



Recirculated Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Land Use Element Update & Urban Design Element of the Long Beach General Plan June 2019

On March 6, 2018, the City Council voted at a public hearing to confirm the General Plan Land Use Element and Urban Design Element PlaceType and Heights Maps, and directed staff to update the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). Since that time, staff has been working to update the PEIR for the Land Use Element (LUE) and its companion Urban Design Element (UDE), as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The revised PEIR is based on the final set of maps adopted by City Council on 3/6/18 as well as the updated LUE and UDE plan texts, to which technical changes have been made to align and ensure consistency with the map changes voted on by City Council and the revised CEQA analysis.

What is the General Plan Update?

The City of Long Beach General Plan is a policy document required by State law, which establishes the goals and policies that will guide growth and development in the City through 2040. The update of the City's General Plan aims to guide Long Beach to a more sustainable future, to improve mobility choices, expand transit access, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and meet state requirements.

What is a General Plan?

A General Plan is a broad, long-range policy document that guides future development and conservation of natural and cultural resources, and is a comprehensive collection of goals and policies related to a multitude of aspects of community life. In California, cities and counties are required by State law to have a General Plan. It is the local government's long-term blueprint for future development. Pursuant to State law, the General Plan must accommodate the required amount of projected population growth the State of California estimates for each city.

What makes up a General Plan?

California requires seven elements within the General Plan: Land Use, Circulation (Mobility), Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. The City of Long Beach has also adopted optional elements including Scenic Routes, Public Safety, and Historic Preservation. Consistency across all adopted elements is legally required.

What is the Land Use Element?

The Land Use Element of the General Plan describes objectives, policies, and programs for areas within a city's boundaries using both text and maps. Maps of land use categories are used to depict the general distribution, location, and extent of public and private uses of land. It includes forecasts for jobs and population, and establishes policy to accommodate those projections. The



proposed LUE would introduce the concept of “PlaceTypes,” which would replace the current approach in the existing LUE of segregating property within the City into traditional land use designations and zoning classifications. PlaceTypes allow for greater flexibility and mix of compatible land uses with more focus on design and context.

What are PlaceTypes?

This Land Use Element takes a more integrated approach to land use planning by organizing land in the city into categories that reflect the way that land should be used, the scale and intensity of development, development patterns, accessibility, and streetscape design. PlaceTypes take into consideration how the development looks and how it relates to the streets, sidewalks and neighboring buildings. This is a deliberate step away from regulating buildings based solely on how tall they are or how many square feet they contain.

What is the Urban Design Element?

While the LUE focuses on specific parcels, the goals and policies of the UDE focus on “the stuff in between,” such as building form, space between buildings, pedestrian space, public open space, connectivity and linkages, and a building’s relationships to the street. The UDE supports PlaceType development with an emphasis on development patterns, streetscapes, and urban form components; and how PlaceTypes relate internally and with adjacent PlaceTypes.

What is a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)?

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a Lead Agency to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for any project that may have a significant environmental effect that cannot be mitigated. For plans such as the LUE and UDE, the City prepares a Program EIR (PEIR), which is a type of EIR document designed to consider "broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures." (CEQA Guidelines §15168(b)(4). Subsequent activities, such as development projects or other legislative actions that would be undertaken by the City to implement the LUE and UDE, that occur as a result of approval and certification of a PEIR must be further evaluated in light of the PEIR to determine whether or not an additional environmental document must be prepared, depending on whether it is found that new environmental effects could occur and whether new mitigation would be required.

If the City Council already agreed to a final set of maps in March 2018, why is a PEIR being recirculated?

CEQA requires recirculation of an EIR when significant new information is added after public notice is given of the availability of the Draft EIR, but before the certification of the EIR. In this instance, recirculation is required due to the substantial changes made to the LUE maps after the first PEIR was circulated for public review in 2016. The revised EIR now being circulated for public review is based on the final set of PlaceType and Height maps approved by the City Council on March 6, 2018, as well as the updated LUE and UDE plan texts, to which technical changes have



been made to align and ensure consistency with the map changes voted on by City Council and the revised CEQA analysis.

Where can I review the revised PEIR?

Online: The revised PEIR is available on the city's website at: <http://www.longbeach.gov/lbds/planning/environmental/reports/>.

In Person: Hard copies and electronic copies of the Recirculated Draft EIR can be found at the following libraries throughout the City: Brewitt Branch, Bay Shore Branch, El Dorado Branch, Back Branch, Dana Branch, Mark Twain Branch, Burnett Branch, Los Altos Branch, Harte Branch, Senior Center Library, Michelle Obama Library, and the Alamitos Branch. Note that the Long Beach Main Library is closed due to construction activities, so there will not be a copy provided at that location.

A hard copy will also be available for viewing at Long Beach City Hall, at 333 West Ocean Blvd., on the 5th floor. After approximately Tuesday, August 6th, a hard copy of the document will be available at 411 West Ocean Blvd., upon the move to the new Civic Center

What is the public comment period for the revised PEIR?

The review period begins June 18, 2019 and remains open through August 16, 2019. The PEIR will be available for public review and comment for 60 days, longer than the mandatory 45-day review required by CEQA.

Why has it taken so long for a revised PEIR to be released?

Updating the PEIR has involved revising the project description to reflect the City Council changes to the LUE text and maps and working with technical experts in transportation modeling, population forecasting, greenhouse gas emissions and more to update the analyses of the proposed LUE, for the purposes of CEQA review and disclosure. This included re-modeling existing and future conditions for 88 intersections throughout the city, updating forecast models related to air quality, and conferring with other agencies, such as the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), to gain consensus on these methodologies.

What is different in this revised PEIR compared to the 2016 PEIR?

This revised PEIR is based on the updated LUE and UDE plan texts, as well as the final set of PlaceType and Height maps adopted by the City Council on March 6, 2018. Compared to the PlaceType and Height maps analyzed for the 2016 EIR, many areas experienced a reduction in PlaceType intensity and/or maximum height allowance. A full description of these changes is included in Section 3.0: Project Description of the revised PEIR, including Figures 3.7 and 3.8 which depict all changes in PlaceType and Height designations comparing the 2016 maps to the final 2018 maps. Additionally, the CEQA baseline year was updated to 2018, so more recent data were used in the environmental analysis whenever they were available.



What Findings are different in the Revised EIR?

Similar to the 2016 EIR, the revised EIR analysis found that all impacts can be reduced to a less than significant level with adherence to Standard Conditions and prescribed Mitigation Measures, with the exception of impacts related to Air Quality, Global Climate Change, and Transportation. The only new impact found to be significant and unavoidable relates to noise. The 2016 EIR did not find Noise impacts to be significant despite mitigation. Given that the timing and extent of construction-related noise is unknown, the revised EIR finds this impact to be significant and unavoidable; this conclusion represents a more conservative analysis.

What if I provided a public comment during the 2016 EIR comment period?

Since the Recirculated Draft EIR has been substantially revised, the City is requiring that reviewers submit new comments on the revised project addressed in the Recirculated EIR (Section 15088.5[f][1] of the *State CEQA Guidelines*). As such, the City will prepare a final EIR to respond to new comments submitted in the comment period noted above, and is not required to respond to comments received during the previous comment period for the original project and Draft EIR. The 2016 Draft EIR and the Final EIR with responses to comment submitted at that time are still accessible to the public for reference and remain a part of the administrative record.

What happens after the comment period closes?

Once the comment period has closed, each comment received from the public or other agencies will be reviewed and responded to in writing in the Final EIR as required by CEQA. Subsequent to this process, staff will bring the matter back to decision makers, first to the Planning Commission for recommendation and then to the City Council for certification of the revised Final Environmental Impact Report (which includes all public comments and responses to those comments). Depending on the number of comments received, it is anticipated that this action will come before the City Council in late fall 2019.

What happens after the LUE is adopted?

Once the LUE is adopted, there are 110 Citywide Implementation Strategies listed in the Implementation Chapter (Chapter 5) of the LUE, and an additional 27 Implementation Strategies in the Administration and Implementation Chapter (Chapter 5) of the UDE. The first implementation strategy of the LUE is to update the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Districts Map to include new zoning districts and development standards that are consistent with the PlaceTypes, goals, strategies and policies outlined in the LUE and map changes made by the City Council on 3/6/18. This work will be done in phases, area by area across the city with additional outreach processes for each phase. The first area of the City where new zoning regulations could be in effect is in North Long Beach through the UPLAN, where extensive community engagement and partnership has led to a set of draft zoning recommendations for portions of two corridors- Atlantic Ave (north of Del Amo Blvd) and Artesia Blvd (from Atlantic Ave to Downey Ave).



What is Zoning and how is it different from the General Plan?

Zoning is the way local governments guide the physical development of land, the kinds of uses that are allowed and the other standards that have to be met such as height, parking, yards, and landscaping, as well as the process for reviewing and approving projects. The Zoning Code specifies the areas in which residential, industrial, recreational or commercial activities may take place and establishes standards (e.g. lot coverage, building height, setbacks, etc.) that determine the size of a building and where it can be located on a lot in relation to the street.

While the General Plan establishes broad, long-term policies that guide future development, the Zoning Code implements general plan policies with detailed development regulations that must be consistent with the General Plan. State law requires that zoning be consistent with maps and policies in the General Plan. Uses and densities/intensities may be permitted if they are consistent with both the General Plan land use designation and the zoning of the property.

Subsequent to adoption of the LUE and UDE, the zoning code will be updated sub-area by sub-area of the city over a period of 5 years to implement the General Plan Update.

What else is happening with Zoning Code updates in Long Beach?

As opposed to comprehensive efforts that will be taken to develop new zones to implement the General Plan Update, LB Code Change is a series of quarterly tune ups to fix and modernize the City's existing Zoning Code to keep the code up-to-date and relevant to emerging land use trends and evolving priorities. Topics addressed in recent code amendments include defining and regulating new uses such as escape rooms and tutoring centers, clarifying rules about animal boarding and adoption uses, granting relief from height limits for rooftop solar facilities in non-residential areas and updating fence regulations in flood zones, for example.