Gilman Street Playing Fields

Berkeley, Alameda County, APN # 060-2529-001-03

Waterfront Specific Plan Amendment, Rezoning, Project Development and Project Operation

July 20, 2005

This mitigated negative declaration was prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and Guidelines (Public Resources Code, Division 13 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3) for the project that is described in the attached initial study and briefly described below.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Berkeley, serving as the lead agency for land use approvals under the terms of a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement executed by the cities of Berkeley, Emeryville, Albany, Richmond, and El Cerrito is proposing to approve and collaboratively develop a sports fields complex for regional use on a 15.76 acre site owned by the East Bay Regional Park District located west of the Frontage Road and south of Gilman Street. The plan calls for the development of five multi-use fields. Two artificial turf fields would be designed for soccer as a primary use. One field would be designed to accommodate baseball in the summer and field sports in the fall. The other two multi-use fields would be designed for summer softball and field sports at other times. Parking for up to 165 cars would be provided in two on-site lots, along with a 1,700 sq. ft. Field House building (with restrooms), a tot lot, and a lighting system to allow after-dark play.

PROJECT SPONSOR

Department of Parks, Recreation and Waterfront, 2180 Milvia St., 3rd Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704

ATTACHMENTS

- Mitigation Measures
- Project Location
- Initial Study (to public agencies only; copies available at Central Library and Permit Service Center)

MANDATORY FINDING OF SIGNIFICANCE

The City of Berkeley has adopted revisions in the project plans and developed mitigation measures (described below) to ensure that all potentially significant environmental effects will be mitigated to a less-than significant level. With adoption of the proposed mitigation measures, no significant adverse environmental effects would occur.

Therefore, there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment.
MITIGATION MEASURES

AESTHETICS

Mitigation Measure AESTH-1. The lighting systems shall be designed by a qualified lighting engineer. Aimed, sharp cutoff fixtures shall be specified to minimize light spill and glare. Viewing angles of freeway drivers, particularly those on southbound I-80/580, shall be considered and the lighting system shall be designed to minimize potentially distracting glare when seen by these drivers.

AIR QUALITY

Mitigation Measure AIR-1. To reduce temporary emissions of PM$_{10}$ during construction, the contractor shall implement the following measures:

- Water all active construction areas at least twice a day.
- Cover all trucks hauling soil, sand, or other loose materials, or require at least two feet of freeboard.
- Pave, apply water three times a day, or apply non-toxic soil stabilizers on all unpaved access roads, parking areas, and staging areas.
- Sweep daily, preferably with water sweepers, all paved access roads, parking areas, and staging areas at the construction site.
- Sweep any public streets where soil is visibly deposited once a day, preferably with water sweepers.
- Limit the area subject to excavation, grading or other construction activity at any one time.
- Suspend excavation and grading activity when winds (instantaneous gusts) exceed 25 mph.
- Limit traffic speeds on unpaved areas to 15 mph.
- Include a training module in the worker safety program to explain dust-exposure risks and hygiene procedures to minimize ingestion of soil particles by on-site workers.

Mitigation Measure AIR-2. Plant a linear shelterbelt of coastal-hardy trees capable of creating a tall, dense windscreen in the open space along the western edge of the site. The trees would reduce winds and increase comfort on the softball and baseball fields and, to a lesser extent, the soccer fields.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-2 would have secondary effects, as discussed in the Initial Study, so an alternative, but less effective, mitigation is suggested if the City Council determines that Measure AIR-2 is undesirable or infeasible. The Alternative Mitigation would address only spectator comfort (spectators would be the most sedentary and therefore the most sensitive users, in terms of thermal comfort). It is as follows:

ALTERNATIVE Mitigation Measure AIR-2. To reduce the adverse effects on human comfort from the strong and persistent winds experienced on the site, windscreens of solid material or fabric should be provided at the backs of east- and northeast facing bleachers, baseball and softball dugouts and on the west and southwest sides of the tot lot.

BIOLOGY

Mitigation BIO-1: Protocol surveys for burrowing owls shall be conducted at regular intervals in 2005, 2006 and 2007 to ascertain whether burrowing owls are still present on the site. If owls are observed at any time, the City shall contact the California Department’s of Fish and Game and Parks and Recreation to establish an acceptable mitigation plan, which shall be implemented.

Supplemental Mitigation BIO-1A: The City could immediately initiate the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding for burrowing owl mitigation with the Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Parks and Recreation and East Bay Regional Park District to formalize the institutional commitments necessary to permanently protect burrowing owl habitat on the Albany Plateau area of Eastshore State Park, or other approved mitigation site adopted by the MOU signatories. Upon adoption of the MOU, the protocol surveys called for in Mitigation BIO-1 could be terminated, and construction of
Phase II of the project could be commenced prior to 2008.

**Mitigation BIO-2.** Prior to disturbance of any upland area occupied by ground squirrels, a pre-construction survey for burrowing owls shall be conducted by a qualified biologist. If any occupied burrows are identified during the breeding season, buffer areas shall be established around the burrow and protected until the nesting activities are completed.

**Mitigation BIO-3 (Optional):** To minimize the potential impact of ballfield lighting on waterbirds and other wildlife, the following is recommended:

- Field lights should be actively managed so that they are on only when needed and are otherwise turned off.
- Lamp housings should be sealed tight, and located away from structures that may trap insects.
- Light intensity should be no higher than necessary, i.e. the ballfields should not be overlighted.
- Lights should be focused specifically on areas needing illumination and shielded to prevent upward and outward radiation.
- Flat glass and ultra-low profile light fittings should be used.

*Mitigation Measure BIO-3 is optional, not mandatory, because it is not required in order to mitigate a significant adverse impact of the project. However, it promotes good environmental practices and should be implemented, to the extent feasible, during the design and operation of the project.*

**GEOLOGY**

**Mitigation GEO-1:** The foundation systems of all structures proposed as a part of the project including the tall light standards, fencing systems and the restroom building shall be reviewed by a qualified structural engineer, in consultation with an engineering geologist, who shall provide recommendations for reducing life safety hazards for field users during a major earthquake. The engineering recommendations shall be incorporated into the final design plans.

**HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-1:** A Second Addendum to the Remediation and Risk Management Plan (RRMP) for the Berkeley North Basin Strip-II (or equivalent) shall be prepared and implemented by the City of Berkeley, prior to commencing construction. Its purpose will be to develop additional specific remediation measures to prevent field users from coming in contact with TPHd contaminated soil, following removal of the existing paved surface. The Plan (Second Addendum to the RRMP) shall be submitted to the Regional Water Quality Control Board for approval and the implementation actions shall be confirmed by the RWQCB prior to opening the fields for public use.

*An alternative approach that would minimize or avoid additional remediation work on the site by modifying the project design is also feasible, as follows:*

**Alternative Mitigation Measure HAZ-1:** The City shall revise the grading plan and site design, as necessary, to elevate the playing fields by 1-2 feet (compared to the levels in the Preliminary Plan) in order to avoid removal of the existing pavement cover on the site. To the extent that cuts are required in the pavement for the installation of drainage systems, light poles or other utilities, the City shall submit plans to the Regional Water Quality Control Board for review and shall implement any supplemental remediation measures that may be specified pursuant to the RRMP, as amended.

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-2:** The Second Addendum to the Remediation and Risk Management Plan shall also address any decreases in the depth of clean fill placed over Area A and Area B, as specified in the First Addendum to the RRMP. Additional remediation, if any, which is required by the RWQCB for these locations shall be implemented during construction of Phase I and/or Phase II, as applicable.
An alternative approach involving modification to the project design is also feasible. It would be a companion to Alternative Mitigation Measure HAZ-1. Measures HAZ-1 and HAZ-2 would be implemented together or Alternative Measure HAZ-1 and Alternative Measure HAZ-2 would be implemented as a pair. Alternative Mitigation Measure HAZ-2 follows:

**Alternative Mitigation Measure HAZ-2:** Reductions in the depth of fill over Areas A and B could be avoided by revising the grading plan and site design, as necessary, to elevate the playing fields by 1 - 2 feet (compared to the levels in the Preliminary Plan). To the extent that minor cuts are required in the existing fill cap in Areas A and B for the installation of drainage systems, light poles or other utilities, the City shall submit request Regional Water Quality Control Board review and shall implement any supplemental remediation measures that may be specified pursuant to the RRMP, as amended.

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-3:** The City shall require that all construction contractors shall prepare and implement worker health and safety plans to address the potential for methane hazards whenever subsurface work is undertaken on the site. The health and safety plans shall include appropriate methane monitoring, ventilation, warning, and evacuation protocols, as appropriate. As required by Mitigation Measure AIR-1, the worker health and safety plans shall also incorporate a training module to explain dust-exposure risks and hygiene procedures to minimize ingestion of soil particles by on-site workers.

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-4:** The Field House and Restroom Building, which is the only closed structure proposed on the site, shall be designed with a flooring system that will not permit methane gas to enter the building from the ground and a ventilation system adequate to dissipate gas that might accumulate in closed spaces.

**HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**

**Mitigation HYDRO-1:** A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be prepared, as required by the State Water Resources Control Board for projects involving more than one acre of land disturbance. The SWPPP shall incorporate appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control soil and surface water runoff during excavation, filling, trenching, and grading. To the extent feasible, ground disturbing activities shall be conducted during the dry season (April 15 to October 31). Stockpiled soil shall be covered and protected with temporary erosion control measures. The SWPPP shall include temporary erosion control measures in the event that rainy weather occurs during construction.

**Mitigation HYDRO-2:** To avoid the risk of up stream flooding, the proposed drainage plan for the project shall be revised so that site is not appended to the Gilman Street Storm Drain area and is not connected to the existing 60-inch Gilman Street Storm Drain. This could be accomplished with the installation of a new, smaller diameter parallel drain pipe beneath Gilman Street or installation of a storm drain across the East Shore State Park “Promenade” strip at an appropriate location.

**Mitigation HYDRO-3:** To reduce the pollutant loads in runoff from the parking lots, the final design shall direct parking lot runoff to vegetated swales for bio-filtration, prior to discharge to the storm drains. The bio-filtration design shall conform to applicable non-point source Best Management Practices and shall be approved by the Public Works Director.

**Mitigation HYDRO-4:** To minimize the potential for discharge of concentrated nutrients to the Bay waters from site runoff, fertilizers shall only be applied in accordance with Best Management Practices (BMPs) that shall be developed to avoid excessive application and periods when runoff is likely.

**PUBLIC SERVICES**

**Mitigation PS-1:** The City of Berkeley and the East Bay Regional Park District shall review their existing
mutual aid agreements to ensure that effective response protocols are in place for this site prior to completion of the fields and commencement of play.

**TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION**

*Mitigation Measure TRF-1:* During final design the project engineers and City staff shall reconcile the layout of the playing fields with the final design of the twin roundabout interchange proposed adjacent to the northeast corner of the project site.

**WATER AND WASTEWATER**

*Mitigation WW-1:* In conjunction with the final design work, the City of Berkeley shall require the project engineer to coordinate with EBMUD to ensure that the project is designed to facilitate conversion to recycled water for irrigation as expeditiously and economically as feasible, once the supply becomes available.
Project Location