



CITY COUNCIL

STUDY SESSION REPORT

MEETING DATE: February 10, 2009

ITEM NUMBER: 3

SUBJECT: UPDATE FROM ORANGE COUNTY FAIR & EVENT CENTER ON
EQUESTRIAN CENTER LAND USE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2009

FROM: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

PRESENTATION BY: THOMAS R. HATCH, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER, (714) 754-5288

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: CAROL C. PROCTOR, MANAGEMENT ANALYST,
AT (714) 754-5688

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and comment.

BACKGROUND:

At the February 4, 2009 City Council meeting, Council Member Katrina Foley requested that the City Council be briefed at their February Study Session on the Orange County Fair and Event Center's (OCFEC) Equestrian Center Land Use Environmental Study. The proposal to conduct this study was presented to the Orange County Fair and Event Center's Board of Directors at their January 22, 2009 meeting. The action taken by the Board was: Director Tucker motioned and Director Dykema seconded to authorize the Equestrian Center Land Use Environmental Study, including an Equestrian Center alternative. This was approved 8-0, with one Director absent. The Board of Directors Agenda Report is included (Attachment 1).

Steve Beazley, President and CEO of OCFEC, will provide City Council with an update on the Study and respond to questions. LSA Associates produced the 10-year Master Plan in 2003 for OCFEC. The firm was directed to research the 7.5 acre equestrian center area (Map – Attachment 2). As a result of that research and the issues involved, LSA recommended a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) as the proper method to initiate a change to the current Master Plan. The SEIR is only a land use study; it will not execute the closure of the Equestrian Center.

ANALYSIS:

Mr. Beazley will be present at the Study Session to provide the details, notifications and meetings leading up to Equestrian Center Land Use Environmental Study. He will explain the next steps in the process and in ensuring the community understands the process.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

This is an informational item. No alternatives are presented.

FISCAL REVIEW:

There is no fiscal impact to the City with this informational item.

LEGAL REVIEW:

Legal review of this item is not required.

CONCLUSION:

This report was prepared as requested by Council Member Foley. The information is to further clarify the OCFEC's Equestrian Center Land Use Environmental Study, and to allow City Council an opportunity to review and comment on it.



CAROL C. PROCTOR
Management Analyst



THOMAS R. HATCH
Assistant City Manager

DISTRIBUTION: Development Services Director
 Public Services Director
 Assistant Development Services Director
 Legislative and Public Affairs Manager

Steve Beazley, President & CEO
Orange County Fair & Event Center

Attachments: 1 OCFair & Event Center Board of Directors Report
 2 OC Fair & Event Center Map



Board of Directors Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: JANUARY 22, 2009 ITEM NUMBER: 7B

SUBJECT: Equestrian Center Land Use Environmental Study
(Policy Reference 2.10)

DATE: January 15, 2009

FROM: Steve Beazley, President & CEO

PRESENTATION BY: Steve Beazley, President & CEO; Frank Haselton,
Managing Principal, LSA Associates.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve LSA Associates, Inc. proposal to conduct Equestrian Center Land Use Environmental Study.

BACKGROUND

At the November 2008 Board meeting, the CEO was directed to research and submit to the Board of Directors a plan of due diligence to study the north east region of OCFAEC that is currently used as an equestrian center.

The CEO contacted LSA Associates, Inc., the firm who produced the 10 year master plan in 2003. After discussion of the issues at hand, LSA recommended a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) as the proper method to facilitate a change to the 2003 master plan.

It is important to note the action recommended in the proposal is limited to study with no presumption of the outcome or eventual future of the equestrian center. This point was made clear to the equestrian community on January 13, 2009.

Out of respect for the equestrian community, the executive staff hosted an open meeting to answer questions on the action that was being recommended as well as a brief overview of an SEIR process. The goal was to educate the interested public on next steps should the Board approve the study to move forward. The outline and information presented in the open meeting is attached and will comprise the presentation at the Board meeting by LSA.

FISCAL IMPACT

The study is estimated to cost \$66,000 for LSA's services and the study is expected to take about 28 weeks to complete. The full proposal is attached.

CONCLUSION

The recommendation to approve the land use study is the sole issue before the Board at this time.

OCFEC EQC
CEQA PROCESS “TALKING POINTS”
Silo Building
January 13, 2009

BACKGROUND

- Master Plan/EIR
- Alternatives
- Public Process/Participation
- Preferred Alternative

POTENTIAL CURRENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Changes to the Master Plan
- Environmental Document
- Environmental Review Process

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

- Purpose
 - Identify potential environmental impacts
 - Publicly disclose potential environmental impacts
 - Publicly disclose feasible means to reduce/eliminate environmental impacts
 - Publicly disclose land use decisions
- Process
 - Identify project (focus of CEQA process)
 - *File Notice of Preparation*
 - *Public Scoping Meeting*
 - Identify existing conditions, potential impacts and mitigation measures of project
 - Identify project alternatives (including “no project” alternative)
 - *File Notice of Completion/Submit environmental report to public for review and comment*
 - Respond to public/agency comments
 - Make findings for basis of decision making
 - *Certify environmental document/decide on project (public meeting)*
 - *File Notice of Determination*



LSA ASSOCIATES, INC.
20 EXECUTIVE PARK, SUITE 200 IRVINE, CALIFORNIA 92614 949.553.0666 TEL 949.553.8076 FAX

BERKELEY
CARLSBAD
FORT COLLINS

FRESNO
PALM SPRINGS
POINT RICHMOND

RIVERSIDE
ROCKLIN
SAN LUIS OBISPO
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO

January 15, 2009

Mr. Steve Beazley, CEO
Orange County Fair and Events Center/32nd District Agriculture Association
88 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Subject: Northeast Land Use Analysis: Environmental Documentation

Dear Mr. Beazley:

As requested, LSA Associates, Inc. (LSA) is providing a scope of services, estimated budget, and draft schedule required to complete the necessary environmental documentation that will accompany the potential change in land use for the 7.5-acre (ac) portion of the Orange County Fair and Events Center (Fair) located at the northeast corner of the Fairgrounds. At this time, it is assumed that a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) will be the necessary environmental documentation.

BACKGROUND

In 2002, the Orange County Fair and Events Center (OCFEC) commissioned the preparation of a comprehensive review of its facilities that focused on how best to serve the widest spectrum of its community-based constituency in a financially and environmentally responsible manner for the next 10 to 12 years. As a result of this comprehensive review, a Master Plan was prepared to guide the evolution of the land use type, intensity, and location for the next decade. The Master Plan process was an equally comprehensive effort that consisted of identifying the existing physical conditions and constraints to property improvement and submitting over 2,000 questionnaires in order to gain a sense of the type of uses that should remain, be modified, introduced or phased out. Several public meetings were held to augment the data gathering process. These public meetings were characterized by significant participation from a large and varied group of interested parties and entities—stakeholders.

The equestrian center (EQC) occupied approximately 15 ac in the northeast portion of the Fairgrounds. It was extensively analyzed in the Master Plan and accompanying Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The EQC's purpose, need, and role were debated throughout the Master Plan process. One alternative questioned its consistency with the OCFEC's Mission and Vision Statements, calling for its removal. Specifically, there were concerns regarding the EQC's status of a private, exclusive use on public property otherwise dedicated to being a community resource. The Master Plan that was eventually adopted reduced the size of the EQC to its current configuration and size (7.5 ac).

As previously noted, the Master Plan EIR evaluated several land use alternatives pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15162. Design Alternative B considered the elimination of the EQC altogether. The EIR stated that this alternative represented a residual negative impact to recreational opportunities that could not be mitigated.

The EIR assessment of Design Alternative B was a qualitative assessment reflecting the increasing loss of other equestrian facilities throughout the County. This situation has not substantially changed since this assessment.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

At this time, the Fair is considering replacing the 7.5 ac EQC with “flexible flat space,” with the primary use being paved parking. Approximately 160 horses are currently boarded in enclosed stalls at the EQC. In addition, there are three arenas for riding, jumping, and training. Also, there are several hotwalkers and wash down areas. Finally, there is an administrative area that includes a small office and storage for feed, miscellaneous equipment, and solid waste.

Should the Board of Directors adopt a change in land use for this area, its primary use will be paved parking with enough area for approximately 1,500 parking stalls. This area would also be available for interim community events such as Cirque Soleil, outdoor exhibits and vendors, and storage, which are all predicated by the Fair’s event calendar.

Replacing the EQC would be an amendment to the Fair’s Master Plan, adopted by the Board of Directors in 2003. This amendment is a “project” under CEQA, and an SEIR must be prepared and certified prior to project approval.

Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR)

An SEIR, pursuant to Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines, is required if:

“Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.”

As mentioned above, replacing the EQC with another use was considered a significant adverse impact in the original Master Plan EIR. Therefore, an SEIR is required to analyze the change should the Board desire to move forward with exploring land use alternatives other than the existing EQC.

SEIR Contents

The SEIR will rely upon the information in the original Master Plan EIR, incorporating by reference much of the data in this document. The SEIR will contain the following:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Project Description

- Environmental Topics
 - Aesthetics
 - Air Quality (construction and operational)
 - Noise (construction and operational)
 - Land Use
 - Recreation
 - Hydrology
 - Water Quality
 - Other topics such as Geology, Soils, Traffic/Circulation, Biology, Cultural, Public Services and Utilities¹
- Cumulative Impacts
- Identification of Unavoidable and Adverse Impacts
- Alternatives

SEIR Deliverables

Upon completing the narratives of the abovementioned topics with accompanying graphics, an **Administrative Draft SEIR** will be submitted to the client for review and comment. One round of consolidated comments are anticipated and budgeted.

Once the comments on the Administrative Draft SEIR are incorporated, a **“pre-print” SEIR** will be completed and submitted to the client for review. It is anticipated that this review will be relatively quick and efficient.

Once the pre-print version has been approved by the client, LSA will prepare and distribute the **Draft SEIR** for public review. In order to maximize efficiency, LSA will prepare electronic versions of the document, as well as have it posted on the Fair’s Web site. The public review period will be for 45 days.

At the close of the public review period, LSA will **prepare responses to any CEQA-related written comments on the Draft SEIR**. LSA will organize the public comments and meet with the client in order to develop a strategy for responding to these comments.

Following the client’s review of the responses to comments, LSA will prepare the **Final SEIR**, which will consist of: (1) written comments and accompanying responses; (2) modifications/errata sheet, if necessary; (3) OCFEC Resolution and Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC); and (4) a Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program.

¹ These topics were thoroughly addressed in the Master Plan EIR, and it is anticipated that these topics’ existing setting and findings will not change as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, a brief summary regarding the proposed project and these topics will be provided.

LSA will draft the Findings and SOC. The SOC will be necessary if the SEIR concludes there are substantial, adverse environmental impacts for which no feasible mitigation measures exist, and should the Board decide to move forward with the project.

Should the Board move forward with approving the proposed project and certifying the SEIR, including the adoption of Findings and an SOC, then LSA will file a Notice of Determination (NOD) with the County Clerk and State Clearinghouse.

BUDGET

The estimated professional fee budget for the SEIR is approximately \$66,000. These fees represent the necessary effort involved in providing the client with a defensible document that will allow the Board to safely consider a change in land use for the northeast portion of the Fairgrounds. Below is an itemization of the proposed budget. Should the scope of services change, then this budget may warrant an augment.

Task	Estimated Budget
Technical Studies	
Aesthetics	\$1,500
Air Quality	\$3,000
Noise	\$3,000
Land Use	\$2,500
Recreation	\$2,500
Water Quality	\$3,000
Hydrology	\$2,500
Remaining Topics	\$5,000
Subtotal	\$23,000
Administrative Draft SEIR	\$18,500
Pre-Print SEIR	\$4,500
Draft SEIR	\$5,000
Response to Comments*	\$5,500
Findings/SOC	\$5,000
Final SEIR/NOD	\$4,500
Total	\$66,000

* It is not possible to accurately calculate the required effort to respond to comments, until these comments are reviewed. This task may warrant budget augment, depending on the number and complexity of the public, written comments.

NOD = Notice of Determination

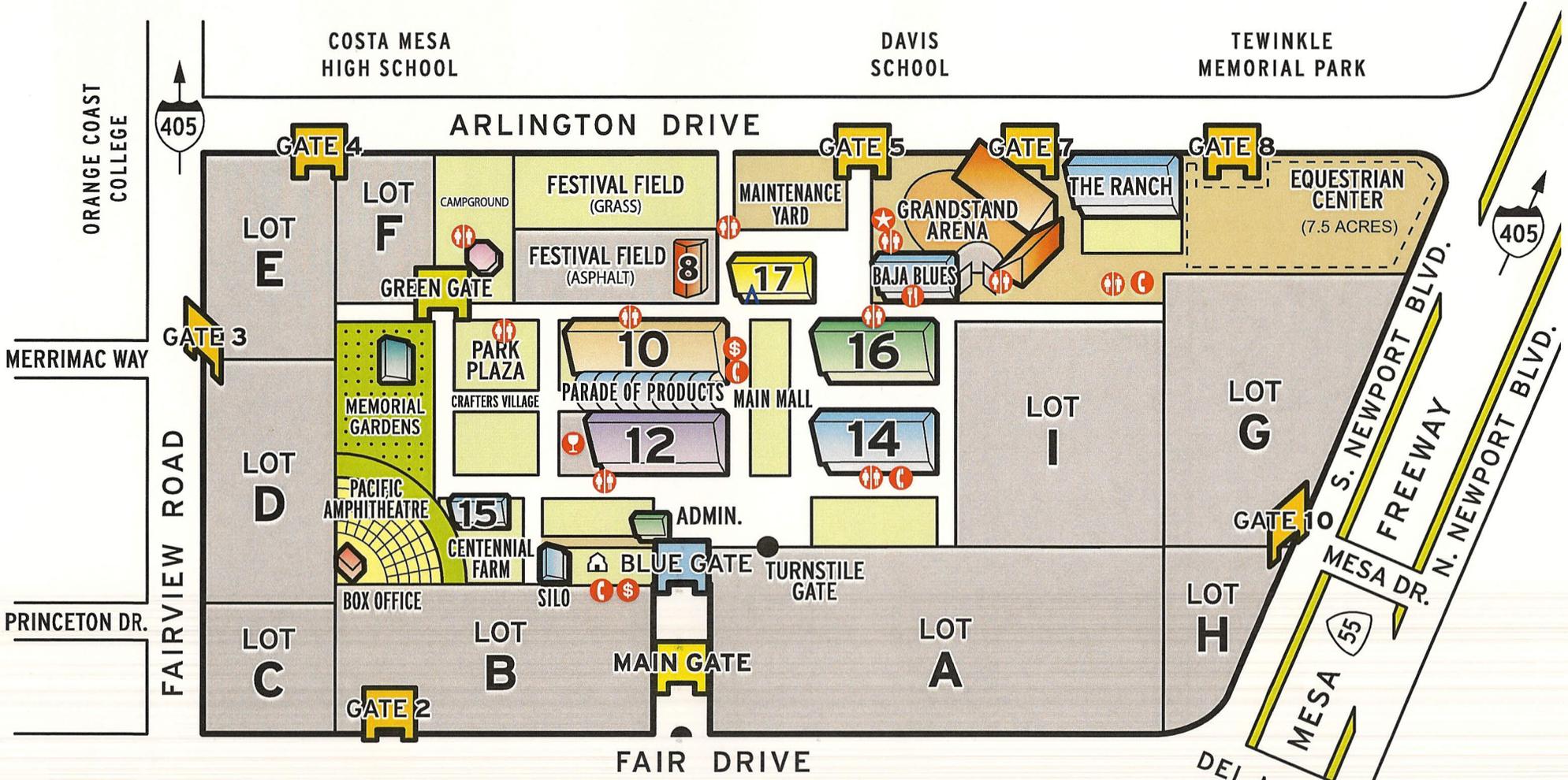
SEIR = Subsequent Environmental Impact Report

SOC = Statement of Overriding Considerations

This budget does not include reimbursable costs, which include printing, copies, travel, meals, and other direct business costs. These will be billed directly to the client at cost and on separate invoices.

SCHEDULE

Below is an estimated schedule to complete the above referenced scope of services.



MAP
NOT TO
SCALE

VANGUARD WAY
COSTA MESA POLICE & FIRE DEPARTMENT
CITY HALL
VANGUARD UNIVERSITY
NEWPORT MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

- RESTROOMS
- TELEPHONES
- ATM
- PUBLIC SAFETY
- RESTAURANT
- THE COURTYARD
- MILLENNIUM BARN



MONDAY - FRIDAY