



Date: November 28, 2017

To: Members of the Planning Commission

From: Amy J. Bodek, AICP, Development Services Director
Kelly Colopy, Health and Human Services Director

For: Mayor, Members of the City Council and Members of the Planning Commission

Subject: **Equity Analysis of the Land Use Element of the General Plan**

As you are likely aware, important public discussions about the potential impacts of allowing additional density in the City of Long Beach through the Land Use Element (LUE) have been taking place. This memo seeks to outline the broad consequences of the proposed LUE changes. Careful consideration is needed for the siting of additional housing and job opportunities between now and the year 2040. Significant costs come with limiting access to high-opportunity neighborhoods through restrictive land use, while research shows that increased access to quality housing, jobs and essential neighborhood resources can improve health, social and economic outcomes for all residents of Long Beach.

Housing and the LUE

The General Plan reflects the long-term vision of the community through its goals, policies, and objectives. The City of Long Beach has been working to update its General Plan LUE for over 13 years; the LUE in place today was adopted in 1989, and projected development patterns through the year 2000. With a growing population and constrained housing supply, 47.2% of Long Beach renters are considered housing cost burdened, more than in Oakland or San Francisco. A lack of housing availability decreases affordability, increases GHG emissions [i], stifles economic activity, and creates a market for higher priced, lower-quality housing while reducing the amount of money households have to spend on other important health-supporting resources such as healthy food, healthcare, or investment in education. The LUE update is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve economic development, access to quality housing, jobs and other opportunities for health and wellbeing.

Like many cities in California, Long Beach is facing a housing crisis; the crisis is hitting a broad range of people, but it disproportionately impacts renters, first time home buyers, young people, and communities of color. In 2015, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health published a report on the importance of housing as a significant social determinant of health for LA County residents. A growing body of research shows that your zipcode has a greater impact on health outcomes than your genetic code. For example, in the 4.2 miles it takes to travel from the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services office to Long Beach City Hall, the average life expectancy drops from 82.6 years in the 90815 zipcode, to 75.2 years in the 90802 zipcode [ii]. This represents more than a 7 year difference in life expectancy across just 4 miles; 7 years is the same difference in

average life expectancy when you compare the average United States life expectancy to the countries of Belarus, Guatemala, or Moldova [iii].

How much housing can be built, where it can be located, its proximity to: jobs, healthy and safe neighborhood environments, retail and shopping needs, transit and quality schools, are all dictated by the Land Use Element of a City's General Plan, so this issue is a vital public health concern for the City. An abundance of research connects such neighborhood-level factors to health behaviors and preventable health outcomes related to heart disease, obesity, and diabetes [iv]. To give an example of this neighborhood-level disparity, Long Beach's green space varies greatly by zipcode. The 90813 zipcode (west and central Long Beach) has 0.26 acres per 1,000 people, while 90808 (east Long Beach) has 19.21 acres per 1,000 people. A lack of green space not only limits opportunity to be physically active, which increases risk of chronic diseases, but it also impacts air quality. Those same parts of Long Beach with the least access to greenspace also face significant environmental health burdens such as lower air quality near freeways and emissions sources like the Port of Los Angeles. Those environmental health burdens have greater impacts on transit-dependent populations who walk, bike and get their exercise outdoors, as well as youth of color that are disproportionately located in high-pollution areas. Asthma hospitalization rates are more than triple in North West Central and Southwest Long Beach as compared to other parts of the City. In adults, living in a high-pollution area is associated with higher rates of lung cancer, heart attacks and respiratory disease.

In December 2016, the City Council adopted a document called the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH), required for all communities who receive federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development approved the City's AFH on May 17, 2017. Through an extensive data analysis and community engagement process, the City's AFH determined a need to provide housing opportunities citywide, including in high-opportunity areas, rather than being concentrated only in specific neighborhoods [v]. In particular, data show that the Eastside is a high-opportunity area with lower concentrations of poverty, greater access to park space, higher median home values, higher performing schools, and significantly better environmental quality. Therefore, according to the report, additional housing opportunity should be provided on the Eastside. The Eastside is also a jobs center, meaning there is even more reason to provide additional housing for those who work there. It has clusters of low- and moderate-wage jobs that draw workers from less affluent neighborhoods of the City. Therefore, increasing housing opportunities for workers to live closer to their job centers in East Long Beach actually helps everyone by minimizing traffic, congestion and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the region.

Furthermore, the AFH reported that 12.2% of all Long Beach households (renter and homeowner), or 60,169 residents in Long Beach, live in overcrowded conditions, showing the need for significantly more housing units just to serve existing Long Beach residents. Los Angeles researchers found that "several

dimensions of children's wellbeing suffer when exposed to crowded living conditions even after controlling for socioeconomic status. The negative effects on children raised in crowded homes can persist throughout life, affecting their future socioeconomic status and adult wellbeing."[vii] Families who cannot find quality and affordable housing move frequently [viii]. Parents work longer hours to pay rent, and students struggle to find adequate transportation to school [ix]. The cumulative impacts of these and other social, economic and environmental health burdens increase stress and community level trauma, increasing rates of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. The constraints on creating sufficient housing supply relate to the complex interplay of local, state and national policy, macroeconomics, and various market forces; however, many of the identified solutions to addressing the need for more housing hinge on local land use and zoning regulations providing sufficient housing opportunity sites.

Growth and Opportunity in Long Beach

Despite being the second most diverse city in California, Long Beach has one of the highest rates of segregation in the state, as evidenced in Long Beach's Dissimilarity Index [xi]. Allowing new housing opportunity only in certain parts (i.e. west of Cherry Avenue) of the City will continue to perpetuate - and likely worsen - the geographic, economic and racial divides that separate areas of low and high opportunity in the City. Evidence shows that when poverty rates and segregation are high in metropolitan areas, those regions perform economically worse overall relative to less segregated places. Segregated regions have slower rates of income growth and property value appreciation [xii], while segmented underinvestment reduces the quality of life for all residents, not just the most marginalized [xiii].

Long Beach has experienced a great deal of economic, social and demographic change over the past generation, and thus far has been largely successful in adapting and innovating to embrace these changes. Recent opposition to the LUE lends evidence to a growing racial generation gap [xiv], indicative of nationwide trends, that can preclude continued economic vitality. While over 85% of youth in Long Beach are people of color, over half of seniors are white. Equitable and integrated communities that properly plan for future generations are more likely to maintain sustained economic growth [xv]. The impact to the City's overall health must be contextualized around housing affordability, homelessness, economic opportunity, and environmental sustainability.

Implementation and the Future

The proposed LUE supports a wide variety of important City investments and initiatives that are already underway, such as the Long Beach College Promise, livability priorities embedded in the Mobility Element and the CX3 Pedestrian Plan, the 10-Year Blueprint for Economic Development, and a commitment through the Global Covenant of Mayors to address climate change. It calls for mixed-use opportunities throughout the City so that all residents have opportunity to walk or bike to local jobs and shopping. The proposed LUE also has policies and programs to start addressing equity considerations through policy priorities, such as exploring the feasibility of developing Green Zones (LU M-64), using development

incentives to attract full-service grocery stores to all communities (LU Policy 10-7), creating green jobs and a green economy (see for example LU-M-58 through LU-M-64), and prioritizing vacant and underutilized land for the development of new green space in park poor communities (LU Policy 17-10).

More than 158 community engagement events were held throughout the city to draft the LUE, and many residents and community members have expressed support for the plan's goals, specifically for additional housing and commercial opportunities in the Eastside. Recent feedback from a segment of the community has strongly opposed any increased density in and around their neighborhoods. The community feedback has been heard and acknowledged and revised land use maps reflect that feedback to a certain extent; however, it is important to publicly acknowledge that limiting opportunity to provide needed housing for current and future residents, particularly in high opportunity areas [xvi] of the City like the Eastside, will further exacerbate the existing housing, environmental, health, and economic inequities in our City for decades to come. By embracing equity and inclusion as a core value, Long Beach is poised to be a national leader, joining the ranks of other Cities, such as Seattle and Oakland, who have embedded this framework into their land use decisions, as well as City of Los Angeles and LA County, where similar efforts are underway [xvii]

The adoption of an updated LUE is just the beginning of community partnership in the planning process. The effectiveness of a plan should not be based on how it reads when adopted, but the process for inclusive development and implementation as well as results and achievements. One of the requirements in the proposed LUE is to regularly review progress towards the goals, policies and implementation measures contained in the LUE [xviii]. This creates an opportunity for measuring progress and making periodic changes to reflect ongoing learning, new information, ever-changing circumstances, and investing in continuous community engagement and partnership.

For more information about the General Plan LUE please contact Christopher Koontz at Christopher.Koontz@longbeach.gov. For more information about equity considerations please contact Katie Balderas at Katie.Balderas@longbeach.gov.

cc: Charles Parkin, City Attorney
Douglas P. Haubert, City Prosecutor
Laura L. Doud, City Auditor
Tom Modica, Assistant City Manager
Kevin Jackson, Deputy City Manager
Rebecca Garner, Assistant to the City Manager
Department Heads

Equity Analysis of the Land Use Element of the General Plan

November 28, 2017

Page 5

[i] <http://www.bayareaeconomy.org/report/another-inconvenient-truth/>

[ii] Long Beach Community Health Assessment:

<http://www.longbeach.gov/globalassets/health/media-library/documents/planning-and-research/reports/community-health-assessment/community-health-assessment>

[iii] http://gamapserver.who.int/gho/interactive_charts/mbd/life_expectancy/atlas.html

[iv] <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2011/05/neighborhoods-and-health-.html>

[v] <http://www.lbds.info/afh/>

[vi] Census Transportation Planning Product (FHWA 2006-10 ACS Tabulations, https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census_issues/ctpp/data_products/2006-2010_tract_flows/index.cfm

[vii] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3805127>

[viii] Attendance Works, 2012; Seeley, 2008; Walls, 2003

[ix] Attendance Works, 2012; Chhang, 2012

[x] See for example Saunders, J. (2005). Good Neighbors Come in All Colors: The Social, Political and Legal History of The Fair Housing Foundation of Long Beach. Retrieved November 5, 2017: <http://www.fairhousingfoundation.com/>

[xi] <https://s4.ad.brown.edu/Projects/Diversity/segregation2010/msa.aspx?metroid=31084>

[xii] <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0042098013477697>

[xiii] Most notably, segregated pollution lowers the environmental quality for everyone in the region, not just low income communities of color. Conversely, white communities that invest in equitable sustainability fare much better. <https://www.umass.edu/economics/publications/2010-05.pdf>

[xiv] http://nationalequityatlas.org/sites/default/files/RacialGenGap_%20final.pdf

[xv] Sources: <http://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/racial-generation-gap/>

<https://www.amazon.com/Just-Growth-Inclusion-Prosperity-Metropolitan/dp/0415517818>

<https://www.amazon.com/Immigrants-Boomers-Forging-Contract-America/dp/0871546248>

[xvi] The Duty to Serve Evaluation Guidance defines “high opportunity area” to mean: An area designated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a “Difficult Development Area” (DDA) during any year covered by an Enterprise’s Underserved Markets Plan (Plan) or in the year prior to a Plan’s effective date, whose poverty rate falls below 10 percent (for metropolitan areas) or below 15 percent (for nonmetropolitan areas); or An area designated by a state or local Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) as a high opportunity area whose poverty rate falls below 10 percent (for metropolitan areas) or below 15 percent (for non-metropolitan areas). https://www.fhfa.gov/DataTools/Downloads/Documents/Enterprise-PUDB/DTS_Residential-Economic-Diversity-Areas/RED_HIGHOPP_Areas_READ%20ME_2017.pdf

[xvii] Several examples, including Seattle and Oakland, described in this report:

<http://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/equitable-development-tool-advance-racial-equity/>

Per the direction of the LA County Board of Supervisors, staff are developing an Equitable Development Work Program for the County’s General Plan:

<file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/99751.pdf>

City of Los Angeles uses its Community Health and Equity Index as the basis of its Health Element of the General Plan (see <https://planning.lacity.org/cwd/gnlpln/PlanforHealthyLA.pdf> and http://geohub.lacity.org/datasets/db877d37b0ce4e16baabfc3d967f11b6_0)

[xviii] See [LUE Implementation Review](#), pg. 167

