



## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 15-1234, **Version:** 1

---

Recommendation to receive and file the Green Terminal Island Transition Plan in accordance with the terms of a California Department of Transportation grant and accept Categorical Exemption CE 15-168. (District 7)

On March 19, 2013, the City Council adopted a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit and accept a planning grant from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). This grant, in the amount of \$250,000, was awarded and accepted on September 19, 2013. The grant was intended to promote strong and healthy communities. The focus of the City's grant application was to prepare a concept plan for the decommissioning of the northern stretch of the Terminal Island (TI) Freeway. The grant is considered a social justice grant which directly applies to negative environmental impacts, such as challenging air quality and noise from goods movement on the west side of the City.

The City engaged the landscape architectural firm Melendrez to assist staff in preparing a preliminary feasibility study and design concept plan to examine the potential decommissioning of the TI Freeway from Pacific Coast Highway to Willow Street. The plan is branded as the Green TI. This plan is a high level concept for the reuse of the 25-acre, mile-long, City-owned segment of the freeway (Exhibit A). The focus of the Green TI plan is to reimagine this City-owned space as a dense planted green buffer between Long Beach sensitive receptors, i.e., schools, parks and residential, that actually border the TI Freeway on the west. It is important to note that this freeway segment is recommended for decommissioning in the City's recently adopted Mobility Element and to mitigate pollution impacts to address long-standing community health concerns. The preparation of the Green TI plan was a collaborative effort led by the Department of Development Services and Melendrez. Additional participation involved the Departments of Public Works, Health and Human Services, Harbor, and Parks, Recreation and Marine.

The Green TI plan was developed through an extensive public engagement process that included community workshops, small group meetings, outreach to the media, and schools. Stakeholders, including residents, environmental justice groups, community associations in the area, and goods movement groups were invited to attend four workshops to elicit their vision and concerns for the potential re-use of the TI Freeway. Promotional flyers for the community workshops were developed in four languages (English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Khmer) in compliance with the City's approved Language Access Policy. In addition, promotional flyers were sent home with 12,000 Long Beach Unified School District students within the project area. Lastly, the promotional flyers were posted on the City's website and meeting notices were distributed via social and traditional media.

To ensure that all stakeholders were reached, 20 small-group meetings and stakeholder interviews were held with local neighborhood businesses, port-affiliated businesses, goods movement companies, schools, neighborhood associations, and property owners. These meetings ranged from stand-alone meetings to project team members attending set meetings of different organizations throughout the community. These small-group settings allowed community stakeholders to provide in depth comments on how the potential removal of this freeway segment would impact their business operations. The Green TI plan demonstrates that 98 percent of area residents and environmental groups are interested in the decommissioning of the freeway and transforming the existing freeway to a planted buffer and park space. However, there is concern about the decommissioning of the freeway from the goods movement community.

Building upon feedback from each successive workshop, the project team developed a conceptual plan for the reuse of the TI Freeway as a greenbelt and local serving road. As such, the concept plan includes a park road, passive open space, and limited access planted buffer and wetlands area. The park road, planted buffer and wetlands area represent approximately 80 percent of the open space acreage. The programming features of the passive open space include community gardens, nature play, outdoor classroom, and plaza. As stated earlier, the Green TI is a concept plan. Completion of this study will conclude the grant requirements and close out the grant. Should the City Council decide to proceed with the next phase, implementation of the Green TI plan will require a larger comprehensive effort that would include:

- City Council direction to proceed.
- Additional community and agency outreach.
- California and Federal Environmental review.
- Civil engineering for park design.
- Public/Private financing strategy.

On November 19, 2015, the Planning Commission recommended the City Council receive and file the Green TI plan (Exhibit B).

In accordance with the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, a Categorical Exemption (CE 15-168) was issued for the proposed project (Exhibit C - Categorical Exemption).

This matter was reviewed by Assistant City Attorney Michael J. Mais on November 13, 2015 and by Budget Operations Administrator Grace Yoon on November 12, 2015.

## SUSTAINABILITY

The core focus of the proposed plan is to present a concept for improving livability for the residents of west Long Beach by providing a buffer between neighborhoods and heavy industrial, and providing much needed park space. The project promotes the installation of low-water landscaping, pollution absorbing trees, and encourages walking and biking by installing a dedicated walking path and bike path along the mile-long stretch of the TI Freeway.

City Council action is requested on December 1, 2015, as the grant with Caltrans for this project requires grant close-out by February 2016.

The Green TI is a concept plan representing the community's vision for the re-use of the TI Freeway. The Plan does not obligate future funding. However, City Council action to receive and file the Green TI plan is the necessary first step if the City Council chooses to allocate additional funding at some future date for environmental review, including traffic and air quality impact analysis, and engineering and construction costs. No fiscal or local job impact will result from this recommended action.

Approve recommendation.

AMY J. BODEK, AICP  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST  
CITY MANAGER