

# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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

Long Beach, CA 90802

(562) 570-6194

FAX (562) 570-6068

November 9, 2015

## CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach  
California

### RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend the City Council certify Supplemental EIR 02-15 and approve a Site Plan Review in conjunction with the new Long Beach Civic Center project, a four-block development consisting of a new City Hall, new Port Building for Harbor Department administration, a new Main Library, a redeveloped Lincoln Park, and private residential and commercial mixed-use buildings, in addition to three parking garages, public street extensions of Chestnut and Cedar Avenues, related infrastructure and landscaping, and the demolition of the former Long Beach Courthouse and existing City Hall building at 333 W. Ocean Boulevard in the Downtown Planned Development District (PD-30). (Districts 1 & 2)

### APPLICANT:

Plenary Edgemoor Civic Partners  
c/o Jeffrey Fullerton  
18201 Von Karman Avenue  
Irvine, CA 92612  
Application No. 1504-04

### DISCUSSION

The need for a replacement Civic Center was first formally identified in 2007, when the Department of Public Works presented to the City Council a study identifying major seismic deficiencies of the existing City Hall building. The study concluded that extensive seismic renovations were needed to protect lives during a major seismic event, and that renovations in conjunction with required building code upgrades, systems replacements, overall maintenance, and staff relocation during the retrofit period would cost approximately \$170 million. The Main Library building was found to suffer from similar seismic and building systems deficiencies. Findings of this original study were confirmed in a second study performed and presented to the City Council in 2013, at which point the City Council authorized staff to release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the development, construction, and operation of a new Civic Center. The qualifying development teams shortlisted in the RFQ process were then asked to respond to a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the design, build, finance, operation, and maintenance of a new Civic Center. In December 2013, Plenary-Edgemoor Civic Partners was selected unanimously by the City Council to develop the new Civic Center in a public-private partnership.



The Civic Center project area encompasses 15.87 acres and is comprised of two separate development sites: a large, three-block site that lies generally between Broadway to the north, Ocean Boulevard to the south, Pacific Avenue to the east, and Magnolia Avenue to the West, and a .9-acre parcel at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Pacific Avenue (Exhibit A – Location Map). The three-block core of the Civic Center project consists of the Civic Block, Center Block, and the Library-Lincoln Park Block. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and Pacific Avenue site, herein referred to as the Third and Pacific Block, represents the fourth of the Civic Center development blocks.

The project area is generally surrounded by a mix of high-rise office and multi-family residential buildings. The south side of Ocean Boulevard, adjacent to the project site, is comprised of multiple residential buildings (ranging in height from six – 25 stories), two commercial office buildings (ranging in height from 15 – 18 stories), and a one-story retail strip center. West of the project site, across Magnolia Avenue, sits the eight-story Glenn M. Anderson Federal Building and a four-level parking garage. North of the project site, across Broadway, sits the five-story, mixed-use Gallery 421 development, commercial office and retail buildings (ranging in height from one – three stories), and a vacant parcel that's been approved for a seven-story mixed-use development. East of the project site, across Pacific Avenue, sit two commercial office buildings (ranging in height from six – 24 stories) and a six-level parking structure.

The proposed Long Beach Civic Center project would involve demolishing all existing buildings on the project site except the Police Department administration building and Fire Station No. 1 and developing a new City Hall (City Hall), a new Port Building for Harbor Department administration (Port Building) on the Civic Block, a new Main Library (Library) and a redeveloped Lincoln Park on the Library-Lincoln Park Block, and a residential and commercial mixed-use development on the Center Block. In total, the project includes six new buildings and three parking garages, including a new subterranean garage below the Civic Block (Exhibit B – Plans).

To support the new buildings and break up the super blocks to reestablish the small block grid of the historic downtown, the project calls for the extension of Chestnut Avenue and Cedar Avenue from Broadway to Ocean Boulevard. Additionally, a section of 1st Street, between the extended Chestnut and Cedar Avenues, would be developed and operated as a privately owned street between the Phase II Center Block commercial and residential buildings. These new roadway segments would provide greater circulation and site accessibility, and feature pedestrian and bicycle-friendly amenities that facilitate visits to the site by means other than the automobile.

The developer's Civic Center proposal reflects an understanding of the PD-30 development standards and design criteria. All uses proposed for the project are permitted by right, provided on-site parking is consistent with applicable standards, and buildings would not exceed PD-30 height limitations. The three City buildings have been designed to meet the LEED Gold standard of building performance, and sustainable design principles played an integral part in shaping the architecture of these buildings and the design of open spaces on the project site, including Lincoln Park and the civic plaza (Exhibit C – Findings).



## THE CIVIC BLOCK

The Civic Block, located between Ocean Boulevard and Broadway, east of Magnolia Avenue, is currently developed with the six-story, 277,000-square-foot Long Beach Courthouse and its surface parking lot. Since the opening of its replacement—the George Deukmejian Courthouse at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Magnolia Avenue— in September 2013, the Long Beach Courthouse has sat vacant and would be demolished as part of this project.

The Civic Block contains four major components: City Hall, Port Building, an open public plaza, and a shared underground parking structure. The 11-story City Hall would stand approximately 165 feet tall and contain approximately 270,000 square feet of floor area. Like the current City Hall, it would house office space for elected officials and City staff, public service counters, meeting rooms, and a 250-seat Council Chamber. The Port Building would similarly contain 11 stories and stand approximately 163 feet tall. The building's 240,000 square feet of floor area would primarily serve the administrative functions of the Harbor Department, which is currently headquartered at 4801 Airport Plaza Drive. The two buildings would be separated by a 73,000-square-foot civic plaza, which is designed as an outdoor gathering place for both formal and informal events. In addition to landscape and hardscape improvements, the plaza would feature a history loop, a spine connecting a variety of historic timeline markers that commemorate the rich history of the City and the Port. Elements to be included in the history loop, which would extend from the Civic Block to the Library-Lincoln Park Block, include the Police and Firefighter Memorial, the bicycle sculpture, and the clock tower, all of which would be relocated from their existing civic center locations. A parking structure containing approximately 509 parking stalls and shared infrastructure for the two buildings would be located beneath the site, accessible from Magnolia Avenue and Chestnut Avenue vehicle access points.

The City Hall Building and Port Building would feature similar orientation, massing, and design. The broad sides of both buildings would face north and south in order to enhance energy performance and maximize their views of the city, Port of Long Beach, and the ocean. City Hall would feature a two-story textured precast concrete and glass podium that would extend out from the main high-rise tower of the building, giving it a more human scale from a pedestrian vantage. The vertical, high-rise towers of each building would feature a glass curtain wall and metal panel system. Whereas City Hall's curtain wall would be more transparent, the Port Building would feature solid, colored "shadow box" glass inserts that would pay homage to the rows of multi-colored shipping containers that have come to symbolize the port.

The City Hall building would be situated at the northern end of the Civic Block. A double-height, elliptical-shaped wing housing the Council Chamber would extend south, along Magnolia Avenue, from City Hall's podium. Along the broad side of the building, adjacent to the plaza, the building features a colonnade that would direct visitors to the building's main entry, which opens to an expansive lobby, and provide shelter in sunny



or inclement weather. Public entry into the Council Chamber would be provided, as well as convenient entry doors into the public service counter areas on the ground floor from the adjacent colonnade area. Situated on the southern end of the Civic Block, the Port Building would be located, symbolically and physically, closest to the ocean. It would feature entrances from both Ocean Boulevard and the plaza, and like City Hall would be raised slightly off the adjacent street grade for an added sense of prominence.

### **THE CENTER BLOCK (Private Development)**

The Center Block, located between the Civic Block on the west and the Library-Lincoln Park Block on the east, is currently developed with the 14-story, 283,000-square-foot Long Beach City Hall and the four-level Broadway parking structure. Development of the Center Block represents Phase II of the Civic Center development, as the existing City Hall building will need to be in operation until the new City Hall is built. Once the new City Hall is operational, the existing City Hall will be demolished and replaced with a two-building mixed-use development that would include up to 580 residential units, 32,000 square feet of retail space, and 8,000 square feet of restaurant space. A high-rise, 200-room hotel would also be a potential Center Block component. An underground parking structure containing up to 725 parking stalls would service these uses, and the existing Broadway parking structure would remain in place.

The Center Block's residential and commercial mixed-use developments would provide vibrancy and a continuous 24-hour presence to the Civic Center site, bringing a nighttime dynamic that's missing from the current Civic Center. Retail and restaurant spaces would line the ground floor of the two buildings, and the streetscape would feature wide sidewalks, decorative paving, street trees, and a curb-less street design. The specific developments on this block would come before the Planning Commission at a later date, with their own individual Site Plan Review once they are fully designed. It should be noted that the timing of development on this block is contingent upon favorable market conditions. It is possible that this site will remain vacant for some period of time should the real estate market soften.

### **LIBRARY-LINCOLN PARK BLOCK**

The Library-Lincoln Park Block, located between Ocean Boulevard and Broadway, west of Pacific Avenue, is currently developed with the two-story, 138,000-square-foot Main Library, Lincoln Park, and the subterranean, two-level Lincoln parking garage. This garage serves City employees only, and will continue to be used exclusively for employee parking after renovation. The proposal calls for the demolition of the existing library and construction of a new two-story, 92,000-square-foot replacement Main Library building at the north end of the block. After the new library is built, the existing Main Library would be demolished and the site would be redeveloped into a newly designed Lincoln Park. The existing Lincoln parking garage would be structurally renovated to support the new library above, and would include library support components on its upper level.



The new location of the Library, at the northern edge of the block and within the boundaries of Lincoln Park, reinforces the Broadway street edge and maximizes the amount of area available for rehabilitation of the remaining portion of Lincoln Park. The Library is designed as an open and inviting building with two main entrances, one to the north, off of Broadway, and the other to the south, accessible from Lincoln Park. The Library would be constructed largely of natural materials, and would feature a deep roof overhang with wood beamed ceilings that extends out over the north-end of the park, creating a porch-like effect that would provide shade for visitors. Its visually permeable facades would showcase views in and out of the library and help contribute to the illumination and activation of the surrounding urban environment.

Programmatic uses within and around Lincoln Park have been introduced to encourage a high level of use of this key City asset by the general public and draw Long Beach residents and visitors to the Civic Center. Program elements include a children's play area, an enclosed dog park, and an open, 30,000-square-foot lawn that would allow for a variety of activities ranging from concerts and public celebrations to outdoor activities such as picnics and Frisbee. Public restrooms are located adjacent to the dog park and along the 1<sup>st</sup> Street pedestrian promenade, which runs from east-to-west through the center of the park and connects the Lincoln Park-Library Block to the Civic Block. At the southeastern corner of the park, adjacent to the Ocean Boulevard and Pacific Avenue rights-of-way, a permanent trellis would provide shade and shelter for park goers and help frame the park's edge. To further enrich the area's bicycle-friendly urban environment, bicycle racks would be provided at strategic locations to encourage usage of alternative modes of transportation.

Lincoln Park would also feature a Cultural Loop that highlights public art, education, and local culture unique to Long Beach. Existing statues and art pieces, such as the eponymous statue of Abraham Lincoln, the Bicentennial Clock Tower, and the Carnegie Library Cornerstone, will be repurposed and repositioned throughout the park. The Library-Lincoln Park Block's Cultural Loop would link with a History Loop that would run along the Center Block's 1<sup>st</sup> Street extension and through the plaza on the Civic Block. Accent lighting will highlight these and other unique items within the Civic Center's open space network. The selected hardscape and plant palette would align to the Downtown Plan's vision for urban park design. A diverse range of flowering accent trees and large canopy trees would be complemented by native, drought tolerant plantings, creating a comfortable ambiance and providing clear, open views throughout the park. With a large portion of the site over the underground Lincoln Garage, planting areas would be built-up in a series of concrete seat walls and platforms that would provide the necessary soil depths, create gentle grade changes, and allow for a variety of outdoor seating options. The City's Parks, Recreation and Marine Commission formally recommended approval of the park and its amenities on October 15, 2015. Their recommendation will be provided to the City Council when the City Council considers approval of the entire project later this year.



### **THIRD AND PACIFIC BLOCK (Private Development)**

The Third and Pacific Block is currently used as a surface parking lot. The proposal calls for the construction of a mid-rise, multi-family residential complex containing up to 200 units. A multi-level parking structure containing up to 250 parking stalls would support the development. Similar to the Center Block's residential and commercial mixed-use developments, the development on the Third and Pacific Block, once it's designed, will be processed under a separate Site Plan Review and be subject to Planning Commission review.

### **ROADWAY EXTENSIONS**

To achieve greater access to the Civic Block and Center Block, Chestnut Avenue would be extended from Broadway south to Ocean Boulevard. This new roadway segment would feature an 80-foot right-of-way consisting of two traffic lanes (one in each direction), a single row of parallel parking stalls on the east side of the street, a Class II bicycle lane that would connect with the Broadway and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street bicycle boulevards north of the site and the Class II and Class III bicycle lanes south the site, and 15-foot and 23-foot sidewalk/parkway areas on the east and west sides of the street, respectively. In addition to continuing to provide egress from the Broadway parking structure, Chestnut Avenue would be used for service access to City Hall, the Port Building, and the Center Block's private developments. Permanent access to the structurally renovated Lincoln parking garage may also come off Chestnut Avenue via a subterranean tunnel that would run beneath the Center Block to the Library-Lincoln Park Block. Alternatively, permanent access to the renovated Lincoln parking garage may be designed to come off Pacific Avenue. Final determination of the access routes will be made once additional structural studies are completed.

An extension of Cedar Avenue from Broadway to Ocean Boulevard would connect the Center Block and the Library-Lincoln Park Block and feature an 80-foot right-of-way consisting of two traffic lanes (one in each direction), one row of parallel parking in each direction, and 20-foot sidewalk/parkway areas. Until the Phase II commercial and residential developments are built, Cedar Avenue will be one of two vehicle access points to the Lincoln parking garage, with the other access coming off Pacific Avenue.

Connecting the extended Chestnut and Cedar Avenues, a new extension of 1<sup>st</sup> Street would be constructed to provide greater east-west mobility and link the Civic Center area with the Metro Blue Line and Pacific and Pine Avenue commercial districts. This block would contain an 80-foot, curbless, private roadway that would consist of two traffic lanes (one in each direction), one row of parallel parking in each direction, and identical 21-foot sidewalk/parkway areas north and south of the roadway. The street would be located between the Center Block's two new building pad areas and be lined with active pedestrian-oriented commercial uses on the ground floor of these buildings. The 1<sup>st</sup> Street connection would tie the three blocks together and reinforce the idea that the Civic Center is a communal public space. Its wider sidewalks and narrow streets would favor pedestrians, and the street could be easily closed for farmer's markets, street fairs, and other outdoor events.



The proposed uses and the buildings which would house them form a coherent campus that both establishes a sense of civic identity for the site and integrates visually and physically with the surrounding downtown neighborhoods. Conditions of approval have been attached to the project to ensure the design goals for the project will be met and the infrastructure to adequately serve the development is in place (Exhibit D- Conditions of Approval).

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

The City prepared a Program Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for the Downtown Plan in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Downtown Plan Final EIR was certified in January 2012. A Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) has been prepared to examine the potential environmental effects of the proposed Civic Center project (Exhibit E – SEIR). The SEIR tiers from the Downtown Plan Final EIR. In accordance with CEQA, the SEIR is a focused study of key issues that were not identified at a project level as part of the Downtown Plan Final EIR.

The SEIR summarized the environmental impacts of the proposed project, proposed mitigation measures, and residual impacts. These impacts are grouped by classes, with Class I impacts being defined as significant, unavoidable adverse impacts which require a statement of overriding considerations; Class II impacts being defined as significant adverse impacts that can be feasibly mitigated to levels less than significant; and Class III impacts, which are those found to be less than significant. Class I project impacts associated with the proposed project consist of Air Quality, Cultural Resources, and Noise and Vibration. Class II project impacts were found in the areas of Aesthetics, Air Quality, and Noise and Vibration. Required mitigation, called for in the SEIR, includes:

- Demolition and construction site screening;
- Production of an Air Quality Safety Plan (in the event existing buildings are demolished by implosion);
- The use of low-VOC paint on all new building finishes;
- The creation of a Historic Artifact Collection Program;
- Archival documentation of historic artifacts, documents, and other objects of importance that are currently located in the existing City Hall and Library buildings;
- Noise and vibration measures for building demolition and new development; and
- Fumigation of all buildings prior to their demolition.

The Draft SEIR was made available to the public on August 4, 2015, which started a CEQA-required 45-day EIR public comment period that ended on September 17, 2015. The City received a total of nine written comments submitted by public agencies, local interest groups, and a local citizen. Issues raised in these comment letters included possible landmark eligibility of the Old Courthouse and the City Hall-Main Library complex, establishing a historic preservation mitigation fund, project vehicle trip



generation, potential project traffic impacts on I-710 intersections and interchanges, project construction and operational air quality impacts, alternatives analysis, and possible shade/shadow effects on the new Library during winter months.

In addition, a Study Session was held at the August 20, 2015 Planning Commission meeting to offer an opportunity for public testimony on the Draft SEIR. Seven individuals, including two Planning Commissioners, provided verbal comments at this Study Session. Issues raised by the speakers involved status of existing mature trees, adequate funding for the new library, location of residential uses with the project site, availability of social services in the new Lincoln Park, building wind tunnel and glare effects, possible decorative water features, and project compliance with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification requirements. The Planning Commission did not take a formal action on the project at this Study Session.

Written responses to all verbal testimony at the Study Session and to all written comments received during the Draft SEIR public comment period are provided in the Final SEIR. This Final SEIR also includes the Draft SEIR text with minor edits based on public comments as well as the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. Text edits provided in the Final SEIR did not substantially alter the Draft SEIR environmental analysis or change the conclusions of the Draft SEIR regarding potential project environmental impacts.

The Final SEIR determined that the project, even after compliance with all recommended mitigation measures, would result in the following significant adverse environmental effects: long-term air pollutant emissions from project operations, exposure of sensitive receptors to short- and long-term emissions of toxic air contaminants, demolition of potential historic structures (Old Courthouse and City Hall-Main Library complex), and construction related noise and vibration impacts. All of these unavoidable adverse impacts were previously identified in the Downtown Plan Final EIR. Certification of the Final SEIR would require approval of a Statement of Overriding Considerations that provides facts in support of the finding that the project's economic, social and other benefits outweigh the adverse environmental effects of the project and therefore such environmental effects would be considered acceptable when compared to the project benefits.

The preparation and public availability of this Final SEIR have been done in compliance with the provisions of CEQA statutes and the CEQA Guidelines. Staff therefore recommends the Planning Commission make a recommendation that the City Council certify SEIR 02-15.

### **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

Public hearing notices were distributed on October 23, 2015, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Long Beach Municipal Code.



CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

November 9, 2015

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Respectfully submitted,



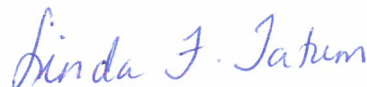
MARK HUNGERFORD  
PLANNER



CRAIG CHALFANT  
PLANNER



JEFF WINKLEPLECK  
CURRENT PLANNING OFFICER



LINDA F. TATUM, AICP  
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



AMY J. BODEK, AICP  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

AJB:LT:JW:mh:cc

Attachments:

- Exhibit A – Location Map
- Exhibit B – Plans
- Exhibit C – Findings
- Exhibit D – Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit E – SEIR



