

APPENDIX D: BACKGROUND AND VISION

BACKGROUND

A. Specific Plan Location

Jordan Downs is located at 9800 Grape Street in Los Angeles, California, 90002. The Jordan Downs Urban Village Specific Plan area that is generally bounded by Grape Street on the West, 103rd Street on the South, Alameda Street on the East and 97th Street on the North, includes the existing Jordan Downs public housing complex. The total acreage of the project area is 118.50 acres; approximately 42 acres of this total acreage is currently within the County of Los Angeles and is proposed to be annexed. Currently, Jordan Downs has approximately 2,200 residents within 700 public housing units.

Jordan Downs is located within the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area and Los Angeles Council District 15. In addition, Jordan Downs is in the 35th Congressional District, the 27th State Assembly District, the 52nd State Senate District, and County of Los Angeles, 2nd Supervisory District.

B. Specific Plan Setting and Surrounding Land Use

The existing Jordan Downs housing complex and high school site forms a portion of the City of Los Angeles eastern boundary. It abuts unincorporated County of Los Angeles land, most notably the 42 acre industrial zoned parcels to be annexed by the City of Los Angeles. The eastern boundary of this Specific Plan area is Alameda Street, and beyond that is the City of South Gate.

Jordan Downs is served by: Century Boulevard, which terminates into the existing Specific Plan area, is classified as a Major Highway, Class II. 103rd Street, which serves as the southern boundary, and 97th Street, which serves as the northern boundary, are classified as Collector Streets. Grape Street forms the western boundary and is classified as a local street. Alameda Street, which forms the eastern boundary of this Specific Plan area is also a Major Highway, Class II, and runs parallel to the Alameda Corridor, a 20 mile long rail line that connects the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to the rail hubs near downtown Los Angeles. At this location just east of this Specific Plan area, the rail line is below street grade.

There are a number of public transportation routes serving Jordan Downs. The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) Local Commuter Dash Route serves the subject Specific Plan site with a few stops along 103rd Street. The Dash service carries passengers to two major public transit rail stations; the Blue Line Station at 103rd Street, and the Green Line Station at the Avalon and the I-105 Freeway. The Blue Line also intersects the Imperial-Wilmington Green Line Station.

This Specific Plan area currently contains a diversity of land uses. Public facilities include the Jordan Downs Recreation Center and David Starr Jordan High School. Industrial uses occupy most of the 42-acre annexation area. It is located on the north-east corner of this Specific Plan site where 97th Street intersects into Alameda Street. The site previously stored hundreds of truck containers/trailers. In addition, a World War II ammunitions assembly and storage facility was located here. A vacant/abandoned industrial building resembling an old steel foundry exists on the interior corner of the property, and will have to be demolished upon environmental approval.

David Starr Jordan High School, owned by the LAUSD, is located on the southeast section of this Specific Plan area, and had 1,700 students enrolled in the 2008-09 school year. It has important community and recreational amenities such as an auditorium, athletic track field, and a basketball

gym. In addition, the High School is registered with the California Office of Historic Preservation Historical Resources Inventory due to its historical significance. Its proximity to Jordan Downs is viewed as an asset and is an important element of this Specific Plan's design which has a set goal of ensuring that 50% of the dwelling units are within ½ mile of schools.

The Mudtown Farms Agricultural Education and Demonstration Center completes the group of parcels that make up this Specific Plan site. This Center that sits on the southwest corner of this Specific Plan area holds great potential for improving sustainable practices in this Specific Plan site and is part of the enduring heritage of Jordan Downs.

This Specific Plan area is surrounded primarily by low to medium-density housing north of 97th Street, medium-density housing west of Grape Street, and low density housing buffered by medium density housing on the southern border along 103rd Street. Some neighborhood commercial areas are located along Wilmington Avenue, southwest of this Specific Plan Area. On the eastern border and the southeast corner this Specific Plan site abuts the cities of South Gate and Lynwood, respectively. In addition to the proximity of housing there are also several community facilities near this Specific Plan area such as 102nd Street Elementary School near the southwest corner of this Specific Plan site, and Ted Watkins Park to the west, as well as the nearby Metro Blue Line, 103rd Street station which is located approximately 8/10 of a mile from this Specific Plan site.

C. Existing General Plan Land Use and Zoning

Currently the portions of this Specific Plan that are within the City of Los Angeles are assigned two separate General Plan Land Use Designations: Low Medium II Residential and Public Facilities. Low Medium II Residential falls within a larger category of Medium Residential.

The parcels located within the City of Los Angeles are currently assigned two separate zones. The majority of the existing housing units are located on parcels zoned RD2-1, which is an abbreviation for Restricted Density-Multiple Dwelling 2. This zone allows for relatively lower density multi-family housing units, which places a maximum density of dwelling units based on a formula of one dwelling unit for every 2,000 square feet of lot area.

Jordan High School is located on parcels zoned Public Facilities, or PF-1. This Public Facilities is typically assigned to civic buildings, government owned facilities, or rights of way.

The parcels currently located within the County of Los Angeles are zoned the County's zone of M2. This zone is the second most industrial-intensive zone, and allows for heavy industrial uses such as metal recycling, various manufacturing, and other intensive uses.

D. Existing Physical Site Characteristics

This Specific Plan area is an infill site, surrounded by development, and relatively flat. The area's topography gently descends about 10 vertical feet from northeast to southwest, with the highest elevation approximately 116 feet above sea level. An underground drainage system runs through the Jordan Downs public housing project and the adjacent 21.08 acre former industrial lot.

The 49.48 acre Jordan Downs housing complex is on the western side of this Specific Plan area and is composed of 103 two-story townhouse style buildings with a total of 700 housing units and is home to approximately 2,200 residents. The existing on-site roadway network for Jordan Downs is inconsistent with the surrounding grid system, it is composed of three loop roadways: one roadway (99th Place) that serves the north portion of the site, and two loop roadways (101st Street and 102nd

Street) that serve the south portion of the site and are connected by Juniper Street. The main access points to the site are 103rd Street from Alameda Street, a major arterial highway and Century Boulevard that ends at this Specific Plan site.

E. Master Plan

In 2010, the HACL A adopted a Master Plan for the redevelopment of Jordan Downs. The Master Plan will guide the comprehensive redevelopment of Jordan Downs by adding housing units, mixed-use opportunities, a central park, and a new street grid. However, these concepts contained within the Master Plan are not feasible within the existing legal parcels and zoning assigned to Jordan Downs. The Master Plan serves thus as a vision document of what may be possible due to the City Charter and LAMC requirements, in addition to requirements set forth by the California Environmental Quality Act. As a result, the adoption of a Specific Plan and certification of an Environmental Impact Report is necessary. This Specific Plan serves as the implementation tool of the Master Plan by amending the zones and land use designations of each block of land. In addition, a tract map is necessary to create new legal lots and a street grid that creates efficient circulation. This Specific Plan honors the vision and intent of the Master Plan.

SPECIFIC PLAN VISION

A. Overview

Jordan Downs will become a model of social and environmental sustainability through the planning, design and development effort identified within this Specific Plan. The social sustainability efforts stem from the comprehensive community input process through the Southern California Association of Governments Compass Blueprint Community Workshop process, the results of which are explained in the HACL A's Family First Plan located in the appendix of this Specific Plan. The environmental sustainability component of the Jordan Downs Urban Village Specific Plan is a result of the core neighborhood development principles established by the US Green Building Council (USGBC) under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND) Rating System. This rating system is the first national standard for sustainable neighborhood design and has been integrated throughout this Specific Plan to incorporate the principles of smart growth, new urbanism, mobility, and green buildings. Using the framework of other LEED rating systems, LEED for Neighborhood Development recognizes development projects that successfully protect and enhance the overall health, natural environment, and quality of life of communities. The Jordan Downs Urban Village Specific Plan, along with the social and environmental sustainability efforts herein intends to create a neighborhood that will significantly transform the community into a safe, thriving, desirable, and livable urban community with many social and physical amenities. Thus, the creation of the Urban Village designation is reinforced through the establishment of the "UV" suffix adhered to the new proposed zones.

The Jordan Downs Urban Village Specific Plan is a comprehensive, mixed-use, mixed-income development featuring diverse building typologies and a variety of densities. The non-residential components of the Plan include expansive common open spaces integrated with both educational and job creation components, resulting in a green and sustainable community.

It is important for the City to have a complete, comprehensive code that regulates this unique development. Currently, the Los Angeles Municipal Code lacks the appropriate zoning standards to allow for a mixed-use community with such customized components/elements of this scale. Since this Specific Plan requires various standards, it is appropriate that the unique Jordan Downs Master

Plan be developed and implemented through a Specific Plan, in accordance with LAMC Section 11.5.7.

This Specific Plan allows rules to be tailored for the 118-acre site and permits the incorporation of custom design guidelines and more extensive landscape than required by the LAMC, as well as establishes the preliminary zoning of the 42-acre portion of land undergoing annexation. Also, this Specific Plan allows for flexibility in the implementation to allow the plan to respond to market preferences in the long-term build-out of this Specific Plan site. This Specific Plan and LEED-ND principles allows the future development to utilize innovative techniques such as variable setbacks to maximize usable public and private open space, multi-family homes, shared common open space and compact, clustered single-family homes encouraging pedestrian activity, all integrated within the same mixed-use community. By using a Specific Plan, the entire streetscape can be coordinated between the residential and commercial uses, creating a seamless experience. In some regulations this Specific Plan provides for stringent requirements along Alameda Boulevard to ensure compatibility with the residential neighborhood and educational facilities of the redeveloped Specific Plan. Overall, the cohesiveness and enhanced design created by this Specific Plan maximizes the ability to create a sustainable community with compatible land uses, and results in a predictable development for the established and future residents of Jordan Downs.

B. Development Program

This Specific Plan calls for a variety of land uses including Residential, Community Facility and Open Space sites, as well as land reserved for employment uses. Two possible school sites are identified in addition to the LAUSD's current Jordan High School grounds. Ground floor retail fronts onto key pedestrian-oriented sites and circulation routes.

The majority use of this Specific Plan is residential development, consisting of the replacement of the existing 700 dwelling units, plus a proposal for up to 1,100 new dwelling units to be built in a variety of residential building types, including townhouses and stacked flats in multiple and varied configurations, for a total project yield of up to 1,800 units. Community facilities include the Family Resource Center and a new gym. This Specific Plan concept includes up to 250,000 square feet of new commercial/office/retail Floor Area on seven acres of existing industrial land along the Alameda Street corridor, plus up to 20,000 gross square feet of community-serving retail and services Floor Area in mixed-use buildings. In addition to residential, commercial, and educational uses, the plan includes a network of parks and open space totaling approximately 8.9 acres, centered in and around the central park.

Implementation of the Specific Plan is anticipated to result in up to 1,800 residential units, which will contain a mix of replacement public housing, affordable rental units (including senior housing units), and market rate (for rent and home ownership) condominium units. HACLA is committed to preserving the present level of affordability for the residents of the existing 700 public housing units. The affordable and replacement units may, as required by HUD, the HACLA or other funders, be evidenced by recorded use restrictions.

C. Subareas

The land within this Specific Plan boundaries is divided into three distinct Subareas. The Subareas are necessitated by the existing conditions and industrial operations, unique characteristics, and contrast in land uses within this Specific Plan. These Subareas each have regulations attached to

them- see Section 6 – Land Use for more information on the zones assigned to each Subarea. The three Subareas are shown on Map 3, Proposed Subareas Map:

1. Subarea 1: Multi-Family Residential, Public Facilities, Parks and Open Space, and Commercial/Manufacturing
2. Subarea 2: Heavy Manufacturing
3. Subarea 3: Medium/Heavy Manufacturing

D. LEED-Neighborhood Development Standards

The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Neighborhood Development (ND) is a nationwide rating system administered by the United States Green Building Council, a non-profit organization that promotes sustainable, environmentally friendly building practices. LEED ND principles encourage smart growth and new urbanism best practices, promoting the location and design of neighborhoods that reduce vehicle miles traveled and communities where jobs and services are accessible by foot or public transit. It promotes more efficient energy and water use, which is especially important in densely populated urban areas such as Jordan Downs. Strengthening the overall neighborhood sustainability qualities of Jordan Downs enhances the opportunities for implementing similar strategies in future developments in the surrounding Watts area.

LEED-ND creates a menu of points within three primary credit categories: Smart Location and Linkages, Neighborhood Pattern and Design, and Green Infrastructure and Building. By obtaining the most points possible, a project achieves LEED-ND certification at one of four levels; certified, silver, gold, and platinum. The infill location of Jordan Downs encompasses many qualities serve as a foundation for creating a sustainable neighborhood in an urban setting. For example, the existing street grid and proximity to public transit make up many of the credits within the category of Smart Location and Linkages within LEED-ND. In addition, the Neighborhood Pattern and Design credit category of LEED-ND encompasses many sustainability strategies that should reduce the carbon footprint of the community while creating healthier, cleaner environments for residents and neighbors. These LEED-ND specific requirements are not applicable to blocks 18B, 30A, 30B, 30C, 31, and 32.

The Housing Authority (HACLA) and the Los Angeles Department of City Planning have a goal that the Jordan Downs Urban Village Specific Plan designed to meet the LEED-ND Gold Level with a goal to achieve certification. To that end, this Specific Plan utilizes design strategies that satisfy certain requirements within the Neighborhood Pattern & Design: Walkable Streets category and prerequisites within the Green Building and Infrastructure credit category.

See Appendix C of this Plan for standards related to green building and infrastructure.

By achieving certification and applying LEED ND as a tool to accomplish the aforementioned Sustainability Principles, Jordan Downs has the potential to create opportunities for implementing similar strategies in other public housing projects surrounding Watts.

