

October 6, 2022

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS  
City of Long Beach  
California

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Recommendation to receive and file presentation on the Race and Suburbanization Historic Context Statement. (Citywide)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach  
Development Services – Planning Bureau  
411 W. Ocean Blvd  
Long Beach, CA 90802

**BACKGROUND**

The *Race and Suburbanization Historic Context Statement* is the result of an internal review of existing City Historic Preservation Documents by City staff in 2015. The review included past initiatives, review of the 2009 Citywide Context Statement. It determined the need to update recent history into City Historic Preservation documents including, cultural history, civil rights, housing rights, discriminatory practices that affected the City's growth patterns, as related to different communities in the City. In January 2019, the Development Services Department's (Department) Planning Bureau initiated this project and engaged the firm of Historic Resources Group. The effort and subsequent report were aided by a Certified Local Government grant awarded by the California State Office of Historic Preservation.

This effort is part of a larger citywide racial equity and reconciliation initiative in recognition of the history of racism in the City of Long Beach (City) and its impact on local residents. All City departments are actively engaged in the initiative. Within the Department this effort focused on recognizing our full history and preserving it as part of this process. For the Planning Commission this history should influence future land use policies and zoning regulations.

The report was presented to Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) on July 26, 2022, the Equity and Human Relations Commission on August 3, 2022, and for final approval by the CHC on August 30, 2022.



## **DISCUSSION**

The *Race and Suburbanization Context Statement* is a study of how discriminatory practices and the fight for fair housing in Long Beach intersects with development patterns in the post-World War II era. It incorporates largely overlooked communities and histories of Long Beach communities of color and the development patterns, including exclusionary practices that played a significant role in settlement patterns in the City. The Context Statement is intended to foster understanding of the influence of race and discriminatory practices on the built environment, provide background information on subsequent waves of immigration in Long Beach, and document an important layer of the City's history (Attachment A - Historic Context Statement: Suburbanization and Race – Final Administrative Report August 30, 2022).

Housing discrimination, growth and discriminatory practices are examined in this report. They were facts of life for people of color in Long Beach between 1945-1979, as it was in cities throughout Southern California and across the nation. The report also discusses post-World War II era growth. The City aggressively annexed adjacent farmland and orange groves in response to the immense population growth in the region after the war. Many residential tracts had Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions that limited the purchase and rental of homes to White residents. Lenders and insurers of the period often followed “redlining maps” which identified neighborhoods containing “subversive racial groups,” or those defined as “deteriorating” due to the presence of non-White residents. This coincided with the migration of White residents from areas that were becoming more racially or culturally diverse, to more homogeneous suburban areas known as “White flight.”

The report highlights significant and groundbreaking efforts by the community to overcome those discriminatory practices. In the early 1950s, Long Beach became a central player in the fight for fair housing in Southern California. During the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Long Beach was transformed by immigration. This context statement uses the multiple property documentation approach to identify and provide guidance for the evaluation of the built environment, as it relates to the intersection of race and suburbanization in the post-World War II era. It is intended to supplement the broader residential development themes and the ethnographic study provided in the City of Long Beach Citywide Historic Context Statement. Future studies of the City will include immigration patterns and changing demographics of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, including a study of the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer, with a “+” to recognize other sexual orientations and gender identities not covered in the acronym) community in Long Beach.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

In accordance with Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, this action is not subject to environmental review as there is no potential for causing a significant impact to the physical environment.

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Respectfully submitted,



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PROJECT PLANNER



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CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP  
ACTING DIRECTOR OF  
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CK:AO:AU:ap

Attachments:

Attachment A – Historic Context Statement: Race and Suburbanization – Final  
Administrative Report August 30, 2022