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Attachment C

Addendum No. 11 to
Final Environmental Impact Report No. 00-03
RiverPark Specific Plan EIR
(SCH 2000051046)

Specific Plan Amendment for
Freeway-Oriented Signs
PZ 10-630-02

prepared by:

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SUMMARY

This document is Addendum No. 11 to the RiverPark Specific Plan Final EIR, certified July 16, 2002. The addendum concludes that there are no additional possible significant adverse environmental effects associated with the Amendment to the RiverPark Specific Plan (PZ No. 10-630-02), which would allow approval of four freeway-oriented monument signs and a change in a pylon sign allowed by a previously-approved amendment, including provisions for two of these signs to contain changeable electronic digital panels. The specific plan amendment would allow these freeway-oriented signs adjacent to The Collection Shopping Center in District D of the RiverPark Specific Plan area. The specific plan amendment provides definitions, standards, locations and permit procedures for these freeway-oriented signs.

Background

The Oxnard City Council certified the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and approved the RiverPark Specific Plan and the related agreements on August 27, 2002. Development of RiverPark began in May 2004 and continues to this date.

The Specific Plan has been the subject of several minor administrative amendments since its original adoption. Errata documents have been prepared for the Specific Plan to document these approved specific plan amendments and correct minor inconsistencies in the text and graphic exhibits within the Specific Plan as they have been identified during implementation of the project. In addition, there have been minor amendments to the RiverPark Owner Participation Agreement, and other agreements related to the implementation of the RiverPark Project. For each of these modifications of the RiverPark Project, an Addendum to the Final EIR was prepared by the City of Oxnard to comply with CEQA. Addenda to the Final EIR were also prepared to address minor changes to the construction of the project during the land development phase and minor revisions to the mitigation measures for the air quality impacts of the project to reflect changes in the planning of the main commercial area. A summary of each of the previous Addenda is provided below:

Addendum 1 – August 2002 - The RiverPark Project, as described and analyzed in the RiverPark Final EIR, included a proposal for temporary dewatering of limited areas during grading activities. This Addendum addressed a minor change to the dewatering plan to include a second location for a dewatering well.

Addendum 2 – November 2005 – The RiverPark Specific Plan, as described and analyzed in the RiverPark Final EIR, included a conceptual grading plan for the entire Specific Plan Area. This conceptual grading plan identified a total of 10 million cubic yards of cut and fill of earth materials on the project site. It was anticipated that the grading operations would be a balanced operation, requiring no import or export of earth materials, based on the soil characteristics identified in the geotechnical report prepared for the project site. During the initial mass grading of the site, it was determined that soil compression was higher than anticipated. In addition, implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR required removal and recompaction of soil at depths greater than the conceptual grading plan. As a result, soil needed to be imported to balance grading on the site. This Addendum assessed the environmental effects of importing of up to 600,000 cubic yards of soil.

Addendum 3 – June 2007 – This Addendum addressed an amendment to the Owner Participation Agreement to permit the hotel allowed in District C to be developed in District D on a 5-acre site on the southeast corner of Oxnard Boulevard and Danvers River Street and allow up to 100,000 square feet of retail commercial development on the 12-acre site in Planning District C where the hotel was originally allowed in the Specific Plan.

Addendum 4 – June 2007 – This Addendum addressed minor changes to the mitigation measures for air quality impacts included in the Final EIR to reflect the planning of the retail commercial project, The Collection at RiverPark, planned in Planning Districts B, C, and D as identified in the RiverPark Specific Plan.

Addendum 5 – November 2007 – This Addendum addressed an amendment to the Owner Participation Agreement and an amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Oxnard Community Development Commission (CDC) and the applicants related to financing of public infrastructure, parking facilities, and improvements in support of commercial development in RiverPark, including a 500-space parking structure within the primary commercial district, Planning District D, of the RiverPark Specific Plan.

Addendum 6 – December 2007 – This Addendum addressed an amendment to the RiverPark Specific Plan to allow changing the amount of residential development allowed on the remaining land in Planning Area A, the Mixed Use/Office District and Planning Area F, the Vineyards Neighborhood District.

Addendum 7 – February 2009 – This Addendum addressed a minor amendment to the RiverPark Specific Plan to allow a single freeway oriented sign, up to 60 feet in height, in one of three designated locations in the main commercial district, Planning District D.

Addendum 8 – July 2009 – This Addendum evaluated the addition of an administrative office and maintenance facility for the City of Oxnard General Services Department in Planning District E of the RiverPark Specific Plan Area.

Addendum 9 – January 2010 – This Addendum evaluated the impacts of the Ventura Road Utilities Project for the City of Oxnard Public Works Department, which proposed infrastructure improvements under Ventura Road between Gonzales Road and Vineyard Avenue.

Addendum 10 – In progress: A separate proposed Amendment to the RiverPark Specific Plan would decrease the amount of commercial development allowed by the Specific Plan and allow the development of additional multifamily residential units in the center of the community. The RiverPark developers submitted this amendment request in order to respond to changes in the demand for commercial and residential development, as compared to when the RiverPark Specific Plan was adopted.

Project Background and Description

In 2009, the City Council approved an amendment to the RiverPark Specific Plan allowing a freeway-oriented pylon sign up to a maximum height of 60 feet along the US 101 Freeway. The current amendment would change the same section of the specific plan to also allow four freeway-oriented monument signs up to 34 feet tall, in designated locations within District D of the Specific Plan area. In addition, the specific plan amendment would allow changeable electronic display panels on the pylon sign and on the furthest west of the freeway-oriented monument signs, subject to approval of a Special Use Permit. The locations of these five signs

are shown on revised Exhibit 5HH, which will be incorporated into the specific plan. The proposed signs would be visible from the US 101 Freeway, Oxnard Boulevard as it crosses the freeway, and RiverPark Boulevard, as well as from the parking area south of the buildings in The Collection shopping center and adjacent properties to the east/northeast of the shopping center.

Precise locations and design of the individual signs would be subject to review by the RiverPark Town Planner/Architect and the City of Oxnard, as part of a Development Design Review permit (DDR) or Special Use Permit (SUP), as required by the specific plan amendment. Current applicable development and environmental standards such as traffic safety, landscaping and lighting control would be applied to the project. In particular, illumination and orientation of the signs would be carefully evaluated during review of the DDR or SUP permit process to prevent light from spilling onto the freeway, adjacent roads, and adjacent land uses, particularly neighboring residences. The electronic display panels will be evaluated as part of the Special Use Permit process to prevent creation of a significant change in character to the project area and vicinity, as well as quantitative and qualitative traffic hazards

The revised specific plan text is attached and the exhibit showing the five sign locations is shown as Attachment A to the amended text.

Project Environmental Review

Section 15164 of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines states that an addendum to a previously adopted EIR is the appropriate environmental document in instances when no conditions exist that would trigger a subsequent EIR. Three tests determine if a subsequent EIR is required (Section 15162(a)). They are:

1. Substantial changes to the project lead to new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
2. Substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken;
3. New information of substantial importance that was not known or could not have been known at the time of the EIR certification shows any of the following:
 - a. The project will have significant effects not previously discussed,
 - b. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than previously estimated,
 - c. Mitigation measures previously found infeasible would now be feasible and would substantially reduce significant effects of the project, and/or
 - d. Different mitigation measures or alternatives from those analyzed in the EIR would substantially reduce significant effects.

In the first test, the signs are accessory structures to a commercial area which was examined by the EIR as part of the project description. The signs do not change the land use type or intensity on this site from the uses and intensity described in the specific plan and therefore will not result in effects not previously discussed.

The only potential environmental effect related to this project would be aesthetics. The Aesthetics section in the RiverPark Specific Plan Final EIR determined that no unavoidable significant impacts to the visual character would result from the RiverPark project, since the

development of RiverPark would not obstruct long range views of the mountains and hills in the Los Padres National Forest to the north from the Ventura Freeway and Vineyard Avenue. In addition, the height and character of the commercial development was determined to be consistent with existing development in the area.

The proposed signs do not represent a change or increase in land use type or intensity. In addition, the proposed signs would also not block long range views identified above, and the signs will be subject to design review and a Design Development Review permit, except for the changeable electronic signs, which require review of a special use permit. The proposed freeway-oriented monument signs are shorter and smaller than other signs along the freeway corridor in this area. In addition, the text amended by the specific plan amendment requires the decision-makers to make the finding that the proposed signs will not be detrimental to (a) the public health, safety or general welfare; or (b) adjacent uses, buildings or structures in the vicinity of the sign(s). Therefore, the proposed amendment would not create additional environmental impacts.

It is acknowledged that several other freeway-oriented pylon (pole) signs exist in the area between the 101 Freeway bridge (adjacent to the western edge of RiverPark) and the Rose Avenue freeway off ramp, and the addition of the additional signs that are the subject of this amendment could create a cumulative adverse effect on aesthetics. The existing signs in this vicinity were constructed over a period of 25 years as accessory to the developments they identify. These signs identify the major tenants in each shopping center. The consolidation of the tenant signs onto one sign for each shopping center helps to reduce the visual clutter over individual freeway-oriented signs for each business. The closest of these tall signs is the 75-foot tall sign at the Esplanade, which is over 700 feet away and on the other side of the 101 Freeway (southbound) from the closest of the RiverPark signs. The only other freeway-oriented pole sign on the same side of the freeway as RiverPark (adjacent to northbound 101) is the Oxnard Auto Center Sign, which is located almost 2 miles away, and is not visible to drivers at the same time as the signs that are the subject of this amendment. None of these are in the same viewshed as the subject signs. Therefore, there is no cumulative effect on aesthetics due to these new signs.

In the second test, staff determined that circumstances surrounding the project have not substantially changed with regard to issues, facts, and mitigations included in the RiverPark Specific Plan FEIR. The project buildout has not changed from that evaluated by the Final EIR, nor have the environs adjacent to the project site. The commercial area is currently under construction as foreseen in the specific plan, and the proposed signs do not change the intensity or land use of the shopping center.

In the third test, staff determined that no new information of substantial importance that was not known or could not have been known at the time of the RiverPark Specific Plan Final EIR certification shows that the project will have effects not previously discussed, that significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than previously estimated, that mitigation measures previously found infeasible would now be feasible and would substantially reduce effects of the project, and/or that different mitigation measures would substantially reduce effects.

The Final Environmental Impact Report with comments and responses and record of project approval may be examined at the City of Oxnard, Planning Division, 214 South C Street, Oxnard, California 93030. Please call (805) 385-7858 to arrange a file review time.

Susan L. Martin, AICP
Planning Division Manager

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