



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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August 20, 2015

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the City Council receive and file the West Long Beach Livability Implementation Plan. (Districts 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8)

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

BACKGROUND

Over the last several decades the City has prepared various plans for West Long Beach. These have included zoning and land use plans, park improvement plans, public works and transportation plans, as well as port impact-area mitigation plans, green port policy plans, and climate action plans. Additionally, capital improvements for the area are covered in the City budget within the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). While these prior planning efforts all serve specific purposes, a need exists to provide a single document with an overall framework and implementation plan for improving livability in West Long Beach. The Board of Harbor Commissioners has graciously provided the full funding and impetus for this effort. Harbor Department staff has partnered with staff from the Development Services Department in creating and developing the West Long Beach Livability Implementation Plan (The Plan), which is an implementation program for public improvements to West Long Beach. The Plan will influence public and private investment in West Long Beach, impacting matters before both commissions in the years to come. The Harbor Commission reviewed, received and filed this matter on July 27, 2015.

The Planning Commission held a study session on this matter on June 18, 2015. At that meeting, staff provided a general overview of the Plan and the Commission received public testimony. The comments received from the public and the Commission involved several key issues: the use of existing plans and projects to compile this plan, outreach for the Plan, implementation of the Plan over time, and the economic impacts of the Plan.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Plan presents a comprehensive approach for achieving the community's vision for healthy, vibrant, attractive, and safe neighborhoods. The purpose of the Plan is to promote livability, including environmental quality, community health and safety, the quality of the built environment, and economic vitality. A liveable community promotes pride amongst its

residents and creates spaces for walking, bicycling, transit use, and outdoor exercise, along with social and economic opportunity for all community members.

The Plan defines West Long Beach according to Zone 1A of the Port of Long Beach (Port) Community Mitigation Grant Program (Figure 2.2 Project Boundary, Page 9 of Exhibit A). This community consists of over 85,000 residents living in diverse neighborhoods. Despite the impacts of air, noise, and other pollutants, these neighborhoods of West Long Beach include parks, schools, recreation opportunities, health services, and most importantly, an engaged citizenry dedicated to the area's improvement.

The focus of the Plan is different than a Port or facility mitigation plan, which would focus solely on achieving reductions in emissions and physical health impacts of those emissions. This Plan is also different than a standard transportation or infrastructure plan that would focus solely on moving goods and people and less on the way those systems create or hinder community. The purpose of this Plan is to pull all of these features together and provide not only a vision, but an achievable pathway to realizing that vision.

The Plan groups projects together to achieve synergistic gains. For example, the West Zone (Figure 4.7 Strategy 1, Page 41 of Exhibit A) projects include intersecting streetscape, transit, and bicycle improvements. Individually a bikeway is of limited value, creating opportunity only for those who start and end their journey along its route. Coupled with streetscape and transit improvements, the bikeway is able to open bicycle commuting and recreational opportunities to a host of residents connected by transit and walking opportunities. These improvements have air quality benefits by moving trips from cars to bicycles, treating stormwater with new streetscape planting, and creating the fabric to stimulate private-sector investment and job creation along reinvigorated corridors.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The public engagement process for this Plan has been extensive. The overall strategy focused on combining two large events with smaller focused meetings. Workshops were held in the community during December 2014 and March 2015, with over 90 and 60 attendees respectively. Flyers regarding the project were distributed to over 12,000 school children in the area. More than 20 small-group meetings were held that ranged from stand-alone meetings to project team staff attending set meetings of different organizations throughout the community. A summary of outreach meetings and other outreach efforts is included as Exhibit B.

As would be expected in a diverse community of 85,000 residents, the outreach process resulted in differing priorities and opinions from different participants and different specific neighborhoods. The resulting Plan attempts to reflect the consensus of input received and pays particular attention to location-specific preferences that were given by participants about the neighborhoods in which they live. Outreach will continue as the individual projects within the plan move forward toward funding and construction.

THE LIST OF PROJECTS

The Plan sets forth three geographically specific strategies (Figure 4.5 All LiNC Projects, Page 39 of Exhibit A) with projects appropriate to each specific area. This list of projects builds upon strategies that apply to the entire area. Both the location specific and the area-

wide projects build from previous studies and plans. The purpose of starting from existing plans was not to limit the scope of improvements (in fact some items in the plan are new), but rather to build on existing efforts and to focus on improvements that could be delivered over the next decade

The area-wide strategies include the following:

- Addressing existing environmental hazards in the home (primarily lead).
- Health promotion primarily through the Healthy Long Beach program.
- Greenhouse gas reduction through improved energy efficiency.
- Air filtration through tree planting and mechanical filters at schools, daycares, and hospitals.
- Mobile health clinics and other tools to improve health service delivery.

Atop these areawide service approaches are a host of projects for each area, broadly falling into the categories of streetscape, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, transit improvements, park improvements, and major road projects. Streetscape plans have a multitude of benefits: improved sidewalks lead to improvements in pedestrian safety and decreases in preventable auto collision deaths, they create new planting areas that absorb pollution in the air and the water, they provide a walking link to bikeway and transit infrastructure, and they upgrade the overall look and feel of corridors, leading to private investment and job creation.

Bicycle and pedestrian improvements work in concert with transit improvements to improve mobility and clean the air by shifting trips from automobiles to bikes and transit. Many of these improvements are aimed at improving safety, as well as the comfort and experience of walking, cycling, or riding the bus. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements are focused on the sidewalks and paths leading to transit stops whereas the transit improvements are focused on benches, shelters and other amenities at the transit stop. Park improvements are focused in assuring not only adequate open space, but that community open space reflects the uses and programming that fulfills the needs of all area residents.

The major roadway improvements identified in the plan; realignment of Shoreline Drive, reconfiguration of the Terminal Island Freeway between PCH and Willow, and improving the 405 connection to Long Beach Boulevard, seek to create greater connections between people, parks, and amenities, while still assuring smooth vehicle movement and access.

The list of projects within the Plan seeks to strike a balance between sufficiently robust and ambitious projects, and the reality of what is possible in the forthcoming decade. Projects are included because they are considered achievable and the implementation strategy is set forth in Chapter 5 of the Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

The West Long Beach Livability Implementation Plan team includes staff from the Development Services Department and the Harbor Department who will continue coordination meetings and oversee the Plan's implementation. The Plan will be formally received by the City Council and will inform the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the Harbor Department's mitigation and grant programs. The Plan includes an evaluation and measurement focus so that the implementation team can continually

evaluate their progress and make adjustments as necessary.

The Plan lists available grants and other potential funding sources to assist the City in implementing these programs. Because the plan establishes the relationship between component projects and the larger goals and vision, staff anticipates that the Plan will enhance the City's likelihood to obtain funding for projects that have cumulative benefits larger than the sum of its parts. The Plan addresses a primary concern of grantors: that projects should fit into a larger program and that program results should be measured and continuously evaluated for effectiveness. Several case studies are included in Chapter 5 that show how effective this strategic approach has been in neighboring jurisdictions.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend the City Council receive and file the West Long Beach Livability Implementation Plan. In the opinion of staff, the Plan reflects community input, needs, and preferences. The Plan provides sufficient detail to guide public investment and infrastructure development in West Long Beach in a fashion that will strengthen and improve the diverse neighborhoods within the designated area. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission request that Development Services staff include the status of plan implementation in its annual work program.

General Plan Consistency

The West Long Beach Livability Implementation Plan is consistent with the goals and policies of the City's General Plan. The Plan is designed to implement several aspects of the General Plan including the Mobility Element goals of creating an efficient, balanced, multimodal mobility network; the Open Space and Recreation Element focus on open space and public safety, the Land Use Element goal of neighborhood emphasis, as well as the safety and liveability goals in all the other General Plan elements.

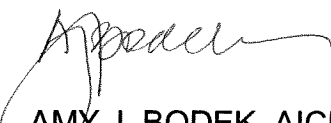
Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment: Exhibit A - Livable West Long Beach Implementation Plan
Exhibit B - Outreach Summary