



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

333 West Ocean Blvd., 5th Floor Long Beach, CA 90802 (562) 570-6194 FAX (562) 570-6068

November 19, 2015

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the City Council receive and file the Green Terminal Island (TI) plan. (District 7)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach
Department of Development Services
333 West Ocean Boulevard, 5th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

BACKGROUND

Port-serving infrastructure including rail facilities, freeways, logistical facilities and oil refineries surround and negatively impact West Long Beach, which has long endured elevated levels of air pollution. The ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles account for 40 percent of all container traffic in the United States. In addition to air pollution, West Long Beach has only one acre of open space per 1,000 residents, compared to the citywide average of 5.8 acres of open space per 1,000 residents.

On September 19, 2013, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) awarded the City an Environmental Justice planning grant to prepare a community vision for the transition of the Terminal Island (TI) Freeway into a greenbelt and a local-serving road. The TI Freeway separates West Long Beach residences, schools and parks from heavy industrial operations to the east, including a railway logistics facility and oil refinery. Entitled the Green TI, the plan is a concept for the reuse of the 25-acre, mile-long City-owned segment of the freeway from the Pacific Coast Highway cloverleaf north to Willow Street (Exhibit A). This freeway segment is recommended for decommissioning in the City's recently adopted Mobility Element to mitigate pollution impacts to address long-standing community health concerns. The Green TI plan represents the initial community outreach of a larger comprehensive effort that will include additional outreach, environmental review, civil engineering and public financing.

The preparation of the Green TI plan was a collaborative effort by the Development Services, Public Works, Health and Human Services, and Harbor Departments.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Green TI represents an extensive public engagement process that included community workshops, small group meetings, and outreach to the media and schools. Residents and property owners were invited to attend four workshops to elicit their vision for the re-use of the TI Freeway. For all the workshops, promotional flyers were developed in four languages (English, Spanish, Tagalog and Khmer) in compliance with the City's approved Language Access Policy. In addition, for each workshop, promotional flyers were sent home with 12,000 Long Beach Unified School District students within the project area. Lastly, the promotional flyers were posted on the City's Development Services website and meeting notices were distributed via social and traditional media.

The first community workshop was held on Saturday, December 6, 2014, at Silverado Park. Over 100 participants contributed to setting the community's goals and vision for the Green TI plan. The second community workshop was held on Saturday, March 14, 2015, with over 70 people in attendance to consider the design criteria for open space features and mobility options. The third community workshop was held on Saturday, July 18, 2015, to review and provide comment on the conceptual open space design. 42 participants attended this event. The fourth and final community workshop, on Saturday, October 24, 2015, was designed as a block-party, where a portion of Hill Street abutting the TI Freeway was closed for a community celebration to exhibit the Green TI concept plan and demonstrated the proposed green buffer design elements. Over 100 people attended this community celebration.

More than 20 small-group meetings and stakeholder interviews were held with local neighborhood businesses, port-affiliated businesses, schools, neighborhood associations and property owners. These meetings ranged from stand-alone meetings to project team members attending set meetings of different organizations throughout the community. These small-group settings allowed community stakeholders to provide in-depth comments on how the removal of this freeway segment would impact their business operations. For that reason, some community stakeholders oppose this plan. Lastly, a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of topic-specific experts was assembled to validate the efficiency of the draft concept plan.

Green TI Plan

Building upon feedback from each successive workshop, the project team developed a conceptual plan for the reuse of the TI Freeway as a greenbelt and a local-serving road. The general consensus for the project goals is:

- Provide Environmental Benefits to Our Community
- Prevent Overflow Freeway Traffic into the Neighborhood
- Quiet Noise and Reduce Freeway Intrusion
- Link the Residential Neighborhoods and Schools
- Introduce Pedestrian and Bike Paths

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As such, the concept plan includes a park road that delineates the passive open space from the limited access planted buffer and wetlands area. The park road, planted buffer and wetlands area represents approximately 80 percent of the open space acreage. The programming features of the passive open space include: community gardens, nature play, outdoor classroom and plaza.

NEXT STEPS

The Green TI plan is the final outcome of the Caltrans Environmental Justice planning grant. However, the Green TI plan is the necessary first step for City staff to seek additional funding for environmental review, including traffic and air quality impact analysis, and engineering and constructions costs.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend the City Council receive and file the Green TI Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment: Exhibit A – Green TI Plan