

City of Long Beach  
Many Unique Neighborhoods  
One Great City



Dr. Suja Lowenthal  
Vice Mayor  
Council District 2

## Memorandum

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**From:** Suja Lowenthal, Second District *SL*  
Lena Gonzalez, First District *LG*  
Dee Andrews, Sixth District *DA*  
Rex Richardson, Ninth District *RR*

**Subject:** Former RDA Parcels in the Downtown Plan

July 12, 2016

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### RECOMMENDATION:

Establish a policy directive that the redevelopment of all former Redevelopment Agency parcels in the Downtown Plan area be required to provide additional publicly accessible space as part of their projects.

### DISCUSSION:

Downtown Long Beach represents the symbolic and economic center of commerce, trade, culture and social life. It is also home to a growing population of residents who want, within a livable urban core, convenient amenities and services. The continued redevelopment of the Downtown over the next few years will result in increased population growth as new residential projects are planned or come on line; much of this redevelopment will be from the sale of former Redevelopment Agency property to private developers.

Appropriate oversight and zoning exists for the redevelopment of these sites under the existing Downtown Plan/PD-30. The adoption of the Downtown Plan/PD-30 in 2012 was a result of a 6 year visioning process that established a series of guiding principles for new development, as well as modern standards for setbacks, stepbacks, height, density and parking. These development standards represent the best practices from across the region and country, and reflect the growing reliance on alternative forms of residential living in an urban environment. The intent of the Downtown Plan/PD-30, is to ensure that Downtown Long Beach remains highly livable, with a series of interconnected spaces, reliance on transit and mobility, and a range of expanded choices for living, working and shopping in the Downtown. While these developers will be required to comply with the design standards of the Downtown Plan/PD-30, there exists a unique opportunity for the City to capitalize on the creation of additional open space resources and expansion of the public realm.

In particular, developers are required to pay Park and Recreation impact fees in accordance with the Long Beach Municipal Code. These impact fees are collected and spent citywide, in accordance with the nexus study that legally established the funds. However, these impact fees are not necessarily always expended

where the population growth is occurring. The ability to spend these impact fees citywide is vital to modernizing, rehabilitating and enhancing our existing recreation and open space resources due to impacts from increased population and use, and the process with which they are collected and spent should not change.

Instead, this City Council should consider adopting a policy that will require staff to request additional publicly accessible open space resources in all Downtown projects on former Redevelopment Agency property. This will ensure the creation of a pedestrian open space network throughout the Downtown, linking our many alleyways, pocket parks, and the Promenade. Under this policy, staff, through the existing Site Plan Review process, would be able to require that the common outdoor open space requirements already contained in the Downtown Plan be located at the street level and be publicly accessible. This privately owned and maintained, publicly accessible open space could take various forms, including but not limited to plazas, greenways, pedestrian paseos, fitness loops, connectivity pathways and pocket parks. They should be amenitized with landscaping, hardscape, seating, public art, etc., and serve as a part of a greater network of urban open space throughout the Downtown.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There will be no fiscal impact to the City with this approach. It maintains the status quo for the imposition of Park and Recreation impact fees, yet, establishes an expectation that additional public amenities be created as a result of the redevelopment of the former Redevelopment Agency properties in Downtown Long Beach for the benefit of the public.