

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS of the Rapid Health Impact Assessment of the Proposed Farmers Field Development

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Conducted by:
Human Impact Partners
In conjunction with a panel of impacted residents



With support from:
Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN)
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA)
Physicians for Social Responsibility–Los Angeles (PSR–LA)



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Human Impact Partners (HIP)

Human Impact Partners' primary expertise is using Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to increase the consideration of health and equity in decision-making arenas that typically do not consider health. HIP has conducted HIAs on local, state and federal levels with communities across the country, from Hawaii to Maine. The findings from HIP's HIAs have been integrated into numerous policy-making and planning processes. To date, HIP has conducted over a dozen HIAs on land use and transportation plans and development projects, and has trained over 1000 individuals around the country in HIA processes and methods. HIP is considered a leader in the field of Health Impact Assessment in the U.S., spearheading efforts to convene HIA practitioners from across North America and chairing the newly formed Society of Practitioners of Health Impact Assessment (SOPHIA), an international association of those involved with HIA. HIP has been funded by major foundations such as The California Endowment, Pew Charitable Trusts, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to conduct HIAs and build the capacity of others to do so. HIP has also been funded by public agencies, including the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conduct HIA work.

Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN)

The Los Angeles Community Action Network is a community-based organization working to promote and defend human rights, primarily in Downtown and South Los Angeles. LA CAN focuses on community organizing and leadership development among extremely low-income residents to ensure that decisions impacting our communities have positive consequences for extremely low-income people. LA CAN has a long history of directly implementing community improvement and human rights projects, as well as informing and shaping decisions and policies that stabilize and improve extremely-low income people's health, homes and lives. This is the first time LA CAN has utilized HIA as a community engagement and education tool that can ensure large developments protect the health of low-income communities in Downtown, South LA and Pico-Union.

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA)

LAFLA is the frontline law firm for poor and low-income people in Los Angeles. LAFLA seeks to achieve equal justice for all through direct representation, systems change and community education. With six offices, four court locations and numerous community-based clinics, LAFLA is the first place thousands of poor people turn to when they need legal assistance for a crisis that threatens their shelter, health, and livelihood. Nearly 12,000 individuals and families are provided with legal services annually and an additional 35,000 litigants are helped through LAFLA's four Self Help Legal Access Centers. Another 20,000 are assisted through referrals, workshops and community outreach activities.

Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles (PSR-LA)

PSR-LA is a physician and health advocate membership organization working to protect public health from nuclear threats and environmental toxins. Representing over 5,000 physicians, health professionals, and concerned residents in Southern

California, we inform the medical community and policymakers about toxic threats, promote safer practices, and strengthen local community organizations to engage in meaningful public health and environmental policy advocacy. PSR-LA is incorporated under the laws of the State of California. It is recognized as a not-for-profit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the United States International Revenue Code. PSR-LA's mission is to reduce threats to public health related to nuclear weapons and environmental toxins." We work to foresee and forestall damage to human health and the environment." In particular, PSR-LA has worked for nearly 25 years to reduce pollution in California and the South Coast Air Basin.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Since the development of the Staples Center and LA Live, which are adjacent to the site for a newly proposed development project called Farmers Field, low-income residents have experienced health-influencing changes such as displacement and gentrification. It is important to recognize the potential effects that the Farmers Field development proposal could have, and to adopt and monitor mitigations to avoid any negative impacts to health.

Farmers Field Plan Proposal

Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG) is proposing to build the Farmers Field development in the South Park area of Los Angeles, which borders the Pico-Union and South Los Angeles neighborhoods. The following is a summary of the proposed project details:

- The development would include a stadium with expandable seating up to 76,250, a net gain of 1,112 parking spaces, demolition of the Convention Center's West Hall, and construction of a 500,000-square foot New Hall.
- The project proposes to create an estimated 12,000 temporary full-time jobs during construction and approximately 4,123 permanent daily jobs (1,866 FTE jobs) during operations.
- The proposed stadium location is adjacent to two large developments: the Staples Center and the LA Live entertainment complex, which have significantly changed the character of the surrounding communities and directly or indirectly displaced hundreds of residents.
- There are 133 additional and related projects apart from the proposed Farmers Field development that could further impact the area.

Issues of Concern

Local residents are concerned about a range of issues related to the proposed Farmers Field development, including: gentrification; the affordability of continuing to live safe and healthy lifestyles in their communities; whether the proposed development will continue and/or intensify displacement; high levels of unemployment; decreasing levels of public safety and access to open space; communication between AEG, the City of Los Angeles, and residents about proposed development activities; and measures to avoid or mitigate any adverse health impacts on local residents of the proposed Farmers Field development. For these reasons, and because the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) overlooked or improperly analyzed these important impacts of the proposed Farmers Field development, this Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) focuses on displacement and housing affordability, employment, public safety, and access to open space.

Health Impact Assessment

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a process that aims to create healthier communities by providing decision-makers with an understanding of the potential health impacts of a proposed project, and makes recommendations that would improve those impacts. This Rapid HIA, conducted in April and May 2012, includes substantial guidance and input from residents living in the neighborhoods surrounding the proposed Farmers Field development. The goals of the HIA were: 1) to ensure that the proposed development accounts for likely impacts to low-income and vulnerable populations, such as displacement and housing affordability, employment, public safety, and access to open space; and 2) to propose appropriate mitigations for potential negative health impacts of the proposed development.

HIA Findings About Current Conditions Around Farmers Field

Health Conditions: The health of residents near the proposed development is worse than in other parts of the City and County of Los Angeles.

- 29% of residents in the HIA study area rated their health status as “fair or poor” compared with 19% in the City and County.
- Rates of hypertension, diabetes, overweight, and obesity are substantially higher than rates in the City and County.

Demographic Trends: The area near the proposed development has a very high rate of poverty (38% vs. 20% for the City overall), but demographics have been shifting. From 2000 to 2010, the HIA study area experienced:

- Five times the increase as in the City of Los Angeles for the percent of non-family households.
- Substantial growth in people ages 20–24 and 55–59, which include college-age and some baby boomer populations.
- Much greater increases than the City in White and Asian populations, but a decrease in the Hispanic population (that increased in the City overall). The Black population decreased a bit more in the HIA study area than in the City overall.

Gentrification and Displacement: Numerous data sets and resulting findings in this HIA suggest that neighborhoods in the HIA study area are undergoing or at risk for gentrification, contrary to the Draft EIR’s lack of recognition of trends of gentrification in the areas surrounding the proposed Farmers Field development.¹ Residents of gentrifying communities often experience adverse effects of redevelopment, such as being forced to move due to increases in property values and rents. Displacement can lead to physical, mental, and social stress, as well as costly school and job relocations and increased risk for substandard housing and overcrowding. These impacts contribute to health disparities among the poor, women, children, the elderly, and racial/ethnic minorities.

¹ Draft Environmental Impact Report on the proposed Convention and Event Center Project. Appendix H: AEG Special Event Center Market Impacts. 3/30/12. Page II-1.

Employment: Displacement may force residents to live further from their jobs, heighten the risk of losing a job, and increase commuting costs and/or time. In addition, California's minimum wage (\$8.00/hour) is too low to provide for "self-sufficiency" for many workers in Los Angeles.

Housing: Rents near the proposed development are unaffordable to many households and evictions and overcrowding are common issues in the area. Housing is becoming less affordable and much affordable housing has been lost recently.

- Fifty-six percent of those earning \$35,000 or less spend over 30% of their income on housing costs.
- Since LA Live was approved, an estimated 2,151 units of extremely low-income housing were lost or otherwise impacted in the area.
- Eviction is prominent, with an estimated 2,416 evictions total for six of the seven HIA study area zip codes between July 2009 and June 2010.
- Severe overcrowding is five times more for owner-occupied units and two times more for renter-occupied units in the HIA study area than the City.

Public Safety and Access to Open Space: Park space near the proposed development is a common convening place for residents. Police presence in the area is high (five times higher than in neighboring areas) and violations are issued for minor offenses at very high rates (e.g., pedestrian violations are issued at up to 69 times the rate of the City overall). Residents report links between unpaid citations and loss of housing, benefits, and employment.

HIA Findings About Impacts of the Proposed Farmers Field Development

Working with HIP to analyze data on existing conditions in the community, lived experiences in the surrounding community, and other relevant data, a Panel of Impacted Residents came to consensus that the following are likely and important negative health impacts of the proposed development.

Displacement and Housing Affordability / Poverty

Implementation of the Farmers Field development as planned and without mitigation is likely to increase displacement and poverty and decrease housing affordability among most groups of local residents. Displacement, lack of housing affordability, and poverty will primarily impact Latino and Black populations, low-income people, families, young children, and seniors, as well as individuals who are permanently disabled. It will disproportionately impact people living in neighborhoods close to the proposed location of the Farmers Field development. Health impacts of displacement can include: impairment of mental health, increase in chronic disease, income- and education-related negative health outcomes, and impairment of social cohesion.

Public Safety and Access to Open Space

Implementation of the development as planned and without mitigation is likely to have negative impacts on the safety of the local population, and to decrease access to open space and green space. Changes in public safety and access to open space will primarily affect communities of color, current residents, youth, low-income populations, and business owners and workers (including street vendors). It will also likely affect visitors to the area, the elderly, and immigrants. Reduced public safety and access to open space issues will likely have moderate to severe negative effects on: mental health, chronic disease, injuries, and social cohesion.

Jobs & Employment

Implementation of the Farmers Field development without mitigation is likely to change local employment conditions both by increasing jobs (primarily low wage, service sector) for some, and decreasing jobs for others (e.g., local businesses). Changes in employment will primarily impact Latino and African American populations, individuals and families, and men and women who are sole financial providers for families. It will disproportionately impact residents living closest to the proposed development. Changes in employment will likely include severe negative impacts on mental health and access to medical care.

HIA Recommendations

Based on all of the findings in the HIA research and community process, the Impacted Residents Panel came to consensus on recommendations to mitigate negative health impacts. Below is a summary of a sample of the recommendations, the complete list of which is included in the full report.

Displacement and Housing Affordability

- AEG shall adopt and fund a “No Net Loss” zone within a one-mile radius of the proposed development, which will ensure that no units at any affordability level are permanently lost within that zone.
- AEG and the City shall create a special parking impact zone within a given radius around the Project site wherein converting sites currently used for housing into parking lots would be prohibited.
- AEG shall provide funding for dedicated personnel within the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) to work with residents within a three-mile radius of the project.
- AEG shall compensate any resident currently living within the three-mile “Impact Zone” who has to move and/or is displaced as a direct or indirect result of the construction and/or operation of the Farmers Field stadium.
- AEG shall proactively fund Promotora/Health Promoter, Community Organizer, and Legal Counsel teams to work within the “Impact Zone”.
- AEG shall provide \$20 million to establish a Housing Trust Fund whose funds will be dedicated solely to the production of new housing within the “Impact Zone” affordable to extremely low income (ELI) households.

Public Safety and Access to Open Space

- AEG shall decrease the stadium footprint to the most compact size possible that still allows for a football stadium.
- AEG shall ensure the project design creates open and green space immediately outside the stadium that is comprised of a) land made available by creating a more compact stadium footprint, and b) current open space at the project site using funds provided by AEG. The resulting open/green space shall be owned, programmed, and managed by a public or non-profit entity, and programming shall reflect the needs of the population within the HIA study area.
- The open/green space shall include a designated space and coordinated times for local micro-businesses, artisans, social service organizations, and other vendors to vend their goods and provide direct service and outreach to the community, both on game days and non-game days. In addition, AEG shall provide funding to develop a green business incubator to help 20–30 low-income, underrepresented local entrepreneurs from zip codes surrounding the proposed stadium, in helping to start local businesses.
- The City of Los Angeles and AEG shall immediately create a community-based public safety task force. The task force will include a proportion of residents from the impacted area, LAPD, small business owners historically serving existing low-income communities, staff of the Mayor and relevant Council Districts, and other appropriate stakeholders.
- Neither the City police nor AEG's private security shall enact "quality of life policing" in the neighborhoods around the proposed development.

Jobs and Employment

- AEG shall develop a local hiring agreement for jobs created as part of the development project. Local low-income residents should be hired into 30%–35% of construction jobs, and 40%–50% of permanent jobs.
- Qualifications for jobs created by the proposed development shall relate directly to the job duties and responsibilities, and not include unrelated measures that tend to disqualify local residents (e.g., credit checks, arrest records).
- Jobs created by the development shall pay a living wage as determined by the strongest regulatory language, whether it be federal, state, or local. In addition to paying a living wage, all permanent jobs (including part-time and full-time permanent jobs) created by the Farmers Field stadium development shall provide full health benefits.
- AEG shall fund a program focused on training and hiring for jobs that are created as a result of the Farmers Field development. The program shall focus on populations facing the most serious barriers to employment including, but not limited to:
 - Day laborers (particularly from the Downtown Day Labor Center)

- Formerly incarcerated populations re-entering the workforce
- Single parents/ heads of households
- Homeless residents

Conclusion

Decision-makers for the Farmers Field development must consider the potential impacts the project will have on a range of health-related factors, including gentrification, displacement, housing costs, policing and safety, access to open spaces, and employment opportunities. This Health Impact Assessment highlights and addresses a lack of analysis of these impacts in the project's Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and suggests potential mitigations for negative impacts. This report provides analysis to help inform decision-makers and other stakeholders about potential health impacts of the proposed development. In future projects, analysis of potential health impacts needs to be an integral part of city planning, particularly for projects that will impact communities that are highly vulnerable and have limited resources to conduct research on their own or to intervene successfully in the decision-making process.