

October 6, 2022

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution certifying the Fire Station No. 9 at 4101 Long Beach Boulevard Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR-04-21, SCH# 2022020416);

Recommend that the City Council adopt an ordinance approving a Zone Change (ZCHG21-003) from Community Commercial Automobile-Oriented (CCA) and Single-family Residential, large lot (R-1-L) to Mixed-Use Zone-1 (MU-1);

Recommend that the City Council adopt an ordinance approving a General Plan Amendment (GPA21-003) from Founding and Contemporary Neighborhood (FCN) to Neighborhood Serving Center or Corridor Low Density (NSC-L);

Recommend that the City Council approve Site Plan Review (SPR21-050) for clearance of an existing 0.4-acre site and construction of a new two-story (12,780 square foot) Fire Station No. 9 with three (3) drive-through apparatus bays located at 4101 Long Beach Boulevard;

Recommend that the City Council approve Standards Variances request to allow: 1) a driveway on Randolph Place located less than thirty feet (30') from an intersection (SV22-006) and 2) a curb cut greater than the 24-foot maximum on Randolph Place (SV22-007);

Recommend that the City Council approve a Lot Merger (LMG22-014) to merge three (3) lots into one 16,829-square-foot lot; and,

Recommend that the City Council approve repealing the five-foot-special setback established by Ordinance No. C-1015 related to a special setback along the west side of Long Beach Boulevard where it intersects with the subject site. (District 5)



CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

October 6, 2022

Page 2 of 10

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach Department of Public Works
c/o Marilyn Surakus
411 West Ocean Blvd, 5th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
(Application No. 2109-01)

DISCUSSION

Background

The applicant proposes clearance of an existing 0.4-acre site and construction of a new two-story (12,780 square foot) Fire Station No. 9 with three (3) drive-through apparatus bays located at 4101 Long Beach Boulevard. The site improvements include concrete paving, site lighting, a trash enclosure, transformer, landscaping, fencing, and gates. Project approvals include zone change, general plan amendment, site plan review, standards variances, lot merger, and the repealing of a special setback. The proposed project would serve as a replacement to the original Fire Station No. 9, which was located at 3917 Long Beach Boulevard, approximately two blocks south of the project site. The former fire station operated until summer 2019 when it was vacated due to the presence of toxic mold in the building and determined uninhabitable by the Long Beach Fire Department (LBFD). Under existing conditions (2022), a temporary Fire Station No. 9 location at 2019 East Wardlow Road would continue to operate under its three-year lease until a new fire station can be constructed within fire service area no. 9 in order to help meet the LBFD response time goals. The project before the Planning Commission would not result in any approvals or changes to the former Fire Station No. 9 at 3917 Long Beach Boulevard, which remains a separate action to take place before the Planning Commission.

Project Site

The 0.4-acre project site is located at the northwest corner of Long Beach Boulevard and East Randolph Place in the Los Cerritos neighborhood (Attachment A – Location Map). The project site is comprised of three parcels listed under two Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 7139-015-900 and APN 7139-015-901.¹ An existing 15-foot-wide alley is located at the rear of the site. Local access to the project site is provided by Long Beach Boulevard and East Randolph Place.

¹ The title report for the site includes three parcels under two APNs. For description purposes, the parcels will be described according to the division between APNs, which align with the division of Zoning and General Plan PlaceType designations.

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

October 6, 2022

Page 3 of 10

The project site is surrounded by single-family residential uses to the west and northwest, a coffee shop and retail stores directly to the north, multi-family residential uses and office uses to the east across Long Beach Boulevard, and office uses to the south across Randolph Place.

The project site is currently developed with an approximately 5,000-square-foot single-story office building and related parking and landscaping (Attachment B – Site Photographs). The building is currently occupied by Catalina Adventure Tours and would be demolished as part of the proposed project.

The project site carries two different Zoning and General Plan PlaceType designations. APN 7139-015-900 is zoned Community Commercial Automobile-Oriented (CCA) and has a General Plan PlaceType of Neighborhood Serving Center or Corridor Low Density (NSC-L)/3-Stories. APN 7139-015-901 is zoned Single-Family Residential, Large Lot (R-1-L) and has a General Plan PlaceType of Founding and Contemporary Neighborhood (FCN)/2-Stories. The current land use, general plan PlaceType, and zoning of the site and its surroundings are described in the table below.

Table 1 – Surrounding Land Uses, Zoning, and General Plan

Location	Existing Land Use	Existing General Plan PlaceType	Existing Zoning
<u><i>Project Site</i></u>			
Project site: East Lot (APN: 7139-015-900)	Office	NSC-L / 3 Stories	CCA
Project site: West Lot (APN: 7139-015-901)	Parking Lot	FCN / 2 Stories	R-1-L
<u><i>Surrounding Land Uses</i></u>			
West	Single-Family Residential	FCN / 2 Stories	R-1-L
East (Across Long Beach Boulevard)	Office, Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, Religious Facility	NSC-L / 3 Stories	CCA
North (Across alley)	Commercial and Residential	NSC-L / 3 Stories, FCN / 2 Stories	CCA, R-1-L
South (Across Randolph Place)	Office	NSC-L / 3 Stories	CCA

Abbreviations:

CCA = Community Commercial Automobile-Oriented Zoning District

FCN = Founding and Contemporary Neighborhood PlaceType

NSC-L = Neighborhood Serving Center or Corridor Low Density PlaceType

R-1-L = Single-family Residential, large lot Zoning District

Project Proposal

The proposed project would merge the parcels and rezone them to a consistent Mixed Use (MU-1) zoning designation for the construction of a new Fire Station No. 9. The proposed project also includes a General Plan Amendment (GPA) to implement a consistent PlaceType (NSC-L) on the entire project site.

The proposed project would construct a 12,780-square-foot, two-story fire station. (Attachment C – Plans). The overall height of the fire station structure is proposed to be 32-feet-6 inches. The building exterior would incorporate a mixture of rain-screen systems (metallic and phenolic siding) over a masonry base consisting of metal and wood composite siding that would be separated by a metal horizontal band in some locations. The eastern elevation along Long Beach Boulevard would have a screened curtain wall window system at an acute corner of the building that would invite the public into the first level and provide natural light to the office area on the second level. The building's massing would be articulated with vertical corner elements, horizontal wood banding, and the acute corner created by the street configuration. The building's eastern façade would feature an extended roof. The fire station's front door to Long Beach Boulevard would have a red metal screen wall system. All roof-mounted equipment would be shielded by a mechanical screen. The apparatus bays facing East Randolph Place would be outfitted with an automatic four-fold door system. The fenestration would include a mixture of storefront systems and aluminum clad wood windows at the sleeping rooms.

The project would be designed to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification and would include solar panels on the roof, low-flow plumbing fixtures, Light-emitting diode (LED) lighting, and energy-efficient heating and cooling systems supported by highly insulated roof and wall assemblies to reduce heating and cooling costs.

A row of existing mature trees along the western boundary of the project site would be protected in place. Any trees that would be removed from the eastern border of the project site would be relocated off site. The balance of the project's landscaping would adhere to the City's landscape design requirements and would include drought-tolerant plants and low-flow irrigation systems.

Vehicular access to a secured firefighter parking area would be provided through the alley on the northern side of the project site. This parking area would also include an exit-only driveway onto Long Beach Boulevard, with a right-turn only restriction. The parking lot would include a total of 11 parking spaces screened with decorative fencing.

Firefighting and emergency medical response vehicles, which are commonly referred to as apparatus, would enter the site via the rear alley and exit the site via a driveway off

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

October 6, 2022

Page 5 of 10

East Randolph Place. Three new traffic signals will be installed adjacent to the fire station on Long Beach Boulevard and East Randolph Place. The fire station's main public entrance, including an American with Disability Act (ADA)-accessible ramp, would be located on Long Beach Boulevard. A security fence and secured pedestrian gate would be located along the project site's eastern boundary adjacent to the sidewalk. The existing fence wall on the western border of the project site would remain in place.

The building's apparatus bays would be able to accommodate a Type 1 fire engine, a rescue company, and a battalion chief vehicle. The station would have additional storage capacity for a reserve Type 3 engine in the apparatus bay and a fire truck in the rear of the site. The apparatus bays would be sized to allow different combinations of response companies for potential future adaptation.

Off-site improvements would include a new driveway apron from the proposed parking lot to Long Beach Boulevard. The sidewalks along the Long Beach Boulevard and East Randolph Place frontages would be replaced and the existing street trees protected in place or relocated, as necessary. A response driveway would be installed from the fire station to East Randolph Place, with "Keep Clear" zones striped in front of the apparatus bay on East Randolph Place and in the Long Beach Boulevard/East Randolph Place intersection. As noted above, three new traffic signals would be installed at the intersection of East Randolph Place and on Long Beach Boulevard. The new traffic signals would include pedestrian crosswalks and would eliminate any parking within the intersection. The alley on the north side of the project site would be widened by 2-feet-6-inches, toward the proposed fire station and would be reconstructed with underground utilities and new pavement. The widening would be required to allow apparatus to enter the project site via the alley.

Requested Entitlements and Recommended Actions

This project requires approval of the including a Zone Change detailed below. The Planning Commission serves as advisory body for land use matters to the City Council and will make a recommendation on the proposed project to the City Council. The following is an overview of the required findings for each of the requested entitlements along with staff's recommendation for the Planning Commission's consideration (Attachment D – Findings).

1. **Zone Change:** The Applicant requests a Zone Change to MU-1, which is a mixed-use zoning district (Attachment E – Zone Change Map). The proposed project would merge the parcels and rezone them to a consistent MU-1 zoning designation across the site.

Existing zoning on the site is a combination of CCA and R-1-L. The CCA zone is a commercial zone that restricts residential uses, which is in conflict with the intent of the mixed-use nature of the NSC-L PlaceType established for the eastern portion of the site. In contrast, the western portion of the site (existing parking lot) is zoned for residential uses (R-1-L). Development of the proposed project would not be possible under the split zoning, as the CCA zone requires an Administrative Use Permit for Institutional Uses and the R-1-L zone prohibits fire stations. Further, the R-1-L zone, while consistent with the intent of the FCN PlaceType, is not consistent with the FCN PlaceType's allowance for the construction of fire stations. Both General Plan PlaceTypes on the site allow for the development of fire stations, but the existing zoning designations do not allow as a by-right uses. This existing zoning also would fail to achieve local planning objectives, especially related to urban form prescribed under Title 22 of the Long Beach Municipal Code (LBMC).

Staff supports the Zone Change request, as it is consistent with the General Plan, would achieve local planning objectives by allowing a fire station to be restored to fire service area 9 and would provide the significant community benefit of restored response times. Justification for the Zone Change is discussed in detail in the Zone Change findings. The Zone Change must be adopted by ordinance, which requires City Council approval.

- 2. General Plan Amendment:** The Applicant requests a General Plan Amendment to change the PlaceType for the western portion of the site from FCN to NSC-L (Attachment F – General Plan Amendment Map). The proposed project would merge the parcels and amend them to a consistent PlaceType.

Existing General Plan LUE PlaceTypes on the site are a combination of NSC-L and FCN. Both PlaceTypes allow for the development of fire stations, but the FCN PlaceType has a more restrictive floor area ratio that is not consistent with the NSC-L PlaceType, which applies to the majority of the site. This General Plan Amendment would bring the entire site under the same PlaceType and consistent zoning.

Staff supports the General Plan Amendment request, as it would ensure consistent development standards across the site in conformance with the LUE. Justification for the General Plan Amendment is discussed in detail in the findings. The General Plan Amendment must be adopted by ordinance, which requires City Council approval.

- 3. Site Plan Review:** Site Plan Review is required for all new construction projects on City land with building floor area of 500 square feet or greater. The Site Plan

Review entitlement considers general design objectives and guidelines and consistency with the General Plan and zoning. Staff supports the Site Plan Review requests, as all of these applicable objectives and requirements are met by the proposed project design. These are discussed in detail in the Site Plan Review findings. Off-site improvements are required in conjunction with this approval include an alley dedication, traffic signals, and street, sidewalk, and parkway improvements. These and other required improvements are detailed in the Conditions of Approval (Attachment G – Conditions of Approval).

- 4. Standards Variances:** The proposed project requires two standards variances associated with the curb cut for the fire apparatus bay on Randolph Place. The fire station building has otherwise been designed in conformance with the development standards for the MU-1 Zoning District related to the use, setbacks, height, and floor area ratio. The requested standards variances relate to the provision of 1) an oversized curb cut and 2) a curb cut location within 30 feet of the nearest intersection.

The proposed fire station use has unique operational needs necessitated by apparatus and nature of emergency response not contemplated in the standard maximum curb cut requirements outlined in Section 21.41.251 of the LBMC. Each of the three apparatus bays require independent access to the street and unique turning radii for emergency response. As part of the site design, the Fire Department analyzed multiple access alternatives with the proposed configuration as the only feasible alternative. As such, the nature of the proposed use and the need for independent access from all three apparatus bays warrants a variance from this requirement.

Furthermore, the site configuration is unique, as Long Beach Boulevard angles to the north west in this portion of the City. The pull through configuration is required for apparatus access, therefore, Randolph Place is the only frontage available for exiting onto the public right-of-way. As such, the building placement in accordance with MU-1 setbacks orients the fire station toward the Long Beach Boulevard primary frontage, thus restricting the placement of the driveway along the Randolph Place frontage. To mitigate this condition, the project includes traffic signals that can be initiated upon apparatus leaving the station, therefore, reducing potential conflict with vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists at the intersection of Long Beach Boulevard and Randolph Place. While the intent of Section 21.41.251 is to provide spacing between driveways and intersections for safety purposes, the incorporation of traffic signals would ensure the proposed curb cut placement does not represent a safety hazard at this intersection.

The apparatus bays are essential for operation of the fire station. With incorporation of the traffic signals, the required findings can be made to support the proposed curb cut width and location.

Staff supports the Standards Variance requests, as they are limited to the configuration of the curb cut that is integral to the use of the site as a fire station. The LBFD has accessed the site with the proposed fire apparatus and determined that the proposed turning radii is the minimum allowable for the safe and efficient use of the site. The pull through orientation has been determined to be the least intrusive to roadway traffic and noise associated with backing into the apparatus bays.

5. **Lot Merger:** The developer requests approval of a lot merger to combine the three underlying parcels into a single 16,829-square-foot lot (Attachment H – Lot Merger). The lot merger will comply with the 3,000-square-foot minimum lot size of the MU-1 Zoning District. This will allow the site to be constructed on a consolidated lot consistent with the setback standards established in the LBMC.
6. **Special Setback:** In 1930, the City established special setbacks along Long Beach Boulevard by ordinance separate from the zoning code for the purpose of tailoring yard setbacks to the development pattern of an area as well as widening streets (Attachment I – Special Setback Ordinance No. C-1015). The special setback ordinances preceded the Subdivision Map Act, the current Zoning Code and other tools to control the right-of-way that are now used. The special setback requirement accommodated future street widening before more effective mechanisms of street dedication and setbacks by zone came into full practice. As these new tools came into existence and practice, the City did not reevaluate the individual special setback ordinances and provisions of the Zoning Code.

Ordinance C-1015 established a special setback for parcels fronting Long Beach Boulevard (formerly American Avenue), from Greenleaf Drive to 36th Street (Attachment J – Special Setback Map). This special setback requires varied special setbacks along both sides of Long Beach Boulevard. At the project site, the special setback is 5-feet, which spans the west side of Long Beach Boulevard from the alley north of the site to Roosevelt Road. The Public Works Department has reviewed the existing right-of-way and determined additional widening is not required in accordance with the Mobility Element. In addition, the special setback is in conflict with the intended setback requirements of the MU-1 Zoning District along the primary frontage. These special setback provisions are no longer necessary or useful, therefore staff recommends they be removed.

Over the long term, the Department of Development Services in consultation with the Public Works Department will need to take a more comprehensive review and approach to remove special setbacks and reconciling conflicting Zoning Code provisions.

Based on the required findings, staff is able to make positive findings to approve the proposed project, including the Zone Change, General Plan Amendment, Site Plan Review, Standards Variances, Lot Merger, and Repeal of Special Setbacks. Staff has included conditions of approval to ensure that the objectives of consistent, high-quality design for this project will be met, and the interests of the City will be protected.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 1,054 notices of public hearing were mailed to a 1,000-foot radius on September 20, 2022, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the LBMC. Additionally, a notice of public hearing was published in the Long Beach Press-Telegram on September 21, 2022, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the LBMC. No public comments in response to these notices were received at the time the report was prepared.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR-04-21) was prepared for the Fire Station No. 9 at 4101 Long Beach Boulevard Project (SCH# 2022020416) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21100 and 21100.1, and CEQA Guidelines Section 15161 (Attachment K – Project EIR and Appendices). A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this EIR was distributed to public agencies and made available for public review and comment for a NOP review period that started on February 18, 2022 and ended on March 29, 2022. The City received five written comments during this NOP review period. A Scoping Meeting was held during this review period, on March 9, 2022, to further solicit public comment on the scope and content of the EIR.

The Draft EIR was distributed to public agencies and made available for public review and comment for a 45-day EIR review period that started on July 15, 2022 and ended on August 29, 2022. The City received four written comments on the Draft EIR during this review period. These comments and the City's responses to these comments are provided in the Final EIR. The Final EIR also includes edits and clarifications to the Draft EIR text based on public comments, expert advice, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Attachment L – Final EIR). Text edits provided in the Final EIR did not substantially alter the Draft EIR environmental analysis or change the conclusions of the Draft EIR regarding potential project environmental impacts. The Final EIR

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

October 6, 2022

Page 10 of 10

determined that the project, in compliance with all recommended mitigation measures, would not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts.

The project will be subject to the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program prepared for the EIR, which establishes mitigation measures that apply to the project (Attachment M – Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program). These mitigation measures pertain to air quality, cultural resources, noise, and tribal cultural resources.

The preparation and public availability of this EIR has been carried out in compliance with the provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council certify EIR-04-21.

Respectfully submitted,



MARYANNE CRONIN
PROJECT PLANNER



ALEXIS OROPEZA
CURRENT PLANNING OFFICER



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP
ACTING DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

CK:AO:mc

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Location Map
- Attachment B – Site Photographs
- Attachment C – Plans
- Attachment D – Findings
- Attachment E – Zone Change Map
- Attachment F – General Plan Amendment Map
- Attachment G – Conditions of Approval
- Attachment H – Lot Merger
- Attachment I – Special Setback Ordinance No. C-1015
- Attachment J – Special Setback Map
- Attachment K – Project EIR and Appendices
- Attachment L – Final EIR
- Attachment M – Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program