



# PLANNING

Palo Verde Apartments

LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING | QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

P2

PRIORITIZING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

P2

TRACKING LOS ANGELES' HOUSING STOCK

P2

RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE

P3

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS

P4

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

P5

NEW TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

P6

STAFF PROFILE

P8

## HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN REACH

The City's growth strategy has largely focused on infill development around major corridors and transit stations, primarily within commercial, multi-family and some industrial areas. With voter approval of Measure M, the most ambitious mass transit expansion project in Los Angeles County history, the City will be focusing additional housing, jobs and economic activity along these transit nodes.

In addition to the tens of millions in local transportation funding that Measure M will provide annually, the City of Los Angeles will leverage \$1.2B over the next 30 years for affordable housing from Measure HHH, a local bond approved last fall to construct housing units for the homeless.

All of this investment necessitates comprehensive planning, an effort the City is in the process of with updates to the General Plan and Community Plans underway,

in order to provide housing opportunities for Angelenos. These updates will foster the creation of vibrant and complete communities with a mix of uses and housing options.

In the midst of a housing crisis, additional areas will need to be designated for housing to meet the current demand – not only

**THE CITY'S GROWTH STRATEGY HAS LARGELY FOCUSED ON INFILL DEVELOPMENT AROUND MAJOR CORRIDORS AND TRANSIT STATIONS, PRIMARILY WITHIN COMMERCIAL, MULTI-FAMILY AND SOME INDUSTRIAL AREAS.**

more units but also a greater variety of price points that people at all income levels can afford. As a citywide policy document, the General Plan will play a pivotal role in setting the long-range vision for the City. By integrating the housing and growth strategies

of Los Angeles, the City will support economic development, reduce housing costs and enhance quality of life standards.

Over the years, Los Angeles has promoted the preservation of its neighborhood character in



Carver Apartments



Star Apartments



The Six

(Continued on page 3)

Photos courtesy of Skid Row Housing Trust

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE VINCE BERTONI



Los Angeles is rather unique among America's largest cities in that it has experienced growth in population each and every decade since its inception – never a decline. To accommodate that population, the Department is focused on improving housing opportunities for all Angelenos.

We've already begun the hard work of implementing the housing strategies referenced in the City's Housing Element and the Homeless Strategies Report. We've even created a new Housing Unit to facilitate the construction of affordable housing and made headway in moving a number of important housing policies to the forefront of our legislative agenda. Some of those policies included our work around the preservation and creation of affordable housing.

This edition of the Planning Newsletter provides an overview of our housing portfolio. Not only does it highlight how the Department is measuring performance and housing output, it sheds perspective on City policies and housing production.

Through policy initiatives and the entitlement of housing projects, the Department is delivering on a core promise to provide quality housing for all Angelenos.

# PRIORITIZING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Serving the needs of affordable housing developers is an important citywide priority. With passage of Measure HHH, the Department is training staff at the Development Services Centers to better assist affordable housing developers through the planning process.

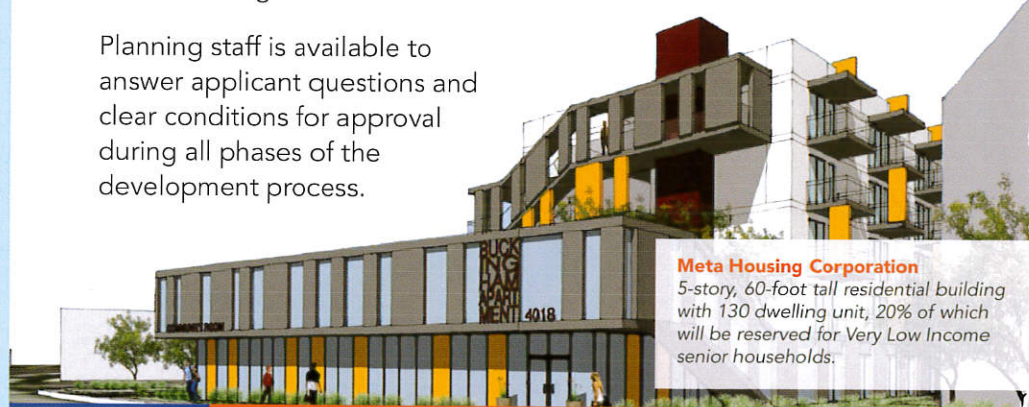
Today, the Department offers applicants prioritized case review and processing through the Department's Priority Housing Project program, established last spring to further the development of the City's affordable housing production. To qualify, projects must set aside at least 20% of rental units or 30% of for-sale units as affordable and consist of 10 or more dwelling units.

Planning staff is available to answer applicant questions and clear conditions for approval during all phases of the development process.



**Mercury Housing Corporation**  
6-story, 68-foot affordable housing project with 48 residential units, 47 of which are set aside for Very Low and Low Income senior households.

With this new program, the Department has showcased a more customer-oriented face to City Planning, while advancing and promoting an equitable mix of housing throughout the City of Los Angeles.



**Meta Housing Corporation**  
5-story, 60-foot tall residential building with 130 dwelling unit, 20% of which will be reserved for Very Low Income senior households.

## Tracking Los Angeles' Housing Stock

In November 2015, the Department launched the Dwelling Unit Tracking System. With this program, the Department can monitor the number of new market-rate versus affordable housing units that are approved on an ongoing basis. Based on the 2016 calendar year, the City of Los Angeles approved 20,280 new dwelling units.

### TOTAL DWELLING UNITS APPROVED

	Multiple-Family		Single-Family		Other	Totals
	Apartments	Condos	Regular	Small Lot		
<b>Affordable</b>	1,666	69	2	13	2	1,752
<b>Market Rate</b>	11,635	3,058	669	922	2,244	18,528
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>						<b>20,280</b>

January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016



The Metro @Hollywood Senior Apartments

## RISING TO THE CHALLENGE GAINING PERSPECTIVE INTO HOUSING

The Department recently advanced a number of housing policies for Council consideration. From proposing new regulations for short-term rentals to instituting stronger design guidelines for small lot homes, these policies are reflective of the City's diverse housing portfolio.

The Housing Element of the General Plan is central to how the City plans for its future. Adopted in 2013, it identifies housing needs and lays out goals, objectives, policies and programs that are at the foundation of the City's strategy to create sustainable, mixed-income neighborhoods. In keeping with those goals, the Department is focused on addressing issues related to affordability – a message reiterated by the electorate when Angelenos cast their vote overwhelmingly in support of Measure HHH. At the same time, the Department is looking more broadly at housing production and preservation to ensure there is an adequate supply of ownership and rental housing affordable for people at all income levels.

Land use policies will play an important role in guiding the location, pattern and design of development – especially, given the limited financial tools and resources available to cities today. The policies highlighted above provide a partial glimpse into the City of Los Angeles, demonstrating how land use and zoning is continually helping the City address its housing needs.



Vermont Avenue Apartments

### Housing Snapshot: Policy Portfolio



#### Small Lot Homes

To institute stronger design standards, the City's existing ordinance was amended to require projects be more compatible and sensitive to the existing neighborhood context.



#### Unapproved Dwelling Unit

To prevent displacement, an ordinance was drafted to provide a path forward for legalizing existing dwelling units in multi-family zones, when certain life/safety and affordability requirements are met.



#### Affordable Housing Linkage Fee

To establish a permanent source of local funding for affordable housing production, an ordinance was prepared requiring fees on new development to bring additional units online.



#### Accessory Dwelling Unit

To provide low-cost housing options for family members, students and the elderly, the City's existing ordinance is being revised, providing greater housing opportunities within existing neighborhoods.



#### Home-Sharing

To protect Los Angeles' housing stock, an ordinance was advanced establishing a regulatory framework to regulate short-term rentals, while still providing certain homeowners with an opportunity to offset some of the cost associated with housing.

### Housing Opportunities *(Continued from page 1)*

balance with new development. This was accomplished by directing growth to transit and job-rich centers along areas of investment in infrastructure. As evident in this Newsletter, the Department is continuing that tradition. Through citywide housing initiatives and policies, an array of housing typologies are being advanced.

# THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS

Today, the City has an updated menu of land use tools to better regulate development within single-family zones. These new zones, commonly referred to as R1 Variations, offer neighborhoods tailored development standards. Some neighborhoods will immediately benefit from the creation of the R1 Variations. Other neighborhoods will have the ability to opt into one of the newly-created residential zones through the Community Plan update process.

Sixteen new zoning configurations in total were created for single-family homes, each governing mass, scale and size. The 16 sub-zones are part of four overarching categories created to afford neighborhoods with greater input on how additions and remodels should be configured. This process allows neighborhoods to select a version of the single-family zone that best suits their specific needs.

For example, a majority of Angelenos in the Mid-City study areas – an area comprised of many single-story Spanish Colonial houses built in the 1930s – have requested the R1R Rear-Mass Variation. The R1R designation promotes additions to the rear of the home and keeps second stories relatively out of sight from the street. Many of those communities also requested a rear garage supplemental zone, requiring that new garages be detached from the home and placed at the rear of the lot to complement the existing pattern and feel of the neighborhood.

In keeping with Los Angeles' longstanding commitment to its residential neighborhoods, the Department has created a new tool in the form of the R1 Variation Zones. Varying in scale and configuration, they uphold the distinguishing characteristics of Los Angeles' single-family neighborhoods – an important component of the City's urban character.

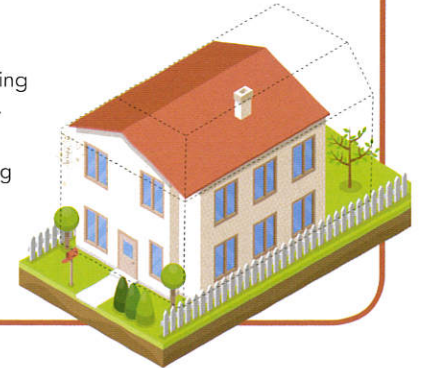
**TODAY, THE CITY HAS AN UPDATED MENU OF LAND USE TOOLS TO BETTER REGULATE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SINGLE-FAMILY ZONES.**

## R1V (R1V1 | R1V2 | R1V3 | R1V4)

### Variable-Mass Variation

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Offers the most flexible building envelope of the new variations.
- The location of bulk is not regulated and the taller building mass may be placed anywhere within the maximum building envelope.



## R1R (R1R1 | R1R2 | R1R3 | R1R4)

### Rear-Mass Variation

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Confines bulk within a rear-loaded maximum building envelope that allows a taller building mass toward the rear of the lot and requires shorter massing at the front.
- Encourages a one-story feel along the street.

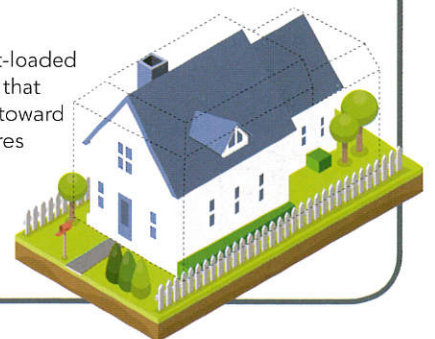


## R1F (R1F1 | R1F2 | R1F3 | R1F4)

### Front-Mass Variation

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Confines bulk within a front-loaded maximum building envelope that allows a taller building mass toward the front of the lot and requires shorter massing at the rear.
- Creates more light and air at the rear of the lot.



## R1H (R1H1 | R1H2 | R1H3 | R1H4)

### Hillside Variation

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Offers a flexible building envelope for hillside areas.
- The location of bulk is not regulated and the taller building mass may be placed anywhere within the maximum building envelope.



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

# COUNCIL ADOPTS ANTI-MANSIONIZATION ORDINANCE

Prior to 2008, regulations in the City's single-family residential zones were more permissive than today. The vast majority of properties were subject to a 3:1 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) – a measurement in planning that defines the allowable usable floor area a building is permitted on a specific site. The height, floor area and yard requirements were the only provisions at that time that addressed building mass and placement.

For decades, this served the City well, since homes were rarely built to the maximum allowable FAR. As land rose in value and many single-family neighborhoods experienced a second wave of development, the limitations of the existing regulations became apparent. By the mid-2000s, the impacts of large-scale homes on aesthetics, natural light and the character of neighborhoods became more relevant as property owners sought to maximize the size of homes they were able to build.

This initiated the adoption of a citywide Baseline Mansionization Ordinance (BMO) in 2008 and Baseline Hillside Ordinance (BHO) in 2011. To address out-of-scale development and potential loss of neighborhood character in single-family zones, new size limitations were established for citywide properties zoned single-family. Those regulations were further refined in March 2017 when Council adopted revisions to BMO and BHO. The recent changes modified the basic rules governing the size and bulk of new homes and limitations on hillside grading.

The Residential Floor Area was also redefined, resulting generally in a reduced housing footprint in single-family zones. For example, the Residential Floor Area Ratio in non-hillside properties in a R1-Zone was reduced to 0.45 regardless of lot size in order to establish more neighborhood sensitive zoning.

Another key amendment to the ordinance included the elimination of a green building bonus provision in all single-family zones. This provision had encouraged the construction of larger homes in exchange for certain energy-efficient designs. In its place, new design features were instituted specifically in the R1-Zone, including regulations governing the building envelope – a term used to define the maximum three-dimensional space on a lot within which a structure can be built.

Taller building mass will now be directed toward the interior of the lot and away from neighboring properties through the established of an angled encroachment plane. A side wall articulation requirement was incorporated as well to prevent long, unbroken building walls from being constructed above a certain height.

Through an extensive outreach process, the City Council adopted a set of development standards in response to community concerns about mansionization. Not only will these standards contribute toward the enhancement of single-family residential neighborhoods, they will also help retain the look and feel of Los Angeles' unique resources.



## NEW TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES


Los Angeles voted in support of Measure JJJ – a City initiative that instituted new labor and affordable housing requirements for housing projects that receive certain planning entitlements. For those projects subject to the initiative, a percentage of units must now be set aside for low-income households to receive approval to build housing – or additional housing – in a zone which otherwise would not have permitted such development.

In addition to instituting these new requirements, Measure JJJ directed the Department to develop a Transit Oriented Communities Affordable Housing Incentive (TOC) Program. The TOC program establishes a tier-based system with varying development bonuses and incentives based on a project's distance from different types of transit. The Program aligns with the City's General Plan by encouraging housing around transit-rich centers to maximize the region's investment in transit infrastructure while promoting housing affordability.

In order to qualify, a project must include at least five or more residential units and be located within a half-mile of a major transit stop. A major transit stop is defined as an existing rail transit station, a rail transit station that is under construction or the intersection of two or more bus routes with peak service levels of 15-minutes or less. Each parcel within a TOC incentive area is determined to be in a specific Tier (1-4) based on the distance from a qualified major transit stop.

Eligible residential and mixed-use development projects are provided incentives corresponding with their Tier. Those incentives include additional FAR, density and/or height for specified projects that set aside a greater amount of onsite affordable housing than is currently required under the City's Density Bonus program. Based on the proposed draft of the TOC Program, a project must dedicate onsite affordable housing totaling at least 8% of the total units at extremely low income, 11% of the total units at very low income or 20% of the total units at low income to qualify for any incentives. In calculating the total amount of affordable units, a developer must also demonstrate that there is no net loss of existing affordable or rent stabilized housing.

*(Continued on the following page)*



**THE TOC PROGRAM ESTABLISHES A TIER-BASED SYSTEM WITH VARYING DEVELOPMENT BONUSES AND INCENTIVES BASED ON A PROJECT'S DISTANCE FROM DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRANSIT.**



Photos courtesy of Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

### New Transit Development (Continued)

In developing the TOC Guidelines, the Department was mindful of existing single and multi-family zones, limiting the allowable density, FAR and height increases in low intensity areas. This was incorporated into the program to ensure that the building envelope, massing and footprint remain compatible with neighborhood character. In total, it is estimated that only 10% of the City's land is eligible to participate in the program.

## TOC Affordable Housing Incentive Area Tiers

### Major Bus Stop

Intersection of 2 bus lines with 15-minute peak headways. Fifteen minute peak headways refer to bus routes with at least one frequency of service interval of 15-minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

**TIER 1:** 750 ft. - 2,640 ft.

**TIER 2:** < 750 ft.

**TIER 3:** N/A

**TIER 4:** N/A



### Bus Rapid Transit and Metrolink Rail Stops

Includes, but is not limited to, Metro Rapid 700 lines, Metro Orange and Silver Lines, Big Blue Rapid lines and the Rapid 6 Culver City bus.

**TIER 1:** 1,500 ft. - 2,640 ft.

**TIER 2:** 750 ft. - 1,500 ft.

**TIER 3:** <750 ft. or <1,500 ft. from intersection of two Bus Rapid Transit Lines.

**TIER 4:** N/A



### Metro Rail Stop

**TIER 1:** N/A

**TIER 2:** 1,500 ft. - 2,640 ft.

**TIER 3:** <1,500 ft.

**TIER 4:** < 750 ft. from the intersection of two Metro rail lines or a Metro rail line and a Bus Rapid Transit Line.



**NEXT  
STEPS**

The guidelines, along with the corresponding list of incentives and eligibility standards, are now available for public review and comment. Prior to the Director of City Planning finalizing the guidelines, the City Planning Commission will hear the matter in May 2017.

## STAFF PROFILE

# ULISES GONZALEZ

Ulises is a City Planning Associate at the Development Services Centers' Housing Services Unit. In his current role, he manages the Dwelling Unit Tracking System which monitors housing production in the City of Los Angeles.



The unit was instituted in November 2015 to provide an analysis of affordable housing production by tracking relevant information, including the associated income levels by dwelling type.

He also oversees the implementation of the Priority Housing Project Program, which provides technical assistance on the Density Bonus Ordinance and manages interdepartmental coordination for affordable housing projects in the development process.

Previously, Ulises served at the Metro Public Counter as a Planning Assistant, working on entitlement case intake, condition clearance and assisting applicants with questions on land use regulations.

Prior to joining the City of Los Angeles, Ulises served as Special Assistant to the Office of the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Ulises holds a Master's Degree in City and Regional Planning from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and a Bachelor's Degree in Geography and Chicana/o Studies with a minor in Geology from UC Santa Barbara.

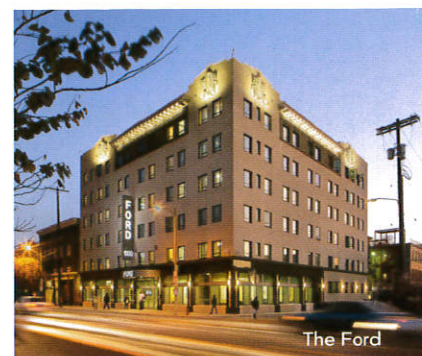
*Photos courtesy of Los Angeles Housing + Community Investment Department*



The Whittier



Pisgah Village



The Ford



New Pershing Apartments



Step Up on Vine

## DEVELOPMENT SERVICES CENTERS

METRO PUBLIC COUNTER	VALLEY PUBLIC COUNTER
201 N. Figueroa St., 4th Fl Los Angeles, CA 90012 (213) 482-7077	6262 Van Nuys Blvd., 2nd Fl Van Nuys, CA 91401 (818) 374-5050

Designed by: Los Angeles Department of City Planning  
Graphic Services Section, Spring 2017

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## DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING: OUR MISSION

To create and implement plans, policies and programs that realize a vision of Los Angeles as a collection of healthy and sustainable neighborhoods, each with a distinct sense of place, based on a foundation of mobility, economic vitality and improved quality of life for all residents.