

**RESOLUTION**  
**THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**PROJECT NO. R2016-000348-(5)**  
**ADVANCE PLANNING NO. 2016000640**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. 2016002556**

**WHEREAS**, the Regional Planning Commission of the County of Los Angeles has conducted a public hearing in the matter of an amendment to Title 22 (Zoning Ordinance) of the Los Angeles County Code ("County Code") relating to the Altadena Community Standards District Update and associated environmental document on July 28, 2016; and

**WHEREAS**, the Regional Planning Commission finds as follows:

1. On February 3, 2016, the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission ("Commission") instructed staff of the Los Angeles County ("County") Department of Regional Planning ("Department") to update the Altadena Community Standards District ("CSD") in order to achieve objectives in residential areas of maintaining the original CSD's intent to provide for light, air and privacy, as well as retaining diverse and eclectic neighborhoods that are safe and peaceful, while making the permitting process less cumbersome and rectifying unintended consequences. Other project objectives for commercial areas include encouraging a diversity of architecture and pedestrian-oriented retail as well as mixed use, increasing visibility of Altadena businesses, encouraging restaurants and outdoor dining, and creating appropriate buffers between commercial and residential properties.
2. The unincorporated community of Altadena is within the Fifth Supervisorial District of the County. This unincorporated area is bordered by the City of Pasadena on the west, south, and east, and the Angeles National Forest and Antelope Valley planning area to the north.

Altadena is a unique community located at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and includes large lots and more urbanized areas comprised of primarily low to medium-density residential with some commercial and few industrial zones. The community contains hillside management areas with slopes greater than 25 percent slope, and areas designated Significant Ecological Area ("SEA").

The Altadena CSD was established on September 4, 1998, with subsequent amendments in 1999, 2001, 2008 and 2010, as a supplemental district to provide a means of implementing development standards that address concerns unique to the community of Altadena.

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3. The project is an update to the Altadena CSD to revise and establish new uses and development standards for future development in residential and commercial zones as well as other amendments. No land use designation or zone changes are proposed as part of the CSD update. The update is applicable only to properties within the boundary of the Altadena CSD area.

For residential areas, the CSD Update includes new development standards for fences, walls and hedges in front yards of properties zoned R-1 (Single-Family Residential) to ensure minimum line of sight for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians for safety. The CSD Update also addresses widely varying front yards by updating how front yards are calculated consistent with community character. Bed and breakfast establishments with three or more guest rooms are included as a new use in the R-1 and R-2 (Two Family Residential) zones with a Conditional Use Permit ("CUP") and development standards including, adequate parking, requiring a property owner or manager on site, and other development standards to protect the residential character of the neighborhoods. Other uses were added as home-based occupations with associated development standards to ensure compatibility with residential character.

For commercial areas, the CSD Update includes revised permitting and development standards, including removing a ban on drive-throughs within a small portion of Altadena and adding a CUP requirement for drive-throughs adjacent to residential uses. The CSD Update includes updated pedestrian friendly design requirements to all new commercial development, including specific requirements where a commercially zoned lot fronts a commercial corridor, increasing the height limit in the Lake Avenue Mixed-Use 'Center', and applying uniform signage standards throughout Altadena. The CSD Update also reduces parking requirements for retail and restaurant uses on legal, non-conforming lots less than 5,000 square feet through a tiered approach, and permits off-site parking within a ¼-mile from the use. The CSD Update will also change the type of required materials, colors, and equipment, and will add more options while reducing the number of required architectural features. Maximum heights and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) are also being updated make the CSD consistent with the Altadena Community Plan.

The CSD update also includes other amendments, including a streamlined and standardized CSD Modification process for certain development standards through a Minor CUP process. The CSD Update also includes updates to the hillside management and historic preservation provisions for consistency with other recently-adopted ordinances as well as other concurrent amendments related to the Minor CUP procedure. These Minor CUP procedure amendments were previously considered by the County Board of Supervisors ("Board"), but are not yet in effect as of the July 28, 2016 Commission hearing.

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4. In 2012, a visioning process was initiated by the County Fifth Supervisorial District in conjunction with County Community Development Commission and the Department, to gather input on the future of Altadena. The Altadena Vision Plan identified a number of characteristics for the community of Altadena, including a diverse, eclectic, unique character; mountain views, access to nature and environmental stewardship; town/district centers with thriving businesses; safe and peaceful neighborhoods; and opportunities for walking and biking. This Vision Plan was intended to set the direction for this CSD Update.
5. The Altadena Town Council (“Town Council”) established the CSD Committee, a sub-committee that developed recommendations for the CSD Update. The CSD Committee is comprised of representatives from various aspects of the community, including residents and business owners along with the Altadena Heritage and Altadena Chamber of Commerce. The CSD Committee developed a number of recommendations addressing residential and commercial issues based on the current needs of Altadena and to implement the Altadena Vision Plan. These recommendations were received by the County after the CSD Committee presented these to the Town Council in December 2014 (commercial) and March 2015 (residential).
6. The original CSD recommendations received by the Department were extensive and detailed. As a result of careful review by the Department and other County staff, and through a series of meetings with the CSD Committee, some of these recommendations were deferred for future review, or were not included or not applicable. The CSD Update reflects the majority of original recommendations that were incorporated into the ordinance amendments.
7. The County General Plan (“General Plan”) was adopted by the Board on October 6, 2015, and emphasizes sustainability through its five guiding principles, which are to employ smart growth; ensure community services and infrastructure are sufficient to accommodate growth; provide the foundation for a strong and diverse economy; promote excellence in environmental resource management; and provide healthy, livable and equitable communities. Through these guiding principles, there are a number of General Plan policies that apply to the CSD Update, including:
  - Encouraging infill and mixed use development, by updates to maximum building height and FAR, which provide consistency with countywide provisions regulating mixed use development;
  - Encouraging patterns of development that promote physical and pedestrian activity, by clarifying and adding standards to encourage pedestrian-friendly design, including visual interaction, pedestrian flow and architectural design features as well as other amenities and permitting off-site parking within a walkable distance;

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- Minimize impacts to noise-sensitive land uses through best practices, by including drive-throughs which are banned in a small portion of Altadena, through permitting and development standards that require setbacks for drive-through areas, establishes specific hours of operation, and through a discretionary CUP process requires site-specific analysis of any environmental impacts on properties adjacent to residential zones; and
  - Incentivize investment in local businesses and older commercial areas, by permitting certain home-based businesses as well as bed and breakfast establishments to support residents while bringing visitors to Altadena, reducing parking requirements for retail and restaurant uses to encourage reuse of existing underutilized structures and revitalize street activity as well as encourage safe neighborhoods.
8. The Altadena Community Plan (“Community Plan”) was adopted by the Board in 1985 as a component of the General Plan, and describes Altadena as a mature community of residences, commercial districts, institutional and public uses. Major objectives of the Community Plan include:
- Preserving the residential character of the community, as well as encouraging limited flexibility to avoid stagnation and lack of property improvements, by adding bed and breakfast establishments, certain home-based occupations and updating fences, walls and other yard standards; and
  - Intensifying, renovating, and revitalizing the commercial and industrial areas, by updating building height and FAR to match Community Plan policies as well as other updates to signage requirements, pedestrian-oriented design, and instituting commercial buffers.
9. In reviewing the CSD Committee recommendations and developing the ordinance, Department staff worked extensively with Current Planning and Zoning Enforcement staff from the Department as well as other County Departments, including Department of Public Works (“Public Works”), Department of Public Health, Department of the Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures, and County Counsel. The CSD Update reflects the ordinance that best meets the desires of the community while limiting any unintended consequences.
10. Outreach for the CSD Update was broad and wide-ranging. The CSD Committee, who were the Department’s key partner in developing the ordinance and understanding the needs of the community, offered recommendations to the Draft CSD, assisted in outreach for specific events, and communicated the current status of the project to their constituents throughout the process. Additionally, the Department hosted an Open House with over 90 estimated participants on June 4, 2016 to present the recommendations and solicit input on the CSD update.

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11. Pursuant to the provisions of Sections 22.60.174 and 22.60.175 of the County Code, the public hearing notice was published in The San Gabriel Valley Tribune on June 27, 2016. Courtesy notices of the CSD Update public hearing were also mailed out to every property owner in Altadena.
12. Comments were received from the public during the Open House as well as online. Open House comments addressed a number of topics, including pedestrian-friendly design, front yard setbacks, fences and hedges, and home-based occupations. Additional public comments received since the release of the CSD Update as proposed to the Commission, include existing hillside management development standards, fences and walls located within and outside any required yard, vacation home rentals, current construction of a supermarket in the community, uses on the ground floor within commercial zones, entrances and windows on street-facing commercial developments, and the CSD modification process. These comments could be generally categorized as clarification, already included, objections, not applicable, or requests for information.
13. An Initial Study was prepared for this project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), and the initial study concluded that this regulatory action will not have a significant effect on the environment. Based on the Initial Study, staff has prepared a Negative Declaration for this project. The Commission finds that the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance will not have a significant effect on the environment pursuant to the CEQA guidelines and the Los Angeles County Environmental Document Procedures and Guidelines.
14. Factors considered in the Initial Study include the CSD Update not changing or conflicting with any General Plan or Community Plan policy. The General Plan includes the Community Climate Action Plan 2020 ("CCAP"), which applies to new construction as well as existing uses within the community. Regarding drive-throughs, currently drive-throughs are permitted throughout Altadena except a small area on Lake Avenue. The CSD Update will remove the ban on drive-throughs in this small area, as well as establish permitting and development standards for any new drive-through throughout Altadena that ensures compatibility, including a CUP process and requirements such as buffering and setbacks of the drive-through area when adjacent to residentially-zoned lots. This amendment also potentially reduces air quality impacts such as greenhouse gas emissions and vehicles mile traveled by allowing uses to establish where retail is in demand within Altadena. The CUP also ensures that site-specific environmental analysis will be conducted, and current regulations require Public Works review for driveway locations. Regarding building heights and FAR, these amendments reflect adopted standards in the Community Plan.

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15. The Commission finds that the CSD Update balances the input from a diverse constituency while striving to maintain the health, safety and welfare of the entire community. The CSD Update addresses many areas, including difficult and sensitive issues such as front yard fences, walls and hedges; and commercial pedestrian-oriented design. The CSD Update incorporates local development standards which reflect the community's interest and the best interest of the County.
16. The Commission finds that the CSD Update meets the need to address conditions specific to the community of Altadena. For many years, the development pattern within Altadena has resulted in numerous over-height fences and hedges that may not ensure the safety of vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians. The CSD Update includes revised standards with considerable consultation with Public Works, and reflects the minimum standards necessary for safety. Modification of these minimum standards must further demonstrate that line of sight needs specific to that property are maintained for safety. The CSD Update also includes residential uses that allow for some flexibility for homeowners while incorporating appropriate permitting and development standards to ensure neighborhood compatibility. Home-based occupations with associated development standards are added to the R-1 zone, and bed and breakfast establishments are added to the R-1 and R-2 zones with a CUP and development standards. The CSD Update will also remove the ban on drive-throughs in a small portion of Altadena, and add permitting and development standards for all new drive-throughs to ensure compatibility.
17. The Commission finds that the revised development standards will appropriately address the unique character of Altadena. This includes certain residential neighborhoods where front yard setbacks vary widely within the block, and in such cases where modification is necessary that the CSD Modification process ensures neighbor notification and decisions based on the merits of the request. In commercial areas, the revised development standards include signage, pedestrian-friendly design, architectural features, setbacks, and visual interest, to ensure that Altadena's commercial areas are well designed, community-oriented and higher quality built environment while safeguarding sensitive residential uses.
18. The Commission finds that the CSD Update streamlines the process and balances certainty with community input for procedures outlined in the CSD. The CSD Modification is revised to standardize the procedure for applicants, and reduces the burden for homeowners from the current requirement for a CUP. The CSD Modification also ensures that neighbors and the Town Council may provide input on modifications while the decision for each request is based on its merits.

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For CSD Modifications regarding fences and walls, additional studies are required to ensure that line of sight is maintained for safety.

19. The Commission finds that the CSD update is consistent and implements the goals and policies of the adopted General Plan, Community Plan, and the Altadena Vision Document, in a manner which protects the health, safety and general welfare of the community.
20. The location of the documents and other materials constituting the record of proceedings upon which the Commission's decision is based in this matter is at the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, Hall of Records, 320 West Temple Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012. The custodian of such documents and materials shall be the Section Head of the Community Studies North Section, Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the Regional Planning Commission recommends to the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles as follows:

1. That the Board certify completion of and adopt the attached Negative Declaration and find that the proposed amendments to Title 22 will not have a significant effect on the environment;
2. That the Board hold a public hearing to consider the proposed amendment to Title 22 (Zoning Ordinance) of the Los Angeles County Code, to amend the Altadena Community Standards District and associated map; and
3. That the Board adopt an ordinance containing amendments to Title 22 recommended by this Commission, and determine that the amendments are compatible with and supportive of the goals and policies of the Los Angeles County General Plan and Altadena Community Plan.

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I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by a majority of the voting members of the Regional Planning Commission of the County of Los Angeles on July 28, 2016.

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Rosie O. Ruiz, Secretary  
County of Los Angeles  
Regional Planning Commission

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

MARY C. WICKHAM  
County Counsel

By

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JILL M. JONES  
Senior Deputy County Counsel

VOTE:

Concurring:

Dissenting:

Abstaining:

Absent:

Action Date: July 28, 2016

SMT:dm:rdm  
July 28, 2016