

# Downtown Community Plan Update/New Zoning Code for Downtown Community Plan

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**Case Number:** ENV-2017-433-EIR, CPC-2017-432-CPU, CPC-2014-1582-CA

**Council District:** Downtown Community Plan: 1, 9 and 14/ New Zoning Code: Citywide

**State Clearinghouse Number:** 2017021024

**Community Plan Areas:** Downtown Community Plan: Central City Community Plan, Central City North Community Plan / New Zoning Code: Citywide

**Project Location:** Downtown Plan Project Area: The Downtown Community Plan consists of the Central City Community Plan, and Central City North Community Plan. The Central City Community Plan Area (CPA) encompasses approximately 2,161 acres and is generally bounded on the north by Sunset Boulevard/Cesar Chavez Avenue, on the south by the Santa Monica Freeway (Interstate 10), on the west by the Harbor Freeway (Interstate 110), and on the east by Alameda Street. Immediately to the east of Alameda Street is the Central City North Community Plan Area, which encompasses approximately 2,005 acres and is generally bounded on the north by Stadium Way, Lilac Terrace, and North Broadway, on the south by the City of Vernon, on the west by Alameda Street, and on the east by the Los Angeles River. The Downtown Plan Area is bordered by the communities of Boyle Heights, Silver Lake-Echo Park, Westlake, Southeast and South Los Angeles, and the City of Vernon.

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*New Zoning Code Project Area: The Project includes the implementation of the New Zoning Code regulations applicable within the Downtown Plan Area with adoption of the Downtown Plan. The New Zoning Code regulations adopted with the Proposed Project could be applied or implemented elsewhere in the City through the community plan update process or other future planning and zoning efforts. This would require future legislative action to adopt plan amendments and zoning changes, as well as environmental review. Thus, the New Zoning Code component of the Proposed Project could affect all areas within the City's*

*jurisdictional boundaries. The City of Los Angeles encompasses roughly 478 square miles including about 5 square miles of water area for the Port of Los Angeles and just under 472 square miles of land area within the County of Los Angeles. The City is generally defined by the San Gabriel Mountains in the north, the Santa Susana Mountains, Santa Monica Mountains, and Pacific Ocean in the west, Pacific Ocean in the South, and Verdugo Mountains, San Rafael Hills, and Repetto Hills in the east. The Santa Monica Mountains and Los Angeles River bisect the City, separating the San Fernando Valley in the north from the Los Angeles metropolitan basin in the south.*

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**Draft EIR Comment Period Extension**

**([/eir/downtownCP\\_newZoningCode/Deir/Comment Period Extension.pdf](/eir/downtownCP_newZoningCode/Deir/Comment%20Period%20Extension.pdf))**

### **Project Description:**

The Proposed Project includes updates to the Central City and Central City North Community Plans, adoption of the New Zoning Code, and the adoption of necessary revisions and any other amendments necessary to implement the above, including amendments to other General Plan elements (such as, Mobility and Framework), the Los Angeles Municipal Code, specific plans, and other ordinances to implement those updates. The following describes in more detail the updates to the Downtown Plan and the adoption of the New Zoning Code.

#### *Downtown Community Plan*

The updates to the Downtown Community Plan will reflect a future vision for Downtown, and are intended to guide development through the year 2040, and revise the existing Central City Community Plan and Central City North Community Plan. Community Plans are also intended to guide development

by informing the general public of the City's broad planning goals, policies, and objectives, as well as specific development standards for the Project area. The Downtown Plan would allocate land for the range of uses that Downtown will need through 2040, including land for jobs, housing, parks and open space (as available and feasible), and civic functions, and would improve the link between land use and transportation in a manner that is consistent with the General Plan Framework Element. Collectively, the Downtown Community Plans' goals, objectives, policies, and programs

articulate the policy direction that the City will promote for the duration of the Plan. It includes amending the Zoning Map to rezone the Plan Area with new zone classifications developed for the Downtown Plan.

The Proposed Plan goals and policies seek to address challenges facing Downtown and the larger region, such as climate change, housing affordability, and a shifting economy, through strategies that will guide thoughtful growth. The General Plan Land Use Designation Map includes the proposed general plan designations in the Plan Area, as well as a corresponding zone table to identify the zoning types that are allowed for each type of land use designation. The Plan will also include amendments to the General Plan Framework Element to introduce new land use designations of the Downtown Plan. The proposed designations, along with implementing zoning actions, would reinforce a pattern of development that directs future growth to already urbanized and transit-served areas.

The Downtown Plan articulates a strategy for land use planning that will accommodate projected growth by encouraging higher intensity development and the most expansive mix of uses in areas that are served by high-frequency transit service. This strategy promotes flexibility of uses over time, and a high-quality built environment, while reinforcing the range of unique places within the Plan Area. These strategies will guide the physical development in the Downtown Plan Area in a sustainable manner that will promote increased access to jobs, housing for all income levels, open space, services, and cultural resources while also implementing policies of SB 375 and SCAG's Sustainable Communities Strategy to reduce overall VMT and greenhouse gas emissions.

As discussed above, the Project also includes the adoption of the New Zoning Code.

The new zoning system is modular, requiring the bundling of multiple districts to make a zone. The zoning system includes the following five (5) districts, referred to collectively as the “base zoning”: Form, Frontage, Development Standards, Use, and Density districts. The first five (5) components of the zone string are mandatory. An optional sixth district, Overlay, may also apply

when there is a policy need to regulate aspects not covered in the base zoning. A brief summary of each of the five mandatory districts of the new zoning system is provided below:

- Form Districts generally govern the shape and size of buildings.
- Frontage Districts govern how a site or building addresses abutting street(s) or right-of-way(s).
- Development Standards Districts regulate pedestrian and motor vehicle access, automobile parking quantities, parking design treatments, and on-site signs.
- Use Districts establish which uses are permitted, permitted with limitations, conditionally permitted, or not allowed on a property.
- The Density District sets either the amount of lot area required for a Dwelling Unit or Guest Room, or the number of Dwelling Units permitted per lot.
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- Use Districts establish which uses are permitted, permitted with limitations, conditionally permitted, or not allowed on a property.
- The Density District sets either the amount of lot area required for a Dwelling Unit or Guest Room, or the number of Dwelling Units permitted per lot.

To implement the Downtown Community Plan and to apply the New Zoning Code in the Downtown Plan Area, certain Form, Frontage, Development Standards, and Density districts are proposed to be added to the LAMC. These districts will be used for rezoning property in the Downtown Plan Area.

As the system is modular, it is possible for some of the districts developed for application within the Downtown Plan Area to be used in other parts of the City in various combinations in the future when community plans are updated and properties rezoned.

Due to the size and scale of the City and the current Zoning Code, the re:code LA program is a substantial undertaking. It is expected that parts of the re:code LA program will be adopted and implemented incrementally.

Specifically, the complete New Zoning Code (proposed to be in Chapter 1A of the LAMC) will not be adopted as a whole or all at once as a part of this

Project. Only the new regulations specifically applicable to the Downtown Plan and the general regulations necessary to implement the Proposed Plan are being adopted at this time.

The general regulations of the New Zoning Code that will be adopted as part of the Proposed Project will also be available for use citywide through discretionary review processes, zone changes and general plan amendments, but would not be expected to be used at this time without a community plan update, amendment, and other future planning and zoning effort. These elements include definitions, administrative rules, development standard rules, and general use standards, among others. Consistent with the intent of the re:code LA program, these regulations will be adopted before or simultaneously with the first ordinance to implement the new zone districts of the Proposed Plan. When the New Zoning Code content is adopted into the LAMC as part of this Project, none of the new zone districts, and their respective development standards and requirements, will be operative for any property in the City until the relevant community plan is updated or amendments are completed to utilize the new zoning, which would require environmental review pursuant to CEQA.

The existing Zoning Code regulations are not being repealed as part of this Project. The existing Zoning Code will continue to be in effect in Chapter 1 of the LAMC for those areas in which the new Zoning Code has not yet been applied. The existing Zoning Code would remain in place until all property in the City is rezoned and all the City's community plans are amended to apply the New Zoning Code.

### **Anticipated Significant Environmental Effects:**

Based on the analysis contained in the Draft EIR, the Proposed Plan would result in unavoidable significant environmental impacts with regard to: Air

Quality (Exceedance of Criteria Pollutants—Construction and Operations, and Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Toxic Air Contaminants— Operations); Cultural Resources (Historical Resources); Noise (Construction Noise and Vibration); Recreation (Park Deterioration); Transportation (Highway Off-Ramp Safety). The Draft EIR has also identified the following significant impacts that are anticipated to be reduced to less than significant with identified mitigation measures:

- **Air Quality:** Construction-related emissions of toxic air contaminants
- **Biological Resources:** Habitat Modification (nesting birds)
- **Cultural Resources:** Archaeological Resources
- **Geology:** Paleontological Resources
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Hazardous Materials within ¼-Mile of School, Hazardous Materials Sites
- **Tribal Cultural Resources:** Tribal Cultural Resources

Government Code Section 65962.5 Notice: The Project area does include sites listed under Government Code Section 65952.5. These are described in Section 4.8 of the Draft EIR, Hazards, Existing Setting.

#### **Document Review and Comment:**

The Draft EIR and all documents referenced in the EIR are available for public review and a 75-day comment period. At this time, there are no scheduled public hearings during the Comment Period.

If you wish to review a copy of the Draft EIR or the documents referenced in the Draft EIR, you may do so at the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Records Management at 221 N Figueroa St, Room 1450, Los Angeles. Appointments must be made in advance by emailing [planning.recordsmgmt@lacity.org](mailto:planning.recordsmgmt@lacity.org) (<mailto:planning.recordsmgmt@lacity.org>) or calling (213) 847-3732

For an electronic copy, the Draft EIR can be downloaded or reviewed at the Department of City Planning's website at:  
<https://planning4la.org/development-services/eir>  
(<https://planning.lacity.org/development-services/eir>).

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, printed copies of the Draft EIR will not be available at a public library.

**Comment Period:**      **START DATE AND TIME: August 6, 2020 AT 9 A.M.**  
**END DATE AND TIME: December 4, 2020 AT 5 P.M.**

If you wish to submit comments on the Draft EIR, please submit your written comments (including a name, telephone number, and contact information and the following file number ENV-2017-433-EIR) during the Comment Period, via mail or e-mail to the following addresses:

Mail: Brittany Arceneaux, City Planner  
City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring Street, Room 667  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

E-mail: [brittany.arceneaux@lacity.org](mailto:brittany.arceneaux@lacity.org) (mailto:brittany.arceneaux@lacity.org)

Comments that are sent to the City before or after the Comment Period provided above or that fail to comply with the above instructions for the manner or submission of comments may not be included in the Final EIR and receive a response to comments under CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.

### **Draft Environmental Impact Report**

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### **Appendices**

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For a consolidated copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Report, including the appendices, please click on the link below:

Consolidated Draft Environmental Impact Report  
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[2020 Census \(https://census.lacity.org/\)](https://census.lacity.org/)

[Community Resource Guide \(/resources/community-resource-guide\)](/resources/community-resource-guide)

[Site Map \(/sitemap\)](/sitemap)

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