

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY  
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Long Beach, CA 90802-4664

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ORDINANCE NO. ORD-10-0031

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF LONG BEACH AMENDING THE  
LONG BEACH MUNICIPAL CODE BY AMENDING  
SUBSECTIONS 21.32.220.D, 21.32.225.A.2 AND  
21.32.225.A.4, SECTION 21.33.145, TABLE 33-4  
OF SECTION 21.33, SECTION 21.38.245,  
AND AMENDING CHAPTER 21.42; AND BY  
REPEALING SECTIONS 21.41.256 AND  
21.41.257, ALL RELATED TO LANDSCAPING  
STANDARDS

The City Council of the City of Long Beach does hereby ordain as follows:

Section 1. Subsection 21.32.220.D of the Long Beach Municipal Code is amended as follows:

D. Required Landscaping. All required yard areas, except yards abutting alleys and yards used for outdoor dining, shall contain an area not less than five feet (5') in width planted with trees, shrubs and/or ground cover. The four-foot (4') setback area from the abutting alley shall also be landscaped unless such area is used for a driving aisle. For additional landscape requirements, see Chapter 21.42, Landscape Standards.

Section 2. Subsections 21.32.225.A.2 and 21.32.225.A.4 of the Long Beach Municipal Code are amended as follows:

2. Parking Lots. All parking lots shall be screened as provided for in Sections 21.41.266 and Chapter 21.42.

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4. Parking Structures. All sides of a parking structure abutting a public street shall be screened by trees, vines or other decorative screening approved by the Director of Development Services. See Chapter 21.42 for additional requirements.

Section 3. Section 21.33.145 of the Long Beach Municipal Code is amended as follows:

21.33.145 Parking areas abutting streets.

Wherever a parking area abuts a property line adjacent to a street, a five-foot (5') wide landscaped strip shall be provided between the parking area and the property line abutting the public right-of-way. See Chapter 21.42 for additional requirements.

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Section 4. Table 33-4 of Section 21.33 of the Long Beach

Municipal Code is amended as follows:

Table 33-4

Minimum Required Setbacks/Yards Areas

Required Setback/Yard Area	IL	IM	IG	IP
Yard Fronting on Minor Arterial or Greater Street Classification	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft
Yard Fronting on Local or Collector Street	6 ft	0 ft	0 ft	0 ft
Parking Lot Setback for Yard Fronting on a Street	5 ft (a)	5 ft (a)	5 ft (a)	5 ft (a)
Yard Abutting Alleys	10 ft from centerline	10 ft from centerline	10 ft from centerline	10 ft from centerline
Yards Abutting Residential District	20 ft	45 ft	45 ft	No restriction
Yards Abutting Nonresidential District	0 ft (b)	0 ft (b)	0 ft (b)	0 ft (b)

Notes:

- (a) See also Section 21.33.145
- (b) Separation between buildings on adjacent lots shall be provided as required by the Fire Code and Uniform Building Code, or any successor Code.

Section 5. Subsection 21.38.245 of the Long Beach Municipal

Code is amended as follows:

The area between any corral or stable and any property line shall be landscaped and maintained in a neat and healthy condition. One (1) fifteen (15) gallon tree shall be planted for each thirty (30) linear feet of property line adjoining a public right-of-way. See Chapter 21.42 for additional landscaping requirements.

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1 Section 6. Chapter 21.42 of the Long Beach Municipal Code is  
2 hereby amended to read as follows:

3 Chapter 21.42

4 Landscaping Standards

5  
6 21.42.010 Purpose.

7 Landscapes are intended to improve the physical appearance of  
8 the City by providing visual, ecological, and psychological relief in the  
9 urban environment. Successfully designed and maintained landscape  
10 areas provide an attractive living, working, and recreating environment in  
11 addition to their role in reducing water and energy consumption.

12  
13 21.42.020 Landscaping required.

14 The provisions of this Chapter shall be the minimum requirements  
15 for the provision and maintenance of landscaped areas.

16  
17 21.42.030 General requirements.

18 The following requirements shall apply to all zoning districts:

19 A. Landscaped Area. All required yards and setback areas  
20 shall be attractively landscaped primarily with drought tolerant and native  
21 plant materials. Decorative non-living materials such as brick, stone, art,  
22 fountains and ponds may be used within the landscaped area provided  
23 such materials present an attractive setting consistent with the intent of  
24 these landscaping requirements. All landscape areas shall be completely  
25 planted or covered. "Landscape area" means all the planting areas, turf  
26 areas, and water features in a landscape design plan subject to the  
27 Maximum Applied Water Allowance calculation. The landscape area  
28 does not include footprints of buildings or structures, sidewalks,

1 driveways, parking lots, decks, patios, and other non-irrigated areas  
2 designated for non-development.

3 1. A minimum of ninety percent (90%) of total landscape  
4 area shall consist of very low to low water usage plantings based on plant  
5 species classifications provided by the State's Water Use Classifications  
6 of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) document. Planted areas containing  
7 less than ninety percent (90%) of land covered with very low to low water  
8 use planting shall require submittal of a complete Landscape Document  
9 Package showing the Estimated Total Water Usage (ETWU) of all  
10 proposed plantings falling below the property's specific Maximum Applied  
11 Water Allowance (MAWA), as specified in the Landscape Document  
12 Package application.

13 2. Non-permeable paving shall not cover more than  
14 thirty percent (30%) of on-site area that is not covered by structures and  
15 parking. To help with on site stormwater retention and filtration along with  
16 reducing the urban heat island effect, the use of permeable and high  
17 reflectance paving materials are encouraged.

18 3. Water-efficient landscape irrigation systems on  
19 automated timers and sensors shall be used and abide by all applicable  
20 Long Beach Water Department water use prohibitions.

21 4. Large canopy trees shall be used to help minimize  
22 urban heat island effect.

23 5. Projects shall be designed to minimize or eliminate  
24 use of turf.

25 6. Recirculating water systems shall be used with  
26 decorative water features. Where available, recycled water shall be used  
27 as a water source.

28 7. Plants with similar water needs shall be planted

1 together.

2 8. The use of infiltration beds, swales, and basins that  
3 allow water to collect and soak into the ground; and retention ponds that  
4 retain water, handle excess flow and filter pollutants are highly  
5 encouraged in the landscape design.

6 B. Maintenance. All landscaped and paved areas shall be  
7 maintained in a neat, attractive, orderly and water efficient condition. All  
8 paved areas, walls and fences shall be in good repair without broken  
9 parts, holes or litter. Dead or diseased plants shall be removed and  
10 replaced with plant materials that comply with the provisions of this  
11 Chapter.

12 C. Plans Required. When applicable, a Landscape Document  
13 Package shall be approved prior to the issuance of any planning or  
14 building permit. For projects proposing landscape area coverage with a  
15 minimum of ninety percent (90%) very low to low water use plantings,  
16 ETWU and MAWA calculations are not required in the Landscape  
17 Document Package submittal. Applicable landscaping, irrigation, planter  
18 drainage, water reuse, retention and filtration improvements shall be  
19 implemented before any final building and planning inspection is  
20 approved.

21  
22 21.42.035 Special requirements for Water Efficient Landscaping.

23 A. Applicability.

24 1. The requirements of this Chapter shall apply to the  
25 following projects:

26 a. All projects which require the issuance of a  
27 Site Plan Review;

28 b. New construction and rehabilitated landscapes

1 for public agency projects and private development projects with a  
2 landscape area equal to or greater than two thousand five hundred  
3 (2,500) square feet requiring a building or landscape permit, plan check or  
4 design review;

5 c. New construction and rehabilitated landscapes  
6 which are developer-installed in single-family and multi-family projects  
7 with a landscape area equal to or greater than two thousand five hundred  
8 (2,500) square feet requiring a building or landscape permit, plan check,  
9 or design review;

10 d. New construction landscapes which are  
11 homeowner-provided and/or homeowner-hired in single-family and multi-  
12 family residential projects with a total project landscape area equal to or  
13 greater than five thousand (5,000) square feet requiring a building or  
14 landscape permit, plan check or design review;

15 e. Cemeteries. Recognizing the special  
16 landscape management needs of cemeteries, new and rehabilitated  
17 cemeteries are limited to Sections 492.4, 492.11 and 492.12; and existing  
18 cemeteries are limited to Sections 493, 493.1 and 493.2 of the California  
19 Code of Regulations Title 23, Chapter 2.7, Model Water Efficient  
20 Landscape Ordinance;

21 f. Existing landscapes are limited to Sections  
22 493, 493.1 and 493.2 of the California Code of Regulations Title 23,  
23 Chapter 2.7, Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance; and

24 g. Public facilities and public right-of-way.

25 2. The requirements of this Chapter shall not apply to  
26 the following projects:

27 a. Registered local, state or federal historical  
28 sites;

- 1 b. Landscape projects not connected to the
- 2 public water system;
- 3 c. Ecological restoration projects that do not
- 4 require a permanent irrigation system; or
- 5 d. Plant collections, as part of botanical gardens
- 6 and arboretums open to the public.

7 3. Special landscaped areas including sports fields, golf  
8 courses, and playgrounds where turf is the surface utilized for recreational  
9 use may require water exceeding the Maximum Applied Water Allowance  
10 (MAWA). As such, justification must be provided in the submittal  
11 documentation outlining specific hydrozones needed for additional water  
12 exceeding the MAWA. Turf shall be limited to areas utilized for high  
13 recreation areas while the perimeter areas shall utilize drought-tolerant  
14 and native plants in hydrozones (very low water and low water use).

15 4. Orchards, community gardens and nurseries may  
16 require water exceeding the MAWA. As such, justification must be  
17 provided in the submittal documentation outlining specific hydrozones  
18 needed for additional water exceeding the MAWA.

19 5. Edible plant gardens may comprise up to ten percent  
20 (10%) of total landscaped area. Edible plant gardens in excess of ten  
21 percent (10%) but not exceeding twenty percent (20%) of total  
22 landscaped area shall use an adequately sized rain barrel or other water  
23 retention system for garden irrigation.

24  
25 21.42.040 Landscaping standards for R-3, R-4 and  
26 Non-residential Districts.

27 A. Applicability. All portions of a lot not paved or occupied by a  
28 structure shall be attractively landscaped. All required set back areas



1 shall be landscaped unless used for a permitted use.

2 B. Landscape Area Requirements. A minimum number of  
3 plants shall be provided as follows:

4 1. On-Site Street Frontage.

5 a. Within the required setback area along all  
6 street frontages, except at driveways, a minimum five-foot (5') wide  
7 landscaping strip (inside dimension to planter) shall be provided. This  
8 area shall be landscaped with one (1) tree for each fifteen (15) linear feet  
9 of street frontage and three (3) shrubs for each tree.

10 b. Sites with more than one hundred feet (100') of  
11 street frontage shall also provide one (1) tree of not less than thirty-six  
12 inch (36") box size for each one hundred feet (100') of street frontage.

13 c. Planters. All on-site landscaped areas  
14 adjoining the public right-of-way shall be located in planters not less than  
15 three inches (3") high. The planters shall be designed to drain back onto  
16 the private property and not directly onto the public right-of-way. When  
17 required, tree-wells shall be sized to allow full growth of proposed trees  
18 within the public right-of-way.

19 2. Parking Lots.

20 a. One (1) canopy tree shall be provided for each  
21 four (4) open parking spaces. Trees may be clustered provided the fifty  
22 percent (50%) tree canopy shade coverage of all parking stall and related  
23 drive aisle areas, after ten (10) years of growth, is achieved. A minimum  
24 of one (1) cluster for each one hundred feet (100') of a row or double row  
25 of parking spaces shall be provided.

26 b. A minimum four foot (4') by four foot (4')  
27 planter size shall be provided to allow full growth of proposed trees.

28 c. Screening Required. A three-foot (3') tall

1 masonry wall, landscaped berm, or hedge shall be provided in the event  
2 parking areas abut a street frontage. See Section 21.41.266.C for  
3 requirements.

4 d. Wheel Stops. No vehicles shall be permitted  
5 to overhang required landscaped areas behind wheel stops. See Section  
6 21.41.269 for requirements.

7 3. Parking Structures.

8 a. An attractive six-foot (6') wide landscaping  
9 strip shall be provided on all sides of the structure except at driveways  
10 and walkways. One (1) tree shall be provided for each twenty feet (20') of  
11 perimeter of the structure in addition to required screening when abutting  
12 a residential district, school, or a street frontage. Trees bordering the  
13 parking structure shall be of a species that will obtain a mature height of  
14 not less than the height of the structure. The trees shall be of a species  
15 or shall be located or trimmed in such a way as to prevent people from  
16 using them to gain unauthorized access to otherwise secured areas.

17 b. Abutting Residential Zone, School, or Public  
18 Street. All sides of a parking structure abutting a residential zone, school  
19 or public street shall be screened by vines or other decorative screen  
20 approved by the Director of Development Services.

21 c. Wheel Stops. No vehicles shall be permitted  
22 to overhang required landscape areas behind wheel stops. See Section  
23 21.41.269 for requirements.

24 4. Yards and Parking Lots Near Residential District and  
25 Schools.

26 a. Residential (R-3, R-4), Commercial, Mixed-  
27 Use, and Light Industrial (IL) Districts. A minimum five-foot (5') wide  
28 landscaped strip shall be provided as a buffer along all yard areas

1 abutting or adjacent to an alley, a residential district or school. This area  
2 shall be planted fifteen feet (15') on center with broad leaf evergreen trees  
3 and minimum twenty-four inch (24") box size.

4 b. Medium Industrial (IM), General Industrial (IG)  
5 and Port-related Industrial (IP) Districts. A minimum fifteen-foot (15') wide  
6 landscaped strip shall be provided along the full extent of the property line  
7 between the two (2) districts. This area shall be landscaped with one  
8 broad leaf evergreen tree, of minimum twenty-four inch (24") box size, for  
9 each fifteen (15) linear feet along the property line, as well as appropriate  
10 shrubs and groundcover.

11 5. Landscaping Over Parking Garages and Other Green  
12 Roofs.

13 a. Landscaped areas on top of parking garages  
14 or other green roofs shall factor in the structural integrity of the building;

15 b. The landscaped areas shall be identified as  
16 requiring shallow soils (extensive) or deep soils (intensive);

17 c. Extensive green roofs shall contain less than  
18 six (6) inches deep of soil to promote plant growth;

19 d. Intensive green roofs shall contain deeper soils  
20 to support a deeper layer of growing medium; and

21 e. Landscaping over parking garages and other  
22 green roofs shall contain irrigation and maintenance measures.

23 6. Other Yard Areas.

24 There shall be a minimum of one (1) tree provided for  
25 each one hundred twenty-five (125) square feet of other required yard  
26 area on the lot. In addition, there shall be a minimum of three (3) shrubs  
27 provided per tree.

28 7. Fences and retaining walls. All required fences and

1 retaining walls shall be landscaped with vines planted no more than ten  
2 feet (10') on center on all accessible sides of a wall or alternative plant  
3 materials approved by the Director of Development Services.

4 C. Plant Size. All the required plant materials shall be not less  
5 than the following sizes:

6 1. Trees. For required on-site trees, at least twenty-four  
7 inch (24") box and seven foot (7') in height;

8 2. Shrubs. For required shrubs, at least five (5) gallons;  
9 and

10 3. Mulch. A minimum of three-inch (3") mulch shall be  
11 applied on all exposed soil services of landscaped areas.

12 D. Substitutions. The following substitutions for required  
13 landscaping materials may be made subject to approval of the Director of  
14 Development Services:

15 1. Three (3) fifteen (15) gallon trees for one (1) twenty-  
16 four inch (24") box tree;

17 2. One (1) thirty-six inch (36") box tree for two (2)  
18 twenty-four inch (24") box trees;

19 3. One (1) forty-eight inch (48") box tree for four (4)  
20 twenty-four inch (24") box trees;

21 4. One (1) twenty-four inch (24") box tree for five (5) five  
22 (5) gallon shrubs; and

23 5. Five (5) one (1) gallon shrubs for one (1) five (5)  
24 gallon shrub.

25 E. Planting Distance Between Trees. Adding the diameter of  
26 two (2) adjacent tree canopies and dividing by two (2) shall determine  
27 planting distance between two (2) trees. Distance between trees shall not  
28 be less than fifteen feet (15') or greater than twenty-five feet (25').

1 F. Plant Height. Plant height shall not exceed three feet (3') in  
2 corner cut-off areas.

3 G. Green Building Development Standards. In addition to the  
4 above requirements, projects requiring Site Plan Review shall comply with  
5 the Green Building Development Standards located in Section 21.45.400.

6 H. Exceptions. The Site Plan Review Committee may waive  
7 any of the landscape standards if it finds that such changes will create a  
8 more functional, water or energy efficient, sustainable or cohesive design.

9  
10 21.42.050 Landscaping standards—Public right-of-way (Parkway).

11 A. Responsibility. Pursuant to the requirements of this  
12 Chapter, the owner of private property adjoining the public right-of-way  
13 shall be responsible to plant, install and maintain landscaping in the area  
14 between the curb and the private property line for the entire frontage of  
15 the property. For any landscaping or paving in the parkway that does not  
16 conform or comply with the requirements of this Chapter, the City of Long  
17 Beach shall not be responsible for any loss or damage to such  
18 landscaping or paving materials in the parkway, such as cast-in-place  
19 concrete or paving units set on concrete, associated with street, curb or  
20 sidewalk repairs, or any other municipal repair or maintenance function.

21 B. Street Trees.

22 1. Provision of Trees. One (1) large canopy street tree,  
23 of not less than twenty-four-inch (24") box size, shall be provided for each  
24 twenty-five feet (25') of property line length whenever a new dwelling unit  
25 is added to the adjoining property or new development requiring  
26 discretionary approval, Site Plan Review, or a fence built under the  
27 special fence height provisions. Such street tree shall be of a species  
28 approved by the Director of Public Works and shall be provided with root

1 barriers and irrigation according to the specifications of the Director of  
2 Public Works.

3 2. Exceptions. Street trees shall be spaced from  
4 driveways, light standards, intersections, utility poles and street furniture  
5 and shall be located only in the prescribed width of parkway as provided  
6 in Chapter 14.28 of this Code. An in-lieu fee shall be provided for any  
7 tree required in Subsection 21.42.050.B.1 that is not allowed by the  
8 provisions of Chapter 14.28. Such fee shall be established by the City  
9 Council by resolution and shall only be used for planting street trees in  
10 other locations that do comply with these standards. Such fee shall be  
11 paid to the Director of Public Works, and shall be based on the actual cost  
12 to the Department of Public Works to obtain and plant a tree.

13 3. Removal. No street tree shall be removed unless  
14 found by the Director of Public Works to be dead, dying, or a public  
15 hazard due to damage to curb, gutter, sidewalk or roadway or potential for  
16 falling, or for replacement of trees in an approved street tree program.  
17 Such approval shall be recorded with the Department of Development  
18 Services before the tree is removed.

19 C. Parkway Landscaping.

20 1. Provision of Landscaping. The area between the  
21 sidewalk and the curb and between the sidewalk and the private property  
22 line, if any, shall be landscaped primarily with live plant material and  
23 maintained in a neat and healthy condition. Nonliving material and  
24 decorative elements may be used within the parkway in accordance with  
25 the provisions of this Chapter. The owner of private property adjoining the  
26 public right-of-way shall be responsible for planting and maintaining such  
27 landscaping. Sidewalk width shall be four feet (4') or, if adjoining the curb,  
28 five feet (5'), as provided in Chapter 20.36.

1 a. Applicability of additional requirements. At the  
2 time of new development involving Site Plan Review from the Planning  
3 Bureau or when a complete Landscape Plan submittal is required, the  
4 Planning Bureau may place additional requirements for parkway  
5 landscaping beyond the above, e.g., requiring low to very low water usage  
6 plant materials, as defined by WUCOLS, over at least ninety percent  
7 (90%) of the total landscaped area.

8 2. Live Planting Material. Groundcover of not more than  
9 eight inches (8") in height, accent plantings or shrubbery not more than  
10 thirty-two inches (32") in height and street trees are the only plant  
11 materials allowed in the parkway. The planting of low-water demand and  
12 drought-tolerant plant materials shall be encouraged by the City of Long  
13 Beach. High-water demand plant material that require, at maturity, one  
14 inch (1") or more of irrigation water per week shall be prohibited.  
15 Automatic irrigation systems, if installed, shall be maintained so as to  
16 conserve water, and shall not cause water to runoff into the sidewalk or  
17 street or pond within the parkway.

18 3. Nonliving Material. Permeable groundcovers that  
19 accept foot traffic, such as decomposed granite, inorganic and organic  
20 mulches, and modular paving units set on sand, are the only nonliving  
21 materials allowed in the parkway and shall not cover fifty percent (50%) or  
22 more of the total parkway area.

23 4. Decorative Elements. Decorative stone, wood or  
24 other elements that are smooth-surfaced are allowed in the parkway, and  
25 shall not project more than eight inches (8") above the surface.

26 5. Exceptions. The paving of the parkway shall be  
27 prohibited, except as follows:

28 a. Rights-of-way subject to major uses for

1 commercial or retail purposes, or abutting a major arterial or regional  
2 corridor street as designated in the Transportation Element of the General  
3 Plan, may be paved for the full depth of the curb to property line area as  
4 determined by the City Engineer and the Director of Development  
5 Services;

6 b. The paving of the parkway is installed by a  
7 public utility, the City of Long Beach or another governmental agency for a  
8 public purpose;

9 c. The paving of the parkway is for a City-  
10 approved driveway;

11 d. A paved parkway was approved with the  
12 subdivision map for the property; or

13 e. A standards variance is approved. Such  
14 standards variance shall not require public notice and shall be charged  
15 the "mini-variance" fee.

16 6. Approval of Paving. If an exception is allowed, the  
17 parkway may be paved according to the specification of the Director of  
18 Development Services. Prior to paving the parkway, the adjoining  
19 property owner must obtain a street improvement permit from the Director  
20 of Public Works as provided in Chapter 14.08 of this Code.

21 D. Parkway Maintenance and Access.

22 1. Maintenance of Landscaping. The owner of private  
23 property adjoining the public right-of-way shall be responsible for planting  
24 and maintaining parkway landscaping free and clear of refuse, noxious  
25 weeds, hazardous materials and plants bearing thorns, stickers or other  
26 potentially injurious parts. Plants, mulches and inorganic groundcover  
27 materials shall not be allowed to overgrow or spill over the edge of the  
28 sidewalk or curb.



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2. Maintenance of Traffic Lines of Sight. For purposes of pedestrian and vehicular safety, all parkway landscaping shall be maintained so as not to interfere with necessary vehicular or pedestrian traffic lines of sight, including views of traffic signage and signals and clear views of vehicles within the roadbed or exiting driveways. Such standards, which include limitations on taller landscape elements within street intersection areas, shall be determined by the City Engineer.

3. Access through Parkways.

a. In order to maintain access between the sidewalk and legally parked cars on the curb, a minimum eighteen-inch (18") wide strip or path that accepts foot traffic shall be maintained abutting and parallel to the curb adjacent to legal parking spaces. Additional space may be required as needed at public transit stops at the direction of the City Engineer.

b. In order to prevent obstructions to public access across parkways, continuous hedge-like plantings shall be prohibited. Single specimen shrubs or groupings of elevated landscape materials, including accent plantings or shrubbery of more than eight inches (8") in height, decorative rock and other elements, shall not extend more than six feet (6') along a parkway as measured parallel to the curb, and must be spaced at least thirty-six inches (36") apart as measured parallel to the curb.

c. The berming of earth or other landscape materials of more than twelve inches (12") in height above the sidewalk at its highest point, or the creation of a bioswale or depression of more than twelve inches (12") in depth at its lowest point, shall be prohibited.

d. Fencing of any kind shall be prohibited in parkways, except for curbing of not more than six inches (6") in height

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intended to contain groundcover material.

Section 7. Sections 21.41.256 and 21.41.257 of the Long Beach Municipal Code are hereby repealed.

Section 8. The City Clerk shall certify to the passage of this ordinance by the City Council and cause it to be posted in three (3) conspicuous places in the City of Long Beach, and it shall take effect on the thirty-first (31st) day after it is approved by the Mayor.

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was adopted by the City Council of the City of Long Beach at its meeting of October 12, 2010, by the following votes:


Ayes: Councilmembers: Garcia, DeLong, O'Donnell, Schipske,  
Andrews, Johnson, Gabelich, Neal,  
Lowenthal.

Noes: Councilmembers: None.

Absent: Councilmembers: None.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

Approved: 10/13/10  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor