



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Long Beach, CA 90802

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June 1, 2017

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the City Council adopt Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations, certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR 02-16), select the reduced intensity alternative, adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, repeal Planned Development District 1 (PD-1), enact the General Plan Amendment related to changing the boundaries and content of the certified Local Coastal Plan (GPA17-002), enact the Local Coastal Plan Amendment related to the Southeast Area Specific Plan (LCPA17-004), enact Zoning Code Amendment 17-011 creating the Southeast Area Specific Plan (SP-2) (ZCA17-001), and enact a Zone Change amending Parts 6, 7, 12 and 13 of the City's zoning map and modifying the zoning from PD-1 to SP-2, R-1-S and I (ZCH17-008). (District 3)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach
333 West Ocean Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
(Application No. 1705-01)

DISCUSSION

This staff report provides the Planning Commission with an overview of the requested entitlement actions for adoption of the Southeast Area Specific Plan (SEASP). The May 4, 2017 study session memo is incorporated by reference and included as Exhibit A providing an overview of the plan itself and the planning policy issues presented to the Commission during the May study session.

The purpose of SEASP is to implement the community vision developed over the last four years. That vision is for Southeast Long Beach to be a livable, thriving, ecologically diverse, and sustainable coastal gateway and destination in the City and the Southern California region. The Specific Plan updates and replaces existing regulations, currently within Planned Development District 1 (PD-1) and otherwise known as the Southeast Area Development and Improvement Plan (SEADIP), for the purpose of expanding mobility choices, enhancing wetland protections, and expanding living, shopping, and public space enjoyment opportunities within specific areas of change.

This will be the second Specific Plan in the City of Long Beach. A Specific Plan is similar in function to a Planned Development District (PD) as a distinct land use regulation document.

However, Specific Plans are advantageous in that they are explicitly recognized by State law, consistent with CEQA and housing law, and able to benefit from streamlining provisions. Staff recommends a Specific Plan as the best way to achieve the community vision and goals for this area of the City. Once the Specific Plan is approved, individual projects will still return to the Planning Commission for their individual Site Plan Review conformance determinations.

The EIR and Its Alternatives

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Exhibit B, for SEASP was released in July 2016. That draft included four alternatives, including no project, no development, reduced intensity, and reduced building height. Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission recommend the reduced intensity alternative to the City Council. This alternative contains approximately 30 percent less development potential than the proposed project alternative. Development would still occur in the same locations, follow the same design and development regulations, and accomplish the same mobility and public space improvements, but would be subject to an overall area-wide development cap. That development cap would be fulfilled on a first-come, first-served basis. Once the development capacity is reached, potential developers would need to demolish improvements in order to build any new square footage.

Table 1, EIR Alternatives

	Proposed Project	No Project / Adopted PD-1 (SEADIP)	No Project / No Development	Reduced Intensity Alternative	Reduced Building Height Alternative
Dwelling Units	9,518	5,499	4,079	6,663	9,518
Population	15,134	8,743	6,486	10,594	15,134
Commercial/Employment Square Feet	2,665,052	3,106,610	2,091,476	2,398,547	2,665,052
Hotel Rooms	425	375	375	375	425
Total Employees	4,115	5,280	3,555	3,704	4,115

Source: Draft EIR

Traffic impacts was the most common concern expressed by the public during the development of SEASP. The selection of the reduced intensity alternative results in the least potential traffic increase between the existing PD-1 and SEASP. Through reductions in residential and particularly commercial development, the reduced intensity alternative results in impacts comparable to buildout with the existing PD-1 regulations.

Scenario	Trips (External)	Change from Existing
Existing	65,731	-
Proposed	96,299	30,568
No Project (Adopted PD-1)	86,564	20,833
Reduced Intensity Alternative	85,964	20,233

The selection of this alternative continues to meet project objectives by providing sufficient development potential to transform the SEASP area and provide the amenities, view corridors,

and mobility enhancements requested by the public during the visioning process. The financial analysis conducted during the preparation of the Specific Plan, tab C of Exhibit C, shows that five-to seven-story development is feasible in relation to existing land values and improvements.

The net new development capacity will include:

	Recommended Alternative
Dwelling Units	2,584
Population	4,108
Commercial/Employment Square Feet	307,071
Hotel Rooms	0 ¹

During the May 4, 2017 study session, the Planning Commission received public testimony that the analysis of the recommended alternative was incomplete and that further time was needed to consider the alternative. The recommended alternative has been in public discussion since it was released in the EIR on July 20, 2016. Sufficient detail exists within the EIR to adopt this alternative, particularly since the development will be in the same location and similar in character, simply less in total construction. This alternative was also discussed during the August 18, 2016 Planning Commission study session on the SEASP EIR. Since there have been numerous opportunity for discussion and public comment on this alternative, as well as SEASP in totality, staff recommends moving forward at this time.

CEQA is designed to evaluate projects for environmental impacts and provide decision-makers with alternatives. In this case, the analysis and the process leads to selection of one of those alternatives. While this is atypical, it is allowed, and in fact encouraged, in the structure of CEQA's statutory and guideline framework. A summary memo expounding on the environmental impacts of the alternative is attached as Exhibit D.

Height Restrictions

During the May study session, the Planning Commission asked for clarification of whether the seven-story height limit (up to 20 percent of total area) applied only to hotel use or also to residential use. Staff recommends the following change to footnote #2 on page 70 of the Specific Plan.

2. Additional height may be considered up to seven stories for the following:
Hotel or mixed-use buildings containing hotel as a portion of their use, if it is demonstrated that significant community amenities are provided, above and beyond those that are required under the maximum height of five stories. Amenities can include plaza spaces, enhanced landscaping, public artwork, public parking (see Section 5.7a Mixed Use Community Core height and FAR Incentives)
Seven-story buildings are intended to be an exception to the building massing for all structures within a project. The majority of the buildings within the Mixed-Use

¹ Baseline includes units at the SeaPort Marina Hotel that were open at the time of the SEASP Notice of Preparation.

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Community Core designations are intended to be constructed at or near the maximum base height. Building footprint of all buildings using seven stories cannot exceed 20 percent of the total acres in the MU-CC.

While staff recommends maintaining the seven-story height limit for hotels up to 20 percent of the total development area that is appropriate to attract hotel uses and the highest quality of amenities, several Commissioners have expressed concern or opposition to this level of height. A potential compromise for the Commission's consideration would be to remove the seven-story opportunity from the Marketplace site, responsive to the public concerns about the height interface with the wetlands while still providing one site (Marina Pacifica shopping center) to provide a meaningful incentive for the creation of visitor-serving uses including hotel uses. This compromise would help the City achieve a balancing and prioritizing of visitor-serving uses explicitly called out in the Coastal Act.

General Plan Amendment

The City's General Plan Land Use Element assigns designations including Single-Family District, Mixed Use District, Institutional and School District, and Open Space and Park District to the SEASP area. These broad designations are consistent with both the existing and future uses contemplated in SEASP. Most of the proposed SEASP is also within the Coastal Zone. The City's Local Coastal Program (LCP) is a part of the City's overall General Plan, therefore for conformity purposes, this action is considered to include a General Plan Amendment as it updates the LCP.

General Plan Amendments are legislative actions that require findings only when the proposed amendment is consistent with other policies and elements of the General Plan. This consistency analysis can be found within Exhibit E.

Local Coastal Program Amendment

This action removes the references to PD-1 (SEADIP) from the City's certified LCP and adds policy language and maps consistent with SEASP. The LCP Amendment is contained within Exhibit F. The proposed amendment is self-contained, impacting only parcels within the coastal zone portion of SEASP and not changing any other designations or policies within the LCP. Importantly, the proposed amendment seeks to certify portions of the Los Cerritos Wetlands that are currently excluded, also known as a "white hole". This would place these parcels within the City's land use jurisdiction subject to appeal to the Coastal Commission on certain parcels proximate to wetlands or an open channel.

The Local Coastal Program Amendment is also a legislative action with no specific findings required under the City's Municipal Code. The consistency analysis found within Exhibit E covers the proposed amendment.

Zoning Code Amendment

The Zoning Code Amendment includes repealing the existing Planned Development District (PD-1 / SEADIP), adoption of SEASP itself, Exhibit C, as well as providing the nomenclature of SP-2 Southeast Area Specific Plan (SEASP) within Section 21.37.210 of the Long Beach Municipal

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Code. This legislative action requires two findings set forth in Municipal Code Section 21.25.106: the proposed change will not adversely affect the character, livability, or appropriate development of the surrounding area; and the proposed change is consistent with the goals, objectives, and provisions of the General Plan. While the SEASP area does include an existing mobile home park, no change is identified for that parcel, therefore supplemental findings per 21.25.109 are not required. Zone Change findings are set forth in Exhibit G.

Zone Change

This action involves three different zone changes. The first involves re-zoning the parcels within the boundaries of the Specific Plan from PD-1 and respective subareas to SP-2 SEASP. The second action involves removing the City-owned parcel at Colorado and Eliot Streets (location of Fire Station 14) from PD-1 and changing the zoning to the "I" Institutional zone. The final action involves removing 38 residential properties near Marine Stadium from PD-1 SEADIP and zoning them to R-1-S. This zone change to R-1-S will provide these properties with regulations that are more consistent with their as-built condition and also the same regulations as similar homes to the south and east of this area. A map of the proposed zone change is found within Exhibit H. Minor technical changes to the Specific Plan text itself, provided to the Planning Commission for their May 4, 2017 meeting, is included as Exhibit I.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

This action was noticed through advertisement in the Press Telegram on May 11, 2017, in accordance with the provision of the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, written notices were sent to the California Coastal Commission and 100-foot radius of the plan pursuant to the Coastal Zone notification provisions of the Municipal Code. Staff also provided courtesy notices through email to all interested parties that had participated in the preparation of the Specific Plan. Comments received by the date of this report are included in the Planning Commission packet.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study was been prepared for the project, identifying potentially significant effects. A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the project, analyzing the following environmental effects: Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation and Traffic, and Utilities and Service Systems. The Draft EIR was circulated for a 60-day public review period between July 20, 2016 and September 19, 2016. Subsequent to the Draft EIR, the section regarding Transportation and Traffic was recirculated for a 45-day public review period between February 17, 2017 and April 3, 2017.

The Final EIR, including responses to comments, mitigation monitoring and reporting program, errata, and corrections was posted to the City's website and distributed to commenting agencies. Consideration of this project by the Planning Commission includes certification of the Environmental Impact Report consisting of both the Draft and Final EIR. The Draft and Final EIR

are on file and available for review at the City of Long Beach Development Services Department, Planning Bureau, 333 West Ocean Boulevard, 5th Floor, Long Beach, CA 90802, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

SEASP is consistent with the general goals, policies and designations within the City's General Plan. The adopted General Plan Land Use Element identifies the Specific Plan area for mixed-use, residential, institutional, and open-space/recreation uses (LUE map grid 6, 7, 12, and 13). These uses are consistent with the development standards and allowed uses contained within Chapter 5 of the proposed Specific Plan. Land Use Element goals are also advanced by the proposed Specific Plan, including: economic development, new housing construction, and functional transportation (LUE p. 17-19).

SEASP protects natural areas through the Coastal Habitat, Wetlands and Recreation land use category. Stewardship of these areas is facilitated through impact fees on new development within the Specific Plan boundaries. Specific provisions within the plan and mitigation measures in the Program EIR all protect wildlife and enhance habitat. These provisions are consistent with the Open Space Element, including Goals 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, and 4.6.

Implementation of SEASP will result in new housing opportunities for various types of families, consistent with Housing Element Goal 4 of providing increased opportunities for the construction of high-quality housing (HE p. 104). Likewise, SEASP focuses on facilitating live, work and play by foot, bicycle, and transit. These efforts will eliminate vehicle trips and reduce vehicle miles traveled consistent with the City's Air Quality Element (AQE p.7) and the Mobility Element goal of creating an efficient, balanced, multimodal mobility network (ME p. 72).

Within the Coastal Zone portion of SEASP, this action is also consistent with the adopted Local Coastal Program (LCP), as amended. This action concentrates development on existing paved and developed parcels while providing substantial protections to open space habitat and wetland areas. The plan also identifies coastally preferred land uses consistent with the LCP and Coastal Act emphasis on visitor-serving facilities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff has prepared a Specific Plan that is consistent with the community vision and advances many of the goals expressed during the public outreach process. While absolute community consensus is not possible on a project of this scale, the process has been responsive and reflective of public input. The reduced intensity alternative best achieves the community goal of rebirth for the area within a feasible and achievable framework. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission certify the EIR, select the reduced intensity alternative, adopt the associated Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations, and adopt the requested entitlement actions.

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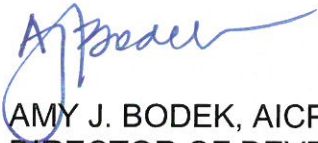
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Respectfully submitted,



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PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



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DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Attachments:

- Exhibit A – May 4, 2017 Study Session Memo
- Exhibit B – Draft and Final EIR
- Exhibit C – Draft Southeast Area Specific Plan and Appendices
- Exhibit D – Alternatives Memo
- Exhibit E – General Plan Consistency Findings
- Exhibit F – LCP Amendment
- Exhibit G –Zone Change Findings
- Exhibit H –Zone Change Map
- Exhibit I – Specific Plan Technical Changes