REPORT TO THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: July 18, 2019
MEETING DATE: July 31, 2019
AGENDA ITEM: 6
PROJECT NUMBER: 2019-001930-(1)
PROJECT NAME: East Los Angeles Third Street Form-Based Code Amendment
PLAN NUMBER(S): ADV RPPL2019003487
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 1
PROJECT LOCATION: East Los Angeles
PROJECT PLANNER: James Drevno, Regional Planner
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RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Regional Planning staff (“Staff”) recommends the Regional Planning Commission ADOPT the resolution recommending approval of the East Los Angeles Third Street Form-Based Code Amendment (Project No. 2019-001930-(1), Advance Planning No. RPPL2019003487) to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

Staff recommends the following motion:

I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AND FIND THAT THE PROJECT IS CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT PURSUANT TO STATE AND LOCAL CEQA GUIDELINES.

I ALSO MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT THE ATTACHED RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF THE EAST LOS ANGELES THIRD STREET FORM-BASED CODE AMENDMENT (PROJECT NO. 2019-001930-(1), ADVANCE PLANNING NO. RPPL2019003487) TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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A. Project

The East Los Angeles Third Street Form-Based Code Amendment ("Project") amends the existing East Los Angeles Form-Based Code ("Ordinance"), which is an implementation ordinance of the East Los Angeles Third Street Specific Plan ("Plan"). Both the Plan and Ordinance were originally adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 2014.

The Plan is intended to guide and foster transit-supportive development around four Metro Gold Line stations, as well as stabilize and enhance adjoining residential neighborhoods approximately one-half mile surrounding the stations. Eight distinct transect zones are designated as part of this Plan and related Ordinance, incentivizing a mix of uses and densities around Indiana Station, Maravilla Station, Civic Center Station, and Atlantic Station. In addition to establishing specific land uses and density requirements, these transect zones provide a menu of design standards to provide a variety of building typologies with a cohesive community character. Existing residential neighborhoods in the community are protected through the Low-Medium Density Residential Transect Zone, which covers most of the plan area. The remaining transect zones concentrate development along major commercial corridors throughout the plan area, including Cesar E Chavez Avenue, First Street, and Third Street. Transit stations are located along Third Street, where more transit oriented transect zones are concentrated. The Ordinance implements the Plan through the designation of transect zones, and their respective design, land use, and density standards.

Since the adoption of the Ordinance, Department staff have proposed several adjustments to the Ordinance in order to correct errors and add additional clarifying language to existing standards and administrative procedures. The Project is intended to provide these changes to existing standards in order to make the Ordinance easier to understand, use, and implement. These technical changes are located throughout the existing Ordinance consists of the following:

- **Typographical Corrections**
  Several typographical errors were present in the Ordinance as it was adopted in 2014. The Project proposes corrections to these typographical errors.

- **Additional Clarifying Language**
  The Project proposes additional clarifying language to standards and definitions to make them easier to understand and implement. This additional language is also added to make the intent of the Specific Plan clearer and to improve the clarity and readability of the Ordinance.

- **Land Use Type Chart Reorganization**
  The building type and land use chart was updated to bring the existing building form, use, and permit type regulations into one table. These standards, which were located throughout the document are now consolidated into one master table. The
consolidation of building form, use, and permit type into one easily referenced format makes the code easier to use for staff and applicants.

Reference Photos
Additional reference photos, which are intended to make the standards easier to understand and implement, have been added to the Ordinance.

Title 22 Code Reference Updates
The Technical Update (TU) to Title 22 of the Los Angeles County Zoning Code became effective early this year. Instead of relying on a conversion table provided by TU for any Title 22 citations referenced in the specific plan, code references in the entire document have been updated with the TU code sections. This change eliminates the need for a code conversion table.

B. Project Background

The County Board of Supervisors adopted the East Los Angeles Third Street Specific Plan and the implementing ordinance, the East Los Angeles Form-Based Code, on November 12, 2014.

The intent of the Third Street Specific Plan is to guide and foster transit-supportive development around four Metro Gold Line stations, as well as stabilize and enhance adjoining residential neighborhoods. The Ordinance established new development standards and strategies to encourage and support a sustainable, transit-supportive community.

Since the adoption of the Ordinance in 2014, Department staff from Current Planning and Land Use Regulation Divisions have proposed several adjustments to the Ordinance to correct technical errors, add additional clarifying language to existing standards and administrative procedures. These comments were collected since the adoption of the Ordinance and reflect the perspective of numerous staff members that work with the standards, including staff from the field office, zoning permits, and zoning enforcement. This Project was initiated by Departmental staff to amend existing standards according to the list of corrections and comments collected over the years from various users.

PROJECT LOCATION

The unincorporated community of East Los Angeles is located in the First Supervisorial District, in the Metro Planning Area as designated by the General Plan. Located to the east and south of the City of Los Angeles, west of the Cities of Monterey Park and Montebello, and north of the City of Commerce, the community is accessed via I-10, I-710, I-5, and SR-60 freeways.

The Project area is located in the center of East Los Angeles, spanning the width of the community and directly surrounding I-710 and SR-60 freeways. The Metro Gold Line runs through the center of this area.
Specific Plan Area Map (Below):

The East Los Angeles Third Street Plan area consists of eight distinct transect zones. Standards applicable to these transect zones vary from other zone designations in Title 22. Below is a map indicating the location of each transect zone. No adjustments to the boundaries of the Plan area or transect zone boundaries are proposed as a part of this Project.
ANALYSIS

A. Land Use Compatibility

The East Los Angeles Third Street Plan area consists of eight transect zones. Standards applicable to these transect zones vary from other zone designations in Title 22. No adjustments to the boundaries of the Plan area or transect zone boundaries are proposed as a part of this Project. The Project consists of technical changes to existing standards that will not impact the land use intent as devised in the Plan. These changes are intended to increase the usefulness and effectiveness of the Ordinance which is an implementation tool of the Plan. The Project will ensure land use compatibility by making Plan implementation more effective.

B. Neighborhood Impact (Need/Convenience Assessment)

The Project intends to make the existing standards easier to understand and implement, to improve enforcement of the standards, and help realize the aesthetic and pedestrian-oriented development desired by the community. Ambiguous language has been revised to provide additional clarity. Reference photographs have been added to better illustrate the standards. Code references have been updated to improve process efficiency. The overall goal of the Project is to help realize development that supports the intent of the Plan, which was developed in conjunction with community values.
C. Design Compatibility

The Plan Area consists of an entirely built-out urban form at the intersection of two major freeways. The Plan was implemented in 2014 to provide for pedestrian and transit serving development along the Metro Gold Line in East Los Angeles. The Plan established eight transect zones that specify building form and design standards that are intended to result in pedestrian and transit-oriented development. The Ordinance provides a menu of building design components that can be utilized per the standards of each transect zone. The result of this implementation is community design that displays a cohesive character consisting of varied typologies. The Project is a technical amendment to the existing Ordinance, which is an implementation mechanism of the Plan. The Project consists of updates that do not affect the intent of the Plan, and will complement the appropriate implementation of this Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Staff recommends that this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption (Class 5 Exemption, Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the County environmental guidelines. The project is administrative in nature and has no physical effect on the environment. Amendments are proposed in order to correct errors and add additional clarifying language to existing standards and administrative procedures. The Project is intended to provide these changes to existing standards in order to make the Ordinance easier to understand, use, and implement. Therefore, staff recommends that the Regional Planning Commission finds that the project is categorically exempt from CEQA. A Categorical Exemption (Exhibit E – Environmental Determination) was issued for the project.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

A. County Department Comments and Recommendations

The following departments were consulted:

- Department of Public Works
- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Department of Public Health
- Fire Department

Departments of Public Health, Public Works, Fire, and Parks and Recreation issued clearances and had no comments on the project.

B. Project Outreach and Engagement

On March 30, 2019, a community meeting was held to update the community about the proposed technical changes in the Ordinance. The community meeting was held in an open-house style to provide direct and straightforward information to community members about how they would be impacted. Since this community meeting, no substantial changes to the intent of the standards in the Project were made.
C. Public Comments

The Public was notified of the upcoming public hearing via a postcard notice that was sent to 4,402 addresses. The project was also advertised in the East Los Angeles Tribune and La Opinion. Project materials were sent to and displayed at the East Los Angeles Library.

Staff received several phone calls requesting more information about the Project, but has not received any comments indicating support or opposition at the time of report preparation.

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**LIST OF ATTACHED EXHIBITS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXHIBIT</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXHIBIT A</td>
<td>Ordinance</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXHIBIT B</td>
<td>Project Summary Sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXHIBIT C</td>
<td>Draft Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXHIBIT D</td>
<td>GIS Maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXHIBIT E</td>
<td>Environmental Determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXHIBIT F</td>
<td>Agency Correspondence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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