



**STAFF ANALYSIS
WHITTIER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 19, 2011**

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. CUP09-004

SUBMITTED BY: TOMAS DURAN, REDEVELOPMENT MANAGER *TD*

REVIEWED BY: JEFFERY S. ADAMS, PLANNING SERVICES MANAGER *JA*

PREPARED BY: JOANN LOMBARDO, CONSULTING PLANNER

LOCATION: CITY OWNED LAND WITHIN THE PUENTE HILLS LANDFILL NATIVE HABITAT PRESERVATION AUTHORITY AREA, FORMERLY THE WHITTIER MAIN OILFIELD, GENERALLY LOCATED NORTH OF MAR VISTA STREET AND WEST OF COLIMA ROAD

ZONING: OPEN SPACE

APPLICANT: MATRIX OIL CORPORATION

OWNER: CITY OF WHITTIER

REQUEST

To drill, explore, and produce the remaining recoverable oil and gas reserves at the Whittier Main Oil Field site.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission adopt:

1. Resolution No. P.C. 11-30 certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Whittier Main Oil Field Development Project; adopting Findings pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act; adopting a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and adopting a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program;
2. Resolution No. P.C. 11-31 approving Conditional Use Permit CUP09-004 to allow the development and operation of the Whittier Main Oil Field Development Project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was prepared for the Whittier Main Oil Field Development Project in compliance with the California Environmental

Quality Act and the State Guidelines (collectively "CEQA"). The DEIR was circulated for public review and comment from June 6, 2011 to July 21, 2011 as required by State CEQA Guideline 15105. The City received a total of 132 comment letters on the DEIR. All comments were responded to by the City. The DEIR, the comments received on the DEIR, and the City's responses to those comments comprise the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR).

FACTS

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

The City owns approximately 1,290 acres of former oil fields in the hills north of the developed areas of the City. This area was commonly known as the Whittier Main Oil Field, which produced oil for more than 100 years as an active oil field and drilled about 550 wells in that time until the early 1990s. The majority of the land encompassing the oil field was purchased by the City from Chevron and Unocal with Measure A funds in order to preserve the land as open space and wildlife habitat. The land is currently managed for the City by the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority (Authority); and is part of the 3,869-acre Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preserve (Preserve), which is bound by the San Gabriel River to the west and the Chino Hills to the east. The proposed Project oil and gas production and processing facilities would be located on one site within the Whittier Main Oil Field, encompassing not more than 7 acres total. (Reference Exhibit 1. Project Area Location Map.)

Currently, activity at the Whittier Main Field is limited to Preserve operations and activities, which consist of restoration and management of natural areas, and management of educational and recreational facilities. Visitors and hikers currently access the Preserve from the parking area along Colima Road. An outdoor seating area and restroom facilities are located at the top of the loop trail and a ranger's residence is just inside the Preserve, near the Catalina Avenue entrance to the Preserve.

The Project also proposes a new 2.8-mile pipeline connection from the Project Site to a tie-in at Leffingwell Road and La Mirada Boulevard to transport marketable crude oil. The connection line would be constructed within the public right-of-way, along the same trench at the same time as the natural gas sales line and would follow the same route to tie in to the Southern California Gas Company (SCGC) line at the intersection of Colima and Lambert Roads.

