



CITY OF POMONA

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

DATE: June 26, 2019

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Development Services Department, Planning Division

SUBJECT: **COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE TO THE DOWNTOWN POMONA SPECIFIC PLAN**

A comprehensive update to the Downtown Pomona Specific Plan (SPA 6409-2016) and related updates to the Pomona Corridors Specific Plan (SPA 12106-2019) and Pomona Zoning Ordinance (ZONE 12104-2019).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Division recommends the Planning Commission adopt the attached PC Resolutions recommending City Council approval of the comprehensive update to the Downtown Pomona Specific Plan (SPA 6409-2016) and related updates to the Pomona Corridors Specific Plan (SPA 12106-2019) and Pomona Zoning Ordinance (ZONE 12104-2019), as defined in the draft resolution (**Attachment 1**) and related exhibits (**Attachment 2**).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND

The Downtown Pomona Specific Plan ("DPSP") was first adopted in 1994 and has had several targeted updates since its initial adoption, however the Plan remained in need of a complete update. In 2016, the Planning Division seized an opportunity to pursue grant funding to update the DPSP. The City was awarded a grant from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority ("Metro Los Angeles") in the amount of \$220,000 to create a regulatory environment supportive of transit-oriented development ("TOD") around station areas and adjacent transit corridors in Downtown Pomona ("Downtown"). The Planning Division selected a consulting firm, RRM Design, to draft the comprehensive update ("Plan update"). Beginning in 2017, RRM Design conducted research, including stakeholder interviews and community forums, and delivered a draft of the Plan update in June 2018. Due to significant turnover in staffing, the Planning Division initiated a draft review six months later in December 2018. As the grant agreement with Metro Los Angeles was set to expire at the end of 2018, a six-month extension request was submitted and approved, giving the Planning Division until July 2019 to finalize the Plan update. To streamline this process, the following four key priorities for the Plan update adoption were established:

1. Reconcile Downtown Pomona Specific Plan boundaries with the Pomona Corridors Specific Plan
2. Implement the 2014 City of Pomona General Plan goals and policies
3. Achieve Metro's TOD goals
4. Streamline the DPSP as a document and the development review process

ANALYSIS

GOAL #1: Reconciling Boundaries

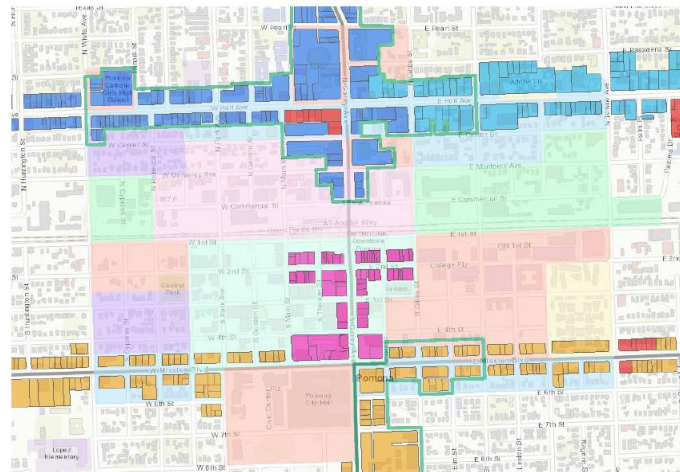
Cleaning Up Dual Zoning

The Pomona Corridors Specific Plan ("PCSP") was adopted in March 2014, affecting parcels along Holt Boulevard, Garey Avenue, and Mission Boulevard, which historically were included in the DPSP. As part of that action, a cleanup was approved to reconcile boundaries between these two plans. However, as the approval only identified rough boundaries, a parcel level cleanup has not been conducted. This has left parcels along these corridors with dual zoning, and in some cases split zoning, which has led to code applicability challenges for entitlement and design review. Moreover, several parcels on the edges of the PCSP remain entirely within the DPSP but are non-contiguous with the rest of Downtown. The Plan update will establish parcel level boundaries (**Attachment 2, Exhibits A-C**) to clarify code applicability and eliminate non-contiguous Downtown parcels.

Establishing Complementary Boundaries

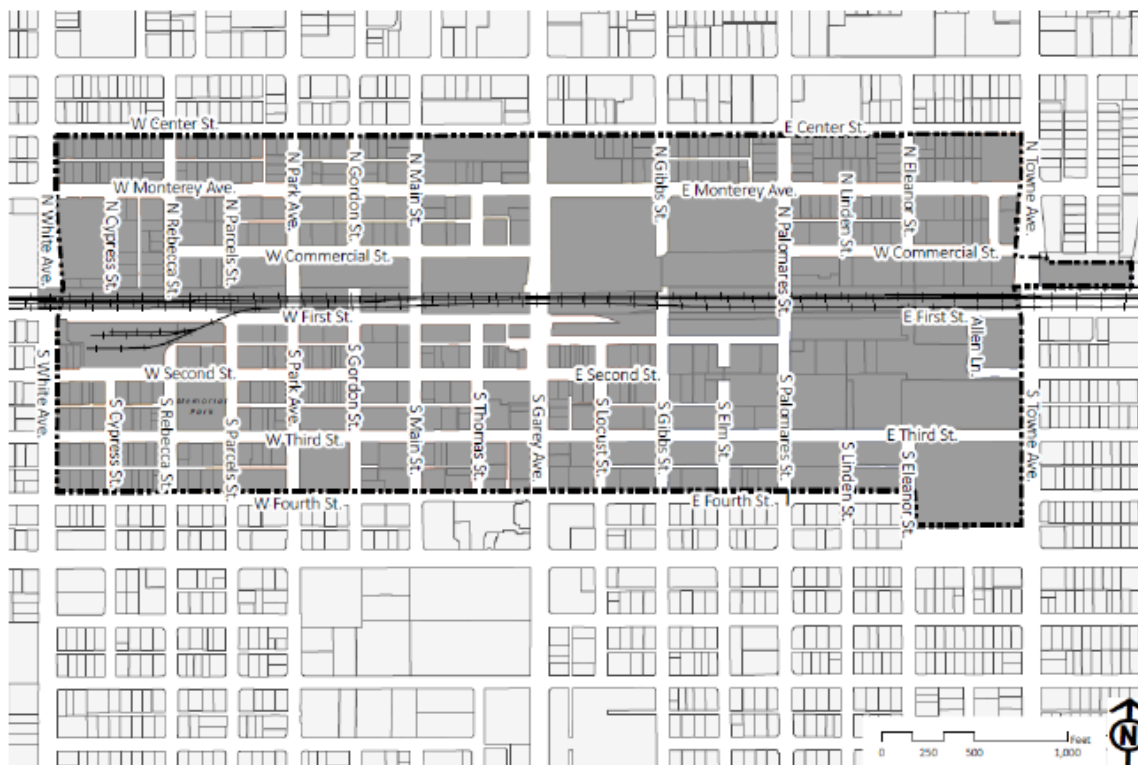
When adopted, the PCSP included multiple parcels along Garey Avenue identified in either the "Downtown Gateway" or "Downtown Core" segment. This includes land use classifications, development standards, and public right-of-way improvement recommendations. In the "Downtown Core" segment, land use classifications defer to the DPSP, further blurring the lines of the two plans (**Figure 1**). This has effectively minimized the reach of the DPSP along Garey Avenue and diminished boundary identities and land use classifications for either plan in Downtown.

Figure 1. Conflicting PCSP & DPSP boundaries diminish each Plan's identity



Furthermore, the land use classifications of “Downtown Core” segment in the PCSP will be updated and will no longer rely on the DPSP. Parcels south of Mission Boulevard currently zoned in the DPSP will change to the “Midtown Segment” of the PCSP, with updated land use classifications to mirror the classifications currently allowed (**Attachment 2, Exhibit B2**). In effect, the PCSP running north along Garey Avenue will pause at Fourth Street and resume at Center Street, leaving the DPSP along this stretch of Garey Avenue uninterrupted.

Figure 2. Proposed DPSP Boundary establishes a clear geographic Downtown identity



Expanding Open Space

The proposed boundary adjustment also necessitated a re-designation of several parcels particularly at Civic Center Plaza and at two City parks within the existing DPSP (Memorial Park and Centennial Park) that are currently zoned mixed-use designations to prevent the creation of any new non-contiguous parcels. To prevent the creation of any new non-contiguous parcels, and to preserve the land development potential of these two City parks, the zoning of these parcels will change to Open Space in the Pomona Zoning Ordinance (**Attachment 2, Exhibit C**). This change of zone will officially add Memorial and Centennial Parks into the Open Space acreage total of the City, and will shift the identity of Civic Center Plaza from a Downtown destination to a public park that complements both the PCSP and DPSP. This action is consistent with Section .38-1 of the Pomona Municipal Code, which technically identifies Civic Center Plaza as a public park.

GOAL #2: Implementing the General Plan

Updating Transect Density

The Pomona General Plan (“General Plan”) was adopted in 2014. In the Land Use chapter, new density thresholds were established citywide, using the theory of transect zoning, which establishes development potential based on geographical context and street patterns. The highest densities are proposed for Downtown, however the DPSP includes density thresholds that are significantly less than what the General Plan has contemplated, creating an inconsistency in development potential (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3. Proposed densities in the General Plan that correlate to DPSP boundaries

	T6-A DOWNTOWN CORE	T6-B TYPICAL	T5 TYPICAL	T4-A TYPICAL
Height	2 floors min. 12 floors max.	2 floors or 24 ft. min. 6 floors max.	6 floors max.	4 floors max.
Housing Density	50 du/ac min. over 100 du/ac max.	20 du/ac min. 100 du/ac max.	80 du/ac max.	70 du/ac max.

In some cases, existing DPSP districts, such as Mixed-Use Central Business District, or Mixed-Use High Density Residential, need only an adjustment in density, as the intent of these districts is still consistent with the General Plan and transect. In other cases, such as Residential Single-Family, or Mixed-Use Light Industrial, the intent and densities of these DPSP districts are irreparably inconsistent with the General Plan and transect, and will need to be eliminated entirely. The proposed Plan streamlines the existing districts into four districts, as illustrated in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4. Proposed DPSP Districts



In addition to the transect provisions of the General Plan, the Housing Element of the City of Pomona identified a portion of the existing Downtown Pomona Specific Plan as a transit-oriented district, which could accommodate additional growth in housing units (**Attachment 2, Exhibit D**). To be certain that such growth could be achieved, the Housing Element included an amendment to establish a minimum density of 40 units per acre for this area. When the transit-oriented district was first identified, it did not include the aforementioned single-family and mixed-use light industrial districts. However, the proposed Plan densities, and the elimination of low-density districts, which are consistent with the General Plan and transect, effectively increase the boundary of the transit-oriented district to be the entirety of the DPSP. Therefore, the Plan update expands upon the intent of the Housing Element update by establishing a minimum density of 40 units per acre in each of the four DPSP districts.

Expanding Arts Colony

Downtown Pomona has a long history of supporting artists and the arts. A major impetus for the establishment of the DPSP in 1994 was to formalize this support through land use permissions and design standards. Such permissions primarily focused on the core of Downtown, in the Mixed-Use Central Business District, which includes the historic Second Street Antique Row and Arts Colony. The General Plan built upon this vision by explicitly creating policies and goals to support the arts in Downtown (**Figure 5**). The Plan update intends to implement this vision through an expansion of the Arts Colony to include the entire DPSP, with by-right permissions for many art-related uses in all four districts, and a streamlined administrative review for more intense art-related uses, such as cultural institutions or heavy-equipment studios. Moreover, as discussed in **Goal 3: Achieving Metro's TOD Goals**, the Plan update establishes a new incentive for developers to provide affordable artist live/work lofts in exchange for concessions on parking requirements, and

establishes a new Placemaking chapter, which calls for the implementation of the Art in Public Places Program, and the promotion of public art and the cultural arts across Downtown.

Figure 5. *Selected General Plan policies related to arts in Downtown*

Policy #	Policy
6E.P3	Permit a range of development types in the Downtown annex areas that support the creation of incubator space and districts of arts and innovation
6F.P22	Permit a range of development types in the eastern Downtown annex area that support the creation of incubator space, and districts of arts and innovation

Refining Design Standards

The General Plan added policies and goals to support improved standards for architectural design and site design citywide (**Figure 6**). The DPSP does not contain any mandates for design, instead relying on design guidelines that are optional and encouraged during plan review. To implement these General Plan design goals, the Plan update brings forward new mandatory urban form standards pertaining to building length, building articulation, street frontage, window transparency, and site pedestrian circulation. In addition, the design guidelines have been overhauled with new guidelines that encourage innovative building materials and encourages public art on blank walls. Additional policy provisions have been added that encourage the Planning Division to explore the feasibility of architectural design incentives in the future to protect historic and iconic building frontages in Downtown.

Figure 6. *Selected General Plan policies related to design in Downtown*

Policy #	Policy
7F.P4	Establish an appropriate relationship between public space and private development with building entrances oriented towards streets, utilizing shopfronts, porches, patios, or outdoor spaces that overlook or interact with front yards or sidewalks.
7F.P5	Promote developments that fit with the scale and character of their district or neighborhood by: -Utilizing varied massing, roof types, and floor plans. -Articulating building facades with distinctive architectural features such as windows, doors, chimneys and other such elements. Use articulation of building massing to reveal internal organization of building elements such as stairs and elevators, atriums, internal gathering spaces and major interior spaces.
7F.P6	Provide visual interest and express the human scale in

	building design with: -Architectural building base treatments -Varied building colors, materials, and site landscaping treatments -Pedestrian-scale signage and ornamental lighting
7F.P9	Maintain an open relationship between buildings and street edge, avoiding fencing and significant landscape barriers, except for street trees and sidewalk plantings. Along major collectors and corridors, allow fencing, low walls, and/or landscaping that maintains visibility and visual interaction between residences and the street edge. Limit materials to wood, stone, decorative metal, or low hedges.

Revisiting Land Use Permissions

The General Plan envisions Downtown as a destination that supports a mix of uses, including retail, residential, artist studios, live/work lofts, and educational institutions and offices (**Figure 7**). In addition, proximity to the Downtown Pomona Metrolink Station encourages walkable neighborhoods which require street activation and active storefronts. This intent is implemented in the revised land use permissions in the Plan update. Land uses are classified into one of four permission types: by-right (“P”), by-right to the rear of tenant spaces or on second or higher floors (“P2”), by minor conditional use permit (“M”), and by conditional use permit (“C”). Use permissions were analyzed against their potential to activate Downtown with pedestrian activity and to encourage arts, entertainment, restaurants, and retail. For example, on-sale alcohol uses, such as restaurants serving beer and wine, will now require a minor conditional use permit without a public hearing, while off-sale permits, such as liquor stores, still require a conditional use permit and public hearing. Indoor sports and recreation spaces are permitted by-right, and cultural and arts related institutions and spaces can be processed as a minor conditional use permit. Such changes are intended to streamline the development process and encourage investment in Downtown.

Figure 7. *Selected General Plan policies related to land uses in Downtown*

Policy #	Policy
+	Make Downtown the centerpiece of the economic development strategy. Focus on increasing housing and employment opportunities to generate activity increases throughout the Downtown area.
7B.P25	Develop a strong concentration of mixed use activities Downtown as a major economic draw for residents and visitors.

GOAL #3: Achieving Metro's Transit-Oriented Development Goals

The Plan update is funded entirely through grant funding by Metro Los Angeles. The intent of the grant award is to encourage transit-oriented developments across Los Angeles County. To facilitate grantees with this process, Metro Los Angeles established a *Transit Supportive Toolkit*, which identifies various ways in which local jurisdictions can enact Specific Plan tools to build transit-oriented developments. The following are examples of such policies.

Placemaking

Borne out of both conversations with Pomona stakeholders and analysis of Metro Los Angeles transit policies, the new Placemaking chapter is intended to offer the community an open door into exploring ways to activate public spaces in Downtown. This includes policies for historic preservation and art in public places; pathways to activate public property and public right-of-way with features such as parklets, temporary pedestrian plazas, street furniture, active alleys, and pop-up music; tree palettes customized to Downtown; wayfinding considerations; improving intersections and crossings; and standards for privately owned public open space. The chapter encourages the City to pursue additional documents to guide placemaking in Downtown, including a Complete Streets manual and adopting a placemaking permit fee and application to facilitate creative uses of the public realm.

More Permissive Parking Standards

The DPSP defers to the Pomona Zoning Ordinance for parking standards. These standards are intended for zoning districts of far less intensity and density, and do not consider adjacency to the Downtown Pomona Metrolink Station. Moreover, Downtown is served by the Vehicle Parking District, which oversees City-owned parking lots. New parking provisions have been added to the Plan update that are in line with transit-oriented development, and provide a more permissive structure that does not overly rely on parking for land uses, and instead considers the ability for multiple modes of transportation to serve these uses, such as light rail, passenger bus, ride share, bicycling, and walking. Moreover, a new provision has been added to grandfather parking requirements for existing buildings up to two stories in the Mixed-Use Central Business District and Mixed-Use Institutional, and waive such standards up to two stories for new development in these districts. The equivalent parking demand generated by such a waiver can be accommodated by the multiple existing City-owned lots managed by the Vehicle Parking District. Parking relief can also be achieved through an applicant-provided parking demand study, certified by a licensed traffic engineer, subject to review and approval of the Development Services Director.

Incentives for Affordable Artist Housing and Public Open Space

As mentioned in **Goal 2: Implementing the General Plan**, the Plan update envisions the entire DPSP boundary to function as the Arts Colony, and to provide for land uses and policies that encourage the cultural arts and artist spaces. In addition, a new incentive has been added to encourage new developers to provide affordable artist housing in Downtown. A developer that

provides at least 25% of their total proposed units as live/work units, meets Pomona Municipal Code live/work requirements, and is rented at fair market value, may receive a 50% reduction in total parking requirements, and 25% reduction in common open space requirements. The incentive is intended to increase the supply of affordable work/live units across all four districts in an effort to address affordability and viability of artist uses in Downtown.

A second incentive has also been added to address public open space in Downtown. All new development is subject to common open space requirements, with 100 square feet of common open space required for every new residential unit proposed. An applicant that provides such open space as “privately owned public open space,” meeting the standards outlined in the Placemaking chapter, may receive a 75% reduction in total common open space requirements. For example, a proposed 100-unit development requires 10,000 square feet of common open space. Utilizing this incentive would bring this requirement down to 2,500 square feet, but would be publicly accessible and function as a community asset that is privately maintained. This incentive is intended to increase the availability of publicly accessible open space such as pocket parks and public plazas in Downtown.

GOAL #4: Streamlining the DPSP as a document and development process

A key component of the Plan update is to ensure that the document is easy to use, accessible, and clear for all stakeholders, including the community, developers, business owners, and City staff. To streamline the provisions of the DPSP, the document has been divided into four chapters: *Introduction, Private Realm, Public Realm, and Implementation*. All requirements that affect private property owners in Downtown are found in the Private Realm chapter, including applicability for new development or significant additions (“Urban Form”) and land use permissions (“Land Use”). All requirements that concern public property or the public right-of-way are contained in the Public Realm chapter, including mobility, placemaking, and infrastructure and utilities.

Another key component of the Plan update is to streamline the development process and establish application processes that are tailored to the type of project proposed. To this end, a new “Development Plan Review” process has been established for all parcels within the DPSP. A Development Plan Review is an application that requires a public hearing at the Development Services Director level, and is currently used in the PCSP. Such a review would only apply to any new construction, significant additions, or major façade changes. All proposed projects that solely concern land use, such as the siting of a new land use or expansion of land uses, would not go through a Development Plan Review, and instead remain governed by either a minor conditional use permit or conditional use permit that requires a public hearing at the Planning Commission.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Pre-Draft Engagement

RRM Design initiated community outreach prior to providing the first draft of the Plan update. This included key stakeholders meetings conducted in January 2017 with Downtown business

owners, educational institutions such as Western University, and land owners. In March 2017, a community workshop was conducted to solicit input on opportunities and constraints that could be addressed in the new plan. Key themes that emerged from this engagement include:

- Economic revitalization and business friendly approaches
- Access, mobility and connectivity
- Cleaner, safer and more welcoming environment
- Address undesirable uses and homelessness
- Community character and beautification
- Mix of commercial, residential and institutional uses
- Importance of arts and education
- Family-orientation and need to accommodate all ages
- Protect historic resources
- Streamlined processes and clear policies

Draft Review and Revisions

In February and March 2019, the Planning Division conducted a series of presentations with the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Cultural Arts Commission to provide an update on the Plan and next steps. Staff also met with Building and Safety, Public Works, and other city departments to ensure the viability and accuracy of Plan update policies and standards. Staff also presented the same update to the Downtown Pomona Owner's Association.

The Planning Division circulated a public draft of the Plan update in May 2019. The draft was made available on the City of Pomona website, promoted on social media, and available at the Planning counter for review. As part of this public review period, Staff conducted an open house in Council Chambers to engage the community on the document, and subsequently discussed the draft with the Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission at its regularly scheduled meetings, and again with the Downtown Pomona Owner's Association.

The final draft recommended for approval incorporates the comments and feedback received during this period.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

According to §15183(a) (Projects Consistent with a Community Plan or Zoning) of the CEQA Guidelines, additional environmental review is not required for projects "which are consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plan, or general plan policies for which an EIR was certified", except as might be necessary to determine whether there are project-specific significant effects. A Finding of Consistency was prepared to conduct this analysis (**Attachment 4**).

This Finding of Consistency evaluates the updated DPSP's consistency with the Final Environmental Impact Report for the City of Pomona General Plan Update. The 2014 Final EIR,

which was certified in March 2014, establishes the City's vision for development of the City through the year 2035. The evaluation determined whether the Plan update would have new or increased severity significant environmental effects beyond those identified in the 2014 Final EIR. The Finding of Consistency has been prepared pursuant to the applicable provisions of §15183 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

The Findings of Consistency concluded that development facilitated by the Plan update would be consistent with the development intensity established by the City's General Plan. Environmental impacts associated with the Plan update would be similar to those anticipated for Downtown in the 2014 General Plan Final EIR and the Plan update would not result in any new or increased severity significant environmental effects beyond those identified in the 2014 Final EIR. Mitigation beyond that identified in the 2014 Final EIR is not required. As such, pursuant to §15183 of the CEQA Guidelines, no additional environmental review or documentation is required for the Plan update under CEQA.

NOTICING

Public noticing was completed as required by Government Code 65091. A hearing for public notice was published on Friday, June 14, 2019 in the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin (**Attachment 5**).

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive update to the Downtown Pomona Specific Plan will reconcile boundaries with the Pomona Corridors Specific Plan, implement the goals and policies of the 2014 Pomona General Plan, achieve the transit-oriented development goals set forth by Metro Los Angeles, and streamline the implementation of the Plan as a document and development process.

Respectfully Submitted:

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Resolution
2. Exhibits A-D
3. Draft Downtown Pomona Specific Plan Update
4. Environmental Findings of Consistency
5. Proof of Publication of Public Hearing Notice