

May 19, 2022

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS  
City of Long Beach  
California

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive the supporting documentation into the record, conclude the public hearing;

Recommend that the City Council adopt a Resolution approving and adopting a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (EIR-03-21) to the General Plan Land Use Element and Urban Design Element Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) (PEIR-SCH# 2015051054), in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15164 of the CEQA Guidelines, and making certain CEQA Findings and Determinations relative thereto, including a finding that the adopted General Plan Land Use Element PEIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program shall apply; and that no new or different mitigation measures are required; approving the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (2205-02); and

Recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the Director of Development Services to submit Policy and Ordinance amendments, as necessary to the California Coastal Commission for its review, approval and certification to obtain a finding of conformance with the City's Certified Local Coastal Program (LCPA22-001). (Citywide)

**DISCUSSION**

At its January 5, 2021 meeting, the City Council confirmed the proposed Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) and directed staff to prepare the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) (Attachment A). The CAAP is a mechanism for the City of Long Beach (City) to establish a set of iterative programs and policies for how the City will achieve two main objectives: (1) meet the statewide greenhouse gas (GHG) target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and generally minimize its contribution to global GHG emissions (Action); and, (2) adapt to the impacts of climate change while maintaining quality of life, prosperity, and equity for all of its citizens (Adaptation). The City completed technical studies of climate stressors and community-wide vulnerabilities to inform development of the CAAP. The CAAP establishes a framework for creating or updating its policies, programs, practices, and



incentives to reduce the City's GHG footprint while enhancing local economic, environmental, and social benefits.

The City's goals and efforts to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 aligns with the same statewide goal set by Senate Bill (SB) 32. A citywide reduction of at least 1,984,272 Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (MT CO<sub>2</sub>e) is needed to meet this goal and the CAAP sets an additional aspirational goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2045, which also matches the statewide 2045 carbon neutrality goal established by Executive Order B-55-18 in 2018. The proposed CAAP, including the GHG reduction target, as well as all the CAAP technical appendices, were confirmed by the City Council on January 5, 2021 and can be found in Attachment A. The CAAP is in alignment with and helps implement elements of the General Plan and state law and consists of policies and programs to reduce future carbon emissions, lessen the impacts of climate change on Long Beach residents and communities, and ensure sustainable future development (Attachment B).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

While the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is most commonly thought as applying to projects such as construction of a warehouse, changes in zoning, or adoption of programmatic documents such as a new specific plan, it also applies to all discretionary actions before the City Council, including in this case the CAAP, which is designed to lessen the impact on the environment from the activities within the City but must still be evaluated pursuant to CEQA.

The Development Services Department prepared the CAAP Draft SEIR to evaluate the environmental impacts that may result from implementation of the proposed CAAP, as well as a proposed update to the General Plan Safety Element which builds from the CAAP and is designed to address recent State legislation requiring cities to include goals, policies, objectives, and feasible implementation measures in the Safety Element that place a greater emphasis on climate change impacts, including increased risks related to wildfires and flooding. The proposed amendments would bring the Safety Element up to date and into compliance with a number of State laws including relating to climate change and resiliency. Although the SEIR analyzes and environmentally clears the proposed Safety Element Update, updates to the Safety Element are not being moved forward for adoption at this time as additional effort is needed to address other Safety Element topics and provisions.

The SEIR constitutes the environmental review of the proposed CAAP and Safety Element Update as planning documents. Neither the proposed CAAP nor the Safety Element Update proposes physical improvements, and approval of these planning and policy documents would not constitute approval of any physical development. Any development or physical improvements incorporating features of the proposed project would be subject to project-specific CEQA review. The Draft SEIR was available for public review for 45-days, from March 18 to May 2, 2022. Seven written comments were provided. The Final SEIR includes responses to each comment on the Draft SEIR (Attachment C).

The SEIR is subsequent to the previously certified Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) adopted for the General Plan Land Use (LUE) and Urban Design Elements was certified by the Long Beach City Council on December 3, 2019 (GPLUE EIR), EIR 03-16, State Clearinghouse No. 2015051054 (Attachment D). The GHG reduction goals of the CAAP were informed by the development assumptions of the adopted LUE and the General Plan buildout conditions. As the proposed CAAP would not alter the land uses designations or development assumptions of the adopted LUE, the proposed project would not result in impacts greater than those anticipated in the 2019 Certified Program EIR. All CAAP Actions and Adaptation Actions would be reviewed at the project level and under CEQA as applicable. Therefore, the analysis in the SEIR focuses on the potential impacts from the measures included in the CAAP Checklist for future discretionary projects and the potential impacts of the CAAP Actions and Adaptation Actions at a programmatic level. No new significant impacts to the environment were identified based on the analysis in the SEIR (Attachment E).

As a qualified climate action plan pursuant to the CEQA, the proposed CAAP may be used to streamline the GHG analysis for future plans and projects undergoing CEQA review pursuant to Section 15183.5 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. Subsequent plans and projects that are consistent with the GHG reduction strategies and targets in the CAAP will be eligible to streamline the GHG impact analysis for a project pursuant to CEQA through demonstration of consistency with the CAAP. The CAAP Consistency Review Checklist establishes screening criteria for future discretionary projects, including those proposed by private developers as well as City-implemented municipal projects, to ensure consistency with the CAAP. Use of these streamlining tools will help the City meet related goals of creating adequate housing supply in a compact and sustainable manner.

The City has already undertaken significant efforts to implement CAAP goals and strategies, including zoning code updates to focus new development near transit consistent with the LUE, adoption of the City's Vehicle Miles Traveled approach consistent with SB743, and adoption of new ordinances related to organics processing consistent with SB1383. Once adopted, the CAAP is designed to be a living document that calls for adjusting strategies at least every five years if the City is not on track to meet its targets. A GHG inventory is required every two years to evaluate CAAP implementation, and adjustments are to be made accordingly.

### **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

Public notice of this hearing was published in the Long Beach Press Telegram on Friday, May 13, and notices were distributed in public locations citywide, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. Any comments received prior to the Planning Commission meeting will be provided to the Planning Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

May 19, 2022

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ALISON SPINDLER-RUIZ, AICP  
ACTING PLANNING MANAGER



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT  
SERVICES



OSCAR W. ORCI  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

ATTACHMENTS

- ATTACHMENT A – JANUARY 5, 2021 CITY COUNCIL CONFIRMATION OF THE CAAP & PROPOSED PLAN
- ATTACHMENT B – FINDINGS
- ATTACHMENT C –FINAL SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
- ATTACHMENT D – GENERAL PLAN LAND USE ELEMENT AND URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT PROGRAM  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM
- ATTACHMENT E – CEQA FINDINGS