

Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Public Scoping Meeting

TO:	Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties	FROM:	March Joint Powers Authority 14205 Meridian Parkway, Suite 140 Riverside, California 92518 (951) 656-7000
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The March Joint Powers Authority (JPA) will be the Lead Agency, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed West Campus Upper Plateau Project (Project) identified below. Through this Notice of Preparation (NOP), we are seeking your input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to agency statutory responsibilities and public interests. Agencies receiving this NOP may use the EIR prepared when considering permits or other approvals for the proposed Project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental impacts are included in the attached materials. The attached Initial Study prepared for the proposed Project outlines the issues that March JPA has determined will be addressed in the forthcoming EIR.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A copy of the Initial Study IS attached.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A copy of the Initial Study IS NOT attached, but can be downloaded at www.marchjpa.com .
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The proposed Project IS considered a project of statewide, regional or areawide significance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed Project IS NOT considered a project of statewide, regional or areawide significance.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The proposed Project WILL affect highways or other facilities under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Transportation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed Project WILL NOT affect highways or other facilities under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Transportation.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A scoping meeting WILL be held by the lead agency.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A scoping meeting WILL NOT be held by the lead agency.

The Project meets the criteria requiring a scoping meeting, and as such, the Lead Agency will hold the meeting at the following date, time, and location:

Date: December 8, 2021	Time: 6:00 – 7:30 PM	Location: Western Municipal Water District Training Room First Floor, Room 120, 14205 Meridian Parkway Riverside, CA 92518
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The public review period for the NOP and Initial Study starts on November 19, 2021

and ends on December 20, 2021. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be received no later than **December 20, 2021**.

Please send your response to Dan Fairbanks, Planning Director, at the address shown below by **December 20, 2021**. Please include the name of a contact person in your agency.

**Dan Fairbanks
 Planning Director
 March Joint Powers Authority
 14205 Meridian Parkway
 Riverside, CA 92518**

Project Title:	West Campus Upper Plateau Project
Project Applicant:	Meridian Park West LLC
Project Location:	<p>The West Campus Upper Plateau Project (Project) site comprises approximately 808 acres within the March JPA land use jurisdiction. Of the 808-acre area, 360 acres would be for the Development Area, 3 acres would be for an existing public facility, and 445 acres would be for the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The Project site is in the western portion of the March JPA planning area, west of Cactus Avenue’s current terminus, to the east and south of the Mission Grove neighborhood, and to the north of the Orangecrest neighborhood in unincorporated Riverside County, California (refer to Figure 1, Project Location, of the attached Initial Study). Interstate 215 is located approximately 0.5 miles east of the Project site. The Project includes a Conservation Area as part of the Settlement Agreement that was entered between and among the Center for Biological Diversity, the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society, March JPA, and LNR Riverside LLC in 2012.</p> <p>The latitude and longitude of the approximate center of the Project site is 33.906375” north and -117.305077” west. The Project site is in Township 3 South, Range 4 West, including Sections 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, within the Riverside East 7.5-minute quadrangle, as mapped by the U.S. Geological Survey. The Development Area is located within the following 13 Assessor’s Parcel Numbers: 276120-001, 276170-007, 294020-001, 297080-003/-004, 297090-001/-002/-003/-004/-007/-008/-009, and 297100-093. The Conservation Area is located within the following 19 Assessor’s Parcel Numbers: 276120-001, 276170-007, 294020-001/-002, 294040-031/-038, 297080-002/-003/-004/-005, 297090-002/-003/-004/-005/-006/-007/-008/-009, and 297110-036.</p>
Project Description:	<p>The proposed Project consists of a Development Area and a Conservation Area.</p> <p>The Development Area includes the redevelopment of the former March Air Force Base (AFB) munitions bunkers. The proposed Development Area would include the construction of a ring of seven Business Park parcels, three Mixed Use parcels, one Industrial parcel, and two Public Facilities parcels, surrounding two Industrial parcels, an open space area with two small adjacent parking lots, two smaller open space areas, and a small park for recreational users.</p>

The four Business Park parcels to the north would be a total of 34.50 acres, the Business Park parcel to the east would be 9.38 acres, and the two Business Park Parcels to the south would total 22.47 acres. Similar to all other Specific Plans in the March JPA planning area, the three Mixed-Use parcels would include a variety of land uses but would not include the development of residential units. The three Mixed-Use parcels would be 10.77 acres, 26.60 acres, and 5.45 acres and would be located along the west side, just east of the Barton Street extension, and along the southeast corner of the Development Area. The two Public Facility parcels would consist of a 2.12-acre Western Municipal Water District sewer lift station to be developed along the east side of the Development Area just south of Cactus Avenue, and a 1.41-acre utility facility located southeast of the Western Municipal Water District facility. The three open space areas would consist of a larger open space area and two smaller open space areas. The larger open space area would be 50.00 acres and would consist of trails for recreational users. The larger open space area would be located directly east of the Barton Street extension and just south of the park area. Two small parking areas would be located on the eastern edge of the larger open space area to provide access for park users. The first smaller open space area would be approximately 11.98 acres and would be located directly north of the four Business Park Parcels. The second smaller open space area would be 2.48 acres and would be located south of Bunker Hill Drive, between one of the Mixed-Use Parcels and the two Business Park Parcels, as well as along the southern perimeter of the proposed Development Area from Barton Street to Cactus Avenue. The open space parcels would provide further buffer to the Conservation Area. The small recreation park area would be approximately 10.00 acres and would be located west of Barton Street and directly north of the larger open space area. The small recreation park area would include park amenities such as a playground, picnic area, and exercise stations.

The proposed Development Area would also include on-site trenching to interconnect with existing water, wastewater, storm drain, natural gas, and electrical facilities that are currently stubbed out at the terminus of Cactus Avenue. The proposed development will extend these utilities along Cactus Avenue to the Development Area (Figure 4, West Campus Upper Plateau Project Site Plan, of the Initial Study). In addition, construction of the Development Area would include relocating several existing on-site utilities, including a 30-inch gas line that traverses the Project site.

In addition, the proposed Development Area would include perimeter landscaping consisting of a minimum 30-foot-wide landscape buffer along the northern, western, and southern Development Area boundary maintained by a Landscape Lighting and Maintenance District. In addition, the improved park area, perimeter slopes, and street parkways will be maintained by the Landscape Lighting and Maintenance District. All landscape planting will be drought tolerant and irrigated by recycled water.

The proposed Development Area would remove 14 of the 16 military bunkers, which were previously used for munitions storage by March AFB prior to March AFB's realignment in 1993 and are currently used for fireworks storage by Pyro Spectaculars. The Project would also remove existing dirt roadways connecting the bunkers. The two military bunkers that would not be removed would be preserved for potential ongoing historical preservation or ongoing reuse within the Conservation Area. In addition, the proposed Project also includes relocating the existing water

tower.

The Conservation Area would provide a buffer of at least 300 feet on all sides of the Development Area, with a larger buffer to the south and east of the Development Area. In addition, the Conservation Area includes the two bunkers that would be preserved for potential ongoing historical preservation or ongoing reuse. As previously noted, to further protect the Conservation Area, the Project proposes a minimum 30-foot-wide landscaped buffer on the proposed parcels to the north, west, south, and southeast of the development. The currently existing service roads within the Conservation Area (Figure 6, Settlement Agreement – Area for Potential Development, of the attached Initial Study) may continue to be utilized by the public for passive recreation as authorized by the March JPA, but public vehicular access would be prohibited.

The following approvals would be required for the proposed Project:

General Plan Amendment: The General Plan Land Use Map designated land uses within the Project site are Business Park and Parks/Recreation/Open Space. The Project proposes to redesignate the site's land uses as follows: increase Parks/Recreation and Open Space (P/R/OS) from approximately 122 gross acres to 453.7 gross acres¹, eliminate approximately 622.5 gross acres of Business Park designated property, eliminate approximately 63 gross acres of Industrial designated property, and adopt the Meridian West Upper Plateau Specific Plan (SP-9) on approximately 351.0 gross acres, approving a mix of Business Park, Industrial, Mixed Use, Public Facility, Streets, Parks, and Open Space land uses. The Project also proposes to redesignate 2.9 acres of Business Park to Public Facility to accommodate an existing water storage tank operated by Western Municipal Water District.

In addition, the approximately 445-acre Conservation Area will be recorded. The amendment would modify the General Plan Land Use Plan, Table 1-1 (March JPA Planning Build Out); Exhibit 2-1, Transportation Plan; and Exhibit 2-3, Transportation Road Systems. The amendment to the Transportation Element of the General Plan will incorporate the following changes: extend Cactus Avenue west to Barton Street, extend Barton Street from Alessandro Boulevard to Barton Drive, extend Brown Street from Alessandro Boulevard to Cactus Avenue, add Arclight Drive, Linebacker Drive, Bunker Hill Drive, and Airman Drive.

Specific Plan: The Project proposes adoption of Specific Plan SP-9 consistent with applicable requirements in California Government Code Sections 65450–65457 and March JPA Development Code Chapter 9.13 containing development standards, design guidelines, infrastructure master plans, maintenance responsibilities, phasing schedule, and implementation procedures necessary to develop the Project site consistent with the requested General Plan Amendment designations. The proposed Specific Plan will address land uses, zoning, and design guidelines. The proposed land uses within Specific Plan SP-9 include 43.08 acres of Mixed Use, 66.35 acres of Business Park, 143.34 acres of Industrial, 28.86 acres of streets and roadways², 10 acres of developed Parks/Recreation/Open Space, 64.46 acres of undeveloped Parks/Recreation/Open Space, and 3.53 acres of Public Facilities.

Zoning Designation: The Project site has not previously been given a

¹ A total of 8.62 acres within the 453.7 gross acres consists of streets located within the Conservation Area.

² Included in this area are 8.62 acres of streets and roadways that are within the Specific Plan but not within the General Plan.

	<p>zoning designation; therefore, the Project proposes zoning consistent with the requested General Plan Amendment and Specific Plan designations of Mixed Use, Business Park, Industrial, Parks/Recreation/Open Space, and Public Facilities for the site.</p> <p>Plot Plan: Concurrent with the General Plan and Zoning Amendments, the Specific Plan, and the Tentative Tract Map, Plot Plan approval is required to construct an approximately 1,330,000-square-foot industrial building on 59.55 acres, a 550,000-square-foot industrial building on 27.58 acres, and a 10.00-acre park with two small adjacent parking lots for recreational users.</p>
California Environmental Protection Agency Hazardous Waste List:	The Project site is not located on a site with known contamination, according to the State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker database. In addition, the Project site is not located on a hazardous materials site according to the California Department of Toxic Substance Control's EnviroStor database.

Date: November 18, 2021	Signature:	
	Title:	Dan Fairbanks, Planning Director
	Telephone (main):	(951) 656-7000

Consulting firm retained to prepare the Draft EIR (if applicable):

Name:	Dudek
Address:	605 Third Street
City/State/Zip:	Encinitas, California 92024
Contact Person:	Nicole Cobleigh, Senior Project Manager