

September 2, 2021

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach

California

RECOMMENDATION:

Find the proposed vacation of a portion of public right-of-way abutting 3770 East Willow Street in conformance with the adopted goals and policies of the City's General Plan (GPC21-001). (District 5)

APPLICANT: Ability First
c/o Lori Gangemi
1300 East Green Street
Pasadena, CA 91106
(Application No. 2105-13)

DISCUSSION

Background

The applicant requests a finding of conformance with the City of Long Beach General Plan for the vacation of a portion of public right-of-way abutting 3770 East Willow Street (Attachment A - Vicinity Map). The right-of-way is adjacent to the Institutional (I) Zoning District and Regional Serving Facility (RSF) General Plan PlaceType designation.

The applicant is currently pursuing the vacation application with the Public Works Department; a General Plan Conformity determination is required before it may proceed further. This request will vacate approximately 1,085 sq. ft. of excess right-of-way (Attachment B - Vacation). This portion of the right-of-way is part of Grand Avenue, a local street as classified by the Long Beach Mobility Element. This classification requires a minimum of 56 feet in width. This segment of Grand Avenue varies in width from 68 to 74 feet. The Public Works Department completed a feasibility review of the request and recommended the maintenance of a right-of-way width of 66 feet, allowing for the vacation of a variable 2- to 8-foot strip of land abutting the subject property. Upon successful vacation, the right-of-way would be merged with the adjacent property parcel. The property owner intends to make improvements to the subject



area that includes updating a sign currently located at the southwest corner of the East Willow Street and Grand Avenue and enhancing the landscaping at that corner.

The abutting property is owned and operated by Ability First, a nonprofit facility serving people with disabilities. As a staple of the community, Ability First provides programming and services to children and adults in the rehabilitation and preparation of real-world adaptations. The vacation would provide Ability First with the opportunity to refresh the corner with new landscaping and signage (Attachment C - Site Photos).

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY FINDINGS

Before an application for the vacation of the public right-of-way can be acted on by the City Council, a finding of conformity with the maps and policies of the Long Beach General Plan must be made by the Planning Commission. The General Plan consists of thirteen (13) elements; each element carries the same authority concerning land use issues. Staff reviewed this project's conformance with all elements of the General Plan, and the proposed vacation was found to be in conformance with all applicable elements. A review of the relevant elements and specific General Plan consistency findings are presented below.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element (LUE) divides the City into 14 land use districts known as PlaceTypes which provide general guidance as to the appropriate type and density of land uses. The public right-of-way is located adjacent to the Regional Serving Facility (RSF) PlaceType of the LUE. The LUE states that the RSF PlaceType is intended for facilities with a regional-serving scope. The vacated right-of-way will be incorporated into the abutting property which is owned by, Ability First, a use called out specifically as an example of the RSF compatible land uses in the LUE (LUE Page 99).

According to the LUE, a subdivision approval (which category would include the proposed vacation) is considered consistent with the LUE when the density of the proposed subdivision meets the PlaceTypes commercial/industrial intensity. Although a subdivision is not proposed in this case, the vacation of the public right-of-way would become part of the abutting property, increasing the overall lot area from 66,796 square feet to 67,881 square feet. With the expansion of the property, the use and intensity of the existing development on the site remain consistent with the land use, height and intensity contemplated by the RSF PlaceType designation.

Mobility Element

The City's Mobility Element is aimed at transforming Long Beach into a city of flexible, convenient, affordable, and energy-efficient transportation options for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities alike. Per the City's Mobility Element, Grand Avenue is identified as a local street, intended to "provide access to individual residential parcels. The local street typology are generally two lanes with on-street parking, tree planting strips, and sidewalks. Traffic on a local street should have a trip end on that street, or on a connecting local street or to a connector". The existing right-of-way currently provide vehicular and pedestrian access to the immediate development site. The application has been conditioned to construct any and

all off-site improvements needed to provide full ADA accessibility compliance, to the satisfaction of the Director of Public Works. The public sidewalk would remain eight (8) feet in width and consistent with Public Works requirements (Attachment D - Conditions of Approval). The proposed vacation would not disrupt travel patterns through and around the area. The area proposed for vacation is remnant right-of way that is in excess of that required by the street designation and operational needs, as determined the analysis conducted by the Public Works Department. As such, it has been determined that the public right-of-way proposed to be vacated is not necessary for the overall movement of people and goods through the city.

The initial review of the proposed vacation yielded no above ground nor below ground public utilities that will require a reservation of easement; therefore, none will be reserved.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A General Plan Conformity Certification does not require a public hearing or public notice. However, the Public Works Department conducts public notification for the vacation in accordance with State law, as the vacation is processed.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This action to make a finding of conformance with the General Plan is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per Section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines, and no environmental review is required. Separate CEQA review will be required for any development proposal that moves forward at this site.

Respectfully submitted,



JONATHAN INIESTA
PROJECT PLANNER



ALEXIS OROPEZA
CURRENT PLANNING OFFICER



PATRICIA DIEFENDERFER, AICP
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES



OSCAR W. ORCI
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR

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Attachments:

- Attachment A - Vicinity Map
- Attachment B - Vacation Exhibits
- Attachment C - Site Photos
- Attachment D - Conditions of Approval