



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT



DATE: September 8, 2023

TO: Governor’s Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

LEAD AGENCY: County of Los Angeles

PROJECT PROPONENT: Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Foundation on behalf of the County of Los Angeles Museum of Natural History

SUBJECT: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the **La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan Project (SCH # 2022020344)**

The County of Los Angeles (County), acting as the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has completed a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the proposed La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan Project (project). The County has prepared this Notice of Availability (NOA) to consult with and request comments from responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other interested parties regarding the environmental analyses presented in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR is being circulated for review and comment by appropriate agencies, as well as organizations and individuals who have requested notification.

La Brea Tar Pits, the George C. Page Museum (Page Museum), and associated facilities are owned by the County but are managed by the non-profit Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Foundation (Foundation). The Foundation’s role is to carry out all County services including public access and programming, administration, and operation for the County of Los Angeles Museum of Natural History (Museum of Natural History), including La Brea Tar Pits and the Page Museum under the oversight of the County. The County, as Lead Agency, acting through the Foundation, proposes a redevelopment, or “reimagining,” of the 13-acre La Brea Tar Pits site.

PROJECT LOCATION AND OVERVIEW

The 13-acre La Brea Tar Pits site is located within the eastern and northwestern portions of the 23-acre Hancock Park (Assessor’s Parcel Number [APN] 5508-016-

902) at 5801 Wilshire Boulevard. The project site includes 13 acres of the eastern and northwestern portions of Hancock Park and is directly adjacent to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Both LACMA and the Natural History Museum are responsible for managing separate and distinct portions of the 23 acres in Hancock Park, with the Natural History Museum responsible for the 13-acre project site and LACMA responsible for the remainder of Hancock Park to the south and west of the project boundaries. LACMA’s facilities are not included in the project.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project would result in a reimagined site design, expansion, and upgrades to the La Brea Tar Pits site, including renovations to the Page Museum and development of a new museum building. Table 1 provides a summary of the project components.

Table 1. Summary of Project Components

Project Component	Description
Page Museum Renovations	Renovate existing building within the same footprint (approximately 63,200 square feet).
New Museum Building	Construct a new two-story, 40,000-square-foot museum building northwest of the Page Museum, including two new theaters. The construction of the new museum building would require the removal of vegetation in the footprint of the new building.
Wilshire Gateway	Renovate the existing entrance to La Brea Tar Pits at Wilshire Boulevard and South Curson Avenue with shaded canopy and new welcome pavilion.
6th Street Gateway	Renovate the existing entrance at the northwest corner of West 6th Street and the entrance to the LACMA service drive with shaded canopy and new welcome pavilion.
Tar Pits (Pits 3, 4, 9, 13, 61, 67, and 91; Project 23)	Renovate the existing facilities at all the tar pits in the northwestern portion of the project site. These renovations would require the removal and replacement of some vegetation, although the exact amount and nature of the vegetation removal and enhancements have not been determined at this time.
Pedestrian Path and Recreation Areas	Reconfigure the existing pedestrian pathways on-site into a continuous paved path linking existing features on the project site. Provide improvements to the Central Green. Establish a children’s play area, picnic areas, and a possible future small dog park.
Circulation and Parking	Relocate the parking lot approximately 50 to 70 feet to the north. The size of the parking lot (63,000 square feet) and the number of parking spaces would not change. The shifting of the parking lot on the northern side of the project site may require removal or relocation of the trees between the existing parking lot and West 6th Street. If these trees need to be removed or relocated, they would be either moved to another location within the 13-acre project site or replaced elsewhere within the project site. Add new landscaping and vehicle access lanes to the parking lot. Establish a new school drop-off/loading area approximately 215 to 230 feet long on South Curson Avenue adjacent to the Wilshire Gateway picnic area.
Landscaping Concept Plan	Establish three distinct landscaping zones encircled by a looping pedestrian path. More than 330 trees are currently on the project site. The project would require removal and replacement and/or relocation of between 150 and 200 trees. The planting strategy includes the introduction or relocation of a similar number of trees as would be removed. It is preliminarily estimated that 10 percent of the 150 to 200 trees to be removed would be relocated rather than replaced. Create three biofiltration areas for stormwater management.

Construction of the project would occur when all design and construction plans are completed and approved by the County and other required agencies. Construction activities would include demolition of the existing museum entrances, grading and excavation, and construction of new structures and related infrastructure. All construction activities, including construction staging of equipment, would be situated entirely within the project site.

LIST OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ANTICIPATED AS A RESULT OF THE PROJECT

The Draft EIR focuses on the following environmental issue areas: aesthetics, air quality, archaeological resources, biological resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, historical resources, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise and vibration, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems.

The Draft EIR made the following significance determinations for each issue area examined:

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation: aesthetics, air quality, archaeological resources, biological resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise and vibration, recreation, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems.

Significant and Unavoidable: historical resources, land use and planning, and transportation.

Additionally, the Draft EIR determined that the project would not result in significant impacts related to agricultural and forestry resources, energy, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, and wildfire.

The project site is not located on a list of hazardous waste sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (i.e., the Cortese List).

PUBLIC MEETING

You are invited to a community open house to learn more about the proposed La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan on Saturday, September 30, 2023. Come meet the project team, ask questions, and see visuals of the reimagined site.

MEETING DATE: Saturday, September 30, 2023

TIME: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

LOCATION: La Brea Tar Pits
5801 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90036

The “pop-up” event will take place outdoors between the Page Museum entrance and the Lake Pit

Translations into other languages can be made available upon request. Please submit translation requests to lnegritto@nhm.org or contact Leslie Negritto at (213) 763-3303. Please provide at least 7 business days to address translation requests.

Disponemos de servicios de traducción a otros idiomas si lo necesita. Envíe sus solicitudes de traducción a lnegritto@nhm.org o comuníquese con Leslie Negritto al (213) 763-3303. Necesitaremos al menos siete días hábiles para trabajar en las solicitudes de traducción.

의뢰를 하시면 다른 언어로 번역이 가능합니다. 번역 의뢰는 lnegritto@nhm.org 주시거나 (213) 763-3303 Leslie Negritto 에게 문의하십시오. 의뢰하신 번역의 완성은 영업일 기준으로 최소 7일이 소요됩니다.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

In accordance with Section 15105 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County has scheduled a 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR. **The formal public review will start on September 11, 2023, and end on October 26, 2023.**

During this 45-day period, the Draft EIR and its appendices will be available for review on the Natural History Museum’s website: <https://tarpits.org/reimagine>.

Printed copies of the Draft EIR are also available for review at the following locations and hours (see Table 2).

Table 2. Draft EIR Review Locations

Location	Address	Hours of Operation	Online Access (URL), if available
George C. Page Museum (Front Ticketing Counter)	5801 Wilshire Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90036	Open daily 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., except the first Tuesday of the month	https://tarpits.org/reimagine
Julian Dixon Library	4975 Overland Avenue Culver City, CA 90230	Tuesday and Wednesday: 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday: Closed	n/a
View Park Bebe Moore Campbell Library	3854 West 54th Street Los Angeles, CA 90043	Monday through Thursday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday: Closed	n/a
West Hollywood Library	625 North San Vicente Boulevard West Hollywood, CA 90069	Monday through Friday: 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday: Closed	n/a
Chief Executive Office at the Hall of Administration	500 West Temple Street, Room 754 Los Angeles, CA 90012	Appointment must be made for review. Appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Contact Alisa Chepeian, (213) 974-4266, achepeian@ceo.lacounty.gov	n/a

Comments on the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Leslie Negritto, Chief Operating Officer
 Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County
 900 Exposition Boulevard
 Los Angeles, California 90007
 email: lnegritto@nhm.org

Due to the time limits mandated by state law, written comments must be sent via United States Postal Service or email within 45 days, postmarked or emailed no later than **5:30 p.m. Pacific Time on Monday, October 26, 2023**. Written responses to all significant environmental issues raised will be prepared and included as part of the Final EIR and the administrative record for consideration by decision makers for the project. The County may approve the project if the EIR has been certified per State CEQA Guidelines 15090.

PUBLIC HEARING

Following the receipt of public comments on the Draft EIR, a Final EIR will be developed and a public hearing on the project and Final EIR will be scheduled before the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors at a time, date, and location to be determined. The public hearing will be properly noticed.

Thank you for your participation in the environmental review of this project.