.

The Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan describes the LASHP as being included within the western edge of the Chinatown-Cornfields Opportunity Area. It is stated that this Opportunity Area would likely undergo an increase in development pressure as the LASHP Master Development Plan and the Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan are implemented. The proximity of the LASHP to the Los Angeles River provides a unique opportunity to create a riverfront community. Instead of being located in the “back” of the neighborhood, the Los Angeles River would become the central feature and a portion of the Los Angeles River’s flow would be diverted through a naturalized channel, creating opportunities for water-based recreation and a large island preserve that expands proposed riparian habitat opportunities at LASHP. In addition, a new 20-acre community park and amphitheater would be developed in this Opportunity Area, connecting to the LASHP.⁵

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District is currently in the plan formulation and evaluation stage of the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Feasibility Study. Several of the alternatives under consideration for restoration of the Los Angeles River would involve connections to the river at or near the LASHP. Measures in this segment of the Los Angeles River may include terracing, wetlands, a pool and riffle complex, riparian plantings, bioengineering channel walls, and exposing any nearby storm drains to convert to a more natural stream confluence.⁶

The Los Angeles River Improvement Overlay District (LA-RIO) is currently being considered by the City for approval. All new projects developed along the Los Angeles River would be subject to the LA-RIO standards, if approved. The LA-RIO is a proposed special use district that would require new projects to achieve points in three design categories: Watershed, Urban Design, and Mobility. The LA-RIO also would provide guidelines for new “complete” streets and includes a mobility strategy to ensure that the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers are considered when major projects or street improvements are undertaken. The LA-RIO would enable the City to better coordinate land use development along the 32-mile corridor of the Los Angeles River that flows within the City’s boundaries.⁷

The project site is located within the Central City North Community Plan area of the City of Los Angeles. Under the Community Plan, the project site is designated for “Light Industrial” land uses. The project site is currently zoned \ MR2-1 (Restricted Light Industrial Zone, Height District 1), which allows for development of limited commercial and manufacturing uses including limited machine shops, media

⁵ City of Los Angeles and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, *Los Angeles Revitalization Master Plan*, April 2007.

⁶ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District, written e-mail correspondence with Kathleen M. Bergmann, Lead Planner, January 4, 2012.

⁷ City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, *River Improvement Overlay District Fact Sheet*, July 2007, available at: http://cityplanning.lacity.org/Code_Studies/Riopropject/factsheet.pdf, accessed: November 3, 2011.

2.0 Project Description

products, animal keeping, and animal hospitals and kennels.⁸ Additionally, the project site is located within the East Los Angeles State Enterprise Zone (ZI-2129) and the Chinatown Redevelopment Project Area of the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA).⁹ The East Los Angeles State Enterprise Zone provides tax credits and deductions to businesses within economically challenged areas of the City. Furthermore, the project site is located in City Council District 1, and within the area of the Central Area Planning Commission and the Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council. Because the project site is owned by a state agency, the C DPR, the development of the project site is not subject to local or City requirements, permits, or other approvals.

2.1.2 PARK VISION

The grass-roots movement for the restoration of the Los Angeles River and the vision for the related 52-mile greenway are linked to the establishment of the LASHP. Many of the same organizations and individuals who pioneered the grass-roots movement for Los Angeles River restoration were some of the first to identify the potential of the LASHP property for public use. Planning efforts for the Los Angeles River, such as the 1998 *River Through Downtown*, noted the valuable role that the former rail yard property could play in the larger Los Angeles River restoration efforts. As such, the coalition of river advocates, environmental groups, local, statewide, and federal agencies and jurisdictions have all supported efforts in the property's preservation, acquisition, and planning.

The fundamental ideals for using the river as invaluable park and open space for the citizens of Los Angeles has helped provide a catalyst for the recent visioning efforts for LASHP, as well as the C DPR property at Rio de Los Angeles State Park (formerly Taylor Yard), located approximately two miles north of the project site. Each of these park properties provides an opportunity to reestablish valuable open space near the City core and reconnect people with the significance of Los Angeles history, culture, and its natural resources.

2.1.3 PUBLIC OUTREACH

C DPR recognized that the future success of LASHP depended on the involvement of the public. As previously mentioned, in order to ensure that the community was involved in the planning process, SB 1177 was passed, establishing the aforementioned Cornfield Advisory Committee (the Committee). The Committee consisted of 36 members representing the communities and property owners surrounding LASHP; environmental justice and civil rights organizations; historians; business leaders; educators; local, state, and federal governmental agencies; and non-profit organizations. The Committee met numerous times over a period of two years, working with C DPR staff in developing a park vision, reviewing Interim Public Use (IPU) plans, providing input on park naming and classification, participating in public meetings, and providing input for the LASHP General Plan.

⁸ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Zone Information and Map Access System (ZIMAS), available at: <http://zimas.lacity.org/>, accessed: February 3, 2011.

⁹ Ibid.

Through its outreach campaign to garner community input, CDPR learned much about the divergent nature of the previously proposed uses, community needs, and recreational preferences for the site. These past proposals included a large-scale industrial/warehouse park, a Los Angeles River-oriented mixed-use plan, and various community plans, and redevelopment plans consisting of mixed land use combinations.

2.1.4 PROJECT BENEFITS

The proposed project would construct a public park in a largely minority and lower income neighborhood of Los Angeles. The proposed project would result in the following additional benefits:

- Increased access to open and green space in a park deprived area of Los Angeles
- Increased educational environment and outdoor educational opportunities
- Improve habitat protection
- Display cultural, historic and public art resources
- Generate job and economic opportunities
- Increased human health benefits of recreation

The LASHP would provide benefits to help alleviate disparities in park access and health for residents of the surrounding communities, as well as the broader Los Angeles area. Los Angeles is one of the most disadvantaged areas statewide and nationally in terms of access to parks and open space for children and people of color. Latinos and African-Americans, for example, are 12 to 15 times more likely to have less park acreage per capita when compared to non-Hispanic whites.¹⁰

The National Park Service (NPS) recently published the report *Healthy Parks Healthy People U.S. (HP/HP Report)*. NPS explicitly recognizes that "[p]eople of color and low income populations still face disparities regarding health and access to parks." According to NPS, "in regard to obesity, 36 percent of black and 35 percent of Hispanic high school students nationwide are overweight or obese, while 24 percent of non-Hispanic white high school students suffer from these conditions."¹¹ As NPS notes, the World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being

¹⁰ For background and primary analysis of the public health benefits of Los Angeles State Historic Park and park space in Southern California see Andrea Misako Azuma & Robert Gottlieb, et al., *Connecting The Parks to the Community and the Community to the Parks: A Community, Economic, and Environmental Assessment of the Los Angeles State Historic Park (Cornfield) and Rio de Los Angeles State Park (Taylor Yard)*, A Report to California State Parks and the California Coastal Conservancy, Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College (2006), Los Angeles, California; Robert García & Seth Strongin, *Healthy Parks, Schools and Communities: Mapping Green Access and Equity for Southern California, The City Project* (2011), available at <http://www.cityprojectca.org/greenjustice>; C. Sister, J.P. Wilson, and J. Wolch, *Green Visions Plan for 21st Century Southern California: Access to Parks and Park Facilities in the Green Visions Plan Region 17* (2008), University of Southern California GIS Research Laboratory and Center for Sustainable Cities, Los Angeles, California.

¹¹ *HP/HP Report* at 4. See Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, (2011), *F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future*, available online at: <http://healthyamericans.org/report/88>.

2.0 Project Description

and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”¹² NPS emphasizes the role that park agencies play to alleviate these disparities and promote public health through park access.

Decades of evidence-based social science research show that parks and recreation promote diverse values, including human health.¹³ Parks may contribute to physical health, improve psychological well-being, encourage social cohesion, offer alternatives to at risk behavior including gangs and drugs, provide places to celebrate cultural diversity, and inspire a spiritual connection with nature.¹⁴

A study by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that Americans living closer to parks are more likely to exercise regularly, leading to weight loss, increased energy, and better overall health.¹⁵ People in low-income areas in Los Angeles who live within one mile of a park visited that park four times more frequently and exercised 38-percent more than people who lived more than one mile away.¹⁶

The California Center for Public Health Advocacy analyzed the 2004 California Physical Fitness Test of 5th, 7th, and 9th graders. The analysis shows that among students in Los Angeles County, 31 percent are overweight. Overweight children face a greater risk of developing many health problems during childhood, including Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, orthopedic problems, gallstones, low self-esteem, poor body image, and depression. Overweight children are more likely to be obese as adults, putting them at a much higher risk for heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes later in life.¹⁷

LASHP has great potential to meet some of the demand for new parks and recreation facilities, with equitable distribution and access. At present, families living near the project site lack adequate recreational facilities to which they can walk. The LASHP would increase opportunities for physical activity in an area that is presently underserved and has a high youth density. The human health benefits of recreation, such as reducing obesity, diabetes, and other diseases, is well documented in the *Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan*, which includes LASHP, and in Azuma and Gottlieb et al., *Connecting the Parks to the Community and the Community to Parks: A Community, Economic, and Environmental Assessment of the Los Angeles State Historic Park (Cornfield) and Rio de Los Angeles*

¹² HP/HP Report at 8, citing Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19 June - 22 July 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948. See WHO FAQ at www.who.int/suggestions/faq/en/index.html.

¹³ Richard J. Jackson and Stacy Sinclair, *Designing Healthy Communities* (2011), available online at: <http://designinghealthycommunities.org>. (Richard J. Jackson et al. *Creating a Healthy Environment: The Impact of the Built Environment on Public Health*).

¹⁴ Robert García & Seth Strongin, *Healthy Parks, Schools and Communities: Mapping Green Access and Equity for Southern California*, The City Project (2011), <http://www.cityprojectca.org/greenjustice>

¹⁵ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2001), *Increasing Physical Activity: A Report on Recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services* (“Increasing Physical Activity”), available on the web at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5018a1.htm.

¹⁶ Deborah A. Cohen, Thomas L. McKenzie, Amber Sehgal, Stephanie Williamson, Daniela Golinelli, & Nicole Lurie, *Contribution of Public Parks to Physical Activity*, 97 *American Journal of Public Health* 509-14 (2007).

¹⁷ California Center for Public Health Advocacy, *Overweight Children in California Counties & Communities, 2004: Los Angeles County* (2006), available at http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/county/Los_Angeles_Fact_Sheet.pdf.

State Park (Taylor Yard).¹⁸

2.2 PROJECT LOCATION

The 32-acre project site is located at 1245 North Spring Street in the eastern portion of the City of Los Angeles, approximately 1.5 miles north of the downtown Los Angeles financial district and directly east of the Chinatown district. The project site is generally bound by the Metro Gold Line right-of-way and Broadway to the north, the channelized Los Angeles River to the east, Spring Street and commercial/industrial uses to the south, and the Metro Gold Line right-of-way and commercial/industrial uses to the west. Regional access to the project site is provided by State Route 110 (SR-110, Pasadena Freeway) located approximately 0.25 miles northwest of the project site; Interstate 5 (I-5, Golden State Freeway) located approximately 0.45 miles east of the project site; U.S. Highway 101 (US-101, Hollywood Freeway) located approximately 0.80 miles southwest of the project site; and Interstate 10 (I-10, San Bernardino Freeway) located approximately one mile southeast of the project site. Figure 2-1 shows the location of the project site in a regional context and Figure 2-2 shows the local project vicinity.

2.3 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

2.3.1 PROJECT SITE

The LASHP, historically Southern Pacific Railroad's River Station, but most recently known as the Cornfield or Chinatown Yard property, is a site of social, historical, and cultural importance, and one of the last large open spaces in the downtown Los Angeles. The project site is owned and operated by CDPH and is currently open for day-uses such as picnicking, jogging, running, informal play, and other activities that require large open areas. In addition, the LASHP also hosts a number of small and large interpretive programs and special events that attract regional attendance. The project site comprises an elongated, grass-covered park that is currently developed with paved and unpaved walkways, with a long, linear walkway connecting the southwestern and northeastern ends of the park. The existing operations and maintenance yard, including a park administration building and a maintenance trailer, is located within the northeastern end of the park near the terminus of Baker Street. A circular, mandala-like garden, referred to as the Anabolic Monument, occupies the north-central portion of the park as part of a temporary public art/interpretive special use permit. The remaining southwestern 13 acres were developed in 2006 with an IPU park consisting of curvilinear walkways, trees, open grass play areas, and interpretive features.¹⁹

The 13-acre IPU park uses were provided for immediate public use of LASHP while permanent planning and a long-range plan for the project site was developed. The existing IPU park includes the following:

¹⁸ Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan at 5-26; Richard J. Jackson et al., *Creating a Healthy Environment: The Impact of the Built Environment on Public Health*. Similarly, the Los Angeles River Task Force pursuant to a city council resolution published a report that addresses the equitable need for physical activity and park space. See *Los Angeles River Access and Use: Balancing Equitable Actions with Responsible Stewardship* (2009). CITE: Azuma and Gottlieb et al., (2006).

¹⁹ CDPH, *Los Angeles State Historic Park*, 2009, available at: http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/22272/files/losangeles_shp_web_31709.pdf, accessed: February 3, 2011.

2.0 Project Description

interpretive and educational features such as exhibits and panels in an outdoor facility, viewing area with patios, overlooks and/or decks; an information kiosk; landscaped public use area with turf amphitheater, picnic area, and walkways; a small lunch stand; site barriers, including fencing; temporary restroom facilities; parking, including bus capacity for school groups; and a maintenance and park operations yard.

Vehicular access is provided via an existing driveway along Spring Street at the southwestern end of the project site. An informal surface parking area is provided within the south-central portion of the project site, near Spring Street. In addition, parking is currently available in dirt/gravel areas along Spring Street, as well as along Baker Street. Pedestrian access to the project site is provided along Spring Street.

Naturally occurring vegetation on the project site is sparse and limited to plants that are able to exist in an urban environment. The 13-acre IPU park is landscaped with sycamore, poplar, willow, alder, cottonwood, other native trees, and a grassy turf area. There are currently approximately 330 trees of various species on the project site, all of which are native. The project site is relatively flat with a gentle slope trending southeast.²⁰

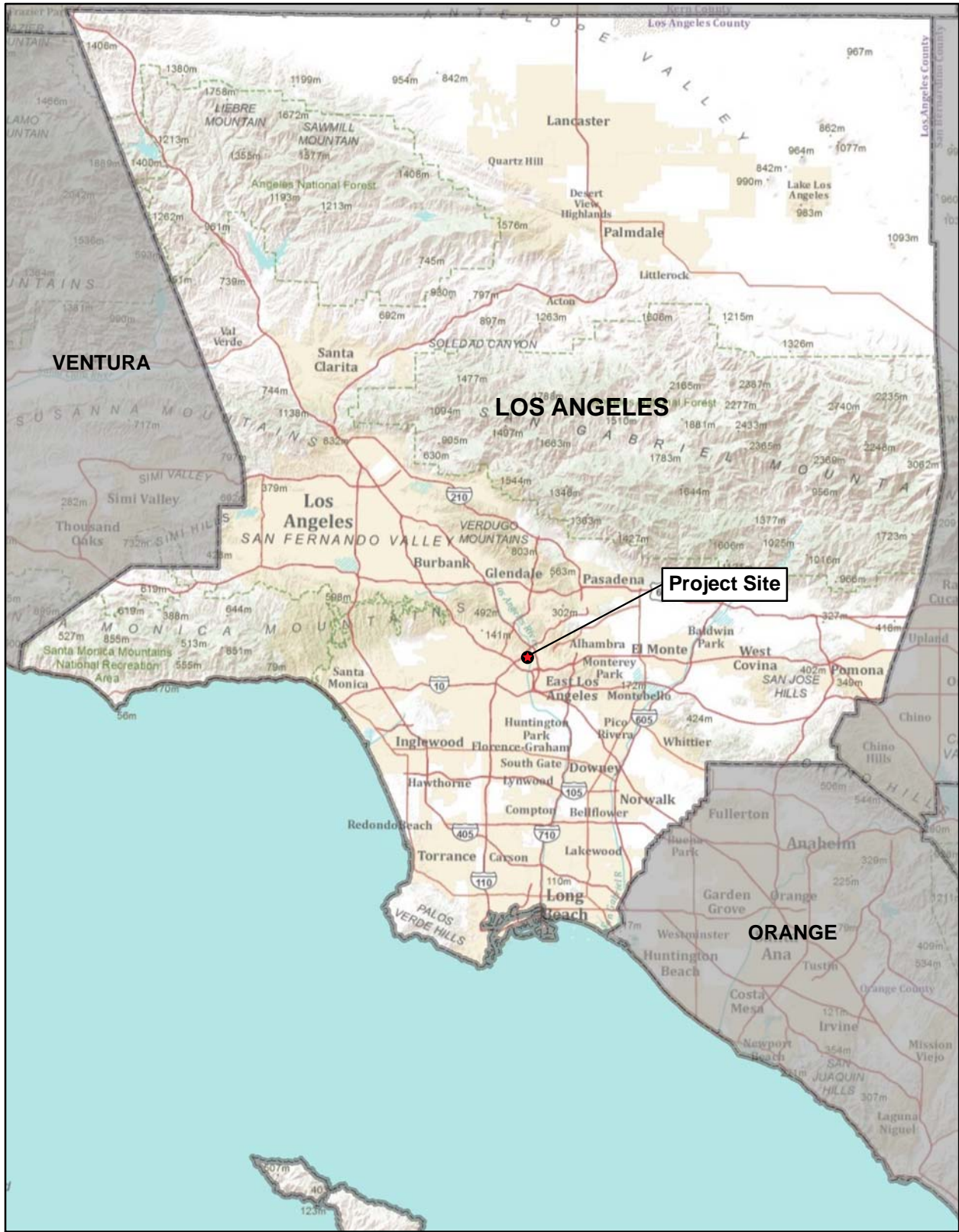
In June 1971, the City recognized the local significance of the project site by officially designating the site as Historic-Cultural Monument No. 82 for its role in the late 1800s and early 1900s as the pioneering Southern Pacific Railroad Company's River Station and railroad yard.²¹

2.3.2 SURROUNDING SETTING

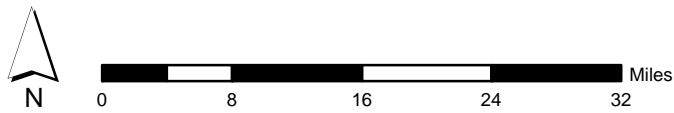
The project site is located just north of downtown Los Angeles in one of the most historically rich areas of the City. The area surrounding the project site is a developed urban area consisting of a mix of commercial, light industrial, institutional, public facilities, and multi-family residential uses. Several historic and ethnically diverse communities surround the project site including Lincoln Heights, Solano Canyon, Chinatown, Chavez Ravine, and the William Mead Homes public housing complex. Major landmarks in the project vicinity include Elysian Park and Dodger Stadium, which are located approximately 0.25 mile to the north. The last recorded location of Yaanga, one of the largest Tongva Native American villages in the area, is located within one mile of the project site. The project site is also located within 0.5 mile of the founding place of Los Angeles, El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument. In addition, the reported camp site of the 1769 Portola Expedition is located in the project area.

²⁰ United States Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, Los Angeles Quadrangle, California, Los Angeles Co., 7.5-Minute Series (Topographic), 1966, Photo Revised 1981, Minor Revision 1994, map.

²¹ City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, Cultural Heritage Commission, Historic Cultural Monument (HCM) Report for Central City North Community Planning Area, Last Updated April 6, 2011, available at: <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/designated-sites>, accessed: October 25, 2011.

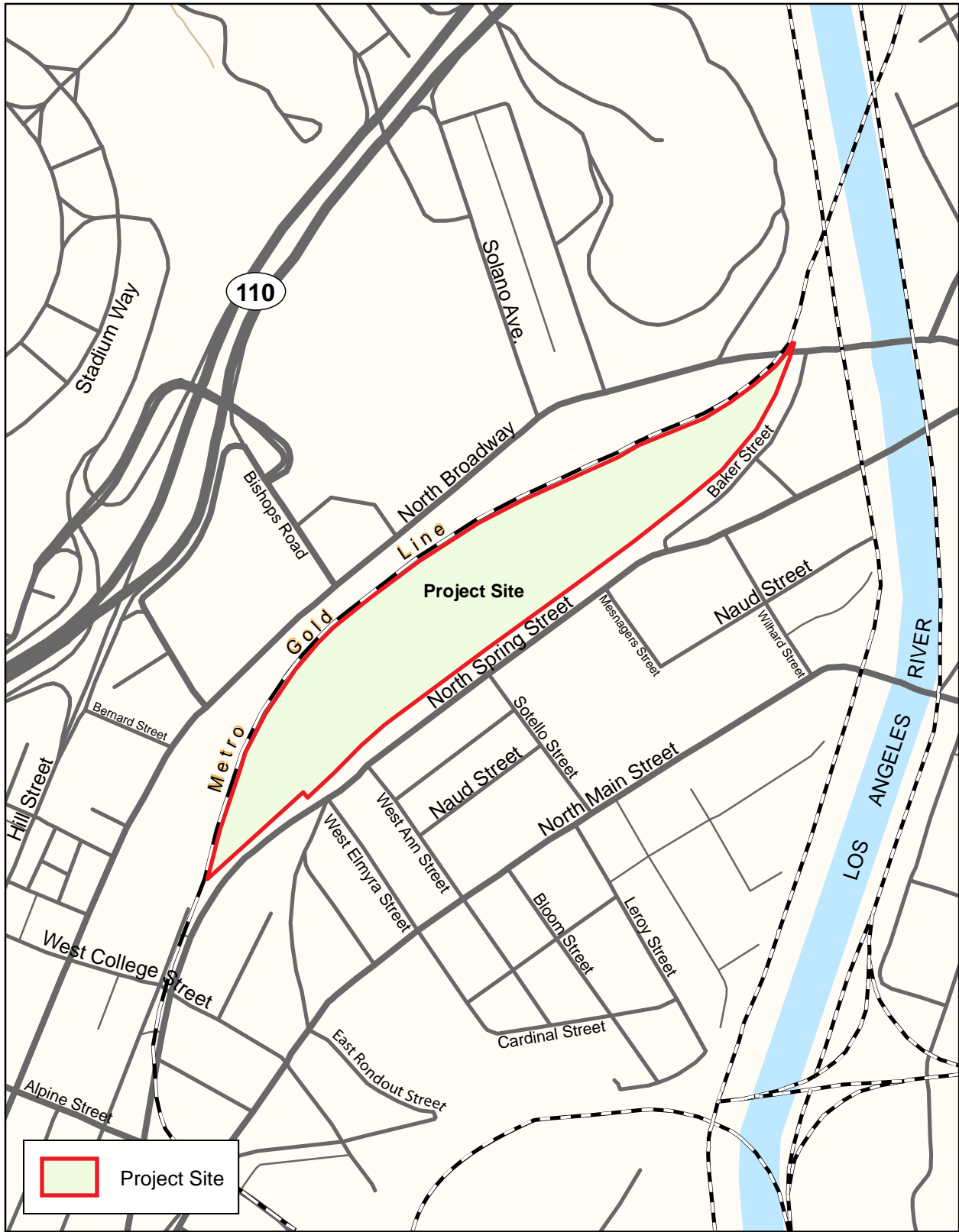


Source: ESRI World Imagery Topographic 2011



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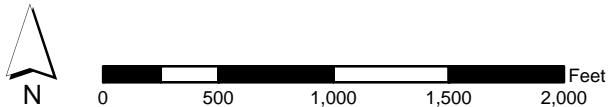
**Figure 2-1
Regional Location Map**



Source: ESRI 2011



**Figure 2-2
Project Location**



Directly north of and adjacent to the project site is the Metro Gold Line right-of-way, which travels in a northeast to southwest direction in the project area. The Metro Gold Line is a light rail transit line that runs between East Los Angeles and Pasadena, passing through the communities of Boyle Heights, Little Tokyo, Downtown Los Angeles, Highland Park, and South Pasadena. A chain-link fence separates the project site from the Metro Gold Line right-of-way. Numerous patrons who attend various events that are held at the project site travel there via the Metro Gold Line, and walk to the project site from the Metro Gold Line Chinatown Station. Transit line operators serving the project area include Metro, Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), and the City of Santa Clarita Transit bus routes, which serve the area along Broadway.²²

Directly north of the Metro Gold Line right-of-way is Broadway, which also travels in a northeast to southwest direction in the project area. In the immediate project area, Broadway generally parallels the Metro Gold Line right-of-way and is located at a higher grade and elevation than the project site and the Metro Gold Line. The land uses located north of the project site along Broadway are situated at the base of the Elysian Hills. These land uses include two-story office buildings and commercial uses, one- to two-story single-family residences, one- to three-story multi-family buildings, a three-story mixed-use building, St. Peter Italian Church, St. Bridget's Chinese Catholic Church, a Buddhist temple, and Cathedral High School.

Northeast of the project site, Broadway spans the Los Angeles River within the North Broadway Bridge, also previously known as the Buena Vista Street Bridge. This bridge was built in 1911 making it one of the oldest Los Angeles River bridges in the City.²³ In January 2008, the City officially designated the North Broadway-Buena Vista Street Bridge, No. 53C0545 as Historic-Cultural Monument No. 907.²⁴ The North Broadway-Buena Vista Street Bridge was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Historic Bridge Inventory in 1986 and the Caltrans Statewide Historic Bridge Survey Update in 2004.²⁵

Directly east of the project site is Baker Street, which travels in a north-south direction in the project area. Several one- to three-story industrial uses are located along Baker Street. The historic Rafael Junction Block Building and Standard Oil/Women's Building are located on Baker Street adjacent to the project site. Located directly adjacent and east of these buildings are the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe railroad and the channelized Los Angeles River, which both travel in a north-south direction in the project area.

²² Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Bus and Rail System Map, December 2010, available at: http://www.metro.net/riding_metro/maps/images/System_Map.pdf, accessed: February 3, 2011.

²³ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Recommendation Report – Cultural Heritage Commission Case No.: CHC-2007-4666-HCM, November 1, 2007, available at: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/staffrpt/CHC/11-1-07/CHC-2007-4666.pdf>, accessed: October 25, 2011.

²⁴ City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, Cultural Heritage Commission, Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) Report for Silver Lake - Echo Park – Elysian Valley Community Planning Area, Last Updated April 6, 2011, available at: <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/designated-sites>, accessed: October 24, 2011.

²⁵ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Recommendation Report – Cultural Heritage Commission Case No.: CHC-2007-4666-HCM, November 1, 2007, available at: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/staffrpt/CHC/11-1-07/CHC-2007-4666.pdf>, accessed: October 25, 2011.

2.0 Project Description

Directly south of the project site is Spring Street, which travels in a northeast to southwest direction in the project area. The land uses located south of the project site along Spring Street include one- to three-story industrial uses, a restaurant, as well as a large vacant lot that is owned by the City. The elevated Metro Gold Line Chinatown Station is located further south of the project site at the intersection of Spring Street and College Street. South of College Street, Spring Street turns in to Alameda Street. East of the project site, Spring Street spans the Los Angeles River within the North Spring Street Bridge, which was built in 1927.²⁶ In January 2008, the City officially designated the North Spring Street Bridge, No. 53C0859 as Historic-Cultural Monument No. 900.²⁷ The North Spring Street Bridge was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory in 1986 and the Caltrans Statewide Historic Bridge Survey Update in 2004. The bridge is also listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.²⁸ In addition, remnants of the City's first historically documented irrigation ditch, the historic Zanja Madre, are located on adjacent properties north and south of the project site.

Directly west of the project site is an LADOT bus maintenance yard. Southwest of the maintenance yard, and southwest of the project site, is the historic Capitol Milling Company building, which is the oldest existing industrial building in the City.

2.3.3 EXISTING LAND USE

LOS ANGELES STATE HISTORIC PARK GENERAL PLAN AND EIR

Adopted June 10, 2005, the LASHP General Plan/EIR discusses the general land use concept for the full development of the project site. According to the LASHP General Plan/EIR, the preferred concept illustrates the historical and cultural significance of the project site through development of the following four concept elements: Cultural Activities Area, Recreation Open Space, Garden Open Space, and Natural Open Space. The Cultural Activities Area would serve to educate visitors about the cultural heritage of the City and state. The Recreation Open Space area would be used for outdoor informal recreational activities and include trails, picnic areas, and interpretive features, as well as restrooms and shade structures. The Garden Open Space area would feature interpretive gardens/landscapes and garden activities that represent activities of statewide interest and significance. Finally, the Natural Open Space area would demonstrate natural habitats and include native plant species. The LASHP General Plan/EIR,

²⁶ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Recommendation Report – Cultural Heritage Commission Case No.: CHC-2007-4665-HCM, April 15, 2010, available at: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/StaffRpt/CHC/4-15-10/CHC-2007-4665-HCM-CC1.pdf>, accessed: October 25, 2011.

²⁷ City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, Cultural Heritage Commission, Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) Report for Central City North Community Planning Area, Last Updated April 6, 2011, available at: <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/designated-sites>, accessed: October 25, 2011.

²⁸ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Recommendation Report – Cultural Heritage Commission Case No.: CHC-2007-4665-HCM, April 15, 2010, available at: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/StaffRpt/CHC/4-15-10/CHC-2007-4665-HCM-CC1.pdf>, accessed: October 25, 2011.

with its preferred concept and the four concept elements, serves as the long-range management tool that provides guidelines for achieving the vision and purpose of LASHP.²⁹

The LASHP General Plan includes Park Principles, which established a framework for developing the preferred Park Concept. These principles include: developing a world-class park; creating an open and inviting park; promoting a “touchstone” landscape for reflecting on Los Angeles’ natural and cultural heritage; developing LASHP as a prime destination through a quality interpretive or educational experience; and emphasizing the importance of the historic site to Los Angeles, California, and the world.

2.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the proposed project include the following:

- Express the interwoven histories and the multi-cultural significance of the LASHP site, while satisfying a broad range of year-round recreational opportunities.
- Establish a major public open space and destination for future generations to celebrate the past, present, and future of Los Angeles.
- Ensure that the pedestrian-friendly public realm of the park seamlessly extends to the park’s boundaries and includes flexible spaces for special events, markets, and festivals.
- Position the LASHP within the 21st Century context and allow it to remain compatible with evolving technologies and to incorporate those future cultural histories as they develop.
- Provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the public by helping to preserve valued cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation while protecting and stabilizing significant cultural resources and recreated natural habitats within the park.
- Engage both nature and culture in creating a regional gathering space around the theme of a larger, more diverse Los Angeles history, which reconnects the City to the Los Angeles River.
- Provide visitor use facilities that offer the opportunity for diverse visitor experiences, maximizing visitor and staff use while minimizing negative effects on viewsheds, cultural or natural resources, or other conflicts.

2.4.1 PROJECT NEED

The mission of CDPR is to “provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.” According to *The*

²⁹ CDPR, *Los Angeles State Historic Park General Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report*, Approved by the State Park and Recreation Commission, June 10, 2005.

2.0 Project Description

Seventh Generation: The Strategic Vision of California State Parks, “facilities are a key element in the realization of [CDPR’s] mission. It is through the use of facilities that the public is able to maximize their experience in park units throughout the state.”³⁰ The proposed project aims to meet CDPR’s mission by creating facilities that will strengthen the recreational and interpretive experience for all visitors, especially for people from California’s diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The project site’s location and unique character make it a popular destination for many visitors each year. Although LASHP is within the most densely populated city within southern California, it is a place where people can have a relaxing and educational outdoor recreational experience. According to *Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California*, park or recreation areas in or near urban areas are the most frequently used and the developed nature-oriented areas are the favorite type of park and recreation area for the largest percentage of Californians.³¹ The document also states that visiting museums and historic sites is rated among the top five recreational activities with high unmet demand in the state. This desire for open space, and adequate recreation and cultural facilities will only increase as metropolitan populations continue to grow.

2.5 PROPOSED PROJECT

2.5.1 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed project represents the design footprint of the long-term vision of LASHP. The LASHP Development Plan would be implemented in at least three phases. The full development of all phases of the proposed project is anticipated to occur by 2035. Due to the long-term nature of the project, the components included within future phases of the project may change over time and would be subject to the availability of funding. At this time, the components of Phase I of the proposed project have been detailed and the implementation would be funded primarily by Proposition 84, a bond measure approved by voters in 2006. This EIR analyzes the potential impacts primarily related to the implementation of Phase I of the LASHP Master Development Plan. Only a limited number of components of future phases are conceptually known at this time. These are addressed in this EIR as appropriate. Subsequent CEQA review will be required for a majority of the future improvements implemented after Phase I.

PHASE I OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Figure 2-3 shows the site plan of Phase I of the LASHP Master Development Plan. Below is a description of the components included in Phase I of the proposed project.

- Three event spaces would be installed with the following capacities: 1,000 to 1,500 people, 4,000 to 5,000 people, and 10,000 to 12,000 people. These event spaces would include turf areas that would not be a substantial change from existing conditions. This would include an amphitheatre

³⁰ CDPR, *The Seventh Generation: The Strategic Vision of California State Parks*, 2001.

³¹ CDPR, *Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California, 2002, An Element of the California Outdoor Recreation Plan*, 2003.

for open air concerts that includes an “archaeological reveal space” showing some of the structures used when the site was a rail yard for interpretive purposes.

- One-story Welcome Station and operations buildings would be constructed, both with permanent public restrooms.
- A 14-foot-tall elevated walkway would be installed including the Roundhouse Observation Deck, which would rise above the exposed “archaeological reveal space.” The elevated walkway would close half the distance in vertical elevation to Broadway to the north for a possible future bridge connection. The Roundhouse Observation Deck would provide views of the exposed archaeological features on-site and the downtown Los Angeles skyline. In addition, views toward the Los Angeles River and hills beyond would be provided.
- Hardscaped walkways and/or plazas would be provided, including a series of pedestrian entry plazas along the Spring Street frontage. In between the series of entry plazas would be a series of tree-lined pedestrian promenades. The pedestrian plazas would help to connect the proposed project to potential future residential populations along Spring Street.
- Jogging and interpretive trail loops would run throughout and around the entire project site. In addition, interpretive areas would be included such as the Zanja Madre view node.
- A Children’s Interpretive Play Area/Exploration Zone and a “Storytelling Circle” amphitheater, with a campfire ring, would be included once funding becomes available.
- Unstructured play and work-out areas, group gathering areas, and restrooms would be provided. In addition, various park furnishings would be provided, including benches (both permanent and movable), picnic tables, drinking fountains, bike racks and storage, trash and recycling receptacles, and bollards to control access. Up to two approximately 75-space surface parking areas would be provided, one potentially within the interior of the project site and the second potentially along Baker Street. The interior parking area would have a permeable surface.
- Pedestrian pathway, parking lot and security lighting would be included throughout the park.
- Bioswales would be installed for stormwater retention, recharge, and reuse. Stormwater basins would be included that also function as constructed/demonstration wetlands and a habitat area. A habitat boardwalk would be located adjacent to this area.
- Approximately 550 new trees would be planted on the project site. Landscaping would be provided including turf, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. Approximately 236,000 square feet of irrigated reinforced turf would be installed for events and general use. In addition, approximately 555,000 square feet and 213,000 square feet of irrigated ornamental plantings and non-irrigated naturalized plantings (requiring temporary irrigation) would be included, respectively. Grasscrete

2.0 Project Description

paved or reinforced turf area(s) for event vehicle access and public programming such as farmer's markets.

- Fire access and services road(s) along the northern border of the project site.
- Automated irrigation systems utilizing the latest technologies in controls and materials for maximum efficiency including, but not limited to smart controls, and rain and moisture sensors. The new irrigation systems would be able to receive reclaimed water and/or river water.
- Re-use as feasible, infrastructure from the existing IPU facilities such as gabion walls with lights, concrete or steel stripes added to the existing parking area, historic cobblestone paving, concrete paving, decomposed granite pathways, and wooden boardwalk elements.

Upon the completion of Phase I, average daily usage, as well as annual attendance is expected to increase and potentially include daytime student field trips and tourist trips to the project site. Most daily park activities are assumed to occur between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. Friday night and weekend park usage and attendance are expected to increase from the existing condition of approximately 1,500 visitors (excluding special events). The proposed project would include as many as four daytime/evening/nighttime special events per year with a total attendance of up to 25,000 people each, as well as smaller events of 500 to 5,000 people expected to occur monthly at the project site. Overall attendance figures are expected to exceed 180,000 annually upon opening. Special events and concerts held at the project site may include fireworks displays and the use of public address systems.

Of the approximately 330 existing trees on the project site, at least 50 would be preserved in place. Any existing trees that must be removed from the project site would either be offered for transplant by other parties to a new location or would be reused on the site in another capacity. In addition, various landforms or small hills would be created through grading on the project site to add visual interest, and in some cases, to protect known archaeological resources.



- Legend:
- A Entry Plaza
 - B Concessions
 - C Llewelyn Street Plaza
 - D Elmyra Street Plaza
 - E Welcome Station/Visitor Center
 - F West Ann Street Plaza
 - G Citrus Grove
 - H Citrus Grove Promenade
 - I Bloom Street Plaza
 - J River Plaza
 - K Operations Building/Ranger Station
 - L Parking Lot
 - M Market Plaza
 - N Seasonal Wetlands
 - O Picnic Areas
 - P Maintenance Yard
 - Q Event Lawn
 - R Roundhouse Plaza
 - S Elevated Walkway/Roundhouse Observation Deck
 - T Major Event Lawn
 - U Storytelling Circle
 - V Loop Road

Source: Spurlock Poirier 2011

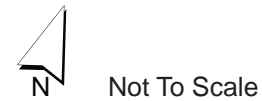


Figure 2-3
LASHP Master Development Plan Phase I

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The proposed project would be designed for the safety of LASHP visitors, as well as the surrounding community. The proposed project would include approximately six-foot-tall perimeter and interpretive fencing, as well as parking lot lighting, pedestrian pathway lighting, security lighting, and security cameras, which would be installed to enhance public safety. The lighting would meet dark sky guidelines in order to prevent unnecessary light pollution to surrounding neighborhoods. The new parking lot lighting would be provided on poles and would be installed within the on-site surface lot, as well as the existing operations and maintenance yard to remain in place on the north end of the project site. Smaller scale poled-lighting would be provided for all pedestrian pathways. The new lighting would consist of a simple design and fixture to blend into the landscape. Several plazas within the park would have enhanced lighting to create unique spaces within the park. Enhanced lighting would include pedestrian-scale pole lighting, wall lights, uplighting for monument signage, accent lighting for water features, as well as lighting on and underneath the elevated walkway and Roundhouse Observation Deck. New poled-lighting would range in height from approximately 10 to 25 feet tall. The proposed project would comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended in 2008. Also, a traffic management plan would be prepared as part of the proposed project. The proposed project would include various improvements to existing utilities and service systems, including water, sewer, electric, data, and telephone. In addition, the proposed project would be consistent with uses identified in the LASHP General Plan/EIR and would not require a General Plan Amendment for implementation.

FUTURE PHASES OF PROPOSED PROJECT

The future phases (i.e., Phases II and III) of the LASHP Master Development Plan would be determined by the availability of funding, as well as by the extent of development accomplished in Phase I. Future phases of the proposed project may include a bridge from the park north to Broadway, a Los Angeles River connection, and enhanced interpretive facilities and elements of the park. These particular components are not analyzed in this EIR. In addition, future phases would include additional tree plantings. The full development of all phases of the proposed project is anticipated to occur by 2035. Annual park attendance would be expected to increase from approximately 125,000 people to 300,000 people at the time of full buildout. As previously mentioned, additional CEQA environmental review will be necessary for the implementation of a majority of the project components following Phase I.

2.6 CONSTRUCTION SCENARIO

The construction of Phase I of the proposed project is anticipated to occur over an approximate one-year period, beginning in spring 2013 and ending in spring 2014. The park would be closed to the public and the entire site would be fenced during construction. The entire site with the exception of the existing operations and maintenance yard at the north end would be graded. Site grading would generally progress from one end of the site to the other. During the construction of Phase I, up to 70,000 cubic yards of soil would be moved and balanced within the project site. Areas for the stockpile and storage of materials and equipment would be provided on-site. These areas may be moved as grading activities progress throughout the project site. Excavation would be required for the installation of building foundations and utilities. The construction equipment expected to be used includes scrapers, graders,

2.0 Project Description

dump trucks, loaders, back hoe, trenching machine, chipper, concrete trucks, concrete pumps, cranes, paving machine, vibrating roller, tree spade, and other typical construction equipment. It is not anticipated that any substantial import or export of soil would be necessary. Only unsuitable material would be removed from the site. In addition, fertilizer and soil amendments would be brought to the site and incorporated into the project.

The existing operations and maintenance yard at the north end of the site would remain open and occupied by park staff during construction. During the construction phase, this existing yard would be connected to the municipal sewer, instead of utilizing a private tank system as is the existing condition. A temporary operations and maintenance yard with associated parking would be established on the project site in order to facilitate construction activities.

A minimum of one ingress and egress point would initially be provided at the southern end of the site for construction-related vehicles for the delivery and export of materials. However, as the construction activities progress, an additional access point(s) may be needed near the central and northern portions of the project site. Construction worker parking would be provided on-site.

The City's plans for the widening and retrofit of the Spring Street Bridge and other modifications planned for Spring Street, adjacent to the project site and in accordance with the CASP, may occur during the same timeframe as the construction of the proposed project. As part of the proposed street modifications, the intersection of Spring and Baker Streets would be altered or eliminated. In addition, a new traffic signal would be installed at the intersection of Spring and Wilhardt Streets. Construction is expected to begin on these modifications in Summer 2012. In addition, a City-owned, elongated, and narrow parcel located along the Spring Street frontage of the project site would be leased or quitclaimed to the C DPR during this time for inclusion in the proposed project. As such, the construction of the proposed project would be coordinated with the City as needed.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority has proposed to construct a high-speed rail line from Los Angeles to Palmdale. One route option that is being considered would potentially traverse the project site and include a station at Union Station, approximately 0.60 miles south of the project site. This possible route would include a cut-and-cover section within the project site that would require trenching, placing the rail, and covering the segment. The construction of this route may impact the project site and would require that the park be closed temporarily. The high-speed rail line is currently under environmental review. Currently, it is expected that environmental review would be completed and approved in late 2012. As such, the construction of the proposed project would be coordinated with the High-Speed Rail Authority, if needed.

An appropriate combination of resource avoidance and monitoring would be employed during the construction of the proposed project, including the implementation of Best Management Practices. A wet weather erosion control plan and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would be developed and implemented for construction activities. These plans may include, but would not be limited to, the following:

- Minimizing the extent of disturbed areas and duration of exposure;
- Stabilizing and protecting disturbed areas;
- Keeping runoff velocities low;
- Retaining sediment within the construction area;
- Temporary desilting basins;
- Silt fences;
- Gravel bag barriers;
- Temporary soil stabilization with mattresses and mulching;
- Temporary drainage inlet protection; and
- Diversion dikes and interceptor swales.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 403 for Fugitive Dust would be implemented during the construction phase. Specific Rule 403 control requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Land disturbance shall be minimized to the extent feasible;
- Haul trucks shall be covered when loaded with fill;
- Paved streets shall be swept at least once per day where there is evidence of dirt that has been carried onto the roadway;
- Watering trucks shall be used to minimize dust, and watering shall be sufficient to confine dust plumes to the project work areas;
- Active disturbed areas shall have water applied to them three times daily;
- Inactive disturbed areas shall be revegetated as soon as feasible to prevent soil erosion;
- For disturbed surfaces to be left inactive for four or more days, and that will not be revegetated, a chemical stabilizer shall be applied in accordance with manufacturer's instructions;
- For unpaved roads, chemical stabilizers shall be applied or the roads shall be watered once per hour during active operation;
- Vehicle speed on unpaved roads shall be limited to 15 miles per hour;

2.0 Project Description

- For open storage piles that will remain on-site for two or more days, water shall be applied once per hour, or coverings shall be installed;
- For paved road track-out, all haul vehicles shall be covered or shall comply with vehicle freeboard requirements of Section 23114 of the California Vehicle Code for both public and private roads; and
- During high wind conditions (wind speeds in excess of 25 miles per hour), all earthmoving activities shall cease or water shall be applied to soil not more than 15 minutes prior to disturbing such soil.

Three additional SCAQMD rules would be implemented during the construction phase: SCAQMD Rules 1113, 401, and 402. The specific control requirements of each rule are as follows:

- **Rule 1113 – Architectural Coatings.** This rule states that no person shall apply or solicit the application of any architectural coating within the SCAQMD with a volatile organic compounds content in excess of the values specified in a table incorporated in the Rule. Architectural coatings for nonresidential uses shall be selected so that the average volatile organic compounds content of the coatings does not exceed 125 grams per liter, or less as specified by Rule 1113.
- **Rule 401 – Visible Emissions.** This rule states that a person shall not discharge into the atmosphere from any single source of emission whatsoever any air contaminant for a period or periods aggregating more than three minutes in any one hour which is as dark or darker in shades that designated No. 1 on the Ringelmann Chart, as published by the United States Bureau of Mines.
- **Rule 402 – Nuisance.** This rule states that a person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause injury or damage to business or property. The provisions of this rule do not apply to odors emanating from agricultural operations necessary for the growing of crops or the raising of fowl or animals.

In addition to avoiding potential impacts of the proposed project on-site, these Best Management Practices would also assist in preventing pollutants or sediment from entering the Los Angeles River, and would minimize potential impacts to nearby sensitive riparian areas and drainages. Further, construction activities would comply with the City's Noise Ordinance, and construction work hours would be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. As discussed in Chapter 3.10, Traffic and Transportation, a traffic management plan would also be implemented with the proposed project.

2.7 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

An EIR is a public document used by a public agency to analyze the significant environmental effects of a proposed project, to identify alternatives, and to disclose possible ways to reduce or avoid environmental damage (CEQA Guidelines Section 15121). As an informational document, an EIR does not advocate for or against approving a project. The main purpose of an EIR is to inform governmental decision makers and the public about potential environmental impacts of the project. This EIR will be used by the CDPR, as the lead agency under CEQA, in making decisions with regard to the adoption of the proposed project and the subsequent construction and development of the proposed project described above.

2.8 PROJECT APPROVALS REQUIRED

The CDPR is the lead agency pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15367. The proposed project and environmental documentation, including this EIR, would require approval by the CDPR. Additional anticipated approvals, permits, or reviews for the proposed project include, but are not limited to:

- National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit for Construction Dewatering from the State of California Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
- ADA compliance review and approval
- California State Fire Marshal review and approval

As previously mentioned, special events and concerts held at the proposed project may include fireworks displays, concerts, and the use of public address systems. The operators of these special events would be responsible for complying with all applicable local laws and ordinances related to the use of fireworks and public address systems. Therefore, the operators of the special events would also be required to obtain the appropriate permits from the local authorities with jurisdiction over such uses.

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