

- What prompted the Department of City Planning to prepare Citywide Design Guidelines?

The Citywide Design Guidelines were prompted by the preparation of New Community Plans for several of the City's 35 Community Plan areas. The Citywide Design Guidelines are also an implementation program of the City's Framework Element. In updating the Community Plans the need for Citywide Design Guidelines became apparent as many of the City's 35 Community Plans contained Design Guidelines that were overlapping and applicable to all 35 Community Plan Areas. At present, design guidelines exist in many of the City's adopted Planning documents, such as the Walkability Checklist, many of our adopted Specific Plan areas and Community Design Overlay districts, Community Plans, and the Framework Element of the General Plan. This effort is an attempt to consolidate the common urban design themes addressed in many documents throughout the City and organize them into a single, easy-to-use document. The existing neighborhood-specific guidelines will remain unchanged. However, as New Community Plans are developed, the availability of Citywide Guidelines will allow the new documents to focus on addressing neighborhood-specific design issues.

- To which types of buildings and land uses will the Design Guidelines apply?

The Citywide Design Guidelines are organized in three sections: Residential, Commercial and Industrial; therefore, they will apply to Multi-family Residential, Mixed-Use, Commercial and Industrial building types and land uses. The proposed draft Guidelines will be used only in conjunction with- discretionary cases coming before the City Planning Commission, Area Planning Commissions, Director of Planning or Zoning Administrator. The Guidelines are not rigid requirements, and Findings would be made as to whether or not a project complied with the Guidelines.

- Would compliance with the Design Guidelines be mandatory?

The adoption of Citywide Design Guidelines would elevate the importance of place-making and urban design throughout the City and establish expectations for high-quality design at the early stages of a project. Although not mandatory, the guidelines will help shape the design process and provide an important tool to assist communities, developers, and decision makers to evaluate proposed development projects. The Design Guidelines will be distributed to applicants filing new discretionary approvals, and applicants can submit information as to how a proposal addresses these guidelines.

- Why was a California Environmental Quality Act Negative Declaration prepared for the Design Guidelines?

The Draft Citywide Design Guidelines is a policy document intended to improve the quality of the built environment by including guidelines and considerations which, taken together, will improve project design and allow new developments to better fit in with their local neighborhood character. The Design Guidelines do not promote new development, nor do they



permit a higher density than is otherwise allowed by the Zoning Code. They also do not remove, alter, or supplant any existing review processes, required findings, or zoning overlays. Rather, the Design Guidelines provide a way for decision-makers and community members to consider certain aesthetic and other design considerations which may protect and improve the built or natural environment as part of the existing discretionary approval process.

- Would the Design Guidelines override existing LAMC requirements, zoning or land use?

The Citywide Design Guidelines do not remove, alter, or supplant any existing review processes, required findings, or zoning overlays. They are an additional citywide resource, and will not supersede any requirements of the Municipal Code, including any adopted Specific Plans and Design Overlays. The Design Guidelines would not override CEQA or the General Plan, including Community Plans. Compliance with the Citywide Design Guidelines would not convey any rights or privileges otherwise granted in the Municipal Code or allow discretionary projects to proceed without a CEQA review.

- How will the Design Guidelines interface with existing design guidelines contained in Community Plans, Specific Plans, HPOZs and/or Community Design Overlays?

In areas where neighborhood-specific design guidelines or regulations already exist, those neighborhood-specific requirements will prevail. The Design Guidelines will likely have no impact on existing or proposed Specific Plans, HPOZs or Preservation Plans, Community Design Overlay Districts, and other overlay zones. The Design Guidelines are primarily intended as a resource for those areas of the City currently not covered by a Specific Plan, HPOZ, Community Design overlay, or other overlay zone. Projects in such areas may benefit from the additional guidance of these Citywide Design Guidelines, as no such guidelines are currently in place. Citywide Design Guidelines will for the first time require such projects to consider urban design best practices as part of an application submitted to the Planning Department.

- What is the timeline for the adoption and implementation of the Design Guidelines? When will they be effective?

After a series of public informational meetings, the City Planning Commission may consider the Draft Citywide Design Guidelines and hold a public hearing on this matter at its meeting in mid-October. Planning Staff will update all interested parties with the details of any future meeting or hearing. Once adopted, the Planning Department will distribute the Design Guidelines as part of relevant discretionary applications. A checklist may be created to help proposed projects identify applicable guidelines, and demonstrate how such guidelines are addressed by the project.



- How can I provide input on the Citywide Design Guidelines? When is the deadline for comments?

In order to give the Planning Department sufficient time to review public comments and incorporate feedback into a revised draft, please submit your comments before Monday, September 27, 2010. Comments received after this date, or on the date of the City Planning Commission meeting, will be given directly to the Commission, but may not be received in time to be addressed by the staff prior to the Commission meeting. Comments may be directed to Michelle Sorkin at michelle.sorkin@lacity.org or 213.978.1199.

