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City of Los Angeles Proposes Easing Development Restrictions for New Housing Projects in Downtown

LOS ANGELES — Today, Los Angeles City Planning released a new plan that would refocus reinvestment opportunities in the City’s urban core. The draft proposal — known as the Downtown Community Plan — expands by nearly twofold the land area where housing is currently permitted, while still reinforcing Downtown’s economic base by encouraging a greater mix of uses.

By the year 2040, Downtown will grow by 125,000 new residents and 55,000 new jobs — representing 20 percent of the City’s population growth in one percent of its land area. City Planning is recommending the elimination of parking requirements for new development, as part of a package of new policies that proponents argue will accelerate housing construction and reduce the number of cars on the road.

Doing away with parking minimums for future projects would free up land for housing, commercial uses, and open space. Downtown sits at the confluence of the region’s transportation network — a hub for rail, bus, and other forms of transit. Nowhere is the diversity of alternatives to car travel more evident than in this urban core. Today, bike share, localized bus services, shuttles, and scooters offer faster — as well as more convenient and affordable — alternatives to paying for parking.

”Eliminating required parking minimums is an exciting step toward linking people-centered development and mobility,” said Hilary Norton, Executive Director of the transportation management organization FASTLinkDTLA, who was recently appointed by Governor Newsom to the California Transportation Commission. “With mobility technology innovations happening every day and future rail and a Downtown Streetcar planned for DTLA, eliminating parking minimums puts Downtown’s focus toward using existing parking more efficiently, creating a vibrant public realm, and investing in a multi-modal ecosystem that shifts us away from driving alone.”

By accommodating the majority of the City’s growth in Downtown, City Planning is also working to address statewide goals on climate change and sustainability. The revised regulations aim to support the environment, public safety, and better health outcomes by replacing decades-old parking requirements with more sustainable policies. Focusing future development in the centermost portion of the City will reduce development pressures in the outlying areas of the City, including ecologically sensitive areas. In addition to reducing commute times and traffic on the roadways, infill development is an important tool for combating climate change. It promotes a healthier economy and a cleaner environment, and often creates additional opportunities for affordable housing.



“For decades, we’ve prioritized shelter for cars over people by requiring parking minimums in Downtown,” said Director of Planning Vince Bertoni. “All of that changes today with the new policies that we’ve laid out in this Plan. We’re removing onerous regulatory requirements that have either slowed or impeded development — unlocking in the process the potential for new housing and jobs.”

City Planning will be hosting information sessions in November to offer stakeholders the opportunity to review the proposed policies and provide additional feedback. Staff will spend the beginning of 2020 reviewing comments, prior to advancing the final Plan to the City Planning Commission.

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