



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0440, Version: 2

Recommendation to adopt ordinance amending the Use District Map of the City of Long Beach as said Map has been established and amended by amending portions of Parts 8, 14, and 15 of said Map to rezone select properties on major corridors (on Willow Street, west of the I-710 freeway to the City terminus; and Santa Fe Avenue between Pacific Coast Highway on the south and Wardlow Road on the north) in West Long Beach to either Mixed Use 1-A (MU-1-A) or Mixed Use 1-B (MU-1-B) to implement the Neighborhood Serving Corridors or Center Low (NSC-L) place types, read and adopted as read. (Citywide)

Project Background

On June 15, 2021, the City Council enacted a one-year moratorium on standalone new residential development along transportation corridors in West Long Beach in areas that are designated by the 2019 General Plan Land Use Element (LUE) update as the Neighborhood-Serving Corridors or Centers Low (NSC-L) PlaceType on Willow Street, west of the Interstate -710 (I-710) to the City of Long Beach (City) terminus; and Santa Fe Avenue, between Pacific Coast Highway on the south and Wardlow Road on the north, in the West Long Beach area of the City (the “Project Area”).

The action was based on a May 18, 2021 request by the City Council, which outlined the unique circumstances leading to the request for the interim moratorium Ordinance, given that the existing zoning regulations for the West Willow and Santa Fe Corridors pre-date adoption of the updated LUE and do not allow for mixed-use development that would be consistent with the LUE and Urban Design Element. The moratorium was put in place to prevent out-of-character development that could be permitted under existing zoning regulations and that would result in standalone single-use residential structures that would further forestall the ability to create walkable, mixed use neighborhoods and corridors. The moratorium is limited to parcels along the Willow Street and Santa Fe Avenue corridors, west of the I-710, which have been designated as “Neighborhood Serving Centers” within the adopted LUE.

The moratorium was extended for one year on June 14, 2022 to allow for City staff to conduct additional community engagement and technical analysis to inform a proposal for a new zoning district and a recommendation for rezoning of properties along the two corridors. Since that time, the Development Services Department has developed zoning code recommendations for the Willow and Santa Fe corridors that were refined based on community input and feedback. These recommendations were presented to the Planning Commission on April 20, 2023, and recommended for approval at said hearing (Attachment A).

Proposed Zoning Recommendations

In November 2020, the City established its new “interim” Zoning Code in Title 22 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. This action marked the beginning of a phased update of the City’s Zoning Code. Twelve new zoning districts were adopted in November 2020 to correspond with and implement the Neighborhood Serving mixed use and Community Commercial PlaceTypes of the LUE. Six of the zones were developed and adopted as basic zones that could apply in any area of the City. The other six of the zones were tailored to reflect community priorities and concerns in North Long Beach as part of an “A-series” of zones with tailored incentives and restrictions based on community input. For example, A-series zones were designed with incentives to facilitate greater access to grocery stores and include restrictions on uses not desired by the community, such as new motels. A city-initiated rezoning of properties in North Long Beach along Artesia Boulevard and Atlantic Avenue, to zones in the tailored “A-series”, was also part of the November 2020 action. Since that time, several other properties throughout the City that are designated with a Neighborhood Serving mixed-use PlaceType have been rezoned, and City staff has been working to develop additional zones and rezoning recommendations in sub-geographies throughout the City to facilitate a geographic rezoning program.

As codified in Title 22, A-series zones are eligible to be adopted in areas of the City that have been designated as Community Development Block Grant Areas (CDBG) by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Project Area is one such location that is primarily designated as a CDBG area. Based on input provided by West Long Beach residents and community members highlighting structural issues such as a need for increased walkability and lack of essential commercial uses and services, the A-series zones were identified as appropriate for the West Long Beach rezoning proposal. Based on community input and City staff analysis, of the six A-Series zoning districts adopted in 2020, the Residential Mixed-Use 3-A (RMU-3-A) and Mixed-Use 1-A (MU-1-A) districts are the most applicable to the Project Area given that the subject Willow and Santa Fe properties are within the NSC-L PlaceType. RMU-3-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. Therefore, this zone is appropriate for more residentially focused portions of the two corridors. In contrast, MU-1-A zones support 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. Public input for the West Long Beach rezoning effort prioritized the need for commercial revitalization and expanded business services, retail, and fresh food access, all of which aligned more closely with the MU-1-A zoning district. Therefore, more commercially focused and intense portions of the two corridors have been proposed for rezoning to the MU-1-A district.

To further address the critical need for commercial services and business opportunities as articulated by the West Long Beach community, a new Mixed Use 1-B (MU-1-B) zone has been developed to be implemented at key nodes of the Santa Fe and Willow corridors. This

proposed zone would reflect all of the same allowable uses and development standards of the MU-1-A zone, with one exception, that the MU-1-B zone would not allow for 100 percent residential projects and therefore requires a commercial component for any new development. The intent of this zone is therefore to ensure that commercial activity at key sections of West Long Beach, especially at major intersections, continues to grow over time and establish anchor points and linkages for new and existing businesses to grow. As the new zoning takes effect, it will ideally meet consumers' daily needs for goods and services close to existing residential areas.

Additionally, the proposed zoning code amendments to Title 22 establish additional incentives for essential retail by amending the Section 22.25 (Special Use Incentives) of Title 22 to include banks and pharmacies in the list of potential uses that can qualify for FAR relief. These incentives will be applicable to all established and future A-Series zones as well as the standalone B-series zone MU-1-B (Attachment B). In addition to establishing the new zoning district and revised A-series incentives, the proposed project would amend the City's zoning map to reflect the rezoning of select properties on the Santa Fe and Willow corridors in the West Long Beach area to either the MU-1-A or MU-1-B zoning districts that will be applied to areas as indicated on the proposed Zone Change map (Attachment C).

Consistency with the General Plan and Other Relevant Plans and Policies

The proposed new zoning district and rezoning proposal is compatible with the goals, policies and designations within the City's General Plan LUE update (Attachment D). The General Plan LUE identifies the areas that are to be rezoned consistent with the NSC-L PlaceType (LUE map grid 14, 15, and 19), and the proposed new zone and rezoning proposal are consistent with and designed to implement the NSC-L PlaceType. Multiple LUE 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, enhanced mobility choices, and safe and secure living environments (LUE p. 4-6). The proposed zoning district is also consistent with the LUE generalized concept of redirecting and concentrating new development, in particular mixed-use development, along major corridors, accommodating higher density housing while minimizing direct displacement, and increasing commercial activity along nodes and corridors (LUE p.13-14, 27).

The proposed zoning district is generally compatible with the City's Housing Element. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65863, which includes a requirement that cities must maintain, at all times during the planning period, adequate sites to meet their unmet share of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). Under this law, cities generally may not take any action that would allow or cause the sites identified in its Site Inventory to be insufficient to meet its remaining unmet share of the City's RHNA for lower and moderate-income households. There are 36 parcels within the project area that have been designated in the Housing Element Site Inventory as potential sites for housing development; these sites total approximately 10 acres and have 338 housing units allocated, of which 205 are

designated as affordable. In total, these sites account for 1.3 percent of the City's RHNA allocation. While the proposed zoning districts do not directly restrict housing development potential for said sites, the commercial requirement for the MU-1-B district could be considered a potential impediment to new residential construction. At the time of preparing this report, the City still has a surplus of sites and unit potential in its site inventory. Additionally, City staff is proactively working to identify additional sites to be added to the City's site inventory to avoid any potential shortfall of units.

Public Hearing Notice

Although not required by code, all property owners and tenants were mailed a notice regarding this public hearing for a total of 1,870 notices of public hearing distributed on April 18, 2023. Three poster notices were posted at prominent locations within the proposed rezoning vicinity, and notices were posted at City Hall and at local libraries in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Zoning Regulations. As of the preparation of this report, City staff has not received any written communications in response to the project. Any additional comments received prior to the City Council hearing will be provided to the City Council for its review and consideration.

Public Outreach

City staff hosted a series of public events to inform community members of the proposed zoning recommendations and gather feedback, including a May 2022 virtual open house and February 2023 virtual workshop. Recordings and presentation materials of both workshops were also posted on the project website to be made available to those who could not attend the outreach events.

Environmental Review

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, the City, as Lead Agency, prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Addendum, EIRA-01-23 (Attachment E), to a previously certified Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), EIR 03-16, State Clearinghouse No. 2015051054 prepared for the General Plan LUE Update and Urban Design Element (Attachment F). 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 previously 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. Therefore, the addendum was prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15164.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Erin Weesner-McKinley on April 17, 2023 and by Revenue Management Officer Geraldine Alejo on April 13, 2023.

City Council action is requested on May 2, 2023 prior to the moratorium expiration on June 15, 2023. Pursuant to Section 21.25.103 of the Zoning Regulations, this request should be presented to the City Council within 60 days of the Planning Commission hearing, which took place on April 20, 2023.

There is no fiscal or local job impact associated with this recommendation. This recommendation has no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with City Council priorities.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LONG BEACH AMENDING THE USE DISTRICT MAP OF THE CITY OF LONG BEACH AS SAID MAP HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AND AMENDED BY AMENDING PORTIONS OF PARTS 8, 14, AND 15 OF SAID MAP TO REZONE SELECT PROPERTIES ON MAJOR CORRIDORS (ON WILLOW STREET, WEST OF THE I-710 FREEWAY TO THE CITY TERMINUS; AND SANTA FE AVENUE BETWEEN PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY ON THE SOUTH AND WARDLOW ROAD ON THE NORTH) IN WEST LONG BEACH TO EITHER MIXED USE 1-A (MU-1-A) OR MIXED USE 1-B (MU-1-B) TO IMPLEMENT THE NEIGHBORHOOD SERVING CORRIDORS OR CENTER LOW (NSC-L) PLACE TYPES

Approve recommendation.

CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

APPROVED:

THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER