



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning



Planning for the Challenges Ahead

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NOTICE OF COMPLETION AND AVAILABILITY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE FAIRMONT BUTTE MOTORSPORTS PARK PROJECT

County Project No. 02-176

Parcel Map 26805

Conditional Use Permit and Zone Change 02-176

General Plan Amendment R2009-00005 and Local Plan Amendment R2005-00005

State Clearinghouse Number 2005031170

The County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning acting in the capacity of "Lead Agency" under the County Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Chapter III, Section 304, has filed a "Notice of Completion" of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the **Fairmont Butte Motorsports Park Project**. This document has been prepared in accordance with, and pursuant to, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as amended; Public Resources Code, Section 21000-21178; and the "Guidelines for California Environmental Quality Act" (State CEQA Guidelines), and California Code of Regulation, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000-15387.

PROPOSED PROJECT AND SITE LOCATION

The proposed Fairmont Butte Motorsports Park project is a request for a parcel map application to subdivide the 320-acre subject property into three (3) parcels. The proposed primary development is a 3.6-mile racetrack and its accessory facilities totaling 186,808 square feet in 36 buildings. The racetrack facility will normally be leased out for use by private racing clubs or automobile companies for car testing purposes. Visitors are generally participants and their family members and friends. Few spectators are expected. Racing events occur during the day, but night time vehicle maintenance could occur and 24-hour security protection is proposed. Project includes a Conditional Use Permit application due to SEA designation; a Zone Change application from A-2-5 to C-R-DP zone on Lot 3 (276.8 acres) for racetrack operation; a Local Plan Amendment on 276.8 acres from Non-Urban to Commercial; and a General Plan Amendment on 276.8 acres from Non-Urban to Major Commercial.

The proposed project is located south of Avenue D - State Highway 138 between 150th Street West and 155th Street West. Surrounding land uses consist of undeveloped properties in all directions and the Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve to the southeast. The property is partially located within the Fairmont and Antelope Buttes Significant Ecological Area (No. 57).

Topics found to be significant after implementation of feasible mitigation measures are: operational noise impacts, short-term construction air quality impacts, operational air quality impacts, cumulative global climate change impacts, biological resources impacts, and cumulative solid waste impacts.

REVIEWING LOCATIONS

The formal public review period for the DEIR will be from **July 6, 2009 to August 19, 2009** (45 days).

A public hearing on this DEIR and the proposed project has been scheduled before the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, **September 2, 2009** in the Regional Planning Commission Hearing Room, 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. All comments received prior to the close of the public hearing will be considered in the Final EIR.

To ensure public access to the DEIR, copies of the document are available for review at the County libraries listed below:

County of Los Angeles
Quartz Hill Library
42018 N. 50th Street West
Quartz Hill, CA 93536-3509

County of Los Angeles
Lancaster Regional Library
601 West Lancaster Boulevard
Lancaster, CA 93534-3398

County of Los Angeles
Canyon Country Jo Anne Darcy Library
18601 Soledad Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91351-3721

Copies of the DEIR will also be available for public review Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at:

County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
Impact Analysis Section, Room 1348,
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Digital copy on the internet at:
<http://www.planning.lacounty.gov/case/all>

Please submit written comments on the DEIR to **Michele Bush** of the Department of Regional Planning at the above address or mbush@planning.lacounty.gov.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PURPOSE

It is the intent of the Executive Summary to provide the reader with a clear and simple description of the proposed project and its potential environmental impacts. Section 15123 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires that the summary identify each significant effect, recommended mitigation measure(s), and alternatives that would minimize or avoid potential significant impacts. The summary is also required to identify areas of controversy known to the lead agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public, and issues to be resolved, including the choice among alternatives, and whether or how to mitigate significant effects. This section focuses on the major areas of the proposed project that are important to decision makers and utilizes non-technical language to promote understanding.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

The Fairmont Butte Motorsports Park (FBMP) project site is situated in an unincorporated portion of Los Angeles County, approximately 14 miles northwest of the City of Lancaster, near the community of Fairmont (**Figure 2.0-1, Regional Location**). Specifically, the 320 gross acre site is rectangular in shape and is bounded by State Highway 138 – Avenue D to the north, 155th Street West to the west, 150th Street West to the east, and open space to the south (**Figure 2.0-2, Local Site Location**). The project site is located within the Fairmont Butte U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle.

The southern portion of the project site is within the current boundaries of County of the Los Angeles Significant Ecological Area (SEA) 57 – Fairmont Butte, while the northern portion of the project site is outside the SEA boundaries. The proposed project would be constructed in the northern portion of the site, outside the boundaries of SEA 57 – Fairmont Butte (**Figure 3.0-4, Site Relationships to SEA 57 – Fairmont Butte**).

1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project involves the construction and operation of a motor recreational facility for the driving, testing, and racing of automobiles or similar vehicles, including appurtenant facilities in conjunction therewith. As shown in **Figure 3.0-5, Site Plan**, the motor recreational facility (racetrack) would principally contain a road course configuration approximately 3.6 miles in length. Primary use of the facility would be for racing events sponsored by private clubs and racing organizations and for automotive testing.

The racetrack would operate only during daylight hours during typical racing events, although car maintenance may be performed during the evening. Automotive and racecar practice and/or testing/development sessions are expected to occur during the weekdays (here defined as Monday through Thursday inclusive) for about 40 weeks per year and would involve approximately 5 to 10 cars. At this time, approximately 50 persons would be present at the facility on weekdays. Racing events are expected to occur on weekends (here defined as Friday through Sunday inclusive) almost every weekend of the year with an expected attendance of approximately 50 to 300 entered cars and an on-racetrack population of approximately 250 to 1,325 persons (3.5 persons per entered car + 75 track employees and employees of leased facilities + 200 spectators). These events are generally sponsored by private car clubs or other racing organizations. Although these events are open to the public, given the relative isolation of the subject property, few spectators are expected to attend.

Structures, their quantity, and size as proposed for the racetrack facility are provided in **Table 2.0-1, Proposed Structure/Facility Details**. The operational characteristics of these structures are described in **Section 3.0, Project Description**. Ancillary facilities and structures at the FBMP include water tanks, a septic system, storm water retention basins, an aboveground fueling station, and helistop. The operational characteristics of these ancillary structures are also described in greater detail in **Section 3.0**.

Access to the motor recreational facility would be provided at one location via the intersection of State Highway 138 - Avenue D and 150th Street West. Roadway improvements are required by the County of Los Angeles and Caltrans as part of project approval. The County of Los Angeles requires 42 feet of half-street improvement to 150th Street West consistent with collector street standards from Highway 138 – Avenue D south to the main entrance of the proposed development. Highway 138 – Avenue D would be improved in conformance with Caltrans requirements including, at a minimum, the addition of an eastbound deceleration lane and westbound left turn lane approaching 150th Street West. Parking would occur throughout an approximately 16-acre, paved paddock area that is situated in the central portion of the proposed motorsports facility.

Selected infrastructure and utilities needed to serve the FBMP project are proposed on site or are located near to the project site. In-place infrastructure includes electricity and natural gas that currently exists within rights-of-way within or adjacent State Highway 138 – Avenue D. Water to the project site would be derived from an on-site well and domestic sewage would be treated and disposed of in two deep seepage pits that have been designed to accommodate projected demand. These improvements are described in detail in the **Sewer Service** and **Water Service** sections (**Sections 5.8** and **5.11**, respectively) of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Grading and construction of the FBMP project would be phased. The site is currently vacant land, and no demolition is required. At this time, it is expected that grading would occur in two phases, while construction would occur in three phases. The grading and construction phasing plan is described in detail in **Section 3.0** of this Draft EIR. Grading would be balanced on site, no import or export of material is proposed or is required, and grading volume would total approximately 200,070 cubic yards of cut and fill. At this time, it is anticipated that buildout of the FBMP (assumes project initiation in July 2010) would be complete in December 2012 (29 months from project initiation).

1.4 TOPICS OF CONCERN

Consistent with the requirements of CEQA, the County of Los Angeles prepared an Initial Study for the project. Based on conclusions of the Initial Study, this EIR addresses the following topics:

- Geotechnical and Soil Resources
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Biology
- Cultural Resources
- Visual Resources
- Sewer Service
- Fire Service
- Police Protection
- Water Service
- Solid Waste
- Land Use

1.5 IMPACTS, MITIGATION MEASURES, AND UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

This EIR has been prepared to assess each potentially significant impact to the environment that could result from implementation of the proposed project. For a detailed discussion regarding potential impacts, refer to **Section 5.0, Existing Conditions, Project Impacts, and Mitigation Measures**, of this EIR.

In accordance with the *State CEQA Guidelines*, summaries of the project's impacts are provided in **Table 1.0-1, Summary Table of Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures** (shown later in this section). Also provided in **Table 1.0-1** is a list of the proposed mitigation measures that are recommended in response to the significant impacts identified in this EIR, and a determination of the level of significance of the impact after implementation of the recommended mitigation measures. Topics found to be significant after implementation of feasible mitigation measures are: operational noise impacts, short-term construction air quality impacts, operational air quality impacts, cumulative global climate change impacts, biological resources impacts, and cumulative solid waste impacts.

1.6 ALTERNATIVES

In response to the significant impacts resulting from the project, the following five on-site alternatives to the project have been defined and analyzed in **Section 6.0, Alternatives**, of this EIR. The environmentally superior alternative is also defined in **Section 6.0**. Descriptions of each alternative are provided below. In addition to these alternatives, an alternative site was considered but not pursued because it was found to be infeasible.

- **Alternative 1, The No Project/No Development Alternative.** This alternative is required by the *State CEQA Guidelines* and compares the impacts which might occur if the project is not approved, based on present plans and infrastructure constraints, with those that would be generated by the project as proposed. Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would remain in its present condition and potential project-related impacts described in this EIR would not occur.
- **Alternative 2, Visual Screening/Noise Reduction.** To mitigate out-of-character views, noise on off-site receptors, increase security, and limit vistas of the racetrack from off-site locations, this alternative combines the use of berms to visually screen the racetrack and provide noise attenuation along portions of the racetrack perimeter. The berm will allow screening landscaping to soften the development from the non-urban setting with the unique views of the buttes. As a further means of reducing noise associated with the proposed project, noise attenuation devices would be required on all racecars. Noise attenuation devices would limit noise to 99 A-weighted decibels (dB(A)) 50 feet from the centerline of the racetrack (versus 104 dB(A) without noise attenuation). As a means of ensuring the use of these noise attenuation devices, the facility would require a noise monitor, as part of its lease agreement with track users.

Analysis was conducted assuming implementation of these noise reduction measures. Gordon Bricken & Associates indicates that with this mitigation, an up to 10 dB(A) reduction in racetrack noise can be achieved.

This alternative results in no change in the construction, operation, or design of the racetrack facility. As such, impacts defined in **Section 5.0** (with the exception of noise effects) would remain unchanged.

- **Alternative 3, 50-Unit Residential Subdivision.** This alternative involves the construction of 50 single-family homes on the project site north of the Broad Canyon Wash. It is acknowledged that this alternative would be consistent with the land use designation and objectives of the County of Los Angeles Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan but reduces permitted density by more than 70 percent when compared with the 160 units that are permitted by the County of Los Angeles Antelope Valley Area Plan.

This alternative would result in a reduction in significant effects associated with noise, air quality, cultural resources, and biological resources. However, it is expected that implementation of this alternative may result in significant impacts associated with the visual resources environment. Impacts associated with the geologic, hydrology and water quality, sewer, fire, police water and solid waste environments would be similar in type and magnitude.

- **Alternative 4, Agricultural/Permitted Use.** This alternative involves the use of the property for agricultural uses including grazing and dry land farming, permitted by the County of Los Angeles Zoning Code and consistent with the Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan. The project site has been used in the past for sheep grazing and the disking of the property to encourage forage crops.

This alternative would result in a reduction in significant effects associated with geologic, noise, air quality, visual resources, and the sewer, water and solid waste services. However, it is expected that implementation of this alternative may result in greater significant impacts associated with the biological resources environment. Impacts associated with the hydrology and water quality, cultural resources, fire, and police environments would be similar in type and magnitude to the proposed project.

- **Alternative 5, Track Moved North-No Subdivision.** This alternative involves relocating the racetrack and ancillary structures approximately 700 feet to the north, outside of the designated SEA boundary and north of Broad Canyon Wash. Because the track would be moved closer to Highway 138 – Avenue D, there would be no potential to subdivide the property for future land uses and therefore, no parcel map would be required. Aside from the project shifted north, there would be no difference in the proposed use of the facility.

This alternative would result in a slight reduction in significant effects associated only with biological resources. However, it is expected that implementation of this alternative may result in significant impacts associated with the noise and visual resources environment. Impacts associated with the geologic, hydrology and water quality, air quality, sewer, fire, police water and solid waste environments would be similar in type and magnitude to those of the proposed project.

The No Project/No Development Alternative is considered the environmentally superior alternative as the project site would remain in its present condition and potential project-related impacts described in this EIR would not occur. However, as specified in the *State CEQA Guidelines* (Section 15126(d)2), if the No Project/No Development Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. Of the alternatives considered, Alternative 4 is determined as the environmentally superior alternative, as this alternative would do the most to avoid or substantially lessen the substantial environmental effects of the proposed project compared to the other three alternatives.