

APPROVED
By the Board of Directors of
The Metropolitan Water District
of Southern California
at its meeting held



MWD

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

NOV 14 1995

[Signature]
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

October 24, 1995

To: Board of Directors (Executive Committee--Action)
(Real Property & Asset Management Ad Hoc Committee--Action)

From: General Manager

Subject: Certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report and Approval of the Headquarters Facility Project

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Board of Directors:

- 1) Certify that it has reviewed and considered the information presented in the Headquarters Facility Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), and exercised its independent judgment prior to approving the project;
- 2) Certify that the FEIR has been prepared and completed in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
- 3) Adopt the Findings of Fact and the Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and approve the project; and
- 4) Authorize and direct the General Manager to take all necessary and appropriate actions to implement the new headquarters facility at Union Station.

John R. Wodraska
General Manager

Submitted by:

[Signature]

Gilbert E. Ivey
Executive Assistant to the General Manager

Concur:

[Signature]

John R. Wodraska
General Manager

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Attachments

(hqeirbl.doc)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In April 1994, the Board identified Union Station as a potential site for a new headquarters facility. Metropolitan, as Lead Agency, prepared a Draft EIR (DEIR) in compliance with the requirements of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The DEIR examined the construction of a new headquarters facility which would contain approximately 600,000 gross square feet (gsf) of floor area on 12 levels above grade, with two subterranean levels of parking for approximately 850 vehicles. The new headquarters facility would accommodate the various space requirements of Metropolitan, such as office-related uses, conference facilities including Board and Committee rooms, an employee cafeteria with an outdoor dining terrace and a wellness center. In addition, the DEIR discussed three reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed project including: 1) a no-project Downtown lease alternative; 2) an alternative design on the project site; and 3) an alternative project site within the Union Station property.

The DEIR identified two environmental effects which cannot be avoided or mitigated to a level of non-significance: 1) traffic impacts at the intersection of Alameda and North Main Streets (p.m. peak hour) and the Vignes Street eastbound on-ramp to U.S. 101 (p.m. peak hour); and 2) historic preservation impacts due to the demolition of the Union Station south service wing (baggage area and parking ramp), and changes in the historic setting of Union Station resulting from new the construction.

On August 16, 1995, an Headquarters Facility DEIR was released for the required 45-day public review comment period. Written comments to the DEIR were submitted by nine agencies and interested parties.

As required by CEQA, all comments received have been addressed by responses contained within the Final EIR documentation. The FEIR (which includes the DEIR and responses to comments) provides the Board, reviewing public agencies, and the public with a comprehensive analysis of the project's environmental impacts, mitigation measures and alternatives. The FEIR has been distributed to the Board, Responsible Agencies and all parties who commented on the DEIR.

CEQA requires that public agencies adopt monitoring and reporting programs when they approve projects that contain mitigation measures to reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts (Public Resources Code Section 21081.6). Metropolitan has prepared a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program which details mitigation measures and monitoring and reporting activities for each of the significant environmental impacts associated with the Headquarters Facility project. The Planning & Resources Division will be responsible for administering the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

The Board must certify that the FEIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. Because it was found that certain impacts could not be feasibly mitigated to below a level of significance, the Board will need to consider adoption of the Findings of Fact, and the Statement of Overriding Considerations, which concludes that the benefits of the proposed project substantially outweigh the unavoidable adverse impacts that would result from project implementation. The Board will also need to adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program which will be used to track the implementation of mitigation measures.

DETAILED REPORT:

In December 1990, Metropolitan's Board of Directors commenced deliberations to resolve its long-term office space needs. This internal process included discussions of whether Metropolitan should centralize or decentralize its administrative staff, preliminary site requirements and evaluation criteria, and also the process by which site selection would occur. During this period of time, Metropolitan received and filed a number of unsolicited developer proposals for sites located throughout its 5,200 square mile service area. Following the completion of an analysis of where employees lived in relationship to Metropolitan's Downtown Los Angeles administrative headquarters (the Centroid Study), the Board voted to direct its search towards sites within a 5-mile radius of

In March 1992, Metropolitan initiated a formal site selection process by issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP No. 047) soliciting possible sites which could accommodate a headquarters facility of up to 600,000 gsf. Under the criteria of the RFP, sites could be either build-to-suit, or pre-existing buildings with appropriate tenant improvements. Fifteen proposals were received in response to RFP No. 047. Following a 17-month comprehensive evaluation of these RFP submittals, the Board of Directors selected Union Station as the preferred RFP site. Further, in order to assure that Metropolitan obtained the best value, the Board subsequently voted to evaluate the Union Station site against other proposed locations, including numerous Downtown sites, as well as the potential redevelopment of Metropolitan-owned properties. Upon completion of these latter evaluations, in April 1994, the Board reaffirmed its preference of Union Station as the new headquarters site and commenced negotiations with the Catellus Development Corporation, the landowner at Union Station.

Following selection of Union Station as the preferred headquarters site, Metropolitan initiated the preparation of the environmental impact report in compliance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. In November 1994, Metropolitan, as Lead Agency, issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Headquarters Facility Project EIR. The DEIR examined the construction of a new headquarters facility which would contain approximately 600,000 gsf of floor area in 12 levels above grade, with two subterranean levels for parking for approximately 850 vehicles. The new headquarters facility would accommodate the various space requirements of Metropolitan, such as office-related uses, conference facilities including board and committee rooms, an employee cafeteria with an outdoor dining terrace, and a wellness center. On August 16, 1995, the Draft EIR was released for the required 45-day public comment period. The Draft EIR discussed three reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed project including: 1) a no project--Downtown lease alternative; 2) an alternative design at the project site; and 3) an alternative site within the Union Station property.

The DEIR evaluated a full range of potential effects associated with development of an Headquarters Facility at the Union Station site. Based on the evaluation in the DEIR, two environmental categories (traffic and historic resources) were identified where significant unavoidable adverse impacts would result. A detailed discussion of these two impacts is contained in the FEIR, the Findings of Fact, and the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Written comments on the DEIR were submitted by the following parties during the public review period: the Governor's Office of Planning and Research; the State of California Department of Transportation/Caltrans (two responses, including one from the Aeronautics Program); the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG); the Southern California Regional Rail Association (Metrolink); the County of Los Angeles' Department of Public Works; the City of Los Angeles; the Los Angeles Unified School District; and the Los Angeles Conservancy.

As required by CEQA, all comments received from the aforementioned parties have been addressed by responses contained within the FEIR documentation. The FEIR (which includes the DEIR and responses to comments) provides the Board, reviewing public agencies, and the public with a comprehensive analysis of the project's environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives. The FEIR has been distributed to the Board, to Responsible Agencies and to all parties who commented on the DEIR.

CEQA requires that public agencies adopt monitoring and reporting programs when they approve projects that contain mitigation measures to reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts (Public Resources Code Section 21081.6). Metropolitan has prepared a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program which details mitigation measures and monitoring and reporting activities for each of the significant environmental impacts associated with the Headquarters project. The Planning & Resources Division will be responsible for administering the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

The Board must certify that the FEIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. Because it was found that certain impacts could not be feasibly mitigated to below a level of significance, the Board will need to consider adoption of the Findings of Fact, and the Statement of Overriding Considerations, which concludes that the benefits of the proposed project substantially outweigh the unavoidable adverse impacts that would result from project implementation. The Board will also need to adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program which will be used to track implementation of mitigation measures.