

June 5, 2025

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to certify and adopt the Environmental Impact Report (EIR-02-23; State Clearinghouse # 2023060250) and adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Pacific Place Project at 3701 Pacific Place;

Recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution approving a General Plan Map Amendment (GPA24-002) to change land use PlaceType from Neo-Industrial (NI)/40 feet to Community Commercial (CC)/5 stories, 50 feet PlaceType;

1. Amend Map LU-7 (PlaceTypes) to convert the project site from Neo-Industrial (NI) to Community Commercial (CC) PlaceType;
2. Amend Map LU-8 (Heights) to increase the project's height allowance from 40 feet to 5 stories, 50 feet;
3. Amend Map LU-14 (CC Place Type) to include the project site;
4. Amend Map LU-16 (Neo-Industrial PlaceType) to exclude the project site;
5. Amend Map LU-20 (Major Areas of Change) to change the project site's "Area of Change Description" from "2-Convert to Neo-Industrial" to "4-Transition from Industrial to Commercial Uses" and convert the color coding from NI to CC; and,
6. Amend Map LU-23 (Bixby Knolls) to convert the project site from NI to CC.

Recommend that the City Council adopt an ordinance approving a Zoning Code Amendment (ZCA24-002) to Section 21.39.030 of the Zoning Regulations, and adopt the proposed findings related thereto, to allow the Commercial Storage (CS) Zoning District to utilize height overlays pursuant to Chapter 21.39 of the Zoning Regulations;

Recommend that the City Council adopt an ordinance approving a Zoning Map Change (ZCHG24-004) request, and adopt the proposed findings related thereto, to amend the zoning designation from Light Industrial (IL) to Commercial Storage (CS), which also includes a high-rise overlay designation of fifty (50) feet/5 stories (HR-50/5) in height'



CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

June 5, 2025

Page 2 of 18

Approve Site Plan Review (SPR24-054) conditional upon the City Council adoption of the general plan amendment (GPA24-002), zoning code amendment (ZCA24-002), and zone change (ZCHG24-004), and adopt the proposed findings and conditions related thereto, for site grading and the construction of a four-story (44 feet in height), 206,756-square-foot self-storage facility with approximately 1,681 self-storage units, with an ancillary lobby, leasing office and restrooms, 551 space covered recreational vehicle storage lot, 27 standard automobile stalls, five Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) parking stalls, on-site landscaping, and a 1,450-square-foot private outdoor car wash for exclusive use of storage facility and recreational vehicle tenants at a 13.95-acre site located at 3701 Pacific Place in the Light Industrial (IL) Zoning District (pending approval of a zone change to Commercial Storage [CS] Zoning District); and,

Approve Conditional Use Permits (CUP24-010) conditional upon the City Council adoption of the general plan amendment (GPA24-002), zoning code amendment (ZCA24-002), and zone change (ZCHG24-004), and adopt the proposed findings and conditions related thereto, to allow the operation of the self-storage facility, recreational vehicle storage, and private outdoor car wash in the CS Zoning District. (District 5)

APPLICANT: Brian Sorensen for Artesia Acquisition Company, LLC
2015 Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Suite 104
Redondo Beach, CA 90278
(Case No. 2407-21)

DISCUSSION

The project proposal which is the subject of this hearing is to establish a self-storage facility with accessory office space, Recreational Vehicle (RV) parking and a car wash on a vacant, privately owned property that was previously used for oil drilling (“the Project”). The most recent active use on the subject property was a golf driving range, which ended operations in 2007. While subsequent golf-related uses (retail and equipment rentals) continued on the site until 2015, they occupied a very small percentage of the property. The vacancy of the site has contributed to blight and dilapidation and has resulted in nuisance activity and challenges with keeping the site secure. Because of the level of contamination on the site, as well as its limited access and isolated location in relation to surrounding land uses, viable options for appropriate uses are minimal and the freeway adjacent, isolated site is well-suited for a storage use. The Project includes new building, paving, landscaping and several offsite improvements including roadway upgrades.

Project History

The Project was previously considered by the Planning Commission on December 17, 2020. At that hearing, the Planning Commission adopted an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) (MND 07-020), and conditionally approved (by a 6-1 vote) a Site Plan Review (SPR), Standards Variance, Conditional Use Permit (CUP), and Lot Merger request for the construction and operation of a three-story, 152,745-square-foot self-storage facility (also consisting of approximately 6,200 square-feet of office space on the third floor), in conjunction with an

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

June 5, 2025

Page 3 of 18

accessory recreational vehicle parking lot and 2,153-square-foot car wash. The Planning Commission's action included a recommendation that the City Council approve a Zone Change to rezone four parcels generally located at the northeast intersection of the Interstate-405 (I-405) Freeway and the Los Angeles River, from Light Industrial (IL) to the Commercial Storage (CS) Zoning District ("the Prior Project").

Subsequently, City staff received five appeals of the Planning Commission's decision. In summary, the appeals cited the following objections to the prior project: inadequate environmental processing; inappropriate building height; public health concerns; and illegal spot zoning. As a result of the appeals, the Prior Project came before the City Council for hearing on April 13, 2021. The City Council denied the appeals and upheld the approval rendered by the Planning Commission, and approved the Zone Change, as recommended.

Subsequently, a lawsuit was filed against the City of Long Beach (City) by local organizations, the Riverpark Coalition and LA Waterkeeper. In comparison to the appeals filed against the Planning Commission's approval in December 2020, the Riverpark Coalition and LA Waterkeeper's lawsuit also contended that an IS/MND was not a sufficient level of environmental review. Additionally, the lawsuit asserted that the Prior Project conflicted with the City's General Plan land use designation.

In June of 2022, the courts ruled in favor of the Riverpark Coalition, determining that the previously adopted IS/MND was not sufficient for the Prior Project for nuanced reasons related to CEQA issues within the topics of biology and land use. The court determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would be required, effectively vacating the previous approvals given by the City Council for the Prior Project. Consequently, the Project applicant, InSite Property Group, submitted the Project which includes minor modifications from the Prior Project, and an EIR has been prepared by the City. The entitlements for the Project include a General Plan Amendment and various zoning changes in lieu of the variance previously provided for the Prior Project. This entitlement approach represents best planning practices and a different pathway to a similar project.

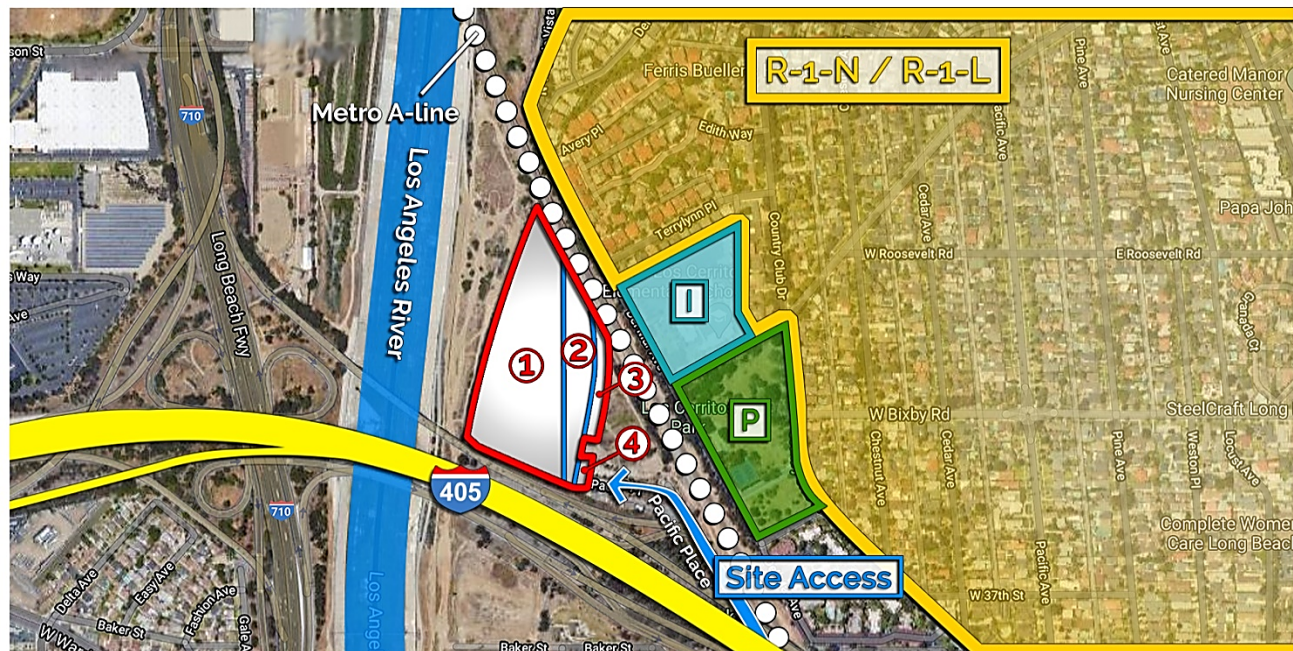
Project Background

The Project site consists of 13.95 acres of land located at the north end of Pacific Place and Ambeco Road (which provide primary vehicular access into the site) addressed as 3701 Pacific Place. The site is located directly to the north of the I-405 Freeway and east of the Los Angeles River, it has a current zoning designation of IL and a General Plan PlaceType designation of Neo-Industrial (NI)/40 feet (Attachment A – Vicinity Map). Surrounding land uses are identified in Table 1 below and Figure 1 is a map of the Project site (which was previously delineated into the four distinct parcels), surrounding zoning classifications, and vehicular access onto the site. There are no public pedestrian sidewalks or bicycle facilities that access the site along Pacific Place or Ambeco Road. Furthermore, there are no existing pedestrian or bicycle connections to the Los Angeles River Bike Path from the Project site.

Table 1 – Adjacent Zoning and Land Uses

DIRECTION	ZONING	LAND USE
North	Public Right-of-way (PR) / Single-Family Residential, Standard Lot (R-1-N)	Railway Tracks / Single-Family Residential
South	PR	Transition Road from I-405 Freeway to 710 Freeway/ Caltrans Maintenance Station / Vacant Land
East	PR / Institutional (I) / R-1-N and Single-Family Residential, Large Lot (R-1-L) / Park (P)	"A" Line (formerly Blue Line) Light Rail Track, immediately beyond the tracks is an Elementary School, Public Park, and Single-Family Residences
West	PR	Vacant Land (owned by Los Angeles County Flood Control District) and Los Angeles River

Figure 1 – Surrounding Land Use Map



Parcel Info

- ① 7140-014-019 - 9.75 acres
- ② 7140-014-032 - 2.96 acres
- ③ 7140-014-033 - 0.98 acres
- ④ 7140-014-025 - 0.26 acres

Zoning Info

- R-1-N / R-1-L - Single-Family Residences
- Institutional (I) - Elementary School
- Park (P) - Public Park

The Project site is currently a vacant dirt lot with patches of vegetation spread throughout. The majority of the site has been vacant since 2007, at which time operation of a private golf driving range ceased after operating for ten years. However, the golf-related retail shop and equipment rental continued to operate after the closure of the driving range (up to 2015). From that time until 2021, only dilapidated fencing and netting, and support beams from an old canopy remained, creating an ideal location for nuisance activity which takes place at the site, such as illegal driving of off-road vehicles.

Prior to the site's operation as a golf driving range, uses at the site included an oil brine water treatment facility for on and offsite oil production activities and oil well drilling. The oil brine water treatment facility was established in the 1920s and activities included the pumping of oil brine to oil sumps (evaporation and treatment ponds), with the majority of the Project site serving as a treatment sump. As a result of the oil brine water treatment activities, water seepage into the subsurface below the sumps caused a sludge residue onsite. Operations for the treatment facility were discontinued in the 1950s and fill soil was imported to the site in the 1970s. The site's oil well drilling activities took place between the 1930s and 1980s, with thirteen oil wells being drilled (11 of which produced oil). All of the oil wells were abandoned between 1961 and 2014, in accordance with the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) standards.

Project Proposal and Entitlements

The applicant, InSite Property Group, is proposing to establish a self-storage facility with accessory uses as follows:

- A four-story, 206,756 square foot self-storage building consisting of 1,681 self-storage units;
- A 1,450-square-foot accessory outdoor car wash to service onsite vehicles only (the car wash will not be available to general public); and,
- A paved RV parking lot consisting of 551 covered parking stalls, which would serve motor homes, travel trailers, vans, truck campers, camping trailers, boats and off-the-road vehicles.

The Project incorporates 27 standard parking stalls and five accessible stalls to satisfy self-storage and car wash requirements (Attachment B – Plans and Photos). In order to facilitate the Project, the following entitlements are required for the establishment of a self-storage facility with accessory RV parking and car wash:

- General Plan Amendment;
- Zoning Code Amendment;
- Zone Change;
- SPR; and,
- CUP approvals for self-storage facility, RV storage, and private outdoor car wash all included under master number CUP24-010.

In addition to City approvals, the Project must also be approved by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), due to the significant levels of contamination on the Project site resulting from the previous oil well drilling and treatment facility operations. DTSC has conducted their preliminary review, conducted a public hearing regarding the proposed response plan, approved the remediation approach and as required, a final sign-off will take place prior to construction.

Zone Change and General Plan Amendment

The Project site currently has a zoning designation of IL. Pursuant to Section 21.33.080 of the Zoning Regulations, the IL zoning district prohibits the operation of self-storage facilities and parking lots as a business use. Therefore, to support the establishment of the proposed self-storage facility and RV parking lot, a Zone Change is required. City staff has determined that the CS Zoning District is the most appropriate zone to support such an establishment. The CS 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 Project site fits the criteria of irregular parcel shape, limited access, and adverse environmental conditions and is appropriate to rezone to the CS district. Commercial Storage is similar to the existing IL designation but provides a less intensive, more limited set of land use allowances. Furthermore, staff has determined that the incorporation of a height overlay is appropriate and should be included as a part of the required Zone Change, to support a building height of up to 50 feet and a maximum of five stories (Attachment C – Zone Change Map). The resulting Zoning District for the Project site would be indicated on the Zoning Map as CS (HR-50/5), pursuant to Chapter 21.39 of the Zoning Regulations, which will be discussed later.

All requests for Zone Changes in the City are subject to Planning Commission review and further recommendation to City Council for approval. Among the required findings for the approval of a Zone Change is the requirement that the proposed change is consistent with the goals, objectives and provisions of the General Plan (Attachment D – Zone Change Findings).

The 2019 General Plan's Land Use Element (LUE) designates the Project site as the NI PlaceType/40 feet, which encourages the location and retention of restricted light industrial activities associated with innovative start-up businesses and creative design offices. The LUE also states that this PlaceType promotes low intensity uses adjacent to low-density residential uses. Where new developments are inserted in the NI PlaceType, quasi or clean industrial such as research and development, office and commercial uses rather than heavy industrial and manufacturing operations should abut residential neighbors.

Although the proposed self-storage project is marginally consistent with the intent of the NI PlaceType (particularly the provision of lower-intensity uses adjacent to low-density single-family neighborhoods), City staff has determined that the Community Commercial (CC) PlaceType is more appropriate for the proposed self-storage use and further accommodates the consistency to the General Plan that is required for a Zone Change from IL to CS. Therefore, the proposed Zone Change is consistent with and works in tandem with the proposed General Plan Amendment.

State law requires that actions and decisions approved by the City must be consistent with the LUE, including the requirement for consistency between PlaceTypes and Zoning Districts. 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 and the CC. A consistency matrix has been prepared for the proposed Project as it pertains to the CS Zoning District (Attachment E – Consistency Matrix provides a portion of Table LU-6 pertaining to the CS Zoning District).

The CC PlaceType serves auto-oriented needs for goods and services, promotes commerce and provides local jobs. It encourages a wide range of local and community-serving commercial uses in buildings no higher than five stories or 60 feet. These uses may include auto sales and repair, appliance repair, furniture stores, hardware stores, clothing stores, restaurants, grocery stores, fast-food outlets and similar uses. Although auto-oriented, development within the CC PlaceType is expected to respect neighboring developments. As evident in Figure 1 above, the Project site is naturally buffered and isolated from the neighboring residential neighborhood to the east. The site is buffered by the Metro A-Line to the east, the Los Angeles River to the west, and the I-405 Freeway to the south. The main form of access to the site is via vehicular access on Pacific Place/Ambeco Road, which does not include any established pedestrian or bicycle connections to surrounding uses in the Project vicinity. The only established pedestrian or bicycle network in the site vicinity is via the Los Angeles River Bike Path, which does not physically adjoin or connect to the Project site. The proposed self-storage facility with accessory RV parking offers an auto-oriented use whose natural land isolation creates a respectable buffer from the neighboring developments.

In addition to access constraints, the redevelopment of the Project site is somewhat limited due to its environmental constraints from previous uses (including elevated levels of petroleum hydrocarbon, arsenic, lead, perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene, benzene, methane, commercial pesticide and herbicide found in the soil, and general groundwater degradation). The aforementioned physical constraints play an even larger role in the redevelopment of the Project site, with its unique location between the river, rail corridors, the freeway and sensitive uses of a school and residential areas. This combination of environmental and physical constraints lends itself well to a storage use, which is preferred only when other more intensive development is not appropriate. A policy change by the City Council that took effect on July 1, 2018, pursuant to Ordinance 17-0012, restricts the parking of RVs on City Streets. The need and usefulness of the proposed facility is therefore increased, while addressing the requirement for General Plan consistency with the proposed Zone Change (IL to CS) and General Plan Amendment (NI to CC).

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 this growth within strategic locations while preserving existing neighborhoods. The LUE identifies the Project 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”. City staff proposes to reassign the Project site’s Major Area of Change designation from #2 to #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 Property site is no longer considered an industrial edge, its history of activity includes decades of oil well drilling and oil brine water treatment facility operation. Therefore, reassigning the Project site from Major Area of Change #2 (which supports transition to NI) to #4 (which supports transition to CC) accomplishes a similar result, particularly considering that self-storage facilities can be categorized as hybrid commercial/restricted light industrial uses.

Strategy No. 7 of the LUE is to “implement the major areas of change identified in this Land Use Plan (Map LU-20).” In particular, LU Policy 7-4 looks to encourage degraded and abandoned buildings and properties to transition to more productive uses through adaptive reuse or new development. The Project site as a whole has been abandoned for several years (since 2007), contributing to the presence of a blighted vacant property that has been used for illegal activity such as the driving of off-road vehicles. As a result of the Project, the blighted site and its surrounding area will undergo several upgrades including landscaping, remediation (in accordance with requirements of the DTSC) high-quality architecture, new paving, off-site roadway improvements and a use that will increase its vitality above and beyond its current status. In sum, the proposed use is deemed to be appropriate for the Project site, in light of the many unique factors associated with the site, including: the environmental constraints, its isolated location, the long-standing vacancy of the site, and the limited opportunities to locate the proposed uses elsewhere in the City.

The 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 2019; the year of the LUE was adopted. Many of these units were smaller, in-fill apartment units or small Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). 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 Project site, for high-quality storage uses.

To ensure consistency while facilitating the proposed General Plan Amendment, the following changes within the LUE of the General Plan are required as part of the Project approval (Attachment F – Proposed General Plan Amendments):

- Amend Map LU-7 (PlaceTypes) to convert the Project site from NI to CC;
- Amend Map LU-8 (Heights) to increase the Project site’s height allowance from 40 feet to 50 feet, five Stories;
- Amend Map LU-14 (CC PlaceType) to include the Project site;
- Amend Map LU-16 (NI PlaceType) to exclude the Project site;
- Amend Map LU-20 (Major Areas of Change) to change the Project site’s “Area of Change Description” from “2-Convert to Neo-Industrial” to “4-Transition from Industrial to Commercial Uses) and convert color coding from NI to CC; and,
- Amend Map LU-23 (Bixby Knolls) to convert the Project site from NI to CC.

Findings for the approval of a General Plan Amendment include the requirement that the proposed changes will benefit the public interest and that the proposed changes are consistent with zoning designations (Attachment G – GPA Findings). Based on the information presented above, City staff believe that both findings can be made in the affirmative. The Project will convert the current condition of the property from an underutilized, blighted site with limited development potential (and that attracts illegal activities such as off-roading and trespassing) to an economically beneficial, safe, sustainable, and environmentally responsible development. Further, the dedication for public access that will result from the Project will also provide the opportunity to improve access between the adjacent Los Cerritos neighborhood and the regional Los Angeles River Bike Path. Based on the required findings, City staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward the General Plan Map Amendment and Zoning Change to City Council for approval.

Zoning Code Amendment

The Project has a building height of 44 feet, while the standard CS zoning district only allows a maximum building height of 28 feet. Therefore, as previously mentioned, the Project includes a Zone Change with a height overlay, from IL to CS (HR-50/5) in order to support additional building height, pursuant to Chapter 21.39 (High Rise Overlay) of the Zoning Regulations. The purpose of Chapter 21.39 is to establish special building height limits to allow taller buildings within certain zoning designations. Currently, Section 21.39.030 deems only the Commercial Office, Commercial Corridor, Commercial Tourist and Institutional zoning districts to be appropriate for the high-rise overlay zone.

In order to support the proposed Zone Change to CS (HR-50/5), a Zoning Code Amendment is required to amend Section 21.39.030 to include the CS zoning district as an appropriate district for the high-rise overlay zone (Attachment H – Proposed Zoning Code Amendment). It should be noted that while previous trends within the self-storage industry were typified by two-story facilities, the evolution of the industry in recent years has seen the emergence of facilities with three and four stories. In order for the CS zone to be useful in today's context (in relation to self-storage facilities), providing the ability to increase height above the base 28 feet in specific circumstances is appropriate given that most self-storage facilities built today require three or more stories in height to be feasible. Use of a height overlay on a specific property is a discretionary action required via a Zone Change to allow the height overlay code to be exercised. Therefore, it allows for analysis of site-specific factors and conditions to ensure the additional height is appropriate at any given site.

For this specific site, given the site context and that it is naturally buffered by the Metro A-line light rail tracks and Del Mar Avenue, and that the General Plan Height Map already allows development up to 40 feet at the site, making the aforementioned code amendment and zone change to allow the Project up to 50 feet would not adversely affect the character, livability or appropriate development of the surrounding area. Therefore, City staff believes that positive findings can be made to support the proposed Zoning Code Amendment, particularly in relation to General Plan consistency (Attachment I – Zoning Code Amendment Findings). Based on the required findings,

City staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward the Zoning Code Amendment and Zone Change to City Council for approval.

Zoning Map Change

As previously discussed, the proposed zone change to CS (HR-50/5) would align with the proposed CC PlaceType /5 stories, 50 feet. The proposed zoning map change would not have a detrimental impact upon the surrounding area, and is also consistent with the goals of the City's General Plan. The property is currently zoned IL, Light Industrial, which allows for different types of businesses housed completely within buildings, which limits their environmental impact. The site would be rezoned to be the less intensive CS zoning district, to facilitate the development of the self-storage facility through the CUP process.

As noted in the findings, 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. This property fits these criteria as it is triangular-shaped, has limited access via a Pacific Place and is situated between The Metro A-Line Railroad tracks, the I-405 Freeway and the L.A. River. Furthermore, the property was used in the past as an oil brine water treatment facility and an oil well drilling site, which resulted in contamination making its reuse options expensive and limited.

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 (Refer to Attachment D). The Project will result in improvements to the development site including the paving of roadways and removal of physical blight within and around the Property and would not result in negative effects upon the surrounding area. Based on the required findings, City staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward the Zoning Map Change to City Council for approval.

Site Plan Review

Pursuant to Section 21.25.502 of the Zoning Regulations, new commercial buildings exceeding 50,000 square feet require Planning Commission approval. On January 22, 2025, the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) reviewed and recommended that the Project move forward to the Planning Commission for consideration. This review and approval was based on positive SPR findings that the proposed design is considered harmonious and consistent within itself and that it represents the most compatible use, given the previous site contamination activities that have taken place at the Project site (Attachment J – SPR Findings). The SPRC noted that the proposed design was of a higher quality than typical self-storage developments and would result in signature architecture when viewed from the nearby freeway.

The Project site is oriented along the northeast intersection of the I-405 and I-710 Freeways and directly to the east of the Los Angeles River. The site is only accessible from its southeastern most point, via Pacific Place which dead-ends into the Project site and adjacent Caltrans maintenance station to the south. Site orientation is designed to provide maximum visibility of the new building

from its entrance along Pacific Place, which will be improved with new paving in accordance with the requirements of the City's Public Works Department. The location of the building in the southeast portion of the site will provide a visual buffer between its entrance and the remainder of the property which will consist largely of a newly paved RV parking lot with canopies. Some of the methods used to help mitigate the visual impacts of the substantial parking lot include in-ground landscaping (where feasible, in light of the contaminated site), potted landscaping, and a carport structural system throughout the site.

While the proposed self-storage building consists of large facades that are common with industrial tilt-up buildings, the architecture effectively minimizes scale with the incorporation of a contemporary design that breaks up large expanses of blank walls. The use of building forms that offset and contrast in color and material helps to enhance the visual quality of the structure. High-quality materials and features include smooth stucco siding with patterns and etched imagery, wood and metal panels, and high-quality glazing with dark bronze curtain wall and storefront system, and a mix of simple, muted colors. City staff believes that the proposed building architecture, landscaping, paved parking, parking lot canopies, public right-of-way improvements and general site upgrades will significantly enhance the Project site which has been characterized by significant visual blight for several years.

The Urban Design Element (UDE) of the General Plan sets forth several goals aimed at improving blighted properties in Long Beach. Strategy No. 15 within the UDE correlates to 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 Project is considered to be an appropriate use that fits the scale of the site itself and the scale of its immediate surroundings along the two major freeways and the Los Angeles River.

Strategy No. 14 of the UDE specifies 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 sets out to "allow new development projects to respond to their particular context and experiment with alternative development patterns while complementing their PlaceTypes." The unique architectural style of the proposed building provides relief from its facades that are 250 linear feet in length and as previously mentioned, the applicant has included architectural forms and features to help break up the massing of the large, continuous facades. As the building will be located close to the site's entrance, ground-level views into the property are expected to be visually appealing. Furthermore, the proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change also respond to the site-specific physical and environmental constraints of the Project site. The Project is consistent with LU Policy 7-4, Policy UD 15-2 and Policy UD 14-3. Based on the required findings, City staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the SPR conditional upon the City Council adoption of the general plan amendment, zoning code amendment, and zone change.

Conditional Use Permits

The City recognizes that certain types of land use, due to the nature of the use, require individual review. Such review shall determine whether the type of use proposed, and/or the location of that use, is compatible with surrounding uses, or, through the imposition of development conditions, can be made compatible with surrounding uses. In accordance with the regulations of Section 21.32.130 of the Zoning Regulations, CUPs are required for self-storage, car wash and parking lot uses in the CS zoning district. The CUP findings include special conditions with which the proposed uses and their operations must comply, which include the following standards:

- Use permitted only if no other reasonable alternative exists;
- Use and design shall not disrupt, impede or negatively affect pedestrian or traffic circulation;
- Use and design shall not disrupt or impede the concentration of high intensity activities;
- Attractive landscape buffering and screening shall be provided for parking lots and car wash uses;
- Use shall not be permitted in existing business or office park;
- Use permitted only if the site is impractical for industrial development due to conditions such as residential proximity;
- Storage spaces shall not be used for manufacturing, retail, offices or human habitation;
- Prefabricated shipping containers not allowed;
- Building/roof design to be compatible with surrounding development. Should include design elements that break monotonous facades;
- Hours of operation that limit noise levels to certain times; and,
- Provision of security plan.

CUPs can be approved when the proposed uses will not be detrimental to the surrounding community and the required findings can be made in the affirmative (Attachment K – CUP Findings). The Project site's location in terms of access, contamination and surrounding land uses (freeways, the river, metro light rail tracks) render it an auto-oriented property that prevents pedestrian compatibility by default. Self-storage facilities, RV parking lots and car washes are all characterized by significant reliance on vehicles for their operations. Although the natural features of the Project site preclude it from being a pedestrian-compatible development, the high-quality architecture of the proposed building minimizes scale and massing, to the extent feasible.

Controlled access to the site will be limited to customers of the self-storage facility or RV parking lot. The proposed 1,450-square-foot car wash will be used exclusively by the storage facility and recreational vehicle tenants only. As conditioned, limits will be placed on hours of operation and access to the building the self-storage units, from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Saturday, Sunday and Holidays. Conditions of Approval are also incorporated to reflect specific requirements related to self-storage facilities and parking lots as a business use, including the requirements outlined above (Attachment L – Conditions of Approval). Among the conditions are the requirement that the applicant adhere to the security plan that has been submitted to staff (Attachment M – Security Plan). The security plan covers operational

practices related to daily walkthroughs and monitoring, tenant communication, access hours, locking systems, collaboration with law enforcement if needed, and eviction protocol. The operator will also be required to impose operational standards related to on-site vehicles. These standards will be required to be included within each lease agreement to which the owner is a party (Attachment N – Motor Vehicle Addendum).

Based on the required findings, City staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the three CUPs (all under CUP24-010) conditional upon the City Council adoption of the general plan amendment, zoning code amendment, and zone change.

Relationship to the Los Angeles River Master Plan

The Project site of the entitlement requests is located in an area that was part of a visioning process conducted to develop the 2022 Los Angeles River Master Plan (LARMP), led by the Los Angeles County Public Works Department. 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. The LARMP identifies the subject site as being located within an area envisioned for a 'Planned Major Project'; however, as the LARMP acknowledges, the properties are privately owned, and the property owner has proposed a different use of the property. Even though the proposed uses, the self-storage building and RV Storage area, comprise a significant portion of the site, the applicant has indicated they are willing to work with the entity responsible for developing this particular area of the LARMP. That commitment includes development and on-going maintenance of a 0.5-acre section of the Native Plant Preserve located within the property boundaries in the northwest corner of the site, to be consistent with the LARMP. The applicant has also agreed and will be required through a condition of approval to hold and maintain an access point/easement to the larger LARMP site, to be developed in conjunction with the LARMP site (specifically with regard to timing). As conditioned, the applicant will be required to develop the access point/easement and adjacent trailhead (proposed to be located in the southwestern corner of the property). The applicant has prepared a conceptual configuration of how the required access point/easement can correlate to the larger LARMP property (Attachment O – Conceptual Drawings for the LARMP Area).

Parkland and Environmental Justice

In relation to the LARMP, the City has also considered the acquisition of the Project site for the development of additional park land to serve as a synergistic extension of the LARMP. However, as detailed in a memo to file for Case No. 2407-21, the City does not have sufficient funds to do so (Attachment P – Park Funds) at this time. For several years, the City and Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) have been discussing potential development of the LACFCD property for public open space and recreational uses consistent with the RiverLink Plan's vision (now embedded in the LARMP) to improve the LACFCD property as a riparian woodland. A similar

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

June 5, 2025

Page 14 of 18

vision is also articulated in the Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan (LLARRP). Among 155 Opportunity Areas along the Los Angeles 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 Project site, and the private property abutting the Project site to the east), which envisions potential open space, wetland, or recharge basin uses.

Even if funds were available for acquisition, which they are not, and even if the property were available for purchase, which it is not, the City must consider where the greatest needs are related to additional park space in the context of limited funding and resources. It should be noted that even though the Los Angeles County Parks Needs Assessment states that the greater North and West Long Beach areas lack sufficient parkspace, the Project site is located across the street (and separated by the Metro A-line) from Los Cerritos Park, a 7.24 acre park located at the intersection of Country Club Drive and Bixby Road, as seen in Figure 1 above.

In contrast, the area west of the Los Angeles River is significantly more cumulatively disadvantaged on both environmental and sociodemographic indicators when compared to the Project site and other areas east of the Los Angeles River. The Project site is separated from these more disadvantaged areas of the City by the Los Angeles River and I-710 Freeway. These divisions are clearly delineated by the average CalEnviroScreen and poverty scores for these wider areas east and west of the Los Angeles River. When comparing the average scores for tracts within the Project vicinity east and west of the Los Angeles River and I-710 Freeway, the tracts to the west have below average scores, while the tracts to the east, which the Project will serve, have clearly advantaged and above-average scores on all metrics in comparison. The tracts within the vicinity of the Project site west of the freeway (Census Tracts 5440.01, 5440.02, 5724.00, 5723.01, and 5723.02) have an average overall CalEnviroScreen score of 55 and an average poverty score of 33.8, while the census tracts east of the freeway (Census Tracts 5721.00, 5718.00, 5720.02, 5719.00, and 5722.01) where the project is located, have an average overall CalEnviroScreen score of 35.2 and an average Poverty score of 21.8.

The Project site is located at the far northeastern corner of Census Tract 5721.00, which has a CalEnviroScreen score of 45. This falls in the 82nd percentile indicating it is less disadvantaged than 18 percent of census tracts in the state. The Census Tract also has a poverty score of 20, which falls in the 34th percentile, indicating that this neighborhood is less burdened by poverty than 66 percent of census tracts in the state. The Project site directly abuts and would most directly serve the Los Cerritos neighborhood to the north, within Census Tract 5718.00, which has a CalEnviroScreen score of 16, which falls in the 28th percentile, indicating this neighborhood is less disadvantaged than 72 percent of census tracts in the state. Census Tract 5718.00 also has a poverty score of 13, which falls in the 16th percentile, indicating that this neighborhood is less burdened by poverty than 84 percent of census tracts in the state.

This disparity of existing environmental justice conditions is currently delineated by the combined geographic divide of the I-710 Freeway and Los Angeles River on a North-South axis, with significantly more disadvantaged areas west of the Los Angeles River and I-710 Freeway. In summary, the census tracts within the Project vicinity west of the Los Angeles River have CalEnviroScreen scores indicating the most cumulatively disadvantaged on both environmental

and sociodemographic indicators compared to those east of the river, including the census tract at the Project Site and the tracts immediately north, south, and east of the Project site.

Again, no public agency has identified, secured, or issued funding to acquire and develop the Project site for open space uses, nor has any public agency made such an offer to do so. Additionally, the cost to remediate the site after the years of use as an oil brine water treatment facility and an oil well drilling site is prohibitive. Nevertheless, the Project will facilitate and be consistent with the opportunities contemplated in the RiverLink and LLARRP 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 Project site. 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/Los Angeles 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. In the first instance, the vacant properties in the vicinity (the Project site, LACFCD property, and private property to the east of the Project site) have long been, due to their isolated location between the I-405 Freeway, L.A. River, and Metrolink tracks, an attractive nuisance for illegal dust-generating off-road vicinity activity, drug use, vagrancy, campfires, trash disposal and other nuisance activity. The Project site 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 improvements, including new security lighting and measures, can help activate the area. Development of the Project site makes nuisance activities less likely for neighboring sites like the LACFCD property because the area will no longer be isolated and vacant. Accordingly, the area would become safer for open space or park uses.

Further, the Project will include a comprehensive soil remediation of the Project site, 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 Project site's potential impacts on those sites in terms of aesthetics, environmental contamination, access, and stormwater runoff and quality.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR-02-23) was prepared for the Self-storage facility, RV Parking area and private car wash at 3701 Pacific Place (SCH# 2023060250) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21100 and 21100.1, and CEQA Guidelines Section 15161 (Attachment Q – Project EIR and Appendices). A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this EIR was distributed to public agencies and made available for public review and comment for a NOP 30-day review period that started on June 7, 2023 and ended on July 7, 2023. The City received 22 written

comments during this NOP review period. A Scoping Meeting was held during this review period, on June 21, 2023, to further solicit public comment on the scope and content of the EIR.

The Draft EIR was distributed to public agencies and made available for public review and comment for a 62-day EIR review period that started on July 31, 2024, to September 30, 2024. The City received over 80 written comments on the Draft EIR during this review period. A summary of the topics raised in the Draft EIR public comments are included in Table 2. These comments in their entirety and the City’s responses to comments are provided in the Final EIR (Attachment R – Final EIR). The Final EIR also includes edits and clarifications to the Draft EIR text based on public comments, expert advice, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP). Text edits provided in the Final EIR did not substantially alter the Draft EIR environmental analysis or change the conclusions of the Draft EIR regarding potential project environmental impacts. The Final EIR determined that the Project, in compliance with all recommended mitigation measures, would not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts.

The Project will be subject to the MMRP prepared for the EIR, which establishes mitigation measures that apply to the project (Attachment S – Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program). These mitigation measures pertain to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, and tribal cultural resources.

Table 2 – Draft EIR Public Comment Topical Summary

TOPICAL CONCERNS FROM PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EIR		
Toxic Dust/Contaminants	Soil Surcharge	Not Enough Open Space
Lost Opportunity for Open Space	Air Quality	Consistency with LA River Master Plan/Riverlink/Riparian Zone
Truck Idling	Truck Traffic	Dept. of Toxic Substances Review of Site.
Cultural/Tribal Resources	Increased Weight on Toxic Site	Heat Trap
City’s Vehicle Miles Travel analysis	Equestrian Impacts	Environmental Justice/ Disadvantaged Community (CalEnviroScreen)
Decline in property values		

Editorial changes were made after the conclusion of the DEIR public review period, these edits and responses to comments are noted in the Final EIR. The EIR determined that with mitigation measures in place, the Project would not result in any significant adverse environmental impact. The preparation and public availability of this EIR has been carried out in compliance with the provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. City staff therefore recommends the Planning Commission adopt and certify EIR-02-23.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

June 5, 2025

Page 17 of 18

In accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Long Beach Municipal Code, a total of 137 Public Hearing Notices were distributed on May 14, 2025. Additional notification for the project included the posting of the Public Hearing Notice in Press Telegram, distribution of the notice to an interested parties list, and the posting of the notice in three public locations within City boundaries. At the time of writing this report, 14 emails regarding the project have been received. 12 are not in favor of the project and the remaining two are requesting clarifications within the FEIR or the conditions of approval (Attachment T – Public Correspondence).

Conclusion

The most recent active use on the Project site was a golf driving range, which ended operations in 2007. While subsequent golf-related uses (retail and equipment rentals) continued on the site until 2015, they occupied a very small percentage of the property. The vacancy of the site has contributed to blight and dilapidation and has resulted in nuisance activity. Because of the level of contamination on the Project site, viable options for appropriate uses are minimal. The applicant's proposal to establish a self-storage facility with accessory office space, RV parking and a car wash is an appropriate use, considering the site's environmental issues, as well as its limited access and isolated location in relation to surrounding land uses. The Project includes high-quality architecture and materials, new paving, new landscaping and several offsite improvements including roadway upgrades that will help remove blight from the community. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt and certify the EIR, forward the legislative actions to City Council for approval and approve the project SPR and CUPs conditional upon the City Council adoption of the general plan amendment, zoning code amendment, and zone change, subject to Conditions of Approval.

Respectfully submitted,



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CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

June 5, 2025

Page 18 of 18

CK:ASR:MC:ah:cj

ATTACHMENTS:

- A – VICINITY MAP
- B – PLANS & PHOTOS
- C – ZONE CHANGE MAP
- D – ZONE CHANGE FINDINGS
- E – CONSISTENCY MATRIX
- F – PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS
- G – GPA FINDINGS
- H – PROPOSED ZONING CODE AMENDMENTS
- I – ZCA FINDINGS
- J – SPR FINDINGS
- K – CUP FINDINGS
- L – CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL
- M – SECURITY PLAN
- N – VEHICLE ADDENDUM
- O – CONCEPTUAL DRAWINGS FOR THE LARMP AREA
- P – PARK FUNDS
- Q – PROJECT EIR AND APPENDICES
- R – FINAL EIR
- S – MITIGATION, MONITORING, AND REPORTING PROGRAM
- T – PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE