

February 17, 2022

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Mitigated Negative Declaration MND03-21 and approve Conditional Use Permit CUP20-014 to operate a water well and on-site water treatment plant on a vacant parcel located at 6157 Long Beach Boulevard in the CCA Zoning District. (District 9)

APPLICANT: Brad C. Lee for California Water Service Company
2632 W. 234th Street
Torrance, CA 90505
(Application No. 2009-15)

DISCUSSION

The applicant, California Water Service Company (Cal Water) is seeking approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to operate a water well (DOM 301) and a water treatment plant on a vacant parcel. The 16,268-square-foot vacant lot is located on the west side of Long Beach Boulevard, between Barclay Street to the north and Victoria Street to the south within the Community Automobile-Oriented (CCA) Zoning District (Attachment A - Vicinity Map). The site has a General Plan Land Use Element PlaceType of Neighborhood-Serving Centers or Corridors – Low (NSC-L), which allows for low-rise, low-density residential uses and low-intensity commercial uses. The site is surrounded by single-family residential uses to the north, light-industrial uses to the west and commercial uses to the east and south. The site has been vacant and undeveloped for approximately 50 years (Attachment B - Site Photos).

The Zoning Ordinance establishes that certain uses due to the nature of the use require an individual review by way of a conditional use permit to determine if the use proposed is compatible, or, through the imposition of conditions, may be made compatible (Long Beach Municipal Code 21.25.201). Land Use Table 32-1 of the LBMC establishes that electrical distribution stations may be permitted within the CCA Zoning District with a CUP. Although, the proposed project is a privately operated water well, which is not a listed use, the Zoning Administrator determined that the proposed use could be considered within the zone, subject



to a CUP, as it is a low-intensity use providing a utility similar to an electrical substation (LBMC Section 21.10.045)

Cal Water, provides water utility services for most of the City of Carson and portions of Long Beach, Torrance, Compton, and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. To meet customers' needs, Cal Water uses a combination of local groundwater and surface water purchased from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), which is imported from the Colorado River and the State Water Project (SWP) in northern California. Cal Water's Dominguez District, which includes the project site, currently encompasses 374 miles of pipeline, nine active wells, 12 storage tanks, and seven MWD connections.

The water treatment plant and associated equipment result in low lot coverage of the site, and, by nature of the use, will generate few trips, and, thus, represent a low intensity commercial use. The proposed structures on the site include a 1,040-square-foot treatment system with a covered canopy structure, a 700 square-foot structure that will house the chemicals and mechanical equipment and a 16-foot-high, 66,000-gallon backwash tank. Other site features will include two onsite parking stalls and an enclosure over the well. The site will be accessed from Long Beach Boulevard from the existing private driveway easement, which will lead into two separate driveway entrances from the south easterly and south westerly most portions of the site (Attachment C - Plans). The water treatment equipment has been designed to meet all required setback requirements. Landscaping will be included along the northern and western property lines of the site to help visually buffer the water well facility from the residential uses, while also capturing water runoff. The architectural design of the mechanical and chemical room will have a gabled roof system, will have a stucco finish and will maintain an overall height of 11 feet to the top of the roof pitch.

The proposed project includes the construction of underground water mains on adjacent public rights-of-way. As proposed, approximately 2,250 feet of distribution mains and 1,950 feet of well collection main conveyance pipelines would be constructed in the Long Beach Boulevard, Victoria Street, and Barclay Street rights-of-way to link two nearby existing water wells, DOM 272 and DOM 297, to the proposed treatment plant. Groundwater produced at the two existing wells and the proposed well would be delivered to the proposed water treatment plant on-site and then to the local distribution system, including Cal Water's existing Dominguez District system within the City of Long Beach (City) and County of Los Angeles jurisdictions (Attachment D - Cal Water Service Map). The applicant will also be required to obtain an excavation permit for the installation of the storm drain and a franchise facility permit for the installation of the proposed conveyance pipelines from the Public Works Department. The permitting process for work within the right-of-way will be processed by the Public Works Department separate and apart from the Planning Commission's review of the conditional use permit.

The proposed treatment plant promotes a number of Long Beach General Plan Goals. The project would enhance the quality of the water delivered to Cal Water customers, while the construction of the new water well and the collection and distribution mains would improve supply reliability and help meet emergency water demands (e.g., fire flows). As proposed, this

project is consistent with the Water Resource Goals within the Conservation Element of the General Plan, which is intended to “develop a comprehensive City-wide water supply and management program which utilizes water from all sources including groundwater”.

By utilizing groundwater, this would enhance local supply reliability and reduce reliance on purchased water sources that are subject to curtailment or interruption. Specifically, the SWP water is subject to cutbacks in response to available snowpack in northern California on a year-to-year basis. SWP water supply may also become completely unavailable should a major disaster compromise the aqueduct system that travels from northern to southern California. The project as proposed would maximize the local groundwater supply, reduce supply variability during dry years, and provide water availability for fire and essential services in the event of a major disaster. The proposed project also helps meet Goal 2.2 of the Open Space and Recreation Element, which is established to “protect and wisely-manage groundwater recharge areas and groundwater aquifers.”

The treatment plant is anticipated to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A daily inspection of the plant would be conducted by one Cal Water plant inspector. Inspections would consist of visually inspecting the plant for proper operation, verifying chemical supplies, noting any abnormalities; inspecting site security, safety, and any chemical spills; and taking water quality samples for testing. A daily inspection log would be maintained on-site. All plant inspectors are required to have all necessary qualifications and experience and be certified by the State Water Resources Control Board. Plant operations would be monitored remotely and any equipment malfunction, warning signals or intrusion alarms would be sent to Cal Water’s central operating center through a Supervisory Control Data Acquisition System for necessary action. Once the facility is constructed, no regular equipment repairs, or maintenance are anticipated. Well pump equipment may require replacement approximately every 10 years and well rehabilitation would occur every 10 to 15 years.

The project will be constructed in two phases, with construction of the well occurring in Phase I. Construction of the well will require intermittent periods of 24-hour drilling to reach a maximum depth of approximately 1,010 feet below ground surface due to the need to drill continuously until well casings can be installed to stabilize the open borehole. Well construction would utilize a reverse circulation hydraulic rotary drilling method. To comply with the City’s Community Noise Ordinance and as conditioned, (LBMC Section 8.80.010), Cal Water will install a temporary 16-foot high noise barrier along the site perimeter during all construction activities to shield the adjacent properties, particularly adjacent residences to the north and west, from project-related construction noise (Attachment E - Conditions of Approval).

During borehole drilling, drill fluid (consisting of water and bentonite, if necessary) and cuttings (consisting of native clay, silt, sand, and gravel) would be contained in a settling tank on site. The temporary water storage tank would be utilized to contain water discharged during well development and test pumping to allow settling of solids before discharging to the off-site storm drainage system. The drill cuttings would be tested for hazardous waste and would be properly disposed, as needed.

This first phase also includes well performance testing for production and water quality in order to determine overall site design and required treatment equipment. To support construction and performance testing, Cal Water is proposing to install an on-site storm drain connection to an existing storm drain, approximately 100 feet to the east of the property. This storm drain connection would be used to discharge water generated during the well drilling and testing process. Cal Water is permitted and authorized to discharge water generated during well development per Cal Water's Statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. CAG140001. Phase I construction would occur for a duration of approximately six months.

Phase II will consist of two subphases, which will involve the construction of the treatment plant as Phase IIA, and construction of the conveyance pipelines in the public rights-of-way as Phase IIB. Both subphases would occur concurrently. During Phase IIA, the treatment plant and associated equipment, including the well pump and motor, electric/mechanical/chemical building, site lighting and paving, security system, perimeter walls, well discharge pipeline, and connection to the water system would be constructed. After the well is installed and tested under Phase I, the final required on-site treatment equipment would be determined.

Phase IIB involves the construction of off-site water distribution and well collection mains connecting other system facilities to the proposed treatment facility. Phases IIA and IIB would occur concurrently for approximately 12 months. There would be an approximately nine-month gap between Phase I and II construction activities to allow for final engineering design and construction material.

As designed, the water treatment facility and the related right-of-way improvements meets the required findings and all zoning regulations pertaining to setbacks, building height, on site landscaping and special standards (Attachment F - Findings). A total of two parking spaces are provided on site, providing parking availability for the daily inspection by a trained Cal Water inspector. The proposed CUP for the construction of an onsite water well and water treatment plant at this location will not cause substantial adverse effects on the neighboring land uses or the community at large and is consistent with the General Plan Land Use Element Policy 20-11, which is established to, "Coordinate with other agencies to reduce stormwater runoff by capturing runoff for groundwater recharge, irrigation and recycling purposes." Therefore, staff recommends that the Planning Commission approved the CUP, subject to conditions of approval.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 331 Public Hearing notices were distributed on January 3, 2022, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the LBMC. This item was originally scheduled for the January 20, 2022 Planning Commission meeting; at that meeting, it was continued a date certain, the next regularly scheduled meeting. As such, no additional noticing is required. At the time the staff report was written, one comment was received expressing concern regarding the proposed use and its potential impacts on surrounding properties, including potential

impacts from truck and vehicular traffic, which are addressed in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and the MND Errata that was prepared for the project.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A formal community-wide virtual meeting, set up by Cal Water, was held on October 13, 2021. Staff was in attendance as a member of the audience. Approximately eight individuals attended the meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for the proposed project (Attachment G – Mitigated Negative Declaration 03-21, Attachment H - MND Appendices List and Attachment I – MND Errata). The Errata to the MND was prepared to better encompass the types of permits required from the Public Works Department and provide additional information related to the construction activities to indicate the number of cubic yards anticipated to be disturbed within the right-of-way and the depth of trenching for the conveyance pipelines.

The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) provides mitigation measures addressing Aesthetics, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, Transportation and Tribal Cultural Resources (Attachment J - Mitigation Monitoring Program). Mitigation measures include the installation of a temporary 16-foot-high sound wall barrier to dampen the noise associated with the well drilling onsite, reducing the noise to a level of less than significance.

The Notice of Intent (NOI) for the MND was distributed to public agencies, interested individuals and was made available for review and comment via a link to the City's website and was also published in the Long Beach Telegram on October 8, 2021. The comment period for the project met the minimum of 30-days that spanned October 8, 2021 to November 8, 2021. No public comments were received during the 30-day public review. The IS/MND finds that, by implementing identified mitigation measures, the project will not result in significant effects to the environment. The NOI was filed with the State Clearinghouse on October 8, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments:

Attachment A – Vicinity Map
Attachment B – Site Photos
Attachment C – Plans
Attachment D – Cal Water Service Map
Attachment E – Conditions of Approval
Attachment F – Findings
Attachment G – Mitigated Negative Declaration 03-21
Attachment H – MND Appendices List
Attachment I – Mitigated Negative Declaration MND 03-21 - Errata
Attachment J – Mitigation Monitoring Program