Legislation Text

File #: 13-0895, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to receive supporting documentation into the record, conclude the public hearing, consider the Negative Declaration, and adopt resolution approving the Mobility Element as part of the City's General Plan;

Cities and counties in California are required to prepare and adopt a general plan as a comprehensive guide for long-term development. The general plan projects conditions and needs into the future, as a basis for determining objectives. It also establishes the long-term policy framework for day-to-day decision-making based upon those objectives. A community's general plan must address seven primary topics: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The Mobility Element focuses on the circulation component of the City of Long Beach General Plan (Exhibit A - Mobility Element). Using the Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan and growth forecasts, the Mobility Element uses a 20-year time horizon for planning purposes.

On July 18, 2013, the Planning Commission recommended to the City Council the approval of the Mobility Element and certified the Negative Declaration. The Mobility Element complies with the relevant code section of State law and the State of California Office of Planning and Research (aPR) General Plan Guidelines. As required, the Mobility Element addresses the circulation of people, goods and resources. The Mobility Element establishes a vision, goals, strategies, policies and implementation measures necessary to achieve a balanced mobility system that serves the needs of all users of the public rights-of-way by recommending complete streets and context-sensitive design principles. The Mobility Element outlines the structure of the City's existing and future multimodal transportation system by mode -- pedestrian, bicycle, transit, motor vehicle -- and also includes information about various transportation-related topics including parking, transportation demand management, goods movement, airports, seaports, transportation funding, and regional transportation.

In addition, the Mobility Element will serve as a guide to inform a wide range of City planning documents and programming activities, such as the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), transportation-related master plans, development permit applications and regional planning documents. The Mobility Element is not a detailed blueprint of the transportation system of the future. Rather, it is a policy document, which provides a framework for future transportation construction and management programs.

Long Beach is a mostly built-out city with a well-developed street network and a regular grid pattern in most neighborhoods. Very limited opportunities exist to acquire additional rights-of-way to widen streets or build new streets to accommodate additional vehicular traffic. Road widening along many street segments would be infeasible, prohibitively expensive, and/or highly undesirable due to overriding considerations such as consistency with policies promoting active living, complete streets and protection of the existing built environment. As a result, the City is focusing future improvements on making the existing mobility network more efficient by encouraging other modes of transportation

(primarily walking, bicycling, and public transit) and by using innovation and technology to improve the flow of traffic along our existing corridors.

More than improving transportation and mobility, this plan is also about improving the quality of life for today's generation, as well as generations to come. In that regard, the Mobility Element has taken a new approach to transportation and mobility, making bold moves to support this community's growth, prosperity, and quality of life. To create this efficient, balanced, and multimodal mobility network, the Mobility Element calls for the City to:

• Establish a network of complete streets that complement the related land uses.

• Reconfigure streets to emphasize modal priorities.

• Strategically improve congested intersections and corridors.

• Establish a more flexible level of service approach to traffic analysis and improvements.

• Reduce the environmental impacts of the transportation system.

• Manage the supply of parking.

While the City has always supported alternative modes of transportation, the 1991 Transportation Element generally focused on making the street network safe and more efficient for private automobiles by maintaining acceptable levels of service standards. The existing Transportation Element uses a functional street classification system to plan and design street improvements. Under this system, the City's primary consideration in planning and designing streets has typically been the roadway's private vehicle capacity, represented by roadway width and number of travel lanes. With the new Mobility Element, by using a context-sensitive approach, the City plans to address the function of the street, neighborhood character, and the needs of all mobility users. This approach lends itself to a more balanced mobility system that also integrates land use and urban design objectives for better place-making. The new nomenclature for street types included in this Mobility Element signifies the shift to a new context-sensitive street classification approach. In the new plan, for example, the Boulevard street type is used to better reflect roadways in the City characterized by moderate speeds, a balanced multi modal function, wide sidewalks, and more intensive land use oriented towards the street.

Moreover, the methods the City uses to measure traffic impacts need to change to reflect this new classification system. For many decades, the City used a conventional Level of Service (LOS) approach to evaluate the performance of roadway segments and intersections. The implementation of this LOS approach has resulted in automobile-centric street corridors and intersections that often ignore the needs of other roadway users, mainly pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. This Mobility Element proposes a departure from this method and a move towards a Multimodal Level of Service (MMLOS) methodology and standard. This change recognizes that the free-flowing movement of automobiles is not the only transportation standard for a city that aspires to have a balanced multi-modal transportation system that counts people, not vehicles.

The Mobility Element includes a detailed map for each mode showing existing and recommended future facilities. For the pedestrian plan, the Mobility Element introduces Pedestrian Priority Areas,

which identify areas to focus new investment toward improving pedestrian circulation by widening sidewalks, adding street trees, and other amenities for pedestrians.

The City will continue to use its Bicycle Master Plan as the primary tool to implement improvements to the bicycle network. With the new bike plan in the Mobility Element, there are additional priorities for bicycling in Long Beach. The new emphasis is on dramatically increasing the mode share for bicycling: how to get recreational/casual bicyclists to ride more. This shift is represented in the policies on social infrastructure and the development of a network of bike boulevards within the City.

One of the primary goals of this Mobility Element is the increased use of transit as a more viable option for both work and non-work trips. Accomplishing this goal, the transit plan will require an improved transit system capable of providing faster and more frequent trips while maintaining safe, clean, and dependable service.

Through this Mobility Element, the City establishes a list of preferred streets for "local delivery" routes - those streets with three lanes or more. This will direct delivery trucks away from neighborhoods except for deliveries to that particular neighborhood. The absence of a local delivery route allows local truck drivers to determine their own routes through neighborhoods, thereby causing unintended impacts to adjacent land uses. The Mobility Element defines preferred streets for local delivery to prevent proliferation of truck traffic in neighborhoods.

The Mobility Element was developed by staff with technical assistance from consultants and with input from residents and other stakeholders dating back to 2009. Several study sessions with the Planning Commission were also held over the past few years. Throughout the winter of 2011, the Public Works Department conducted public workshops to identify and prioritize new bike facilities for the Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) in anticipation of the update. Relatedly, staff administered a grant from Los Angeles County Department of Public Health that resulted in the formation of several principles for active living. The Planning Commission approved, and City Council adopted, these principles in 2011, which were then incorporated into the Mobility Element.

The Mobility Element has been available for public review and comment since March 15, 2013, and the final citywide workshop was held on May 22,2013. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, a Negative Declaration was prepared and made available to the public on May 2, 2013, starting a 30-day public review and comment period that ended on May 31,2013 (Exhibit B - Negative Declaration). On September 17, 2013, a City Council Study Session was held.

This matter was reviewed by Assistant City Attorney Michael Mais on September 26,2013 and by Budget Management Officer Victoria Bell on October 1,2013.

The Municipal Code requires City Council action within 60 days of positive action by the Planning Commission, which took place on July 18, 2013.

There is no fiscal or local job impact associated with this request.

AMY J. BODEK, AICP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER

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A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LONG BEACH APPROVING AND ADOPTING, AFTER PUBLIC HEARING, A MOBILITY ELEMENT AS PART OF THE GENERAL PLAN OF THE CITY OF LONG BEACH