

## Section 2: INTRODUCTION

EARVIN “MAGIC” JOHNSON RECREATION AREA MASTER PLAN  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) addresses the environmental effects of the proposed Earvin “Magic” Johnson Recreation Area Master Plan (Project). The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that government agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary approval authority. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is a document that provides both government decision-makers and the public with an analysis of the potential environmental consequences of a proposed project in their jurisdiction.

This Draft EIR has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA as set forth in Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq., the CEQA Guidelines, and 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq. (CEQA Guidelines). The County of Los Angeles (County) is the lead agency on the proposed Project and has reviewed and revised all submitted drafts, technical studies, and reports to reflect its own independent judgment, including reliance on applicable County technical personnel from other departments and review of all technical subconsultant reports.

### **2.1 PROPOSED ACTION**

The County has prepared a comprehensive park master plan (Master Plan) for the existing Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park (EMJ Park). The Master Plan establishes land uses, circulation, development standards, amenities, and design concepts for the Project site. The Project is described in greater detail in Section 3, *Project Description*. The Master Plan, in conjunction with this Draft EIR, will go forward for approval from both the County’s Regional Planning Commission (Planning Commission) and Board of Supervisors.

The analysis contained in this Draft EIR compares impacts associated with implementation of the proposed Project to current existing conditions.

## 2.2 OUTREACH EFFORTS

The County has undertaken extensive outreach efforts to the public since Project inception. The purpose of the outreach efforts is to inform Project stakeholders and continuously engage the general public, EMJ Park users, and local residents to understand the adequacy of the existing EMJ Park. Additionally, the County desires to develop a Master Plan that incorporates the “wants” and “needs” of the local residents and EMJ Park users. The following outlines the outreach efforts conducted by the County thus far for the proposed Project:

- April 2014 - County began discussions with affected agencies and local interest groups to inform them of the County’s intentions to prepare a Master Plan for the proposed Project.
- May 2014 - County staff, in conjunction with consultants, attended the Willowbrook Master Plan Community Workshop at Mona Park. Upcoming dates and public meeting schedules were announced.
- May 2014 - Community leaders meeting held by the County at the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Supervisor’s office to inform the community of progress on the Master Plan process.
- May 2014 - County staff, in conjunction with consultants, held a meeting with the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to discuss preliminary Master Plan efforts.
- May 2014 - County staff, in conjunction with consultants, began Project information discussions with EMJ Park users and distribution of information at the park on multiple days. Additionally, flyers were mailed to a 1,000 foot radius around the Project site. Email blasts were also sent to interested parties.
- June 2014 - Community Workshop #1 was held at Athens Park. The purpose of this workshop was to gain input as to what the regular EMJ Park users liked about the existing EMJ Park and what they would like to see changed and/or improved. A site analysis, as well as site development opportunities and

constraints, were presented and discussed. Community Workshop #1 was attended by approximately 50 people.

- July 2014 - County staff, in conjunction with consultants, met with EMJ Park users and distributed Project information at the EMJ Park on multiple days. Additionally, flyers were mailed to a 1,000 foot radius around the Project site. Email blasts were also sent to interested parties.
- August 2014 - County staff attended Supervisorial District 2 Quarterly Community Association Presidents and Leaders meeting. Update on the Master Plan process was given to attendees.
- August 2014 - Community Workshop #2 was held at Athens Park. The purpose of this workshop was to present three conceptual designs that were drafted based on the input from Workshop #1. Input was received from the public about what they liked and disliked about each concept. Community Workshop #2 was attended by approximately 120 people.
- August 2014 - County staff present conceptual plans to RWQCB and the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC).
- September 2014 - County staff, in conjunction with consultants, met with EMJ Park users and distributed Project information at the EMJ Park on multiple days. Additionally, flyers were mailed to a 1,000 foot radius around the Project site. Email blasts were also sent to interested parties. A park outreach event was also held to garner additional input on the three concepts presented at Workshop #2.
- October 2014 - Community Workshop #3 was held at Athens Park. The purpose of this workshop was to present the final Master Plan concept, proposed in this EIR, based on input from Workshop #2. The County obtained input from the public on the final Master Plan concept. Additionally, Workshop #3 served as the CEQA public scoping meeting. Community Workshop #3 was attended by approximately 180 people.

Refer to Appendix J, *Public Involvement*, of this document for documentation regarding public outreach.

## 2.3 EIR SCOPE, ISSUES, CONCERNS

To determine the scope of this Draft EIR, the County prepared and distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed Project. Baseline conditions from which this EIR evaluates impacts were established at the time the NOP was released on October 14, 2014, and identifies that the Draft EIR will address focused environmental topics identified in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines.

The NOP distributed on October 14, 2014, identified the following environmental issues to be addressed in the Draft EIR:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geological Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Climate Change
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology, Drainage, and Water Quality
- Noise
- Recreation
- Transportation and Circulation
- Utilities and Service Systems

A total of 72 comment letters were received during the NOP comment period. Comment letters were received from both the general public and public agencies. Overall issues raised during the NOP review period and at the public scoping meeting include the following:

- Concerns about the equestrian aspect of the proposed Project, particularly odors.
- Concerns about increased traffic as a result of an expanded park containing more amenities.
- Various environmental issues were raised, primarily related to noise and water pollution.
- Concern about the number and cleanliness of the expanded park's restroom facilities.
- Request for bus shelters on adjacent streets currently on public bus lines.
- Request to comply with all aspects of existing policies and codes governing land use in and around the Project area.
- Questions about the coordination of ongoing soil remediation efforts and the construction of park improvements proposed by the Master Plan.

Through the Initial Study (IS) and NOP scoping process, the County determined that the proposed Project would have no significant impact on certain environmental issues, or the impact could be feasibly mitigated with identified mitigation measure(s); these issues have been excluded from further analysis in this Draft EIR. Refer to Section 6, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*, for a discussion of the effects found not to be significant as identified in the IS.

This Draft EIR has been prepared at the Project-level under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 to assess and document the environmental impacts of the proposed Project. This Draft EIR serves as the primary environmental compliance document for entitlement decisions regarding these components of the proposed Project by the County and the other regulatory jurisdictions. Future developments that require additional discretionary review (i.e., individual development applications, Conditional Use Permits, Specific Plan Amendment, etc.) may require subsequent environmental review in compliance with the CEQA Guidelines.

## INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15150, this Draft EIR incorporates by reference the following documents (available for review at the County Department of Regional Planning, located at 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012):

County of Los Angeles General Plan (1980). The County's General Plan is a long-range policy-planning document that defines the framework by which the County's physical and economic resources are to be managed over time. The goals and policies contained in the General Plan are provided to guide the County's decision-makers. The seven State-mandated elements are included in the General Plan, including Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Safety, and Noise.

County of Los Angeles General Plan EIR (1980). The General Plan EIR was prepared to assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed General Plan. The EIR summarized potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the County's General Plan, including growth inducing and cumulative impacts.

## 2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The Draft EIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA to assess the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the proposed Project, as well as anticipated future discretionary actions and approvals. There are five main objectives of this document as established by CEQA:

- 1) To disclose to decision-makers and the public the significant environmental effects of proposed activities.
- 2) To identify ways to avoid or reduce environmental damage.
- 3) To disclose to the public reasons for agency approval of projects with significant environmental effects.
- 4) To foster interagency coordination in the review of projects.
- 5) To enhance public participation in the planning process.

Prior to the preparation of this Draft EIR, the County contacted affected agencies, organizations, and persons who the County has identified as having an interest in this proposed Project in accordance with CEQA Guidelines. For a discussion of the NOP process, refer to Section 2.3, above.

This Draft EIR, with an accompanying Notice of Completion (NOC), is being circulated to the State Clearinghouse, trustee agencies, responsible agencies, other government agencies, and interested members of the public for a 45-day review period as required by CEQA. The review period for this Draft EIR will begin the day the document is released for public review and will end 45-calendar days later. During this period, public agencies and members of the public may provide written comments on the analysis and content of the Draft EIR. Further, the County will hold a public meeting on the Draft EIR during the review period identified above. All interested parties are invited to attend the public hearing to provide either verbal or written comments on this Draft EIR. In reviewing a Draft EIR, readers should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and on ways in which the significant effects of the proposed Project might be avoided or mitigated.

Following the close of the public comment period, a Final EIR will be prepared to respond to all substantive comments related to environmental issues surrounding the proposed Project. The Final EIR will be available prior to Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors public hearings to consider this EIR and the proposed Project.

Concurrent with the County's consideration of the Final EIR, the Commission will also consider the merits of the proposed Project itself. This consideration may render a request to revise the Project, or an approval or denial. If the proposed Project is approved, the Commission may require mitigation measures specified in this Draft EIR as conditions of Project approval. Alternatively, the Commission could require other mitigation measures deemed to be effective mitigations for the identified impacts, or it could find that the mitigation measures cannot be feasibly implemented. For any identified significant impacts for which no mitigation measure is feasible, or where



mitigation would not reduce the impact to a less than significant level, the Commission will be required to adopt a finding that the impacts are considered acceptable because specific overriding considerations indicate that the proposed Project's benefits outweigh the impacts in question.

## 2.5 REPORT ORGANIZATION

The Draft EIR is organized into ten Sections, described below:

- **Section 1. Executive Summary.** Summarizes the description and background of the proposed Project, addresses the format of this EIR, discusses alternatives, and the potential environmental impacts and any mitigation measures identified for the proposed Project.
- **Section 2. Introduction and Purpose.** Describes the purpose of the EIR, background of the proposed Project, the NOP, the use of incorporation by reference, and the Final EIR certification.
- **Section 3. Project Description.** Describes the proposed Project, the objectives of the proposed Project, the Project Area and location, approvals anticipated to be included as part of the Project, the necessary environmental clearances for the Project, and the intended uses of the EIR.
- **Section 4. Environmental Analysis.** Provides a description of the thresholds used for each parameter analyzed to determine if a significant impact would occur, the methodology to identify and evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed Project, the environmental setting, the potential adverse and beneficial effects of the proposed Project, the level of impact significance before any mitigation, the mitigation measures, the level of significance of the adverse impacts of the proposed Project after mitigation is incorporated, and any potential cumulative impacts associated with the proposed Project related to existing, approved, or proposed development in the area.

- **Section 5. Other CEQA Required Topics.** Summarizes the significant and unavoidable impacts, energy conservation, and significant irreversible environmental changes.
- **Section 6. Effects Found Not to Be Significant.** Summarizes effects found not to be significant or less than significant, or less than significant with mitigation based on information contained in the Initial Study previously prepared for the proposed Project.
- **Section 7. Growth Inducing Impacts.** Analyzes the potential environmental consequences of the foreseeable growth and development that could be induced by implementation of the proposed Project.
- **Section 8. Alternatives to the Proposed Project.** Analyzes any alternatives to the proposed Project and their potential environmental effects.
- **Section 9. References.** Identifies reference resources utilized for the EIR.
- **Section 10. Organizations and Persons Consulted.** Identifies the lead agency, preparers of the EIR, and all Federal, State, and local agencies, and other organizations, and individuals consulted during the preparation of the EIR.

Table 2-1, *CEQA Required Sections and Location in Draft EIR*, depicts the sections of the Draft EIR that are required and their location.

**Table 2-1**  
**CEQA Required Sections and Location in Draft EIR**

Required EIR Section	Location in This Draft EIR	
	Section	Page
Table of Contents (Section 15122)	Same	i
Summary (Section 15123)	Section 1	1.0-1
Introduction	Section 2	2.0-1
Project Description (Section 15124)	Section 3	3.0-1
Environmental Setting (Section 15125)	Section 3	3.0-1
Significant Environmental Effects of the Proposed Project (Section 15126(a))	Section 4	4.0-1
Significant Unavoidable Environmental Effects of the Proposed Project (Section 15126(b))	Section 1	1.0-9
Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes of the Proposed Project (Section 15126(c))	Section 5	5.0-3
Growth-Inducing Impact of the Proposed Project (Section 15126 (d))	Section 7	7.0-1
Mitigation Measures (Section 15126 (e))	Section 4	Section 4
Alternatives to the Proposed Project (Section 15126(f))	Section 8	8.0-1
Effects Found Not to Be Significant (Section 15128)	Section 6	6.0-1
Organizations and Persons Consulted (Section 15129)	Section 11	8.0-1
Cumulative Impacts (Section 15130)	Section 4	Section 4
Technical Appendices and other materials, including the Initial Study, Notice of Preparation, and comment Letters	Appendices	N/A

Based on significance criteria, the effects of the Project have been categorized as either “less than significant” or “potentially significant.” Mitigation measures are recommended for potentially significant impacts, to avoid or lessen impacts. In the event the Project results in significant impacts with implementation of mitigation measures, the decision-makers are able to approve a Project based on a Statement of Overriding Considerations. This determination would require the decision-makers to provide a discussion of how the benefits of the Project outweigh identified unavoidable impacts. The CEQA Guidelines provide in part the following:

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- a) CEQA requires that the decision-maker balance the benefits of a proposed Project against its unavoidable environmental risks in determining whether to approve the Project. If the benefits of the Project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered "acceptable."
  - b) Where the decision of the public agency allows the occurrence of significant effects that are identified in the Final EIR but are not mitigated, the agency must state in writing the reasons to support its action based on the Final EIR and/or other information in the record. This statement may be necessary if the agency also makes the finding under Section 15091 (a)(2) or (a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines.
  - c) If an agency makes a Statement of Overriding Considerations, the statement should be included in the record of the Project approval and should be mentioned in the Notice of Determination (Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines).

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