

Department of Public Works

Bureau of Engineering  
Report No. 2

June 30, 2017  
CD No. 11

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD  
PUBLIC WORKS OF THE CITY  
of Los Angeles California  
AND REFERRED TO THE CITY COUNCIL  
JUN 30 2017

  
Executive Officer  
Board of Public Works

**VENICE AUXILIARY PUMPING PLANT PROJECT (PROJECT) - CERTIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) (STATE CLEARINGHOUSE [SCH] No. 2015111038) AND PROJECT APPROVAL BY THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL (COUNCIL)**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), review and consider the Final Venice Auxiliary Pumping Plant (VAPP) EIR, and adopt and forward this report and transmittals to the Council with the recommendations that it:

1. Certify that the EIR (Transmittal Nos. 1 and 2) was completed in compliance with CEQA; that the EIR was presented to the Council, as the decision-making body of the City of Los Angeles (City), and that the Council reviewed and considered the information contained in the EIR; and that the EIR reflects and expresses the City's independent judgment and analysis.
2. Adopt the Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations (Transmittal No. 3).
3. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Transmittal No. 4).
4. Specify that the documents constituting the record of proceedings in this matter are in the custody of the City Clerk located at 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012 and in the files of the Department of Public Works Bureau of Engineering (BOE) located at 1149 South Broadway, Suite 600, Los Angeles, CA 90015.
5. Approve the Project as described in the Final EIR.

**TRANSMITTALS**

1. Draft EIR, dated October 2016.
2. Final EIR, dated May 2017.
3. Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations, dated May 2017.
4. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, dated May 2017.

**DISCUSSION**

***Background***

The City owns and operates the Venice Pumping Plant (VPP) (Pump Station No. 646), located at 140 Hurricane Street in the Los Angeles community of Venice. The VPP is the City's largest

pumping plant, and it is considered a critical facility for conveying sewage from its tributary area. The facility was designed and built in 1957 and was last upgraded in 1987. Five pumps currently serve the facility.

The VPP collects sewage from the City's Coastal Interceptor Sewer (CIS), which serves the communities of Topanga, Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, Venice, and Mar Vista. It also serves the City of Santa Monica and parts of the County. Sewage is pumped south to the City's Hyperion Treatment Plant, located in Playa del Rey. Unlike other portions of the City's sewage collection and conveyance system, there are no diversions for bypassing the facility or associated CIS for required maintenance or in the event of an emergency. Moreover, the existing VPP has no physical space for additional back up pumps and associated equipment to ensure system reliability.

The proposed Project would be located adjacent to the existing VPP, the Ballona Lagoon, and the Grand Canal. It is a critically needed wastewater facility that will ensure in meeting needed pumping capacity and reliability at all times to the existing VPP.

### ***Project Description***

The Project site is within the Venice Community Planning Area and Council District No. 11. The proposed Project would be built on three vacant lots with a total combined area of approximately 12,076 square feet. Three construction laydown areas may be used for staging materials and equipment storage during the anticipated two year construction period.

Implementation of the proposed Project entails construction of a new pumping plant with three new pumps adjacent to the existing VPP, which would provide redundancy and ensure reliability of the sewer collection system. It would also allow the sewer system to handle extreme weather (e.g., El Niño), and corresponding increases in groundwater levels that exacerbate infiltration conditions, both for the existing and planned conveyance system. The potential for near misses and/or catastrophic system failures would be reduced with upgraded system redundancy and reliability.

As part of the proposed Project, a number of system improvements would be implemented both above and below ground, including a new electrical building, housing the control system and employee workstations; three new pumps and associated generator; sewer pipe connections to the CIS, including construction of a submerged diversion structure beneath the Grand Canal; parking, public art, and green open space. Combined, the five existing pumps at the VPP and the three new pumps would have a rated capacity of 87 million gallons per day. All pumps would have a similar capacity and be functionally equivalent.

The Project site is within the Coastal Zone and therefore within the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission. Adjacent to the Project site is an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area, which is associated with the Grand Canal and Ballona Lagoon. The Venice Canal System is also City's Historic Cultural Monument No. 270 and part of the Venice Historic Canal District (ZI-2370). The Project site is also within an area zoned for residential land use and will require approval from the Los Angeles Department of City Planning for several proposed land use and zoning entitlements.

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## ***Environmental Review***

### Scoping

A Notice of Preparation/Initial Study was released for the proposed Project on November 12, 2015, and circulated for 30 days for public and agency comments. Nineteen comment letters were received from public agencies, organizations, and individuals. These comments are summarized in the Draft EIR. Public scoping meetings were also held on December 3, 2015 and on December 8, 2015.

### Draft EIR

The Draft EIR (Transmittal No. 1) was released on October 15, 2016, and was circulated for 45 days for public and agency review and comment. A Notice of Availability and Notice of Completion for the Draft EIR was mailed to interested parties and posted with the County of Los Angeles Clerk's Office and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse on October 27, 2016. A notice regarding the public review period and time and location for a public meeting on the Draft EIR was published in the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Argonaut*. The Draft EIR was posted on the BOE website and hard copies were made available for review at several local public facilities (i.e., BOE offices, the Venice Branch Library, and the offices of Council District No. 11).

A public hearing was held on November 17, 2016, to solicit comments on the Draft EIR. In addition to the comments received at the public hearing, a total of eight comment letters or emails on the Draft EIR were received from agencies and individuals. Responses to comments are documented in the Final EIR.

### Final EIR and Findings

The Final EIR (Transmittal No. 2) states that the proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts after mitigation is implemented for Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Land Use and Planning (operation only, for secondary noise and vibration impacts), Noise and Vibration (operation noise and construction vibration related to potential for building damage) and Transportation/Traffic (construction only, for emergency access). The EIR identifies feasible mitigation measures that would reduce these impacts to a less than significant level.

The Final EIR also finds that even with the implementation of all feasible mitigation measures, the proposed Project would result in unavoidable significant impacts to Land Use and Planning (secondary, related to noise and vibration impacts), Noise and Vibration (during construction only), and Hydrology and Water Quality (operation). Cumulative Noise and Vibration impacts would also be significant and unavoidable. As such, the proposed Project requires that a Statement of Overriding Considerations (Transmittal No. 3) be adopted by the Council to approve the proposed Project.

The Findings are based on information contained in the Draft EIR and the Final EIR for the proposed Project, as well as information contained within the administrative record. The

administrative record includes, but is not limited to, the public hearing records, public notices, written comments on the proposed Project and responses to those comments, proposed decisions and the findings on the proposed Project, and other documents relating to the agency decision on the proposed Project.

### ***Project Alternatives***

In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the EIR described a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project that could feasibly attain most of the objectives of the proposed Project but would avoid or substantially lessen any significant environmental impacts. The No Project Alternative and Alternative 1 were analyzed in detail in the Draft EIR, while five additional alternatives were considered but rejected as infeasible.

#### **No Project Alternative**

Under the No Project/No Build Alternative, the proposed Project would not be implemented (constructed). The existing VPP would operate in its current condition with normal and planned upgrades and maintenance. Rental of temporary pumps and associated piping and back-up generators would be undertaken as needed to address extreme wet-weather or dry weather events and/or when existing pumps are either down or undergoing maintenance (up to three pumps and two diesel generators). As in the past, temporary pumps and piping would be located at-grade within Hurricane Street between Canal Court and Esplanade. There is a minimum three-week set up time to bring the equipment on-line. Hurricane Street (between Canal Court and Esplanade) would be closed to the public during this time period. The equipment would operate 24 hours per day. As discussed in Chapter 4 (Comparison of Alternatives) of the Draft EIR, the No Project Alternative would not meet any of the objectives of the proposed Project. Because this alternative would require the periodic rental and placement of pumps along Hurricane Street (between Canal Court and Esplanade), required to operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week, these activities would produce unacceptable noise levels, nuisance odors, and air quality (diesel emissions from the back-up generators) on adjacent sensitive receptors.

#### **Alternative No. 1**

Alternative No. 1, construct VAPP and permanently vacate Hurricane Street between Canal Court and Esplanade, would be identical to the proposed Project, except that Hurricane Street would be permanently vacated between Canal Court and Esplanade. Both, coastal access and existing parking, would be eliminated and no public access to the proposed Project or existing VPP would be allowed. The site would be fenced and controlled via secured and gated access. This alternative would meet the project objectives, however, coastal pedestrian access on Hurricane Street between Canal Court and Esplanade would be eliminated. Although alternate access to the Esplanade would be available via Canal Court and Galleon Street, access would be more circuitous to residents and visitors.

#### **Alternatives Considered But Rejected As Infeasible**

As discussed in detail in Chapter No. 4 of the Draft EIR, Section 15126.6(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires EIRs to identify any alternatives that were considered by the

lead agency but were rejected as infeasible during the scoping process and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination. The following five alternatives were considered but rejected as infeasible in the Draft EIR:

- Use of Temporary At-grade Pumps with External Piping at VPP and/or Along Hurricane Street.
- Build New Plant on Proposed Site and Decommission and Demolish Existing VPP.
- Expand Existing VPP and Install Pumps and Piping Below-grade.
- Construct VAPP Underground at Proposed Project Site Location with Control Room Located Off-site.
- Construct Auxiliary Pumping Plant at Alternate Location Along Coastal Interceptor Sewer.

#### Environmentally Superior Alternative

The No Project Alternative would result in the fewest impacts on the existing environment. However the No Project Alternative could result in catastrophic failure since the VPP has experienced near-miss conditions that would have resulted in discharges of sewage to the Grand Canal, Ballona Lagoon, or adjacent street system.

Pursuant to CEQA regulations [see CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2)], if the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, then the EIR must also identify an environmentally superior alternative from among the build (or "action") alternatives. Based on the analysis in the Draft EIR, the proposed Project would be the environmentally superior alternative, as Alternative No. 1 would permanently eliminate existing coastal pedestrian access along Hurricane Street between Canal Court and Esplanade.

#### ***Project Schedule***

Upon obtaining all required permits and planning entitlements, construction is anticipated to begin in Spring 2018 and be completed in approximately two years.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

The proposed Project has an approved construction budget of approximately \$19,000,000. Funding is available from the Sewer Construction and Maintenance Fund.

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( MEM BWJ RMK KRR ALM )

Report reviewed by:

Respectfully submitted,

BOE (ADM and WCE)



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