

June 4, 2020

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the City Council approve EIR addendum EIRA-02-20; adopt an amendment to the Long Beach Municipal Code to establish Title 22 (Updated Zoning Code) and new zoning districts and regulations to implement the 2019 Long Beach General Plan Land Use Element Update adopted in 2019; and adopt City-initiated rezoning of select properties on major corridors in North Long Beach. (Citywide)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach
Department of Development Services
411 West Ocean Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
(Application No. 1701-01)

DISCUSSION

Project Overview

The proposed project involves three key components: 1) the establishment of a new Title 22 (Exhibit A - Updated Zoning Code) of the Long Beach Municipal Code that will facilitate a phased update of the City's Zoning Code, 2) the establishment of 12 new zoning districts Citywide that will implement the recently adopted General Plan Land Use Element Update and the Urban Design Element; and 3) the rezoning of select properties on major corridors in the North Long Beach from their existing zoning to the proposed new zoning districts.

Project Summary

In December 2019, the City Council of the City of Long Beach (City) adopted an update to the General Plan Land Use (LUE) and a new Urban Design Element (UDE). The update to the City's General Plan guides growth and future development in Long Beach through the horizon year 2040. Consistent with State law, the City is currently undertaking a program to rezone properties throughout the City in accordance with the adopted LUE. The City's Zoning Code (Title 21 of the City's Municipal Code), which has not been comprehensively updated since 1989, does not provide the full range of zoning districts and general development standards needed to implement the policies of the LUE and UDE. As such, the City is developing the new zones needed to implement the General Plan PlaceTypes. The first of these proposed new zones correspond to three of the 14 new PlaceTypes instituted by the



LUE: Neighborhood Serving Corridor-Moderate (NSC-M), Neighborhood Serving Corridor-Low (NSC-L), and Community Commercial (CC) PlaceTypes, and will be established Citywide and contained in a proposed new title of the LBMC. This project also involves rezoning select properties within the North Long Beach area to these new zones. The 12 zones represent two versions of six primary zoning districts: six standard zones that are anticipated to implement the three PlaceTypes noted above Citywide, and a version of each of these zones that is tailored to the unique needs and conditions of North Long Beach, which are labeled as the “A-Series” zones. The heights, densities, and allowable uses permitted by these 12 new zones are consistent with those contemplated by the updated LUE for their respective PlaceTypes.

As noted above, Title 22 is being established to facilitate a substantial update to the City’s Zoning Code. The intention is to fully transition from Title 21, which is the currently established zoning chapter within the City’s Municipal Code, to Title 22, which will eventually regulate zoning throughout the City. During the transition period, all regulations contained within Title 22 apply to zones established in Title 22. In the case of a regulation not specified in Title 22, the Municipal Code will refer to Title 21.

The proposed standard or “non-A series” zones will not be applied to any property at this time but may be applied in the future to properties within the aforementioned PlaceTypes throughout the City, as part of an ongoing, systematic geographic rezoning program. This program is consistent with State law, which provides that a city must update its zoning ordinance to be consistent with its updated general plan within “a reasonable time” (see California Government Code Section 65860). In a city as large as Long Beach, it is not feasible to rezone every parcel at one time due to the size of the city, the variety of contexts, and the need to engage the public in the process. Therefore, the City will phase the development of new zones and the geographic rezoning of all properties in the City until new zoning districts have been established for all the LUE PlaceTypes. Coastal areas will be phased in last after updates to the City’s Local Coastal Program and certification by the California Coastal Commission.

By establishing the 12 proposed new zone districts Citywide through this action, it is anticipated that individual property owners may seek to rezone their properties to one of the new zones in the interim time, before the City concludes its Citywide rezoning program. In such circumstances, any request for a zone change by private application would be required to be rezoned to a corresponding zone of its respective PlaceType to be consistent with the LUE. If an applicant seeks a zone change to one of the proposed zones for a property located in a PlaceType that does not correspond to the proposed zones, then the action will additionally require a General Plan Amendment, which will require initiation by the City and thus will be reviewed and considered at the discretion of the City.

Proposed Zoning Districts-Allowable Land Uses

The 12 proposed zoning districts were developed through outreach conducted as part of the North Long Beach “UPLAN” planning process; during this process the City developed zoning districts that could be used Citywide and also the tailored “A-series” zoning districts that have

been crafted for the North Long Beach context and are the result of extensive community engagement and with neighborhood stakeholders.

In addition to establishing the new zoning districts, the proposed project will amend the City's zoning map to reflect the rezoning of select properties on major corridors in the North Long Beach area to one of six (6) proposed "A-Series" zoning districts that will be applied to the areas shown on the attached Zone Change map (Exhibit B). Following is a description of the new zoning districts and the objectives of each:

- Residential Mixed-Use 3 (RMU3 and RMU3-A) zones are residentially focused and permit a range of residential configurations with limited neighborhood-serving non-residential uses. Uses may be configured in a horizontal or vertical mixed-use format.
- Residential Mixed-Use 4 (RMU4 and RMU4-A) zones are residentially focused and permit higher density residential in areas where multifamily housing is currently the dominant use. These zones permit intensification of existing residential areas to increase housing opportunities and introduce neighborhood-serving uses in proximity to residents.
- Mixed-Use 1 (MU-1 and MU-1-A) zones provide for medium-scale, mixed-use development as a transition between residential areas and mixed-use nodes. These zones permit mixed residential and non-residential uses in a wide variety of configurations.
- Mixed-Use 2 (MU-2 and MU-2-A) zones provide for neighborhood activity centers in proximity to bus routes and multimodal corridors. These zones permit horizontal and vertical mixed-use appropriately scaled for adjacent neighborhoods.
- Mixed-Use 3 (MU-3 and MU-3-A) zones provide for the highest intensity neighborhood activity centers in proximity to bus routes and multimodal corridors. These zones permit horizontal and vertical mixed-use scaled for the highest intensity uses that benefit from transit proximity and pedestrian activity.
- Commercial 3 (C3 and C3-A) zones are non-residential zones that support the transition of larger format industrial/light industrial development to neighborhood services. These zones permit non-residential development, scaled to the neighborhood setting, with a range of services and employment intensities.

In establishing allowable uses within the proposed zoning districts, the goal is to transform the major corridors into safe, vibrant, and walkable mixed-use environments. The proposed mix of land uses is a major change from existing conditions along corridors that have experienced little investment in recent decades. With the exception of the C3 zone, all the proposed zones will allow for a mix of residential and commercial uses at varying scales, to increase the housing stock, bring retail and services closer to residents, activate vacant storefronts and improve the walkability and safety of the area's corridors. Additionally, in the "A-Series" zones specific uses that have been identified as highly desirable, health-serving

uses by community members are promoted through flexible development standards and incentives; these uses include grocery stores; educational, community-serving, and institutional uses; and commercial spaces for existing local businesses. Conversely, the proposed A-Series zones prohibit uses that have been deemed incompatible with the goals for the area, placing limitations on uses such as automobile-oriented and hospitality uses. Existing businesses will retain their legal, non-conforming status and will be permitted to remain, but new uses of this kind will not be permitted.

Proposed Zoning Districts-Urban Design Standards

The proposed zones include development standards that are consistent with the Urban Design Element guidelines and foster well-designed buildings and compact, walkable neighborhoods that provide access to services, jobs and transit. Some examples of the innovative development standards include a requirement for a minimum building setback that is measured from the curb to the building facade rather than to the property line (as is customary) which will allow the required setback to function as an expanded sidewalk, remedying current conditions where there are narrow sidewalks and improving the comfort and safety of pedestrians. This required building setback expands the physical space between the building and the sidewalk so that additional sidewalk, seating, landscaping and other pedestrian amenities can be accommodated over time.

Additionally, flexible open space and parking regulations and active ground floor requirements that are tailored to the physical constraints associated with shallow commercial lots found on older commercial corridors such as Atlantic Avenue and Artesia Boulevard, where the rezoning is proposed, will improve the function and visual quality of the corridors--ensuring that new developments are feasible while still providing amenities for current and future residents. The aim is to institute development standards that encourage new housing and mixed-use development, allow businesses to more easily locate in vacant storefronts and reuse existing buildings, and generally attract greater investment in North Long Beach. All projects that occur in the areas where zone changes are proposed are required to incrementally improve the public realm as well as meet high-quality standards for design and materials. While North Long beach is a unique set of neighborhoods within the larger city, much of the tailored zoning solutions will be very applicable to other areas of the City during future planning updates.

Proposed Zoning Districts-Parking Standards

The parking standards in the proposed zoning districts balance the need for parking with other stated community goals identified during the extensive UPLAN outreach process. Community members' input throughout the planning process largely focused on concerns about vacant storefronts and empty lots and the blight and associated safety concerns that result from those conditions. Residents additionally highlighted the need for community amenities and essential businesses such as grocery stores, affordable housing, and local jobs. The proposed regulations respond to these concerns, in part, by adjusting parking requirements to remove barriers to investment in the area in the form of new businesses and housing development. Parking is costly to provide, and high parking requirements can make

housing more expensive and deter new businesses. The proposed standards aim to make it easier for new businesses, such as restaurants, fitness centers, and grocery stores, to locate in existing buildings without having to provide additional parking that cannot be accommodated on the site due to the built-out nature of the lots. The standards also make it less expensive to develop new housing of all types to address existing overcrowding and affordability concerns in North Long Beach. While the proposed parking regulations in some cases decrease the minimum parking requirements compared to the Citywide zoning code, they aim to attract the kind of investment stakeholders desire for the area and are also more comparable to parking standards in similarly sized and developed coastal California cities, such as Oakland and San Jose. The proposed parking standards have been developed with significant community engagement and technical research, including a parking demand study along both major corridors that were a focus of UPLAN Phase 1. In staff's evaluation, the proposed parking standards achieve a balance of providing sufficient parking to meet existing demand along major commercial corridors, while also providing flexibility for existing spaces to accommodate future uses and achieve community priorities for the areas.

Summary

The proposed zoning districts including their development, urban design and parking standards are intended to actualize the UPLAN Vision Statement:

We envision Uptown as an identifiable and inviting neighborhood, full of pride, with a range of community-serving destinations and hubs — a community that supports its residents and businesses, and creatively celebrates its existing and growing diversity. As a livable, full service neighborhood, people who live in Uptown can visit local businesses, rather than traveling outside to go to the bank, shop, and meet friends. Uptown will not be a place to pass through – it will be a place to live, work, play, and visit, with high-quality stores, public art, accessible housing, and appealing streets that are pleasant to walk along. North Long Beach will be a clean and green oasis, well-positioned and easily accessible to nearby transit, bikeways, and highways, as a gateway to the region.

Some of the most notable priorities encompassed in the Vision Statement that are promoted by the proposed zoning districts include active, walkable, and safe corridors, investment in and reuse of vacant buildings and parcels, neighborhood-serving uses that cater to existing community members, and healthy spaces that allow greater freedom for getting around within and beyond North Long Beach. Though there are tradeoffs with all zoning regulations, flexible parking standards and other components of the proposed zoning districts help to achieve these stated goals.

THE UPLAN PROCESS AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

UPLAN is a collaborative effort between the City and the community to create a new vision, economic strategies, active transportation improvements, and zoning recommendations to guide future development in North Long Beach. For the purposes of UPLAN, North Long Beach is defined as the 90805-zip code, roughly bounded by Del Amo Boulevard to the South

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and the City boundaries to the East, North, and West. The UPLAN initiative evolved from the UPLAN Task Force convened by the City and Council District 9 in 2017 to address longstanding structural issues related to economic investment, development, and connectivity in North Long Beach through comprehensive zoning and land use reforms.

UPLAN has been developed as a two-phased approach to updating the zoning code for North Long Beach. The proposed rezoning of properties on Atlantic Avenue and Artesia Boulevard is the culmination of the first phase of the UPLAN process which focused on the major corridors. The second phase which is taking place currently is focused on developing new zones for the most properties in the remainder of the 90805-zip code that makes up North Long Beach. This planning process has been supported by grant funding: a \$250,000 Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Sustainable Planning Grant (placeholder, look up actual name) and a \$733,000 grant from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Sustainable Transportation planning grant which will conclude in February 2021. This phase builds upon Phase 1 and will develop new zoning districts for other major corridors in North Long Beach not already addressed through Phase 1. The six standard districts and six "A-Series" zoning districts presented today are the final result of the UPLAN Phase 1 process, and combined extensive community engagement with technical analysis and "ground truthing" to develop progressive land use and parking regulations that address historical and contemporary issues in the area.

The UPLAN community engagement process has been a multifaceted approach over more than two years. Evolving out of the 2017 UPLAN Task Force, Phase 1 of the process implemented outreach strategies that met residents and community members where they were and provided multiple avenues for collaboration. An Advisory Committee (AC) comprised of Neighborhood Association leaders and other local stakeholders held regular meetings on different topics throughout the process, providing an opportunity for community members to give their input on both the technical studies and zoning proposals that were developed throughout Phase 1 of UPLAN. AC meetings were held at multiple locations and times and conducted in coordination with other organizations, such as Carmelitos Housing, to ensure all community members had an opportunity to participate. Along with the AC meetings, stakeholder interviews were held with experts in a variety of areas, including local small businesses, developers, architects, local activists, and fellow public agencies. Throughout the engagement process, an email listserv was established and the UPLAN website was developed and regularly updated with resources, news, and additional information about the initiative.

The City also pioneered new engagement activities to foster deeper input from community members, such as a collaboration with Cal State Long Beach Master of Social Work Students to conduct research on the area. City staff have established a partnership with Jordan High School students and teachers to expose students to the city planning process and garner youth input on UPLAN proposals and recommendations; this partnership has continued into Phase 2 of UPLAN, becoming a core element of all outreach to ensure the youth vision for North Long Beach is embedded in the policy and zoning recommendations. Additionally, a series of six walk audits were conducted with community members along key stretches of North Long Beach corridors to physically assess existing conditions and identify areas for

improvements. Finally, the City held pop-up workshops and a demonstration project to show how activating a vacant storefront exemplifies the possible changes that could occur in the area as a result of the proposed zone changes. Together, these engagement activities provided a wide array of opportunities for involvement in UPLAN and helped to ensure that the proposed zoning recommendations are reflective of the community vision for North Long Beach.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN AND OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND POLICIES

The proposed zoning districts are compatible with the general goals, policies and designations within the City's General Plan Land Use Element update. The General Plan Land Use Element identifies the areas that are to be rezoned as Neighborhood Serving Corridor-Low (NSC-L), Neighborhood Serving Corridor-Moderate (NSC-M), and Community Commercial (CC) PlaceTypes (LUE map grid 29, 31, & 32). For each PlaceType, corresponding zoning districts have been developed that are congruent with the allowable uses. Multiple Land Use Element goals are also advanced by the proposed zoning districts, including but not limited to: healthy, active, and complete neighborhoods, increased economic development and shared economic prosperity, new housing construction and more varied housing types, improved environmental health through reduced Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), enhanced mobility choices, and safe and secure living environments (LUE p. 4-6). The proposed zoning districts are also consistent with the Land Use Element generalized concept of redirecting and concentrating new development, in particular mixed-use development, in significant centers and along major corridors, accommodating higher density housing and increased commercial activity (LUE p.13-14, 27).

The proposed zoning districts would be established Citywide and thus affect areas within the Coastal Zone, however at this time proposed zone changes are not being implemented in the Coastal Zone; the only areas that are proposed for City-initiated zone changes at this time are shown in North Long Beach, as shown in the attached Zone Change Map. At a later date to be determined the City will adopt a future amendment to the Local Coastal Program for impacted areas in the Coastal Zone. The proposed zone change areas do not abut a designated scenic route or highway, and do not contain significant mineral resources, therefore the Conservation Element and Local Coastal Program are not impacted by the proposed project.

The proposed zoning districts and City-initiated zone changes are consistent with the General Plan and also with the findings laid out in Municipal Code Section 21.25.106 and articulated in Exhibit C. Together the comprehensive Program EIR and addendum satisfy the requirement that the proposed change will not adversely affect the character, livability or appropriate development of the surrounding area. The main focus of the proposed zoning districts is to improve the quality of the built environment in the project area and specific protections are in place to assure safety, livability, and quality design and to protect historic structures.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The required public hearing notice was provided in accordance with the Long Beach Municipal Code (LBMC). A public hearing notice was published in the Long Beach Press-Telegram on May 21st, 2020. Additionally, a total of 4,200 public hearing notices were mailed to affected property owners and occupants. Due to the declared state of emergency, there was limited posting of the notice. Notices were not provided to City libraries (they are closed), notice posting was provided at City Hall. The public hearing notice was posted on the Department's web site and distributed through the City's LinkLB e-mail blast system. An electronic newsletter was also sent out by email to a list of xxx recipients, comprised of community stakeholders, neighborhood associations and other interested parties, providing information about the upcoming public hearing and a detailed explanation of the proposed project. No comments have been received as of the preparation of this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, the City, as Lead Agency, prepared an addendum EIRA-02-20 (Attachment D) to a previously certified Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) EIR 03-16, State Clearinghouse No. 2015051054 prepared for the General Plan Land Use Element Update and Urban Design Element. The EIR Addendum analyzed the proposed project in accordance with the PEIR and determined that the project will not result in any new significant impacts that exceed those analyzed in the PEIR. The PEIR found significant and unavoidable impacts related to air quality, global climate change, noise, and transportation. However, none of the conditions requiring a new subsequent or supplemental environmental impact report, as stated in Section 21166 of the Public Resources Code or in Sections 15162 or 15163 of the CEQA Guidelines, are present. Thus, the addendum was prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15164.

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Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

- Exhibit A - Zoning Code Update
- Exhibit B - Zone Change Map
- Exhibit C - Findings
- Exhibit D - Addendum to PEIR 03-16