

A GREAT CITY

STEPS FORWARD

LONG BEACH PLANNING COMMISSION

Year in Review:

2011



A GREAT CITY STEPS FORWARD

For the Planning Commission, 2011 was a positive year, a year of moving forward. With the Planning staff, city officials and the community, significant progress was made on many important fronts. From the Downtown Plan approval and the Douglas Park expansion, to a trio of neighborhood improvement programs, 2011 was year of accomplishment and forward thinking. It was a year where the great City of Long Beach intelligently and thoughtfully moved forward.

PLANNING BUREAU 2011 BY THE NUMBERS

- Customers assisted at the 4th floor public Planning counter: 10,789
- Zoning Information Line (562-570-6194) calls answered: 15,103
- Plan Checks reviewed (Building Permits): 229
- Planning Entitlement Applications Processed: 191
(Zone Change, Conditional/Administrative Use Permits, Site Plan Review, Standards Variance)



DOWNTOWN PLAN

The Downtown Plan, an update to PD-30 that's been in the works since 2007, was approved by the Planning Commission in December 2011. The Plan will guide the future development of the greater downtown area and provide a clear vision for new development projects and streetscape improvements. Form-based design guidelines, focusing on the design of structures and how new buildings address existing structures and the street, will complement revisions to PD-30's land use and development standards regulations. The City Council adopted the Downtown Plan and certified its Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in January 2012.

WIRELESS ORDINANCE

A three-year effort to amend the zoning regulations for wireless telecommunications facilities culminated in the July 2011 adoption of wholesale changes that affect the placement and look of wireless telecommunications facilities. The new regulations encourage the placement of wireless facilities away from residential areas, require co-location of facilities any time a co-location option is available, mandates a master Conditional Use Permit and 5-year build-out plan for each site, and sets clear design standards for all sites. In addition to giving the City added design review powers over the appearance and aesthetics of wireless sites, the new ordinance sets clear rules and expectations to create less uncertainty for Long Beach residents and the wireless industry.

DOUGLAS PARK

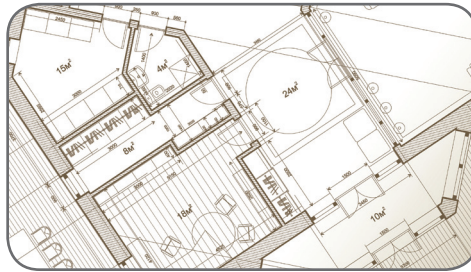
The Planning effort to convert an outdated aircraft manufacturing facility into a vibrant mixed-use destination took a significant step forward in 2011. On the heels of last year's Rubbercraft and LD Products approvals (both projects currently under construction), the Planning Commission in 2011 approved seven new industrial buildings and a four-story, 155-room hotel. Whereas the new Rubbercraft and LD Products buildings are to be located in the PD-32 South area of Douglas Park, the Courtyard Marriott hotel marks the first major project approval within the PD-32 North area. The seven Sares/Regis Group industrial buildings will be spread out – four are to be located in PD-32 North, on Cover Street; three are to be located in PD-32 South, on Conant Street – and range in size from 168,271 to 35,272 square feet.

GOLDEN SHORE

In 2010, the Planning Commission approved the Golden Shore Master Plan, which called for three mixed-use development options on nearly six acres of land south of Ocean Boulevard and adjacent to Golden Shore. The development options consisted of either 1,110 or 1,370 residential condominiums, 340,000 square feet of commercial office space, 235,000 square feet of open space, and the potential for a 400-room hotel. Accompanying the Golden Shore Master Plan was an amendment to the City's Local Coastal Program, which required approval by the California Coastal Commission. The Coastal Commission approved the Local Coastal Program amendment in June.

717 SITE REZONING

The Planning Commission approved two significant changes to PD-19 in 2011. In August, commissioners voted to eliminate the uncertainty associated with 2008-approved "interim" uses. By eliminating the interim verbiage, the 717 site – located on the east side of Lakewood Boulevard, just south of Carson Street, adjacent to Douglas Park – becomes a more viable site for long-term development. Further amendments to PD-19, prohibiting indoor and outdoor storage uses, were approved by the Planning Commission in November. Both sets of approved amendments allow PD-19 to be marketed and used as a viable long-term economic commodity.



THE PRINCIPLES OF ACTIVE LIVING AND COMPLETE STREETS

In 2008, the City of Long Beach received a PLACE grant from the Los Angeles County Public Health Department to update the City's General Plan (Long Beach 2030) with "active living" and "complete streets" policies and to expand the network of bicycle facilities in Long Beach. Based on nearly a dozen public workshops devoted to bicycle mobility and two Planning Commission study sessions focused on urban design and mobility, Planning staff coalesced ten principles of complete streets and active living for Planning Commission consideration. These principles, which include a balance of the needs of all modes of travel, context sensitive streets, and bicycle, walking, and transit promotion, were approved by the Planning Commission in June 2011 and represent the first in a series of principles Planning staff will bring to the Planning Commission for advisement and consent in the lead up to the adoption of Long Beach 2030.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

I. PD-29 Performance Standards — In 2007, the City Council adopted amendments to PD-29 that require all non-conforming automobile sales businesses to obtain a Conditional Use Permit and incorporate adopted performance standards to ensure that dealerships do not create adverse impacts on adjacent properties and surrounding neighborhoods. The Planning Commission considered, and approved, five such permits in 2011, helping to reduce visual blight, glare, noise, and traffic generated by these uses.

II. Billboard Ordinance — In 2009, the City Council adopted a one-year moratorium on the development of new billboards and the conversion of existing billboards to electronic billboards. A one-year extension of the moratorium was adopted in 2010 to allow Planning staff to draft a comprehensive ordinance to replace existing, outdated billboard regulations, which failed to incentivize the removal of hundreds of existing, nonconforming billboards that were installed in the 1940s through the 1960s. Numerous community meetings, along with several Planning Commission and City Council study sessions, aided Planning staff in creating an ordinance that aimed to reduce visual blight by capping the number of billboards in the City and limiting their locations to freeways, regional corridors, and major arterials. The Planning Commission approved the billboard ordinance in October 2011, and it's currently pending a City Council vote.

III. Discretionary Permit Inspection Program — In 2008, the City of Long Beach initiated the Discretionary Permit Inspection Program to ensure that permit holders were abiding by their conditions of approval. Prior to coming into effect, enforcement of project conditions of approval was primarily complaint-based. The Discretionary Permit Inspection Program takes a proactive approach to enforcement, ensuring entitled projects are operating in the approved manner and required site improvements, such as landscaping, have been made. Upwards of 100 inspections occur each month.

PLANNING COMMISSION

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