



AGENDA REPORT

Department: Planning
Prepared by: Martin Reeder, AICP – Planning Manager
Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023
Approved by: Brad Raulston, City Manager

SUBJECT:

Consideration of the findings of the Balanced Plan Environmental Impact Report and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP).

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the Resolution of the City Council of the City of National City, California, Accepting the Findings of the Balanced Plan Environmental Impact Report and Adopting by Reference the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE PRIOR ACTION:

The Planning Commission accepted the EIR findings and adopted the MMRP.

EXPLANATION:

Executive Summary

The City of National City (City), in conjunction with the San Diego Unified Port District (District), GB Capital Holdings (GB Capital), and Pasha Automotive Services (Pasha) have been working together to propose a mixed-use recreational and maritime industrial project that includes both landside and waterside development components on approximately 58 landside acres and 19 waterside acres in the City's waterfront area. This project is collectively referred to as the "Balanced Plan" and is intended to be mutually beneficial to the region and is geographically located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City and the District. The LCPA includes changes to the text and updated maps to reflect adoption of the Balanced Plan. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the Amendment to the City Council.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

In November 2022 the District, acting as the CEQA lead agency, certified the Balanced Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which reflected several land use changes within the Port Master Plan as well as the City's Balanced Plan. Pursuant to CEQA, the City is considered a "Responsible Agency". As Responsible Agency, the City must only consider the environmental effects of a project that they are required by law to approve or carry out. The 2022 EIR considered environmental factors including traffic, air quality and other environmental issues that were relevant to the City's portion of the Balanced Plan. Because the City is now amending the Land Use Plan portion of its LCP to reflect the approval of the Balanced Plan it must also consider the findings contained in the Final EIR produced by the District.

In reviewing the CEQA findings, the City Council will need to decide if the significant impacts associated with the environmental issues related to biological resources, air quality and health risk, cultural, tribal cultural and paleontological resources, greenhouse gases and climate change, hazards and hazardous materials, land use, noise and transportation circulation and parking have been fully mitigated to below a level of significance. The EIR identifies specific mitigation measures, virtually all of which would be relevant upon construction of the Bayshore Bikeway and the eventual development of the parcels that were rezoned to Tourist Commercial. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the EIR outlines the specific mitigation measures, mitigation timing, methods for monitoring, and reporting and responsible parties. The CEQA findings of fact and the MMRP are included as Exhibits A and B with the Resolution accepting the EIR Findings and adopting the MMRP (Attachment 1).

Lastly, the City Council must determine whether any alternative other than the proposed Balanced Plan project might meet the key objectives of the project while reducing its environmental impacts. The EIR considered a number of alternatives, but only two alternatives were related to the City's portion of the Balanced Plan. The alternatives considered and their respective conclusions were as follows:

- No Project/No Development Alternative – This would eliminate environmental impacts and was rejected as all project objectives would not be met.
- Reduced Development Alternative (Environmentally Superior Alternative). This alternative would have reduced the hotel development in the City owned parcels to three stories and 75 total rooms. While it would have reduced to a limited degree the environmental impacts compared to the proposed Balanced Plan project, it would have generated less transient occupancy, property and sales tax and would have rendered the project economically infeasible. Hence, the Reduced Development Alternative has been rejected.

Summary

The proposed Balanced Plan project will provide additional commercial opportunities for the City and the San Diego County region and generate revenue for the City through transient occupancy, sales and property tax. Further it will increase visitor-serving uses, public access and recreational activity in the City's waterfront. The project will produce new full and part time jobs and will help meet the City's revenue generation needs for the General Fund, which funds essential services throughout the City.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

There is no budgetary impact at this time, but as described in the summary above, the project will have a positive impact in future years.

RELATED CITY COUNCIL 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Balanced Budget and Economic Development

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

This is a project under CEQA and requires full environmental review and the preparation of an environmental impact report. CCR 15362.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION:

Agenda Report posted within 72 hours of meeting date and time in accordance with Brown Act.

ORDINANCE:

Not Applicable

EXHIBITS:

Exhibit A – CEQA Findings of Fact

Exhibit B - Consideration of the findings of the Balanced Plan Environmental Impact Report and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)

Exhibit C - Resolution