



Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meeting

TO: Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

FROM: City of Long Beach Development Services
333 West Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90802
Contact: Angela Reynolds, AICP, Deputy Director, Development Services, (562) 570-6369

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for Midtown Specific Plan

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21165 and the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines) Section 15050, the City of Long Beach (City) is the Lead Agency responsible for preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addressing potential impacts associated with the proposed project.

The purpose of this notice is (1) to serve as a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15082 and (2) to advise and solicit comments and suggestions regarding the scope and content of the EIR to be prepared for the proposed project, and (3) serve as a notice of a public scoping meeting to be held by the City. The City, as Lead Agency, respectfully requests that any Responsible or Trustee Agency responding to this notice respond in a manner consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b). Comments and suggestions should, at a minimum, identify the significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be explored in the EIR, in addition to whether the responding agency will be a responsible or trustee agency for the proposed project, and any related issues raised by interested parties other than potential responsible or trustee agencies, including interested or affected members of the public.

PROJECT TITLE: Midtown Specific Plan

PROJECT LOCATION: The Project Site (generally situated east of Pacific Avenue, west of Atlantic Avenue, north of Anaheim Street, and south of Wardlow Road) is just north of downtown Long Beach and consists of three areas: the Midtown Specific Plan area and two Conventional Zoning areas. The Midtown Specific Plan area spans approximately 353 acres from Anaheim Street to Spring Street. The first Conventional Zoning area covers 15 acres from Spring Street to Wardlow Road, and the second area covers 5 acres near Officer Black Park. All three areas make up the Project Site and together, comprise 373 acres spanning from Anaheim Street to Wardlow Road. The eastern and western boundaries of the Project Site range from 300 feet at midblock locations to quarter-mile transit nodes along California State Route 1 (SR-1) and Anaheim Street.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Midtown Specific Plan

The Midtown Specific Plan (Specific Plan) provides a framework for the development and improvement of a 353-acre corridor along Long Beach Boulevard. As shown in Table 1, the Specific Plan would increase the number of permitted residential units within the Specific Plan area to just over 3,600 units (a net increase of 1,800 units over existing conditions) and the commercial and employment building square footage to just under 2.8 million square feet (a net increase of almost 350,000 square feet over existing conditions). The buildout projections also assume a small increase in the number of licensed hospital beds and addition of a business hotel.

Table 1 Land Use Projections for Midtown Specific Plan Area

	Dwelling Units	Population	Com/Emp Square Feet	Hospital Beds	Hotel Rooms	Employees
Existing Land Use	1,819	5,695	2,427,567	956	196	12,570
Development Projected Under Proposed Midtown Specific Plan	3,619	10,066	2,776,499	983	277	15,357
Development Levels Allowed Under Current Zoning	5,696	16,528	4,812,965	983	277	20,180

Notes: Com/Emp = Commercial/Employment

Land Converting to Conventional Zoning

Based on the recent adoption of the Downtown Plan and the proposed Midtown Specific Plan, and because the City does not anticipate any new residential development, the City determined that the 16 acres of PD-29 between Spring Street and Wardlow Road along Long Beach Boulevard is to be converted to conventional commercial zoning, known as Community Commercial Pedestrian-Oriented (CCP). Converting this area from PD-29 to CCP would occur under a zone change. As shown in Table 2, the total commercial and employment square footage would increase under the proposed zoning in comparison to what could occur under the existing PD-29 zoning district; however, the number of dwelling units would decrease under the proposed zoning.

Table 2 Land Use Projections for Conventional Zoning Area

	Dwelling Units	Population	Com/Emp Square Feet	Hospital Beds	Hotel Rooms	Employees
Existing Land Use	140	438	212,112	0	0	241
Development Projected Under Proposed Zoning	76	246	237,852	0	0	538
Development Levels Allowed Under Current Zoning	247	773	192,362	0	0	429

Notes: Com/Emp = Commercial/Employment

Additionally, 5 acres of residential blocks near Officer Black Park west of Pasadena Avenue between 21st Street and 20th Street would be extracted from PD-29 and retain its underlying conventional zoning, which include Single-family Residential, standard lot (R-1-N); Low-density Multi-family Residential, small lot (R-3-S); and Park (P). No change is expected to occur within this area and all existing uses are expected to remain.

Overall Development for Proposed Project (Midtown Specific Plan and Conventional Zoning)

Land use projections for the overall Project Site (including the Specific Plan and Conventional Zoning areas) are detailed in Table 3. As shown, the Proposed Project would increase the number of permitted residential units to approximately 3,700 dwelling units—roughly 1,700 more than existing conditions. The Proposed Project also increases potential commercial and employment building square footage to approximately 3 million square feet (a net increase of approximately 375,000 square feet over existing conditions), concentrating development at key transit, employment, and freeway nodes. The number of hospital beds and hotel rooms would also increase over existing conditions.

Table 3 Overall Land Use Projections for Proposed Project

	Dwelling Units	Population	Com/Emp Square Feet	Hospital Beds	Hotel Rooms	Employees
Existing Land Use	1,959	6,133	2,639,679	956	196	12,811
Development Projected Under Proposed Project	3,695	10,312	3,014,351	983	277	15,895
Development Levels Allowed Under Current Zoning	5,943	17,301	5,005,327	983	277	20,609

Notes: Com = commercial; Emp = employment

Roadway Segment Closures

The Proposed Project also includes the closure of the following roadway segments to vehicular traffic in order to create parklets: 25th Street west of Long Beach Boulevard; 25th Street east of Long Beach Boulevard; 23rd Street west of Long Beach Boulevard; 23rd Street east of Long Beach Boulevard; 21st Street west of Long Beach Boulevard; 21st Street east of Long Beach Boulevard; Rhea Street east of Long Beach Boulevard; Esther Street east of Long Beach Boulevard; 15th Street west of Long Beach Boulevard; 15th Street east of Long Beach Boulevard; and 14th Street east of Long Beach Boulevard.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: Potentially significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed project include Aesthetics, Air Quality, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation/Traffic, and Utilities and Service Systems. These topics will be addressed in the EIR. In addition, the EIR will describe and evaluate project alternatives that may reduce or avoid any identified significant adverse impacts of the project. Unless new information identifying it as a potential impact is presented during the scoping process, the following topics will not be discussed further in the EIR: Agricultural Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Mineral Resources.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, responsible and trustee agencies and other interested parties, including members of the public, must submit any comments in response to this notice no later than 30 days after receipt. The Notice of Preparation (NOP) and accompanying Initial Study are available for a 30-day public review period beginning **March 9, 2015**, and ending **April 7, 2015**.

Copies of the Initial Study and supporting documents are available for review at the following locations:

- City of Long Beach Development Services, 333 West Ocean Boulevard, Long Beach, CA 90802
- Main Library, 101 Pacific Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90822
- Burnett Neighborhood Library, 560 East Hill Street, Long Beach, CA 90806
- Dana Neighborhood Library, 3680 Atlantic Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90807
- Mark Twain Neighborhood Library, 1401 East Anaheim Street, Long Beach, CA 90813

The Initial Study can also be viewed on the City of Long Beach website at the following address: http://www.lbds.info/planning/environmental_planning/environmental_reports.asp. Additionally, a copy of the NOP was published in the Long Beach Press Telegram.

RESPONSES AND COMMENTS: The City will accept written comments only during the aforementioned public review period. Please indicate a contact person for your agency or organization and send your written comments to Angela Reynolds, AICP, Deputy Director, Development Services, of the City of Long Beach at the above address, by facsimile to 562.570.6205, or by e-mail at angela.reynolds@longbeach.gov.

SCOPING MEETING: As a part of the NOP process, the City will conduct a public scoping meeting in order to present the proposed project and environmental process and to receive public comments and suggestions regarding the proposed project. The scoping meeting will be held on March 25, 2015, at 6:00 pm at Veteran’s Memorial Park Community Room, 101 E. 28th Street, Long Beach, CA.