

# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

333 West Ocean Blvd., 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

Long Beach, CA 90802

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March 7, 2019

## CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach

California

### RECOMMENDATION:

Determine the project is within the scope of the project previously analyzed as part of the Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater Treatment (LB-MUST) Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) (State Clearinghouse No. 2017071068) and warrants no further environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15162; and

Approve a Site Plan Review (SPR18-039) to construct a 9,680-square-foot stormwater treatment facility and associated piping and landscaping improvements at 901 De Forest Avenue in the Light Industrial (IL) zone. (District 1)

APPLICANT: Alvin Papa  
City of Long Beach  
Department of Public Works  
333 West Ocean Blvd., 9th Floor  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
(Application No. 1807-12)

### DISCUSSION

The proposed Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater Treatment (LB-MUST) Project at 901 De Forest Avenue (Project) includes the construction of a 9,680-square-foot stormwater treatment facility on an undeveloped 1.19-acre site (Exhibit A – Location Map). This Site Plan Review (SPR) entitlement is for the construction of the LB-MUST facility and associated piping and landscaping improvements.

The Project site consists of six separate parcels (Assessor Parcel Numbers: 7271-003-904, 7271-020-902, 7271-020-903, 7271-020-904, 7271-020-905, 7271-020-908) bounded by the Los Angeles River and bicycle path to the west, De Forest Avenue and Fairbanks Avenue to the east, Shoreline Drive to the south, and Drake Park to the north. The majority of the site is vacant land with sparse ornamental/non-native vegetation, utility poles, and an advertising/billboard sign (Exhibit B – Site Photos).

The area surrounding the LB-MUST facility site consists of open space, residential, and industrial land uses. Open space uses such as Drake Park and the Los Angeles River bicycle

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path are located to the north and west, respectively. A bus yard is located southeast of the Project site across De Forest Avenue/Chester Place. A one-story industrial building is located east of the Project site, across De Forest Avenue. Single-family and multi-family residential uses in the Drake Park/Willmore City Historic District are located east of the industrial building across De Forest Avenue.

The Project site is located in the Light Industrial (IL) zoning district, which allows a wide range of industries whose primary operations occur entirely within enclosed structures and which pose limited potential for environmental impacts on neighboring uses. The site is located within General Plan Land Use District 9R – Restricted Industry (LUD 9R). Similar to the IL zoning district, LUD 9R intends for industrial or manufacturing operations that are primarily indoors, with limited outdoor appurtenant activities.

All new industrial projects with five thousand (5,000) square feet or more of floor area and new construction projects on City land with building floor area of five hundred (500) square feet or greater require Site Plan Review prior to project commencement. The role of the Planning Commission is to review the project for consistency with the General Plan, zoning and Site Plan Review findings.

The applicant is requesting approval of a Site Plan Review to construct a 9,680-square-foot stormwater treatment facility. (Exhibit C – Plans). Construction of the LB-MUST facility would occur during the first phase of the overall LB-MUST Project. The proposed LB-MUST facility would be a centralized mechanical treatment facility for the treatment of urban stormwater. Stormwater would be conveyed to the LB-MUST facility from the pretreatment wetlands and treated entirely within the proposed 9,680 square foot building. The proposed building will include a treatment equipment area and ancillary storage, control, restroom, and electrical areas.

The LB-MUST building will measure 30-feet in height, which is below the 45-foot height maximum in effect for the IL zone. The building would be setback 20-feet-8-inches from the property frontage along De Forest Avenue at its narrowest point, where a minimum of 6 feet is required. Along the western portion of the property, abutting the Los Angeles River, the building would maintain a 17-foot setback at its narrowest point, where no setback is required. The Project's lot coverage is below the maximum 55 percent lot coverage standard in effect at the site. A parking lot would be located north of the building, taking access from De Forest Avenue and would maintain 16 parking spaces for the facility. The Zoning Code requires ten off-street parking spaces for a mechanical equipment building.

The building exterior will feature decorative CMU block with glazed windows and a mural painted on the north elevation of the building adjacent to the parking lot. As conditioned, the project will meet the City's development standards including building setbacks, height, and parking (Exhibit D – Findings).

All setbacks would be landscaped with drought tolerant landscaping that would function as a demonstration garden for the public. The landscape area would include interpretive signage to provide a public education component for local property and business owners to learn about the stormwater treatment process.

The Zoning Code includes provisions for required landscaping on on-site street frontages and within the public right-of-way (parkway). These provisions include, but are not limited to:

- Section 21.42.040.A.2: Within the required setback area along all street frontages, except at driveways, a minimum five-foot (5') wide landscaping strip (inside dimension to planter) shall be provided. This area shall be landscaped with one (1) tree for each fifteen (15) linear feet of street frontage and three (3) shrubs for each tree.
- Section 21.42.040.A.2: Planters. All on-site landscaped areas adjoining the public right-of-way shall be located in planters not less than three inches (3") high. The planters shall be designed to drain back onto the private property and not directly onto the public right-of-way. When required, tree-wells shall be sized to allow full growth of proposed trees within the public right-of-way.
- Section 21.42.050.B.1: One (1) large canopy street tree, of not less than twenty-four inch (24") box size, shall be provided for each twenty-five feet (25') of property line length for a new development requiring discretionary approval, Site Plan Review. Such street tree shall be of a species approved by the Director of Public Works and shall be provided with root barriers and irrigation according to the specifications of the Director of Public Works.

The proposed landscape area exceeds that of typical industrial land uses in the IL zone. The code required landscaping for on-site street frontages includes specific provisions for the number, spacing, and size of trees and the installation of planters along the public right-of-way. The proposed landscaping plan would exceed the overall intent of the landscaping standards identified in the Zoning Code, but would not meet the required spacing or quantities of trees in the street frontage or the provision of a planter along the public right-of-way. As stipulated in Section 21.25.508 (Waiver of development standards.) of the Municipal Code, the SPR Committee may waive development standards for development projects. The applicant has requested a waiver from three landscape standards included in Chapter 21.42 (Landscaping Standards) (identified above).

As justification for this waiver, the applicant has included upsized box trees in lieu of larger quantities of smaller trees in the frontage area. The Project will include Coast Live Oak and Engelmann Oak trees of a greater size than code requirements (36" box trees rather than 25" box trees). In addition, planting of these species of trees at the code prescribed spacing could be detrimental to the trees due to the size of the trees at full maturity. In addition, code required planter areas along the public right-of-way are intended to disallow water and soil silts from draining to the sidewalk and parkways. The proposed landscape area would be a demonstration garden for drought tolerant landscaping and for processes involved in the capture, retention, and reuse of on-site stormwater. The proposed landscape areas implement Low Impact Development (LID) standards and would be designed to divert runoff away from the sidewalk and the public right-of-way. In lieu of street trees, the applicant has requested that the provision of clustered on-site 36" box Coast Live Oak trees adjacent to the public right-of-way satisfy this code requirement. The overall design and volume of proposed

landscaping and the inclusion of a public education component would meet the intent of the code requirements to be waived under this SPR entitlement.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, an initial study and environmental review was prepared for this project to further evaluate land use compatibility of the project with its surroundings. Mitigation measures required for the project have been incorporated as conditions of approval to address the potential impacts aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, population and housing, and transportation/traffic, as further described in the environmental review portion below.

Because the project complies with the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and other applicable regulations, staff is able to make positive findings for the Site Plan Review. Staff has also 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 (Exhibit E – Conditions of Approval).

### **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

A total of 343 Public Hearing notices were distributed on February 15, 2019, in accordance with the provision of the Zoning Ordinance. No comments have been received as of the preparation of this report.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) (Exhibit F- Negative Declaration ND-03-17) was prepared for the proposed project. The IS/MND provided mitigation measures addressing potential impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, population and housing, and transportation/traffic. These mitigation measures are included as conditions of approval. The IS/MND was distributed to public agencies and made available for public review and comment for a CEQA-required 30-day review period that started on July 31, 2017 and ended on August 29, 2017. Comments were received during the review period. The Long Beach City Council carried out the approval of the overall LB-MUST Project on January 23, 2018.

The proposed LB-MUST facility would be consistent with the project approved by the City Council. The project would be of the same size and use as analyzed in the IS/MND, and construction and operation of the project would not result in additional impacts not identified in the environmental document (Exhibit G – Environmental Compliance Statement). The IS/MND determined that the project, in compliance with all recommended mitigation measures, would not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts. As conditioned, the project would be required to adhere to all mitigation measures identified in the IS/MND. The preparation and public availability of this IS/MND has been carried out in compliance with the provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

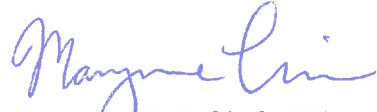
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Staff therefore recommends the Planning Commission approve Site Plan Review for construction of the LB-MUST Project consisting of a 9,680-square-foot stormwater treatment facility and associated piping and landscaping, located at 901 De Forest Avenue within the Light Industrial (IL) zone.

Respectfully submitted,



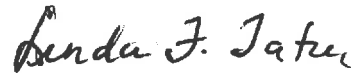
MARYANNE CRONIN  
PROJECT PLANNER



ALEXIS OROPEZA  
SENIOR PLANNER



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP  
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



LINDA F. TATUM, AICP  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

LFT:CK:AO:mc

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Attachments:

- Exhibit A – Location Map
- Exhibit B – Site Photos
- Exhibit C – Plans
- Exhibit D – Findings of Approval
- Exhibit E – Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit F – Negative Declaration ND-03-17
- Exhibit G – Environmental Compliance Statement