

# FACT SHEET

## New Zoning Code


### Background

The City is undertaking an effort to re-organize and re-write its zoning code. This effort, previously referred to as “re:code LA,” has established a new framework for the development of zoning tools in Los Angeles, and has culminated in a Proposed Draft of the new Zoning Code, for the [Downtown Community Plan](#) area. After the new Zoning Code is established Downtown, it will be adapted with additional zoning tools to meet the needs and opportunities of communities throughout Los Angeles, through the ongoing Community Plan update process.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What is the Zoning Code?

The Zoning Code is a part of the City’s Municipal Code (laws) that regulates the uses that are allowed on land throughout the City, as well as the size, shape, location, and configuration of land uses and buildings on a given property. As the primary method for regulating development, the Zoning Code is a key implementation tool for the Community Plans - the City’s General Plan Land Use Element, and the guiding vision for land use and development. The Zoning Code’s parcel-specific regulations are intended to ensure that the built environment reflects the Community Plan’s stated vision, guiding principles, and land use policies.



For example, if a Community Plan includes a goal to encourage wildlife habitat near the Los Angeles River, the Zoning Code can implement this goal by requiring that properties near the river include open space and specific methods of landscaping.

### **Why is the Zoning Code being updated?**

The City's Zoning Code was first adopted in 1946, and has been amended and added to significantly since that time, but without a comprehensive approach to organization or readability. The present day Zoning Code is difficult for many in Los Angeles to navigate and understand, and offers few tools to meet the many goals of the City's General Plan and Community Plans. The update to the Zoning Code is intended to provide greater clarity to users, and to offer a more sophisticated set of tools to implement the City's goals.

### **When is the new Zoning Code going to be adopted?**

The new Zoning Code will be adopted incrementally, with the update of each Community Plan or through other community planning efforts. The Downtown Community Plan is the first Community Plan to apply the new Zoning Code. Efforts to develop new tools and expand the applicability of the new Zoning Code are underway in 12 additional Community Plan areas. To learn more about other Community Plan updates visit <https://planning.lacity.org/plans-policies/community-plan-updates>

One major component of the new Zoning Code is the Administration Article, which outlines how our Department reviews and acts upon various requests and applications. This Article is currently in the adoption process and is referred to as the Process and Procedures Ordinance. To make zoning regulations more user-friendly, transparent, and predictable, the Process and Procedures Ordinance systematically reorganizes the administrative provisions of both the current Zoning Code, as well as the new Zoning Code.

### **When will my community use the New Zoning Code?**

The new Zoning Code provides a zoning system with the ability to be adapted to offer a more responsive set of zoning tools that help implement the visions of the many neighborhoods that make up the City of Los Angeles. The new zoning tools will be used as part of updating the City's 35 Community Plans.

The Proposed Draft of the new Zoning Code has been initially crafted around the goals of the Downtown Community Plan area. New zoning tools drafted for the [Boyle Heights Community Plan](#) area were made public in the Summer of 2020, following a multi-year process with stakeholders. Additional Community Plan update efforts that will adapt and use the new Zoning Code are underway in the following 12 communities.

- [Canoga Park-Woodland Hills-Winnetka-West Hills](#)
- [Encino-Tarzana](#)
- [Reseda-West Van Nuys](#)
- [Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks](#)
- [North Hollywood-Valley Village](#)
- [Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake-Cahuenga Pass](#)
- [West Los Angeles](#)
- [Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey](#)
- [Westchester-Playa del Rey](#)
- [Venice](#)
- [Harbor Gateway](#)
- [Wilmington-Harbor City](#)
- [San Pedro](#)

In addition, other localized efforts are underway to use tools offered by the proposed new zoning system. These include:

- [The Orange Line Transit Neighborhood Plan](#)
- [The Ventura/Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan Amendment](#)

### **What is the structure of the new Zoning system?**

The new Zoning Code is organized across 15 Articles that establish a new zoning system that allows for more responsive solutions to the wide variety of visions throughout the City. The new zones are modular and allow use and form to be regulated distinctly, capabilities that will help implement each community's vision and goals.

The fundamental components of the draft new Zoning Code are found in Articles 2 through 6:

- 2: Form - Regulates the massing aspects of a building, such as floor area, height, how much of a lot can be covered, and where buildings can be located.
- 3: Frontage - Regulates a building's relationship to the street and public realm, addressing things like transparency (doors and windows), articulation, and access.

- 4: Development Standards - Establishes regulations for landscaping, access, parking, and signs, among others.
- 5: Use - Regulates what specific uses are allowed on a property
- 6: Density - Regulates how many residential dwelling units are allowed on a property

### **Which parts of the new Zoning Code have been released ?**

In October 2019, City Planning released the initial components of the draft new Zoning Code for the Downtown Community Plan, including the Form, Frontage, Development Standards, Use, and Density, as well as an initially proposed draft Zoning Map. City Planning staff held a series of open houses in November of 2019, as well as numerous “office hours” and other small-group engagements through May 2020 to receive initial feedback.

In August 2020, City Planning released the remaining portions of the proposed new zoning system as part of the Preliminary Draft Zoning Code. These articles address the more technical functions of the zoning code, such as the rules of measurement, applicability, and relief; procedures for the establishment of subdivisions; etc. City Planning also released the Draft Environmental Impact Report. The public comment period was open from August 6, 2020 through December 4, 2020.

In November 2020, City Planning released the Public Hearing Drafts of the Downtown Community Plan and the New Zoning Code. In December, 2020, City Planning held two virtual open houses and the Public Hearing for the City Planning Commission.


In the coming months, the City Planning Commission and City Council will consider the Downtown Community Plan and New Zoning Code. There will be opportunities for public comment at each step of the adoption process.

### **How can I get information and give input on the New Code?**

View the latest draft of the new Zoning Code at:

<https://planning.lacity.org/zoning/new-code>

The Proposed Draft of the new Zoning Code will be presented alongside the Proposed Downtown Community Plan at City Planning Commission in the spring of 2021. This virtual meeting will be open to the public and will include an opportunity for public



comment. Written comments on the new Zoning Code can be directed to the City Planning Commission at [cpc@lacity.org](mailto:cpc@lacity.org).

To learn more about and get involved with Community Plan updates visit <https://planning.lacity.org/plans-policies/community-plan-updates>

For more background on the Downtown Community Plan update, see the [Community Plan Fact Sheet & FAQ document](#).

### **MORE INFORMATION**

For additional information please contact [downtownplan@lacity.org](mailto:downtownplan@lacity.org)

Media inquiries should be directed to [planning.media@lacity.org](mailto:planning.media@lacity.org) or (213) 978-1248.