



# Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*



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December 21, 2021

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**PUBLIC HEARING ON THE GREEN ZONES PROGRAM  
PROJECT NO. 2018-003209-(1-5)  
ADVANCE PLANNING CASE NO. RPPL2018004908  
GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. RPPL2020002900  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN NO. RPPL2020002788  
ZONE CHANGE NO. RPPL2021012002  
PROJECT LOCATION: COUNTYWIDE  
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS, 1-5) (3-VOTES)**

**SUBJECT**

The recommended actions are to certify and approve the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and Green Zones Program (Project), which amends Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the Los Angeles County Code (County Code) and the Los Angeles County General Plan (General Plan) to improve the public health and quality of life of residents in unincorporated communities that have been disproportionately and historically impacted by environmental effects.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD, AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING,**

1. Certify that the FEIR and Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations (Environmental Assessment No. RPPL2020002788) (Attachments 7 and 8), have been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the County of Los Angeles (County); find that the Board of Supervisors (Board) has reviewed and considered the information

contained in the FEIR prior to approving the Project, and approve the FEIR, with the recommended revisions for clarity;

2. Indicate its intent to approve the Project (Advance Planning Case No. RPPL2018004908, Plan Amendment Case No. RPPL2020002900, and Zone Change Case No. RPPL202102002), as recommended by the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), and with modifications as proposed by the Department of Regional Planning staff (Staff);
3. Find that the Project is consistent with the goals, policies, and principles of the General Plan; in the interest of public health, safety, and general welfare and in conformity with good zoning practice and consistent with other provisions of the Title 22 Zoning Code; and
4. Instruct County Counsel to prepare the necessary final documents for the Project and bring them back to the Board for their consideration.

### **PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION**

On September 22, 2021, the RPC held a public hearing and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Project. The RPC public hearing proceedings are included as Attachment 9.

### **Project Background**

In December 2015, the Board initiated the Project to address environmental justice in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County (See Attachment 12 – Green Zones Board Motion 2015). Since 2016, the Department of Regional Planning (Department) has worked with various stakeholders and agencies at the local, regional, and statewide level to develop the program framework, which consists of developing the Environmental Justice Screening Method (EJSM) GIS mapping tool, extensive stakeholder engagement and community collaboration, Zoning Code and General Plan amendments, and research on potential funding incentives for small businesses. Pursuant to County Code Section 22.244.020, the Project responds to this Board directive.

Utilizing the EJSM, the Department identified the following unincorporated communities as being historically and disproportionately burdened by polluting sources: Avocado Heights; East Los Angeles; East Rancho Dominguez; Florence-Firestone; South San Jose Hills; Walnut Park; West Athens–Westmont; West Carson; West Rancho Dominguez–Victoria; West Whittier–Los Nietos; and Willowbrook. The Green Zones Ordinance (Ordinance) designates these 11 communities as Green Zone Districts and provides additional permitting requirements and development standards to address land use incompatibilities in these communities. This includes specific standards for new gas

stations and drive-through establishments, in response to a recent Board Motion and the development of Interim Ordinance No. 2021-0031U Extension (Attachment 13). By incorporating the provisions of the Interim Urgency Ordinance, which was adopted by the Board on June 22, 2021, and extended on July 27, 2021, the Ordinance makes these standards permanent.

In addition, the Ordinance also establishes Countywide policies affecting new sensitive uses established adjacent to industrial uses and new recycling and waste management uses. All major components of the Project are outlined in detail below.

### **Key Components of the Project**

The Project includes the following key components:

**1) Green Zone Districts:** The Ordinance will establish 11 unincorporated communities as Green Zone Districts. In these districts, zoning regulations will prohibit certain heavy industrial land uses and implement new permitting requirements and development standards for certain industrial, recycling and solid waste, and vehicle-related uses on properties that are within a 500-foot radius of existing sensitive uses. See Attachment 6 (Maps of Green Zone Districts Communities and Proposed Zone Changes). The new development standards and permitting processes will be retroactive to applicable properties and apply to future developments in the Green Zone Districts. The Ordinance requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and new development standards for certain land uses, including the use of alternative fencing materials; solid wall screening where certain facilities are not enclosed; expanded landscaping buffers between incompatible uses; required paving; lighting; signage; maintenance and operations standards; building height restrictions and screening; storage enclosures; access and vehicle circulation standards; and open space standards. The Ordinance applies a Schedule for Compliance for nonconforming uses to come into compliance within three, five, or seven years of adoption of the Ordinance (based on the type of improvements and permit required, and distance to the nearest sensitive use), or at the time of expiration of an existing CUP.

**2) CUP Requirement for New Gas Stations and Drive-Through Establishments in Green Zone Districts:** The Ordinance includes a new CUP requirement and development standards for new gas (automobile service) stations and drive-through establishments in Green Zone Districts. It also defines “Drive-Through Establishments” countywide. The new development standards address site design and maintenance, buffering techniques and setbacks, wall and trash bin enclosure requirements, and hours of operation.

**3) New Sensitive Uses:** The Ordinance defines “Sensitive Use” countywide. New sensitive uses that locate adjacent to or adjoining existing, legally-established industrial, recycling or solid waste, or vehicle-related uses are subject to development standards,

including landscaped buffers, walls, air filtration, and the placement of windows, balconies, and doors away from the neighboring high-impact use(s).

**4) Recycling and Waste Management Facilities:** The Ordinance establishes new definitions for organic waste and recycling, new permitting processes, and development standards for recycling and solid waste uses countywide. This includes a recategorization of auto dismantling, scrap metal yards, and junk and salvage yards to recycling collection and processing facilities. The Ordinance also establishes organic waste uses in the Zoning Code. A CUP will be required for most primary uses, with some allowance of accessory organic waste processing, such as composting on-site waste up to a maximum tonnage. New development standards will address materials accepted at facilities, building height requirements, storage of materials, walls and fencing, landscaping, facility enclosure, vehicle circulation, paving, signage, lighting, and maintenance.

The Ordinance also requires recycling and solid waste storage enclosures with standards for placement, access, signage, lighting, and maintenance to store, collect, and load waste, recyclable materials, and organic materials generated by all new multifamily development of four or more units, new commercial, and new industrial uses, or expansion of such uses by more than 50% of the existing building area.

**5) Text Amendments to the General Plan, Zone Changes, and General Plan Land Use Policy Map Amendments:** The General Plan amendments ensure consistency with the proposed revisions to the Zoning Code. The text amendments to the General Plan consist of changes to policies, and the addition of new policies to Chapter 3 Guiding Principles; Chapter 6 Land Use Element; Chapter 14 Economic Development Element; and Appendix C Land Use Element Resources. See Attachment 5 (General Plan Amendments),

In addition, the Project includes the rezoning of 27 parcels adjacent to residential uses from Heavy Manufacturing (M-2) to Light Manufacturing (M-1), changing the land-use designation of 14 of those parcels from Heavy Industrial (IH) to Light Industrial (IL) for zoning and land use consistency.

A brief Project Summary is included as Attachment 1. Also see Attachment 4 (Draft Zone Change Ordinance) and Attachment 6 (Green Zone Districts Communities and Proposed Zone Changes).

Staff has prepared an implementation guide as a resource to planners and the public with information regarding the compliance schedule, monitoring, and reporting. This document will be revised regularly as program implementation progresses over time. The current versions of the Green Zones Implementation Guide is included as Attachment 14.

### State law compliance

An important goal of the Project is to update the Zoning Code with definitions of new kinds of Recycling and Waste Management land uses, permitting requirements, and regulations in alignment with State laws, including the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 35), to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the Short-Lived Climate Pollutants: Organic Waste Methane Emissions Reductions of 2016 (Senate Bill 1383) to reduce emissions and divert waste from landfills.

### Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The proposed Project supports the County's Strategic Plan Goal II to "*Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities.*"

Specifically, Policy II.2.3 of this goal aims to "*strengthen the County's capacity to effectively prevent, prepare for and respond to emergent environmental and natural hazards and reduce impacts to disproportionately affected communities.*" The Project develops targeted land use strategies to improve the public health and quality of life of residents in vulnerable communities that have been disproportionately and historically impacted by environmental effects.

Furthermore, Policy II.3.4 aims to "*Increase landfill diversion and recycling programs and infrastructure and inspire the community to reduce, reuse and recycle waste materials.*" With its countywide policies and ordinance component with respect to recycling and waste management, the Project will enhance current permitting requirements to reduce emissions and divert waste from landfills, also bringing County policies into compliance with State laws and regulations.

### FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Adoption of the Project will not result in any significant new costs to the Department or other County departments and agencies.

### FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Pursuant to Section 22.244.040 of the County Code, the Project is consistent with and supportive of the goals, policies, and principles of the General Plan. Specifically, it supports General Plan goals to address environmental justice through land use policies and new regulations, and to improve waste management and diversion from landfills, thereby, reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions through the identification and permitting of new organic waste and recycling uses.

The General Plan, Chapter 3 Guiding Principles, defines environmental justice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national

origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies,” and states the following:

“An environmentally just Los Angeles County is a place where:

1. Environmental risks, hazards, and public service-related environmental services, such as trash hauling and landfills, are distributed equitably without discrimination;
2. Existing and proposed negative environmental impacts are mitigated to the fullest extent to protect the public health, safety, and well-being;
3. Access to environmental investments, benefits, and natural resources are equally distributed; and
4. Information, participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environment-related matters are accessible to all.”

In addition, the Project adds the following text to the General Plan Guiding Principles:

SB 1000 requires that local jurisdictions include an Environmental Justice Element to their General Plan or related goals, policies, and objectives as they relate to disadvantaged communities in other elements of the General Plan. The Project supports the goals of SB 1000 and the implementation of environmental justice throughout the unincorporated areas by identifying communities that disproportionately bear a burden from stationary sources of pollution due to incompatible land uses and better regulating incompatible land uses in close proximity to each other through new Zoning Code definitions, new permitting requirements and development standards.

Additional text amendments to the General Plan are described in the General Plan Amendments with Green Zones Program (Attachment 5).

In addition to the public hearing conducted by the RPC on September 22, 2021, a public hearing before the Board is required pursuant to Section 22.232.040.B.1 of the County Code. Required notice (Attachment 11) has been given pursuant to the procedures and requirements set forth in Sections 22.222.180 and 22.244.030 of the County Code.

Finally, pursuant to Section 22.244.040 of the County Code, approval of this plan amendment, including the revised General Plan policies, the land use and zoning changes, and the Ordinance will meet the following findings:

- 1) This plan amendment is consistent with the principles of the General Plan;
- 2) Approval of the amendment will be in the interest of public health, safety, and general welfare and in conformity with good zoning practice; and
- 3) This amendment is consistent with other provisions of the Title 22 Zoning Code.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION**

A Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) was prepared in compliance with CEQA and County environmental guidelines to assess the environmental impact of the Green Zones Program. In addition, a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was prepared as a supplemental document to the PEIR to assess the potential effects of the project on the health of the communities impacted. An HIA generally provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those potential effects. A case study review was conducted to assess potential impacts from construction and operation as a result of the required new development standards. The HIA determined that health risks and impacts of the Project would be less than the CEQA significance thresholds.

The PEIR determined that the project would result in less than significant impacts related to air quality, biological resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, and utilities and service systems. However, impacts to cultural resources, noise, and tribal cultural resources were determined to be significant and unavoidable, requiring a Statement of Overriding Considerations.

The Project has environmental, economic, and social benefits that outweigh the short-term but unavoidable adverse environmental impacts on ambient noise level and ground-borne vibration, as well as impacts from the potential to encounter previously unrecorded or unknown historical resources, archeological resources, unique paleontological resources, or Tribal Cultural Resources during construction of improvements required by the project; for by-right development, or activities that are subject to ministerial review or statutorily exempt from CEQA. Implementation of the Project supports attainment of State and regional goals related to environmental health, social equity, and environmental justice.

The PEIR concludes that the Project will not result in a physical change to the environment and no additional mitigations will be required. All significant effects on the environment due to approval of the Project have been eliminated or substantially lessened where feasible; there are no feasible project alternatives that would mitigate or substantially lessen the impacts; and any remaining significant effects on the environment found to be unavoidable are acceptable due to the factors described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

The FEIR and Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations are included as Attachments 7 and 8.

## **IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)**

Approval of the Project will not significantly impact County services.

The Honorable Board of Supervisors

December 21, 2021

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Should you have any questions, please contact Erica Gutierrez, Senior Regional Planner, in the General Plan/Transit-Oriented Communities Section at (213) 974-6316, or [egutierrez@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:egutierrez@planning.lacounty.gov).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy J. Bodek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amy" being the most prominent.

Amy J. Bodek, AICP  
Director of Regional Planning

AJB:CC:PLH:TF:EG

Attachments:

1. Project Summary
2. Draft Green Zones Ordinance
3. Summary of Green Zones Ordinance Revisions
4. Draft Zone Change Ordinance
5. General Plan Amendments with Green Zones Program
6. Maps of Green Zone Districts Communities and Proposed Zone Changes
7. Final Environmental Impact Report
8. CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations
9. RPC Hearing Proceedings
10. Final Resolution of the RPC
11. Board Notice of Public Hearing
12. Green Zones Board Motion (2015)
13. Interim Ordinance No. 2021-0031U Extension
14. Green Zones Program Implementation Guide

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Chief Executive Office  
Public Works  
Public Health  
Fire Department