

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(CORRECTION) Riverpark Coalition Files Suit Against the City of Long Beach For CEQA Violations by an Additional River-Adjacent Developer

Last October, the LA Superior Court ruled the City must set aside approval for the commercial Pacific Place project unless and until it complies with CEQA. Riverpark Coalition builds on that victory by seeking CEQA compliance with regard to the adjacent parcel.

LONG BEACH, Calif. – The environmental justice group Riverpark Coalition (RPC) has filed the [attached lawsuit](#) against the City of Long Beach for approving a deficient environmental impact report (EIR)—which fails to comply with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)—for a proposed 20-acre development project located immediately south of the site which was the subject of [RPC’s court victory last October](#) (3701 Pacific Pl.).

The aim of this lawsuit is CEQA compliance with regard to biological resources, hazards (flooding), land use (park space, equestrian uses, and freeway incompatibility), greenhouse gas emissions, vehicular traffic, tribal cultural resources, and water quality. Private development of this site would, in similar fashion to development of the Pacific Pl. site to the north, further decimate adherence to the Long Beach section of the LA River Master Plan (as well as Long Beach’s own RiverLink Plan), which identified both adjacent parcels as the future Wrigley Heights River Park. Indeed, the subject site for this litigation and RPC’s previous litigation was once a single tract of oil operations land, decades ago, before being bisected by the construction of the 405 Freeway. There remains a walkable connection between the two tracts underneath the freeway to this day.

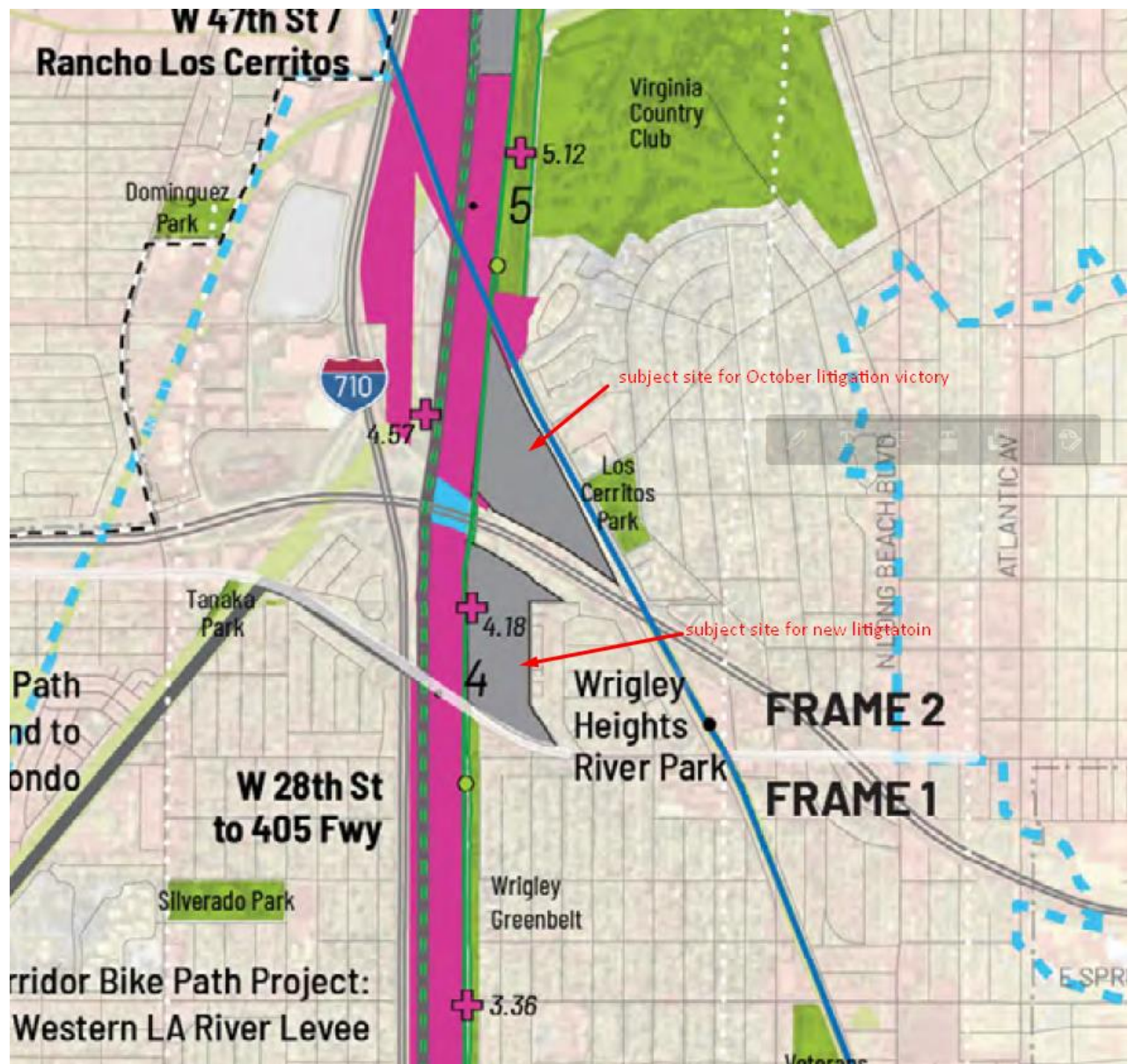
The subject site for this litigation is 712 Baker Street, Long Beach, CA 90806, a property owned by Oil Operators Inc. (a petroleum production consortium co-owned by the City of Long Beach) and bounded by Wardlow Rd., Baker St., the 405 Freeway, and the LA River.

The developer, approved by the City to further derail the future greenbelt envisioned by the LA River Master Plan, is Integral Communities LLC, which previously developed another parcel identified in river planning documents—the former Will J. Reid Boy Scouts Camp. That land had also been a key component of river greenbelt visioning prior to its development into townhouses. Integral appears to be intent on systematic exploitation of the LA River for the purposes of advancing private profit over the public good of revitalized riverine open space.

The fact that the City Council recently moved forward with this District 7 development is particularly troubling in that it occurred when the elected official representing this area,

Councilman Roberto Uranga was absent from the Council due to medical leave. Councilman Uranga was the lone vote opposing approval of the project just to the north, 3701 Pacific Pl., and his wife and predecessor on the City Council, then-councilwoman Tonia Reyes Uranga had opposed development of the Baker St. property during her time on Council for District 7.

"We hope to achieve yet another victory for park equity and environmental justice for our side of Long Beach," said Juan Ovalle, President of Riverpark Coalition. "The path to ultimately building the river park envisioned by Long Beach's own RiverLink Plan, as well as the Los Angeles River Master Plan, i.e. the intended Wrigley Heights River Park, is a long one. But we believe the arc of environmental history will eventually bend toward justice in western Long Beach."



(2020 Los Angeles River Master Plan, p. 407, arrows/text in red added)

About the Riverpark Coalition

Riverpark Coalition is Long Beach's only environmental justice organization dedicated exclusively to improving access to the lower Los Angeles River, promoting park equity, and developing planned green space in western Long Beach. As a community group and policy advocate, they are committed to holding Long Beach decision makers, elected officials, and city planners accountable for delivering on commitments to build green infrastructure along the river and facilitate community access. Visit them at <https://www.riverparkcoalition.org/>.

Please find previous op-eds and editorial support [here](#).

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