



CITY OF LONG BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

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A Note from the City Manager on the Land Use Element:

Long Beach is a great city. It has wonderful people, strong neighborhoods, a terrific location, and a unique spirit that makes us all proud to live, work, and play here. Recently, there has been a great deal of discussion over how our city will look in the future, as our community contemplates a revised Land Use Element. Land Use Elements are one of the most important documents a city adopts, and it should reflect the results of community engagement, thoughtful planning, and compliance with State law.

Land Use Elements are required by the State of California to ensure every city is making wise and thoughtful decisions about land use, and appropriately planning for population and job growth. Long Beach needs to plan for additional housing and commercial growth citywide by 2040. Great work has already occurred through the adopted Downtown Plan, Midtown Plan, and the Southeast Area Specific Plan (SEASP) to account for much of the future need. The challenge we now collectively face is how to accommodate the remaining need throughout the entire city, in a manner that preserves existing single-family neighborhoods, but also recognizes that housing and shopping opportunities in the future will likely not be single-family homes and traditional retail stores. These new opportunities, with appropriate planning and design, can become as much a part of our city as what we know and love today.

As the City seeks to adopt a revised Land Use Element, it is important to bear in mind that these proposed land uses will likely not be implemented today, tomorrow, or even in the next decade. It is a plan for our children, and our children's children. We must balance our city's character and aspirations with the need to provide for a growing population. Where do we want to add new, quality housing? Where are the job centers? How do our residents commute to work or school? How do we retain quality shopping centers? Where will our future Cal State Long Beach graduates find employment and buy a home? These, and other questions, need to be answered if we are to achieve a preferred future. Simply saying "no" to a revised Land Use Element is not an option, we must plan for the future – in fact, the State mandates it.

The Land Use Element has sparked significant debate from some in the community, specifically relating to density, additional housing units, and traffic. City staff have certainly heard those concerns throughout the past two years, and in particular, over the past few weeks. This week, City staff will release revised maps. In these new maps, you will see a significant reduction in the proposed density in every area of Long Beach compared to the previous maps. The changes will be significant, and should largely alleviate the concerns of most; however, we will continue to propose land use changes that allow the City to meet the State mandates for accommodating housing and job growth.

I would like to encourage anyone interested in this topic to learn more and get involved. We need your constructive input and participation. As with any large project, misinformation often circulates more quickly than fact, so the City has spent considerable time answering questions from the community to help clarify and increase mutual understanding. Visit <http://www.longbeach.gov/pages/city-news/long-beach-general->

[plan-update-is-here/](#) to get involved, to learn the facts, and to gain a better understanding of this effort.

Lastly, I would ask that as we continue this journey together, we respect the varied input of all stakeholders, as well as City staff, who have worked hard to answer questions, and make professional recommendations on how to tackle this challenge. Your City staff is committed to this process, to listen, to adapt, and to make professional recommendations – that is their job. But calls for sanctioning City employees simply for doing their job, or because someone does not agree with their recommendation, is not constructive. In Long Beach, we pride ourselves on being inclusive, it is a part of who we are. I encourage all of us to remember that as we debate and provide our input. We all have important input to share and, as a community, we can do that respectfully and thoughtfully.

PATRICK H. WEST
City Manager, Long Beach