



Planning Commission Report

Planning Commission Meeting: May 13, 2020

Agenda Item: 8-A

To: Planning Commission

From: Jing Yeo, AICP, City Planning Division Manager

Subject: Resolutions of Intention of the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Monica declaring its intention to consider recommending to the City Council that the Council amend the text of the Downtown Community Plan to authorize Tier 3 housing projects greater than 90,000 square feet to be reviewed through a Development Review Permit and amend Section 9.10.070 of the Zoning Ordinance to establish project requirements for Tier 3 Downtown housing projects greater than 90,000 square feet.

Recommended Action

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolutions declaring its intent to consider recommending to the City Council amendments to the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) to authorize Tier 3 housing projects greater than 90,000 square feet to be reviewed through a Development Review Permit (DRP) instead of a Development Agreement and amend Section 9.10.070 of the Zoning Ordinance to establish project requirements for Tier 3 Downtown housing projects greater than 90,000 square feet.

Discussion

On December 10, 2019, City Council held a study session regarding housing policy in response to State and Regional directives regarding housing production. Among other things, Council directed staff to proceed with efforts to support housing production, particularly 100% affordable housing.

On March 10, 2020, City Council held a public hearing and adopted an Emergency Interim Zoning Ordinance thereby authorizing 100% Affordable Housing projects and housing projects compliant with the Housing Accountability Act to be reviewed through an Administrative Approval process. During the Council's discussion, it was suggested that the requirement of a Development Agreement be eliminated for Tier 3 housing projects in the Downtown. Consistent with Council's efforts to maximize opportunities for housing production, it would be appropriate to consider changes to requirements that would help streamline the review of housing projects.

The Downtown Community Plan (DCP) was adopted by City Council on July 25, 2017. The DCP establishes three application review procedures for projects consisting of Administrative Approvals, Development Review Permits, and Development Agreements. Application review thresholds are based on the project type (housing or all other), Tier level (Tier 1, 2, or 3), and the amount of proposed square footage in a project. Pursuant to Section 9.10.050, Tier 3 housing projects greater than 90,000 square feet require the approval of a Development Agreement, as shown below:

9.10.050 Application Thresholds Table

	Housing Project	All Other Projects
<i>Administrative Approval</i>	Projects up to 75,000 sf	Less than 10,000 sf
<i>Development Review Permit</i>	Tier 2 greater than 75,000 sf	10,000 – 30,000 sf
	Tier 3: between 75,000 - 90,000 sf	
<i>Development Agreement</i>	Tier 3 greater than 90,000 sf	Greater than 30,000 sf

An alternative approach would include reviewing Tier 3 housing projects through a Development Review Permit by expanding the DRP application threshold to include all Tier 3 housing projects greater than 75,000 square feet. In comparison, review through a Development Review Permit offers greater predictability in both review process and requirements for applicants and likely decreasing overall project costs. This change would be intended to encourage the development of larger housing projects as the current requirement of a Development Agreement for projects greater than 90,000 square feet may be viewed as a disincentive for property owners to maximize housing developments. Amendments to Section 9.10.070 of the Zoning Ordinance modifying project requirements for Tier 3 Downtown housing projects greater than 90,000 square feet would need to be updated accordingly.

The attached resolutions represent the formal initiation of the process to consider recommending to the City Council: 1) amend the DCP to potentially eliminate the Development Agreement requirement for Tier 3 housing projects greater than 90,000 square feet; and 2) to amend the text of the Zoning Ordinance to establish project requirements for such projects. These resolutions do not represent the final content of the proposed amendments as draft amendments will be further evaluated and revised based on staff research, Planning Commission and community recommendations, and Council direction on the substantive provisions of the proposed amendments.

Prepared by: Steve Mizokami, Principal Planner

Attachments

- A. Planning Commission Resolution of Intention 20-010, Downtown Community Plan.
- B. Planning Commission Resolution of Intention 20-011, Zoning Ordinance.