

ZONE CHANGE FINDINGS

**3701 Pacific Place
Case No. 2407-21 (ZCHG24-004)
June 5, 2025**

Pursuant to Section 21.25.106 of the Long Beach Municipal Code, in all cases, the Planning Commission and the City Council shall be required to make the following findings of fact before rezoning a parcel. These findings and staff analysis are presented for consideration, adoption and incorporation into the record of proceedings:

1. THE PROPOSED CHANGE WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER, LIVABILITY OR APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SURROUNDING AREA; AND

Positive Finding: The subject property (Property) is located at 3701 Pacific Place and is currently zoned Light Industrial (IL). The IL zoning district is an industrial use district for a wide range of industries whose primary operations occur entirely within enclosed structures and pose limited potential for environmental impacts. The proposed Project consists of a self-storage facility with accessory car wash and recreational vehicle (RV) storage. Self-storage facilities are not allowed within the IL Zoning District. The site would be rezoned to be the less intensive Commercial Storage (CS) zoning district, to facilitate the development of the self-storage facility through the Conditional Use Permit process. Additionally, the self-storage building would be approximately 40 feet tall at the roof line, with a parapet extending an additional approximately four (4) feet. While the proposed building height is comparable to the existing Neo-Industrial PlaceType and 40 foot height limit in the Land Use Element (LUE), the proposed height exceeds the established LUE height and the maximum height in the CS zone (28 feet). As such, a zone change and zoning code amendment to add a height overlay of 50 feet is also required. The project also includes a General Plan Map Amendment to change the land use PlaceType from Neo-Industrial (NI) to Community Commercial (CC) and the LUE height from 40 feet to 5 stories, 50 feet.

The CS zoning district encourages storage uses in areas which are particularly difficult to use due to parcel shape, access, adverse environmental conditions, or in areas where parcels are needed to form a buffer from incompatible uses. The Property fits the criteria of irregular parcel shape, limited access and adverse environmental conditions. The Property is located in a unique position to the north of the Interstate-405 (I-405) Freeway, and to the west of the Interstate-710 (I-710) Freeway and the Los Angeles (L.A.) River, with access available only through a small road that is used mostly for access to said freeways. It is further confined by the Metro A-Line light rail tracks directly to the east. In addition, the Property does not have access or proximity to other commercial, retail, or neighborhood services; it therefore is not located in an area that could capitalize on proximity to services,

transit, and walkability. The site has been exposed to substantial levels of contamination due to its previous activities as an oil brine water treatment facility and an oil well drilling site. Based on the level contamination on the site, self-storage and vehicle storage are appropriate uses.

Self-storage and vehicle storage are considered low-intensity uses that are not expected to cause adverse impacts such as excessive vehicle trips or traffic, or the generation of excessive noise, odor or hazardous materials. The site's location along two freeways suggests its compatibility as auto-oriented use that will be accessible using the same road that currently provides access to both freeways. Although the Property is in proximity with a school, park and a single-family residential community, it is naturally buffered by the Metro A-Line light rail tracks and Del Mar Avenue. There is also no direct vehicular, pedestrian, or bicycle access from the Property to the school, park or residential area.

Due to the site's relatively isolated location and access, the rezoning and construction of the Project will not negatively affect the character of the existing residential neighborhood, nor would it adversely affect its livability. The Project will result in improvements to the development site including the paving of additional roadways and removal of physical blight within and around the Property and would not result in negative effects upon the surrounding area.

The Project is also harmonious with its location near the L.A. River. The Property is located adjacent to a vacant Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) property, which itself is located adjacent to the L.A. River and existing public trails along the river, used by bicyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians. There is not currently any public access to the L.A. River from the Property or near the Property's location. For several years, the City and LACFCD have been discussing potential development of the LACFCD property for public open space and recreational uses consistent with the RiverLink and now the Los Angeles River Master Plan's (LARMP's) vision to improve the LACFCD property as a riparian woodland. The LARMP is a vision document that identifies long term goals and potential strategies for increasing open space along the Los Angeles River. The role of the master plan is to identify potential opportunities for development of open space, in partnership with County of Los Angeles which owns and manages the land that comprises the river channel and in some cases land that is adjacent to the river channel. It does not supersede the City's General Plan or zoning which determine what types of land uses are permitted on any given property. A similar vision is also articulated in the Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan (LLARRP). Among 155 Opportunity Areas along the L.A. River identified in the LLARRP, the LLARRP identifies 58 acres in the Project vicinity as potential Opportunity Area 68 (includes, among other properties, the LACFCD parcel, the Property, and the private property abutting the Property to the east), which envisions potentially open space, wetland, or recharge basin uses.

No public agency has identified, secured, or issued funding to acquire, remediate, and develop the Property for open space uses, nor has any public agency made such an offer to do so. Nevertheless, the Project will facilitate and be consistent with the opportunities contemplated in the RiverLink and LLARRP plans by dedicating an easement for future development of a publicly accessible trail and trailhead that connects Pacific Place to the LACFCD property via a path around the southern and western edge of the Property. Therefore, if the LACFCD property is developed for public open space in the future, the easement will be available to be developed as safe, efficient public access to the LACFCD property and bike path/L.A. River adjacent where none currently exists at this location.

In addition, if the LACFCD property is developed as public open space, the Project's development and use would be consistent with adjacent open space uses. The vacant properties in the vicinity (the Property, LACFCD property, and private property to the east of the Property) have long been an attractive nuisance, due to their isolated location between the I-405 freeway, L.A. River, and Metro A-Line tracks. The Property has been secured and is now monitored by the current owner, however, these issues have created safety risks and public nuisances resulting in community complaints in the past. The Project would reduce the amount of space in which those concerning activities can occur, add new security lighting and measures, and bring commercial activity to the area. Development of the Property makes those activities less likely for neighboring sites like the LACFCD property because the area will no longer be isolated and vacant. Accordingly, the area is anticipated to become safer for open space or park uses.

Further, the Project will include a comprehensive soil remediation of the Property, implement major upgrades including landscaping, construct a new building with high-quality architecture and new paving, install water and energy efficient systems, install a comprehensive stormwater control system including detention basins and modular wetland biofiltration, and construct off-site roadway improvements. These improvements will enhance adjacent properties and reduce the Property's potential impacts on those sites in terms of aesthetics, environmental contamination, access, and stormwater runoff and quality. The proposed zone change to the CS zoning district aligns with the intent of the zone based on site challenges including isolated location and access limitations. Given the significant barriers to site development and that the isolated nature of the project and its physical separation from the surrounding area by freeways, railroad tracks, and the L.A. River is not anticipated to change, the proposed zone change is an appropriate change in zoning classification from Light Industrial (IL) to Commercial Storage (CS) to facilitate a similar but slightly less intensive set of land uses and will therefore not adversely affect the character, livability or appropriate development of the surrounding area.

2. THE PROPOSED CHANGE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PROVISIONS OF THE GENERAL PLAN.

The Project is consistent with the General Plan regulations applicable to the new proposed zoning. The General Plan's LUE, adopted in December 2019, designates the Property as the Neo-Industrial (NI) Placetype. However, the Applicant is also requesting a General Plan Amendment as part of the entitlement package, in order to designate the Property as the Community Commercial (CC) Placetype, which is consistent with the proposed zone change to CS zoning.

The CC Placetype serves the City's auto-oriented need for goods and services, promotes commerce, and provides local jobs. Customers of businesses located in this Placetype will generally arrive by car and expect to find convenient parking. Additionally, properties in the CC Placetype must have visual and noise buffers, and act as a transition in scale between auto-oriented corridors and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The proposed Project meets these General Plan objectives for the CC Placetype. It consists of the construction of a four-story self-storage facility with accessory leasing lobby space, RV parking and accessory car wash. It is consistent with the proposed CC Placetype as it is an auto-oriented use that will provide self-storage and RV storage for residents in the vicinity needing those services. Self-storage customers will necessarily use automobiles to transport their belongings to and from the Property. Similarly, RVs and other vehicles stored on the Property will either drive or be driven therein. Ample parking for customers and employees is available. It is low impact with regard to noise, traffic, odors, and hazardous materials and will act as a buffer and transition between the more intensive Industrial (I) Placetype properties to the west and the Los Cerritos neighborhood to the east.

State law requires that actions and decisions approved by the City must be consistent with the General Plan LUE, including the requirement for consistency between the General Plan Placetype designation and the property's zoning designation. Within the LUE, Table LU-6: PlaceTypes and Zoning Districts Consistency Matrix identifies the PlaceTypes and Zoning Districts that are consistent with each other. Per Table LU-6, the two Placetype designations that are consistent with the CS Zoning District are the Neighborhood-Serving Centers and Corridors-Low (NSC-L) and the CC Placetype. Table LU-6 supports staff's position that the CC Placetype is the most appropriate for the project site.

One of the citywide goals identified in the LUE is to accommodate strategic growth and change (Goal No. 3 of the LUE). Under this goal, the City aims to encourage growth within strategic locations while preserving existing neighborhoods. The LUE identifies the subject site as a target for one of the eight major areas of

change. Per Map LU-20 of the LUE, the project site is within a Major Area of Change #2 with the focus of the land use concept: “Convert targeted industrial edges and districts to Neo-Industrial uses”.

Staff proposes to reassign the subject site’s Major Area of Change designation from #2 that calls for converting properties from Industrial to Neo-Industrial uses, to instead designating to change, to the Major Area of Change Designation #4: “Transition from Industrial to Commercial Uses”. It should be noted that the intent of the NI PlaceType is to transition industrial uses within certain areas of the city into alternatives that result in less pollution and intensity (such as commercial uses and/or restricted light industrial uses). Although the subject site is no longer considered an industrial edge, its history of activity consists oil well drilling and oil brine water treatment facility operation. Therefore, reassigning the project site from Major Area of Change #2 (which supports Neo-Industrial) to #4 (which supports Community Commercial) accomplishes a similar result, particularly considering that self-storage facilities can be categorized as hybrid commercial/restricted light industrial uses.

The proposed project consists of the construction of a four-story self-storage facility with accessory RV parking and accessory car wash. Given the access challenges, irregular parcel shape, environmental and safety constraints of the site, the project captures the intent of the CC PlaceType by providing an auto-oriented use that serves the local community. The project supports the citywide goal of strategic growth and change by specifically addressing Strategy No. 7 – to “implement the major areas of change identified in this Land Use Plan (Map LU-20).”

In particular, LU Policy 7-4 sets out to encourage degraded and abandoned buildings and properties to transition to more productive uses through adaptive reuse or new development. The project site has been abandoned for several years (since 2007), contributing to the presence of a blighted vacant property that has been a location for nuisance activity. The use of this site in a limited capacity is due largely to its contamination from previous activities such as oil well drilling and oil brine water treatment facility operations.

The proposed project should be reviewed in relation to the General Plan as a whole and the growth trends of the City. The City continues to accommodate housing construction across the city and has issued permits for more than 7,000 units since the 2019 year of the LUE adoption. Many of these units were smaller, in-fill apartment units or small Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Some portion of these units, as well as the population as a whole, requires storage including off-site self-storage. The ability for the City to accommodate urban living and smaller units around the city requires that the City also consider facilitating a limited number of appropriate properties, including the subject property, for high-quality storage

uses. In that manner, the proposed zone change is consistent with and helps to implement several goals and policies of the General Plan related to facilitating a greater density and range of housing, including LU Policy 12-1 “Allow a variety of housing types in new residential developments with the goal of establishing new opportunities for persons of varied income ranges, ages, lifestyles and family needs” as well as several goals and policies in the Land Use and Housing Elements related to increasing density, allowing smaller units including piloting the use of micro-units, and preserving historic homes and neighborhoods, many of which are developed with minimal amounts of storage compared to the typical needs of residents today.

Further, proposed self-storage facility with accessory leasing lobby space and RV storage lot is among the most practical uses given the site’s contamination, physical isolation, and limited pedestrian access. In addition, the Project Site does not have access or proximity to other commercial, retail, or neighborhood services that could serve the site; it therefore is not located in an area suitable for other development typologies that could capitalize on proximity to services, transit, and walkability. As a result of the Project, the blighted site and its surrounding area will undergo a comprehensive remediation, install major upgrades including landscaping, construct a new building with high-quality architecture and new paving, install water and energy efficient systems, construct off-site roadway improvements, and implement a use that will increase the Property’s vitality above and beyond its current status.

The Project also supports the LUE’s Strategy 6, which is to “Maintain a full range of City services for the community that is consistent with the revenue available to sustain those services,” by implementing Policy 6-1 to “Encourage a mix of land uses that is diverse, innovative, competitive, entrepreneurial, local and sustainable, which thereby promotes economic development, increases City revenues, expands job growth and increases value, access and usability for existing neighborhoods and communities.” The Project would develop a self-storage facility including RV storage, which are local serving uses and can meet local demand for secure storage solutions. The Project would increase employment in the City, with construction expected to generate a small number of temporary construction jobs and operations expected to generate approximately 10 permanent jobs. Developing a stable, economically productive use at the Project Site is beneficial for purposes of generating revenue available to sustain those services and to overcome the site’s development constraints, including the historical contamination, limited surrounding services to service the site, and lack of pedestrian accessibility.

In addition, the Project will also promote access and usability of the area to connect surrounding neighborhoods and the L.A. River. As mentioned, the Property is

located adjacent to a vacant LACFCD property, which itself is located adjacent to the L.A. River and existing public bike and jogging path along the river. There is not currently any public access to the L.A. River at this location. For several years, the City and LACFCD have been discussing potential development of the LACFCD property for public open space and recreational uses consistent with the RiverLink Plan and LLARRP. The Project will include dedication of an easement for future development of a publicly accessible trail and trailhead that connects Pacific Place to the LACFCD property via a path around the southern and western edge of the Property. Therefore, if the LACFCD property is developed for public open space in the future, the easement will be available to be developed as safe, efficient public access to the LACFCD property and bike path/L.A. River adjacent.

The Urban Design Element (UDE) of the General Plan also sets forth several goals aimed at improving blighted properties in Long Beach. Strategy No. 15 within the UDE coincides with the proposed Project as it is meant to “consider vacant parcels as infill opportunities.” Specifically, Policy UD 15-2 aims to “promote infill Projects that support the designated PlaceType and be appropriate in their use, scale, compactness of development, and design character with adjacent sites and nearby existing development.” The Property is a 14.2 acre vacant property with historic contamination. The site is bounded by two major freeways (the I-405 and I-710 freeways), the L.A. River and the Metro A-Line light rail tracks, which limits its access to a small road that dead-ends into the site. The proposed rezoning would facilitate a feasible infill opportunity, self-storage facility with accessory lobby, RV storage and car wash which are an appropriate use that fits the scale of the site itself and the scale of its immediate surroundings along two major freeways and the L.A. River. This unique location also provides adequate buffering between the adjacent school, park, and residential neighborhood.

Furthermore, Strategy No. 14 of the UDE contends that “building types and forms should contribute to the PlaceType they are sited within and should address potential conflicts between neighboring PlaceTypes by implementing buffering measures and thoughtful design patterns.” Policy UD 14-3 set out to “allow new development Projects to respond to their particular context and experiment with alternative development patterns while complementing their PlaceTypes.” The zone change would facilitate the proposed Project which provides a unique architectural style that deviates from the typical self-storage facility. The self-storage facility will be four stories with a total area of 206,756 square feet. In comparison to the Property, the size of the building is relatively small in scale. Nevertheless, the building’s widest facades are approximately 250 feet.

The Applicant has included several architectural forms and features to break up the massing of the large facades. The building will feature cementitious siding with different patterns and etched imagery, polycarbonate panels, dual-pane glazing with blackened aluminum storefront system, art walls with murals, and swiss pearl

wooden panels. As the building will be located close to the site's entrance, ground-level views into the Property are expected to be visually appealing.

As detailed above, the proposed zone change is consistent with the goals, objectives and provisions of the general plan, and the zone change and associated general plan amendment are appropriate to the context of the site and its relationship to nearby uses and access constraints.

3. THE PROPOSED CHANGE IS A REZONING OF AN EXISTING MOBILE HOME PARK, THAT THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 21.25.109 HAVE BEEN OR WILL BE FULLY MET.

Not Applicable: The proposed project is not a rezoning of an existing mobile home park.