




Date: July 7, 2022

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Oscar Orci, Director of Development Services 
Johnny Vallejo, Acting Director of Economic Development 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Waterfront Visioning Effort**

On October 22, 2019, the City Council approved a [recommendation](#) directing the City Manager to initiate a visioning effort for the Downtown Shoreline Planned Development (PD-6) zoning district as the framework for a Downtown Shoreline Specific Plan that updates current development regulations and facilitates repositioning of existing uses and resources in the Downtown Shoreline area. The purpose of this memo is to provide an update regarding actions taken by staff and proposed next steps.

Background

The Planned Development (PD) District is established to allow flexible development plans to be prepared for areas of the Long Beach which may benefit from the formal recognition of unique or special land uses and the establishment of special design policies and standards not otherwise possible under conventional zoning district regulations. A PD can include a compatible mix of land uses, allowing for planned commercial areas and business parks, and encouraging a variety of housing styles and densities. Planned Development Districts are adopted by the City Council in accordance with Long Beach Municipal Code [Chapter 21.37](#).

In 1999, the City of Long Beach (City) adopted an Ordinance establishing [PD-6](#) to provide a framework to guide and regulate the development of the Downtown Shoreline. Specifically, PD-6 is intended to lead to the creation of an area exhibiting the following characteristics:

- A mixture of public and private uses of a variety of land use types;
- Significant public access through and around uses, whether public or private, and to coastal resources;
- Uses of a recreational or recreational access nature;
- Strong land use interactions and access connections with the downtown;
- An urban park-like setting with a variety of strolling, bicycling, and active and passive recreational areas, interesting water features and abundant landscaping; and,
- The highest quality of development.

The PD-6 boundaries include Ocean Boulevard to the coast, and Golden Shore Drive to Alamitos Avenue. This area captures the Convention Center, Pike Outlets, Catalina Landing, Rainbow Harbor, Rainbow Lagoon, the Aquarium of the Pacific, and the Downtown Marina. With the development and revitalization of most of the City and Successor Agency-owned properties in the

Downtown area, there has been increased interest in the vacant and underutilized properties in PD-6 for uses that complement and enhance the attraction of the Downtown Shoreline area.

PD-6 Visioning Process

In the Fiscal Year 2019 budget, the City Council approved \$150,000 to begin the economic analysis of the downtown waterfront area as a part of the first steps toward the PD-6 update process. Although City staff quickly moved forward with the economic impact analysis, the City was approached by leadership from the Major League Baseball's Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim (Angels) organization in early 2019, and the economic impact study was refocused on the assessment of economic impacts and potential revenue sources for the support of a stadium complex, administrative offices, and surrounding retail development. Although negotiations with the Angels concluded without reaching mutually acceptable terms for the stadium development project, City leadership emerged with a much better understanding about the Shoreline area, land use requirements, environmental challenges, and financing options for development in the area.

At the September 24, 2019 [Building a Better Long Beach](#) presentation, Mayor Garcia announced plans for a visioning process for the PD-6 area. Shortly thereafter, on October 22, 2019, the City Council approved \$250,000 in funding to support the planning, development, and community outreach process. Although Development Services Department staff immediately began preparing a scope of work the project was sidelined and placed on-hold after the City declared an emergency related to COVID-19 in March 2020. Given the pandemic related constraints coupled with competing priorities and staffing and other challenges, the outreach process has not resumed. Staff in both Development Services and Economic Development Departments (Departments) are planning to restart this effort as part of the economic recovery plan to attract interest and investment to the Long Beach and the coastline in the post COVID-19 era.

The visioning process will be the first step in a multi-year effort that would allow ample time for the City to develop community and stakeholder consensus for future development and enhancement of the area; and, provide a framework to subsequently prepare a Specific Plan to guide and facilitate new investment and repositioning of resources in the Shoreline area. A typical process takes years to complete and will involve economic analysis, due diligence, and community input; and, any proposed vision would be determined by the Mayor and City Council once the visioning process is complete.

Next Steps

Consistent with the systematic approach currently underway by the Development Services Department Planning Bureau to rezone Long Beach to implement the newly adopted General Plan policy guidance pursuant to State law, the PD-6 visioning process will be led by the Departments. The process will mirror the successful visioning process that resulted in the Downtown Plan (PD-30) adopted in 2012 as well as more recent land use efforts that resulted in the adoption of the Globemaster Specific Plan and the Southeast Area Specific Plan and the current [Zone In: City Core](#) effort to rezone Central Long Beach. The process will also involve the completion of an economic trends analysis to inform the visioning process with data on the challenges and opportunities that exist in the regional market for repurposing this area.

City staff will initiate the visioning process through a Request for Proposals to select a qualified consultant to support staff in conducting the visioning process and preparation of the PD. Once the consultant is selected and under contract they will assist City staff in assembling a Visioning Committee comprised of key stakeholders in the Downtown and Waterfront areas. Following completion of the waterfront visioning process, staff will work with the selected consultant to prepare a Downtown Shoreline Specific Plan that replaces PD-6 with regulations that capture the broad goals of the visioning process with objectives that confirm and strengthen existing uses and services, creates stronger linkages between the coastal area and Downtown as well as the Queensbay Bay Planned Development, and strategies to promote new uses that enhance the attractiveness of the area for new investment and visitors to the area. It is anticipated that the visioning process and preparation of a Specific Plan would be completed and ready for implementation at the close of the 2028 Summer Olympic Games.

Fiscal Impact

The Departments estimate the visioning effort can be initiated with approximately \$250,000 appropriated by the City Council but an on-going multi-year strategy to fund the PD and the California Environmental Quality Act clearances for this environmentally sensitive area will require further analysis. The Departments will return to City Council and address the fiscal impact of the full visioning effort when a contract for a project consultant is selected and recommended for City Council approval. City staff will continue to work on estimates and potential funding sources, including potential grants, for this multi-year planning effort that includes the visioning process, preparation of the specific plan, and the environmental documents.

Conclusion

City staff anticipates providing the Mayor and the City Council with written updates, which will include a detailed work program, a project timeline for a multi-year, multi-phase process, and cost estimates for each component.

If you would like further information please contact Oscar Orci, Development Services Director, at (562) 570-6369 or via email at Oscar.Orci@longbeach.gov or Johnny Vallejo, Acting Economic Development Director, at (562) 570-6792 or via email at Johnny.Vallejo@longbeach.gov.

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