



Legislation Text

File #: 07-0959, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to receive and file the supporting documentation; and request City Manager to: (1) prepare a Downtown Specific Plan and associated environmental document, and (2) continue to work with the Downtown Visioning Committee and the community in the creation of the Downtown Specific Plan, once funds in the amount of \$290,000 are identified. (Districts 1,2)

In November 2006, the Councilmembers of the First and Second District appointed a committee to prepare a vision for the Downtown. The 12 person committee represents downtown residents, business owners and local organizations and institutions. Since December 2006, the committee has met regularly to craft their collective vision statement.

On May 29, 2007, the vision statement was presented in video format to the public at a noticed community meeting. The committee has since presented the vision to the Planning Commission and RDA Board for review and comment. The RDA Board and Planning Commission comments are attached (Attachment A). The recommendations contained in the presentation have been widely supported.

The vision statement is the overarching concept of what the Downtown could become. It sets out a vision for the future. In order for this vision to become reality, staff recommends that a more detailed planning implementation document, a Specific Plan, is necessary.

Over the decades, numerous studies have looked at planning the Downtown comprehensively or by subject matter. From the Downtown parking or public arts program, to an assortment of zoning studies, land use plans, and strategic plans, the Downtown has been the most studied and considered part of the City of Long Beach because of the significant role it plays in transforming Long Beach into a world renowned city. The increase in development interest and activity in the Downtown has highlighted the need to revisit and establish a new vision for the next 10-15 years.

A Specific Plan for Downtown could provide detailed land use and development guidance, including building height limits, setback and build-to lines, land use regulations, landscaping and public open space requirements, and other urban design components. The Specific Plan would serve as the guide for development in the Downtown, and replace PD-30, PD-6, and a portion of PD-29 (Attachment B). As such, the adoption of a Specific Plan would require environmental review and preparation of an Environmental Impact Report in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

This report was reviewed by Assistant City Attorney Michael J. Mais and by Budget and Performance Management Bureau Manager David Wodynski on August 8, 2007.

The City Council has expressed a desire to consolidate all planning documents related to the Downtown area and to prepare a specific plan that will establish and vision and an implementation plan for the future growth and development of Downtown. In order to respond to present and future

development demands, the creation of a Specific Plan would serve to provide direction and coordination of public and private expenditures.

The preparation of a Downtown Specific Plan will involve a significant staff effort and consultant assistance that will require funding. The preliminary estimate for public outreach, document preparation, and the environmental review is approximately \$400,000. The RDA has budgeted \$110,000 for this project, however, an additional \$290,000 will be required. The Departments of Community Development and Planning and Building are currently reviewing funding options and would delay implementation efforts until adequate funding has been identified and approved.

The Downtown Specific Plan could include a requirement that developers reimburse the City for associated costs. California Government Code [65456(a)] offers an avenue for a local government to recover the cost of preparing, adopting, and administering a specific plan. Once the Specific Plan is in place, developers that comply with the Specific Plan could be required to pay a fee to defray the costs of preparation, adoption and administration of the Specific Plan and EIR. Full reimbursement using this mechanism would occur over time as development occurs.

Approve recommendation.

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