

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

**APPROVED**  
**JUN 17 2009**

NO. 09-167

DATE June 17, 2009

**BOARD OF RECREATION  
and PARK COMMISSIONERS**

C.D. 7

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: HANSEN DAM PROJECTS (PHASE II - RANGER STATION/VISITOR CENTER (W.O. #E170405B), PHASE III - ROAD/TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS) - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT / MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

R. Adams	_____	J. Koib	_____
H. Fujita	_____	F. Mok	_____
S. Huntley	_____	K. Regan	_____
V. Israel	_____	*M. Shull	<u><i>M. Shull</i></u>

*R. Adams*  
General Manager

Approved \_\_\_\_\_      Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_      Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Review, consider and adopt the Final Environmental Assessment/Mitigated Negative Declaration (EA/MND) prepared for the proposed Hansen Dam Ranger Station/Visitor Center, and Road/Trail Improvements Projects, finding on the basis of the entire record of proceedings in the project, including the EA/MND and any comments received, and that all potentially significant environmental effects of the project have been properly disclosed, evaluated and mitigated in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and State and City CEQA Guidelines and reflects the Board's independent judgment and analysis;
2. Review, consider and adopt the Mitigation Monitoring Plan, published under separate cover, that specifies the mitigation measures designed to reduce or eliminate the potentially significant environmental impacts identified in the EA/MND, in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15074 (d));
3. Direct Staff to file the Notice of Determination (NOD) for the project with the Los Angeles City and County Clerks within five working days of the Board's adoption; and,

## REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 2                      NO. 09-167

4. Authorize the Department's Chief Accounting Employee to issue checks in the total amount of \$2,068 from the available Proposition K funding, payable to the Los Angeles County Clerk, for the NOD filing fee (\$75) and California Department of Fish and Game Fee (\$1,993).

### SUMMARY:

The proposed projects are to be located at 12200 West Osborne Street in the San Fernando Valley within the Hansen Dam Flood Control Basin and Recreation Area on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and leased to the City of Los Angeles for recreational development. The new Ranger Station/Visitor Center is proposed to be in proximity to the southeast corner of the intersection between Osborne Street and Dronfield Avenue. The proposed projects were initiated as a result of Proposition K, "Los Angeles for Kids Program," passed by City voters in November 1996, which provides a budget of \$25 million per year for 30 years to fund acquisition and capital improvements for parks and recreational facilities in the City of Los Angeles. The development of the proposed project is expected to provide a much-needed recreational amenity to the community because it would ensure safe, enlightened patronage and stewardship of an important regional resource, the Hansen Dam Recreation Area. The proposed action would maximize the use of the City's Proposition K funds for recreational development.

The projects, which include the Ranger Station/Visitor Center and Road/Trail Improvements within the Hansen Dam Recreational Area, will be phased, depending on the availability of funds. The projects are projected to start construction in Fall 2009. Originally, the project was to include the Road/Trail Improvements, now identified as Phase III. This portion of the project will be done as a separate project since funding has been programmed as a future phase.

The projects would satisfy the USACE mission to help provide recreational amenities at water resource projects, and is consistent with the Hansen Dam Master Plan (1991). The site is currently vacant.

The new Ranger Station/Visitor Center would serve two main functions: (1) to facilitate public access and education regarding area amenities and (2) to provide additional maintenance function capacity. Personnel within the facility would provide emergency response as well as public education services (the latter via the public education components within the facility and via interpretive nature trail walks). The public environmental education function would involve displays, escorted nature walks, along with a visitor center/rest area to serve the existing bicycle and equestrian trail systems. The proposed project also includes an auxiliary maintenance facility, which will provide additional space for park equipment storage and maintenance. In addition, as park and other nearby amenities, such as the Lake View Terrace Library, develop and recreation area patronage increases, it will become increasingly important to attain

## REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 3                      NO. 09-167

appropriate levels of oversight and security. The project is intended to address increased security needs. The park has attracted illicit and other undesirable activities, such as loitering, vagrancy, and vandalism, which have underscored a need for enhanced surveillance.

The proposed Ranger Station/Visitor Center function is considered an intensive recreation use under the Hansen Dam Master Plan. As of Spring 2008, a preliminary design and layout had been agreed upon, with the design details not yet finalized. The project will be constructed in phases, and will be subjected to funding limitations. The analysis in the EA/MND is based upon a refined development concept for the ranger station and nearby vicinity, which is consistent with the planned recreational uses described in the 1991 Final Hansen Dam Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. Moreover, this project would satisfy the USACE's mission to help promote stewardship as well as protection, conservation and enhancement of natural, cultural and man-made resources through improved onsite security, and visitor education services. The concept is supported by both the lead agency, the City of Los Angeles and the property owner, the USACE.

In accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a joint Environmental Assessment/Mitigated Negative Declaration (EA/MND) was prepared based on an Environmental Assessment/Initial Study, which determined that all potentially significant environmental effects would be mitigated to a less than significant level. The EA/MND was circulated to all interested parties and responsible agencies for a 30-day review and comment period from June 26 to July 28, 2008. One comment letter was received from the State of California, Native American Heritage Commission (CANAHC). The CANAHC advocated contact with local tribal leaders, and provided guidelines for the encounter of remains and artifacts at sacred sites. Tribal contacts were made in June of 2005; no records were found. Nevertheless, based upon a request from the USACE, copies of the EA/MND were submitted to nine Native American tribal contacts for an additional review period, from August 7 to September 2, 2008. No comments were received.

Based on the review of all comments received, the Department concluded that no fair or reasonable arguments have been made that identified new environmental impacts from the project or that would require additional mitigation measures. In addition, City environmental staff has determined that there have been no substantial changes in the environmental conditions at the park or in the design of the project since the preparation of the MND. Therefore, no revisions to the MND, or additional public review and re-circulation are required. A separately bound Mitigation Monitoring Program specifies all of the mitigation measures identified in the EA/MND that would either reduce or eliminate the potentially significant environment impacts of the project. It was determined that the project, as proposed, could individually or cumulatively have an adverse effect on wildlife resources or their habitats as defined by Fish and Game Code 711.2. This required a formal review of the EA/MND by the Department of Fish and Game and will require the payment of a \$2,068.00 fee at the time the Notice of

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 4                      NO. 09-167

Determination (NOD) is filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk. The EA/MND, along with the Public Review Record and Mitigation Monitoring Program documents, the originals of which are in the custody of the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering located at 1149 South Broadway, have been provided to both this Board of Commissioners and the Commission for Fish and Game for their review, consideration and adoption.

Subsequent to this Board's approval of the EA/MND and staff's filing of the NOD with the City and County Clerks, and assuming there are no challenges to same, it is proposed that the Phase II – Ranger Station/Visitor Center portion of the project will be constructed by GSD pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering and Department of General Services, subject to this Board's approval of the MOU.

The Office of Council District 7, the Assistant General Manager of Operations West and the Superintendent of Valley Region concur with staff's recommendations.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

Approval the EA/MND results in no fiscal impact to the Department's General Fund. Fees for filing the NOD and review by the California Department of Fish and Game will be paid for from available Proposition K funds.

This report was prepared by Cathie Santo Domingo and Henry Sisomvang, Recreational and Cultural Facilities Program, and William Jones, Environmental Management Group, Bureau of Engineering. Reviewed by Neil Drucker, Program Manager, Recreational and Cultural Facilities Program; Deborah Weintraub, Chief Deputy City Engineer, Bureau of Engineering; and Michael A. Shull, Superintendent, Planning and Development Division, Department of Recreation and Parks.