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CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

333 West Ocean Blvd., 5th Floor Long Beach, CA 90802 (562) 570-6194 FAX (562) 570-6068

November 17, 2016

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept Categorical Exemption CE-16-268 and recommend that the City Council adopt a Resolution approving the draft Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention (CX3) Pedestrian Plan as a technical appendix to the Mobility Element of the Long Beach General Plan. (Districts 1, 2, 6, and 7)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach
Department of Development Services
333 West Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90802

DISCUSSION

The nation is facing an epidemic of obesity as nearly 1 in 3 children (ages 2-19) in the nation are overweight or obese, putting them at risk for serious health problems. The likelihood of being overweight is influenced by the environment in which you live, from your ability to be physically active to your access to healthy food options and non-processed food choices. Low-income communities tend to have the poorest food choices with greater densities of restaurants and stores selling processed foods rather than fresh produce. For these communities, the easiest choice, if there is one, is most often not the healthy choice.

The Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention (CX3) is a grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide assistance to low-income households to buy nutritious foods for better health. The Department of Health and Human Services received a CX3 grant to develop a framework to increase access to healthy food options and encourage physical activity by active transportation in ten neighborhoods in Long Beach. The neighborhoods were selected based on criteria defined by the USDA to include only neighborhoods having at least 50 percent or more of the resident population at or below 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level based on the 2010 Census. These neighborhoods are geographically oriented around school campuses including: Cabrillo and Poly High Schools, Washington and Franklin Middle Schools, and Lafayette, Burnett, Mary Butler, Whittier, and Edison Elementary Schools, as well as St. Mary's Hospital.

The draft CX3 Pedestrian Plan (Plan) assesses existing conditions in CX3 areas, identifies paths for improving the pedestrian environment, and lays out a framework of tools, project types, policies and programs for improving CX3 neighborhoods. The Plan is one of several tools that will be prepared to implement the Mobility Element of the Long Beach General Plan. As such, once adopted, the Plan will serve as a technical appendix to the Mobility Element and changes to the projects and programs in the Plan will not require amending the General Plan.

Long Beach is a mostly built-out city with a well-developed street network with a grid pattern in most neighborhoods with limited opportunities to acquire additional rights-of-way to widen streets or build new streets to accommodate additional vehicular traffic. As a result, the City is focusing future improvements on making the existing mobility network more efficient by facilitating the use of other modes of transportation – primarily walking, bicycling, and public transit. The Mobility Element establishes this citywide vision and the policies necessary to achieve this balanced mobility system by implementing improvements that provide multi-modal access to all users of the public rights-of-way.

One of the objectives of this multi-modal access policy is the increased use of transit and walking as a viable option for both work and non-work trips. Long Beach is a young city with nearly a quarter of the City's residents under the age of 18, many of whom are transit-dependent. Moreover, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, a full 16 percent of the City's households (25,000) do not own or have access to a vehicle. As such, a "walkable" public realm is a public good. The Mobility Element identifies pedestrian priority areas, increased amenities, and safety treatments for pedestrian routes and paths. Safety is a key consideration in the CX3 plan, with special attention to creating walking routes to schools, parks and amenities that are well lit, comfortable, and that limit potential conflicts with vehicles. The Plan is consistent with and provides additional policies and programs to implement the Mobility Element.

The Plan is an implementation-oriented document, as it provides a blueprint for the Department of Public Works to develop a multi-modal system that provides safe and direct connections to healthy food options and active recreational opportunities as a means to enhance community life, recreational opportunities, and ecological benefits. The Plan will also provide guidance to the Department of Development Services to encourage improvements to the public realm as new development occurs.

The pedestrian toolkit chapter of the plan provides potential solutions for different concerns including safety, expanding open space, or otherwise. The toolkit does not propose where the infrastructure enhancements shall go, but instead provides a context for communities to work with City officials to improve their pedestrian environment. The majority of the treatments within this chapter are based on the PEDSAFE: Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System 2013, published by the Federal Highway Administration.

The implementation chapter of the plan identifies how and when specific improvements

are put in place with priorities and resources for their execution. As such, the CX3 Pedestrian Plan provides a strategic approach to implementation by providing a matrix with short-, mid- and long-term projects that have been determined based on a variety of objectives including aligning the analysis of the area's existing conditions with community priorities, industry best practices and overlapping project goals.

Public Participation

The Plan was developed through a comprehensive and collaborative process that included community outreach, City departmental coordination meetings and stakeholder interviews. Public outreach was organized around fun, innovative, and meaningful community events to solicit input from Long Beach residents, visitors, and business owners, within the CX3 neighborhoods.

Building upon earlier work related to developing the CX3 Neighborhoods Assessments additional walk audits were conducted along major corridors and neighborhood connectors to determine the physical conditions of the pedestrian environment. The walking workshops were built as much for engaging local residents and stakeholders as educating them to think critically about the pedestrian environment. These workshops used walking tours customized for each neighborhood to share with participants how the physical characteristics of the public right-of-way and adjacent properties effect movement and influence behavior, as well as feelings of comfort and safety. The resulting conversation focused on where residents enjoyed walking in their neighborhood and where they had concerns for safety or were uncomfortable and collectively drew conclusions as to why that might be, so that these concerns could be addressed.

One of the primary goals within the community engagement process was reaching greater equity by including the voice of those not typically heard in the planning process. To that end, community engagement included meeting these stakeholders where they were, at grocery stores, transit stops, and on their way to school, where a few moments could be spared in between destinations, especially for those on foot.

A study session on the CX3 plan with the Planning Commission was held on September 1, 2016. Ongoing Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings were held throughout the development of the plan. These TAC meetings allowed Public Works and Development Services Department staff to consult an extensive and diverse array of expertise toward developing the prioritized project list.

The Plan has been made publicly available and is posted online for comment since September 20, 2016. Staff has received no written comments on the plan, as of the preparation of this staff report. If adopted by City Council, the Plan will assist in securing funding to implement the programs and projects in the Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the provisions of the City's Municipal Code and Office of Planning and Research (OPR) for General Plan amendment items, a 1/8-page public notice was published in the Press Telegram on Wednesday, November 2, 2016. This notice included the date, time and location for this meeting. Notice was also provided via eNotify announcements on the City's web page.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, a Categorical Exemption (CE-16-268) was issued.

Respectfully submitted,



LINDA F. TATUM, AICP
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



AMY J. BODEK, AICP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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AJB:LT:CK: IB

Attachment: Exhibit A – CX3 Pedestrian Plan
Exhibit B – Categorical Exemption CE-16-268



NOTICE of EXEMPTION from CEQA

CITY OF LONG BEACH | DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
333 W. OCEAN BLVD., 5TH FLOOR, LONG BEACH, CA 90802
(562) 570-6194 FAX: (562) 570-6068
lbs.longbeach.gov

TO: [] Office of Planning & Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: Department of Development Services
333 W. Ocean Blvd, 5th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

[X] L.A. County Clerk
Environmental Fillings
12400 E. Imperial Hwy., Room 1201
Norwalk, CA 90650

Project Title: CE-16-268

Project Location/Address: Portions of East and Central Long Beach

Project Activity/Description: A framework plan to increase access to healthy foods options and encourage physical activity by active transportation in ten neighborhoods in Long Beach. The Plan assesses existing conditions and identifies paths for improving the pedestrian environment.

Public Agency Approving Project: City of Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California

Applicant Name: Long Beach Development Services

Mailing Address: 333 West Ocean Boulevard

Phone Number: Applicant Signature:

BELOW THIS LINE FOR STAFF USE ONLY

Application Number: ME-2 Planner's Initials: IB

Required Permits: Resolution

THE ABOVE PROJECT HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE EXEMPT FROM CEQA IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE GUIDELINES SECTION

Statement of support for this finding: The Plan is a general public policy document that does not direct the level of location of new pedestrian improvements that would result from its adoption. As such, its too speculative to evaluate the impact from adoption.

Contact Person: Ira Brown Contact Phone: 562-570-5972

Signature: Date: November 8, 2016