



LIVING IN DOWNTOWN

EQUITY AND IDENTITY

A GUIDE FOR THE NEXT 20 YEARS

PROPOSED DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY PLAN

SUMMER 2021

THE BIG PICTURE

Cities have rules about what can be built and where. These rules are called land uses. This is a guide to help understand the goals for land use laws that will shape what you see in Downtown Los Angeles for the next 20 years after the update to the Downtown Community Plan is adopted by the City Council.

The Community Plan is currently being presented to the City of L.A. decision-makers. Visit planning4la.org/dtla2040 to identify opportunities to join and provide comments.

HOW DO THESE RULES MAKE MY NEIGHBORHOOD BETTER?

Communities need a plan to guide growth, jobs, housing, schools, transportation, and parks.

Land use laws will not build specific buildings, but instead set the rules for what buildings look like and how they can be used.

EQUITY IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

Taking into account past history and current conditions, the proposed Downtown Community Plan aims to equitably meet the needs of stakeholders in the plan area and reduce racial disparities, especially those unequally present in historic cultural communities and communities of color. In doing so, issues of equity, health, and climate justice have become goalposts.

As Downtown is anticipated to accommodate more housing and jobs over the next 20 years, understanding these issues provides insight into common values, competing demands, fiscal priorities, and awareness of existing inequities. Continue scrolling for some approaches to address equity, health, and climate change that will be further explained.



TRANSIT PROXIMITY

The Downtown Plan is designed to accommodate approximately 80% of its new residents and employees close to transit. This means that it will be convenient for a majority of people to hop on a bus or train and to get to work, school, parks and other daily needs. The Plan also works to provide easy access to health care, food and open spaces. Allowing a mix of uses will shorten the distance between these uses, making it more attractive for people to walk or bike to access these amenities.

SERVICES & AMENITIES

A new Community Benefits Program will offer incentives for development to provide space for social and health services, social enterprises, small business incubators, childcare, and public services within the Plan area. Through zoning tools and incentive programs the Plan works to increase access to fresh food and cultural and educational resources. The Plan expands the areas where grocery stores, corner markets, and other neighborhood services can be built, especially within walking distance of housing and jobs.

HOUSING FOR ALL

The Plan nearly doubles the area where housing is allowed today to broaden the areas where housing can be built across Downtown. Approximately 66% of the Plan area would allow for new housing, ranging from market-rate housing to Permanent Supportive Housing. This also makes it easier to build affordable housing for more Angelenos, permanent supportive housing for many residents experiencing homelessness. More neighbors will also support more daycares, health facilities, grocery stores, as well as create small business opportunities in more areas of Downtown Los Angeles.

EQUITY

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

The Plan expands the area where housing can be built, allowing for housing to exist more widely across Downtown than where it is allowed today. The Plan also generally permits bigger and taller buildings than is currently possible, especially close to transit, creating more opportunities for people and households to live, work and experience the advantages of multiple travel options, such as walking or biking.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

It will be easier for existing buildings to change to a different use, without having to go through lengthy and expensive processes. This is a more sustainable pathway to give new life to existing underused buildings.

HEALTH

OPEN SPACE

The Downtown Plan includes requirements for new developments to include open spaces available to people who live and work in the building. It also introduces new programs that incentivize public open spaces, open to all, and community facilities like gardens and schools.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Historically, affordable housing has often been zoned for and built near industrial uses, which have been found to have negative health effects to residents who live close to these places and uses. The Plan allows for new housing in a larger area but still ensures that residential uses are not allowed near industrial uses known to be harmful to residents and workers.

CLIMATE CHANGE

AFFORDABLE & PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

PLAN STRATEGIES

When residential projects choose to build larger buildings, the proposed Community Benefits Program requires affordable housing to be provided before any other benefits. The system was developed with the¹benefit of substantial local input, as well as market analysis.

Economic Analysis

The Plan proposes to rezone neighborhoods where housing isn't allowed today so that housing, particularly affordable housing, can be built by-right.

Proposed Draft Downtown Community Plan Text, reference the housing section

The Plan introduces a new Community Benefits Program. The predominant community benefits system used today, TFAR, does not require affordable housing before other benefits. The Plan proposes to replace TFAR with the Community Benefits Program & prioritizes provision of on-site affordable housing.

Community Benefits Program Summary

The proposed Plan allows for an increase in floor area ratio² (FAR) when community benefits such as affordable housing are provided. The Downtown Community Plan zoning outlines base and bonus FARs for each property. The difference between the base and bonus FAR is the key mechanism to incentivize affordable housing in new developments. In most areas of the Plan, the maximum FAR is greater than what is allowed today-allowing more opportunities to capture affordable housing. The proposed FARs are informed by what is allowed under the current adopted plan as well as stakeholder feedback.

Community Benefits Program Summary

The Plan proposes to increase project review thresholds and reduce review time for projects providing affordable housing.

Staff Report discussion Improving Feasibility of the Community Benefits Program

The Plan also introduces a new Community Benefits Fund to promote creation of new affordable housing, buyout expiring affordable housing covenants, and distribute funding to Community Land Trusts.

Community Benefits Trust Fund Ordinance

¹ The proposed zoning outlines a Base and Bonus FAR for each property. Developments that build larger than what the Base FAR allows are required to provide community benefits such as affordable housing.

² Floor area ratio (FAR) is the measurement of a building's floor area in relation to the size of the lot that the building is located on.



Visit planning4la.org/dtla2040 to find referenced Draft Plan materials and documents.

ANTI-DISPLACEMENT PLAN STRATEGIES

The Plan proposes to increase opportunities for affordable housing by lowering the base FARs, removing density limitations, and increasing the maximum FARs in Chinatown and Little Tokyo.

📍 [Draft of the New Zoning Code Article 2-Forms, Zoning Form Districts: LN1, LM2, MN1, DM5, DM2 and Chinatown Plan Summary](#)

The Proposed Plan requires 100% affordable housing in certain portions of Skid Row.

📍 [Draft of the New Zoning Code, Article 5-Use, Zoning Use District IX1](#)

The Plan introduces a deeply low income affordable housing category to serve existing Downtown residents and safeguard housing for those making less than 15% AMI or approximately \$14,000 annually.

📍 [Community Benefits Program Summary](#)

Projects choosing to participate in the Community Benefits program will be required to replace any residential units demolished as a result of new residential construction. Residential Hotel Unit Conversion and Demolition Ordinance and Home-Sharing Ordinance protections will continue.

📍 [Draft of the New Zoning Code, Article 9-Public Benefit Programs](#)

The Plan outlines a number of Implementation Programs in the Policy Document including:

Vacancy Tax Study: Study the feasibility of an annual tax on the rental value of vacant land that is based on the permitted land use to encourage activation and development of underutilized land in urban areas, particularly near public transit infrastructure.

First Right of Refusal Study: Explore the creation of Citywide first right of refusal provisions to ensure lower- and moderate-income tenants that are displaced due to new residential construction have the First Right of Refusal to return to a rental unit at an affordable cost.

No Net Loss Program: Explore the creation of a Citywide no net loss program to minimize the displacement of residents and ensure that there is no loss of affordable rental housing.

A Racial Justice and Equity Analysis: Explore the creation of a Racial Justice and Equity Analysis, that outlines recommended transformative or restorative strategies, such as targeted plan and code amendments, if harm is identified.

Community Land Trust: Encourage partnerships that seek to implement community land trust projects. A Community Land Trust is a community-based non-profit organization designed to ensure community stewardship of land by purchasing or holding land and removing it from the speculative real estate market.



Visit planning4la.org/dtla2040 to find referenced Draft Plan materials and documents.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

PLAN STRATEGIES

The Plan prohibits toxic uses near residential uses and only allows heavy industrial uses in areas of the plan that are buffered from mixed-use zones.

📍 [Interactive Zoning Map](#)

The Plan requires buffering and screening from adjacent freeways to protect people from air pollution.

📍 [Draft of the New Zoning Code, Article 4-Development Standards](#)

The Plan requires pedestrian passages and amenities to help create a safe and inviting space for more Angelenos to walk, roll, and take transit to complete their daily activities.

📍 [Draft of the New Zoning Code, Article 4-Development Standards, Article 3-Frontages](#)

The Plan supports a range of mobility options to reduce car trips, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality for all Angelenos.

📍 [Proposed Draft Downtown Community Plan Text, reference Chapter 3 Mobility & Connectivity](#)



Visit planning4la.org/dtla2040 to find referenced Draft Plan materials and documents.

HISTORIC & CULTURAL NEIGHBORHOODS

PLAN STRATEGIES

Introduces height limits and a palette of character tools in historic and cultural neighborhoods to encourage building frontages that reinforce the unique character of these neighborhoods.

📍 Draft of the New Zoning Code Article 3-Frontage, Zoning Frontage Districts: CHC1, CDF1, CDR1, SH2, AL1, AL2, MK1

The Plan proposes incentives for preserving historic resources.

📍 Draft of the New Zoning Code, Article 9-Public Benefit Programs, Downtown Adaptive Reuse

SMALL BUSINESS PROTECTIONS

PLAN STRATEGIES

The Plan limits the maximum size of a ground floor business establishment in Little Tokyo and Chinatown to promote and retain locally owned small businesses.

📍 Draft of the New Zoning Code Article 5-Use, Zoning Use Districts: RX1, CX1

The Downtown Community Benefit Fund supports eligible small legacy and community-serving businesses with rent subsidies, grants for low-income micro-entrepreneurs, and supports creation of Sidewalk Vendor Commissaries.

📍 Community Benefits Trust Fund Ordinance

The Community Benefit Program offers incentives for developments to include business incubators, providing tenant space and assistance for small business.

📍 Community Benefits Program Summary

Proposed Live/work zoning requirements in the Arts district require production space in residential units to support small scale artisans, manufactures, and fabricators

📍 Draft of the New Zoning Code Article 5-Use, Zoning Use Districts: IX4



Visit planning4la.org/dtla2040 to find referenced Draft Plan materials and documents.

ON TONGVA LAND, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES WAS SAID TO BE ESTABLISHED IN 1781. RULES ABOUT BUILDING A CITY HAVE CHANGED A LOT IN 240 YEARS.

AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE, THE DTLA 2040 PLAN CELEBRATES DOWNTOWN'S MANY DIFFERENT NEIGHBORHOODS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIVERSE AND RICH FABRIC OF THE DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY WHILE DISTINCT STRATEGIES FOCUS ON SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES.

CHINATOWN

REQUIRE THAT NEW BUILDINGS HAVE SIMILAR SCALE TO EXISTING BUILDINGS, CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AND ADOPT NEW DESIGN BEST PRACTICE DOCUMENTS TO ENSURE NEW DEVELOPMENT RESPECTS THE CULTURAL LEGACY OF CHINATOWN.

SKID ROW

REQUIRE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN EXISTING INDUSTRIAL AREAS. REQUIRE THAT NEW LARGE DEVELOPMENTS PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS. ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR THOSE MOST IN NEED. ALLOW FOR COMMUNITY SERVING USES SUCH AS GROCERY STORES.

LITTLE TOKYO

REQUIRE THAT NEW BUILDINGS INCLUDE SPACE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES. REQUIRE SPECIAL REVIEW FOR ALL PROJECTS THROUGH THE COMMUNITY DESIGN OVERLAY TO ENSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT RESPECTS THE CULTURAL LEGACY OF LITTLE TOKYO.

HISTORIC CORE

REQUIRE THAT NEW BUILDINGS HAVE SIMILAR SCALE TO EXISTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND USE CERTAIN MATERIALS LIKE BRICK OR STONE TO RESPECT THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD. ENCOURAGE ACTIVATION OF BROADWAY THEATERS AND ENCOURAGE SPACE FOR ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT.

CHINATOWN

REQUIRE THAT NEW BUILDINGS HAVE SIMILAR SCALE TO EXISTING BUILDINGS, CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AND ADOPT NEW DESIGN BEST PRACTICE DOCUMENTS TO ENSURE NEW DEVELOPMENT RESPECTS THE CULTURAL LEGACY OF CHINATOWN.

FASHION DISTRICT

PRESERVE SPACE FOR FABRICATION, RETAIL, AND OFFICE AND ALLOW NEW HOUSING TO BE BUILT. APPLY ZONING TOOLS THAT SUPPORT OUTDOOR MARKETS AND VENDING.

ARTS DISTRICT

ENCOURAGE "MAKER" SPACE FOR ARTISTS, MANUFACTURERS, AND CONTENT CREATION. PRESERVE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITATE ACCESS TO THE LOS ANGELES RIVER.

FINANICAL DISTRICT

IMPROVE WALKABILITY AND TRANSIT ACCESS. ENCOURAGE TOWERS THAT WILL SHAPE THE CITY'S SKYLINE.

LOCAL POLICY SHAPES OUR FUTURE

RULES AND ACTIONS OF GOVERNMENT CAN SHAPE OUR DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCE AND QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH THE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES.

THE DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY PLAN OUTLINES NEW RULES TO ENSURE NEW BUILDINGS CONTRIBUTE AMENITIES SUCH AS AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND PARKS.

YOUR LIVED EXPERIENCE OF DOWNTOWN IS VALUABLE. YOU CAN ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES THAT HELP CREATE POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND DISCOURAGE NEGATIVES ONES IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. THE PLAN UPDATE PROCESS OFFERS MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE.

WAYS TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON THE PLAN:

- SHOW PUBLIC SUPPORT IN FAVOR OF A COMMUNITY PLANNING POLICY OR VISION
- WRITE A LETTER IN FAVOR OR AGAINST THE PLAN
- DOCUMENT ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED IN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
- HIGHLIGHT ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED
- PROVIDE TESTIMONY AT A PUBLIC HEARING