



Agenda Report

Item #: 23-1377

Meeting Date: 9/19/2023

TITLE:

STATUS UPDATE REGARDING THE CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES' (CAL OES) SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER PROJECT AT FAIRVIEW DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER SITE

DEPARTMENT: ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT/PLANNING DIVISION

PRESENTED BY: JENNIFER LE, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

CONTACT INFORMATION: JENNIFER LE, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, (714) 754-5270

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council receive and file this information and provide feedback, as needed.

BACKGROUND:

The Fairview Developmental Center (FDC) site is a 109-acre property owned by the State of California located at 2501 Harbor Boulevard in the City of Costa Mesa. The site was developed and previously operated by the State as a residence for developmentally disabled persons, but is now largely vacant and in the process of being repurposed for a potential mixed-use project at the site.

The State is proposing to locate the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) headquarters for southern California on a 15-acre portion of the FDC site. As a separate effort, the remainder of the site would be master planned by the City of Costa Mesa for housing pursuant to Government Code Section 14670.31 and sold or leased for redevelopment subject to the State's disposition process.

On March 1, the State released a Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the OES Project and accepted comments regarding the scope of the Draft EIR for period of 30 days. The State held a scoping meeting on March 13, 2023. The comment deadline was subsequently extended to April 17, 2023. The City submitted a comment letter dated April 17, 2023 which is provided as Attachment 2.

The City's April 17, 2023 comment letter included specific questions and concerns regarding the proposed project which the City requested be further studied and disclosed in the Draft EIR. Comments included a request for a comprehensive project description; ongoing land use planning coordination with the remainder of the FDC site; clear project objectives which included facilitating housing on the remainder of the FDC site; evaluating a reasonable range of alternatives including offsite and other onsite locations for the facility; visual compatibility of the proposed communications tower with existing and future adjacent residential uses; noise; hazards and safety; transportation/traffic including a

request to study specific intersections and incorporating active transportation systems; impacts to public services and recreation (e.g., the onsite soccer fields and adjacent community golf course); utilities; cumulative impacts; and other issues.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed OES project is the establishment of a Cal OES Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for the southern region of California. Cal OES provides disaster planning, readiness, and response of state resources for various emergencies and threats of emergency facing California. Currently, Cal OES operates the State Operations Center in the City of Mather in Northern California. The proposed project would develop another EOC in Southern California that would mirror the operations of the Mather facility at a smaller scale and provide more effective state emergency support to local governments within the Southern Region. The Southern Region covers 11 counties within two mutual aid regions (Mutual Aid Region 1: Los Angeles, Orange, San Luis Obispo, Santa Ana, and Ventura Counties; Mutual Aid Region 2: Imperial, Inyo, Mono, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties). The proposed Southern Region EOC would support full-time staff and establish a regional center to serve as a hub for critical emergency management planning and training programs.

The Southern Region EOC facility would include an approximately 35,000-square-foot, single-story office building that would contain office space, an EOC, and shared training rooms, as well as an approximately 20,000-square-foot warehouse building that would contain a vehicle maintenance bay and space for storage of life-sustaining commodities. The proposed facility would also include a helipad and a 100-foot-tall lattice tower with 20-foot-tall microwave dishes and antennas on top. Other site improvements are also proposed such as fencing, landscaping, internal roads, parking for approximately 250 vehicles, and solar shade canopies. The proposed project would replace the temporary Regional EOC, currently operating approximately 11 miles northwest of the project site in the City of Los Alamitos, and would also act as a backup State Operations Center for the Mather facility. Construction is anticipated to begin in September 2024 and last approximately 37 months.

State Draft EIR Released

On September 5, 2023, the State released its Draft EIR for the OES project. An EIR is a study and evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of a project which is required for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA requires a public agency to review and consider the information provided in an EIR before making a decision to approve or deny a project. The EIRs executive summary is provided as Attachment 1; the full EIR is posted online on the State's website at <https://oesregionsoutheoc.org/library/>.

In summary, the draft EIR concludes that all project impacts are "less than significant". Mitigation measures are identified in the areas of air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, paleontological resources, and tribal cultural resources.

Comments are due regarding the Draft EIR by October 20, 2023 at 6 p.m. In addition, the State will hold a community meeting on September 28, 2023 at 6PM in the Fairview Developmental Center Auditorium (2501 Harbor in Costa Mesa).

Staff is reviewing the Draft EIR and will be preparing a comment letter to submit to the State.

ALTERNATIVES:

There are no alternative actions because the item is to receive and file information.

FISCAL REVIEW:

There are no fiscal impacts to the City from this informational item.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this staff report and approved as to form.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

This item supports the following City Council Goal:

- Diversify, stabilize and increase housing to reflect community needs

CONCLUSION:

The State has released a Draft EIR for its OES project proposed on a 15-acre portion of the Fairview Developmental Center site in Costa Mesa. City staff are preparing a comment letter; comment letters are due October 20, 2023 by 6 p.m. The State is hosting a community meeting on September 28, 2023 at the project site. Staff recommends that the City Council provide feedback and receive and file this information.