

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 24, 2024

TO: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395
Attention: Committee Chair

FROM: Vincent P. Bertoni, AICP, Director of Planning 
LA City Planning

Laura Rubio-Cornejo, General Manager, Department of Transportation 

Keith Mozee, Executive Director and General Manager of Street Services,
Bureau of Street Services  for KM

Carolyn M. Hull, General Manager of Economic & Workforce Development
Department 

SUBJECT: **LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE REPORT BACK TO COUNCIL FILE**
[21-1230-S2](#)

SUMMARY

In response to Council File (CF) 21-1230-S2 this report outlines current programs and potential approaches to create more affordable and sustainable residential and mixed-use opportunities on commercial infill sites, while supporting complete streets and elevating the quality of design and the public realm.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Direct the Department of City Planning to incorporate the Livable Communities Initiative zoning strategies in active rezoning efforts, including Community Plan updates and the Citywide Housing Incentive Program.
2. Develop a cross-departmental Livable Communities Initiative (LCI) Pilot program in 10-15 locations to connect mixed-income housing opportunities in transit-rich corridors with public realm amenities such as wider sidewalks, improved tree canopy, outdoor dining, bicycle infrastructure, transit shelters, and other placemaking strategies that support a holistic vision for sustainable, livable communities. Of the 10-15 locations to be selected in the Pilot program, the report recommends pilot corridors be identified in both high opportunity areas and low resource areas with high density, where public improvements should be prioritized.

The LCI Pilot program will facilitate public engagement across multiple City geographies to identify suitable zoning strategies that encourage housing and corresponding public

realm enhancements. Utilizing an equity framework for identifying candidate locations, the Livable Communities Initiative will build upon active work programs, including the Citywide Housing Incentive Program and Community Plan Program, and evaluate new candidate areas for inclusion.

3. Add funding and position authorities for staffing resources for the key implementing departments:
 - 1) Nine Department of City Planning positions:
 - (1) Senior City Planner, Community Planning Bureau
 - (2) City Planner, Citywide and Community Planning Bureaus
 - (5) City Planning Associate, Citywide Planning and Community Planning Bureaus
 - (1) Management AnalystContractual Services Funding
 - 2) Six Department of Transportation positions:
 - (1) Supervising Transportation Planner I
 - (3) Transportation Planning Associate II
 - (2) Transportation Engineering Associate IIContractual Services Funding
 - 3) Three Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Services positions:
 - (1) One Civil Engineer
 - (1) One Civil Engineering Associate II
 - (1) One Landscape Architectural Associate II
 - 4) Four Economic and Workforce Development Department positions:
 - (1) Principal Project Coordinator (0.5 FTE)
 - (1) Management Analyst (0.5 FTE)
 - (1) Accountant (0.1 FTE)
 - (1) Auditor II (0.1 FTE)Contractual Services Funding

Positions will be funded by the General Fund to initiate a two-year Livable Communities Initiative Pilot work program that will result in Livable Communities plans for 10-15 locations.

4. Direct City Planning to pursue outside funding sources to supplement contractual services to support a Livable Communities Initiative Pilot program. City Council approval will be necessary for grant acceptance.
5. Direct City Planning, LADOT, Street Services and EWDD to submit joint budget requests for resource needs to advance design development and implementation of the public realm and infrastructure elements identified during the two-year Livable Communities Initiative Pilot.

BACKGROUND

The City's 2021-2029 Housing Element identified the creation of a Livable Communities Initiative (Program 131) directing the City to pursue ways to integrate planning for new housing and mobility and public realm investment.

On September 16, 2022, a City Council motion was introduced by current and former Councilmembers Bonin, Raman, Harris-Dawson, and De Leon, and seconded by Councilmember Krekorian, instructing City Departments to report back within 180 days on a comprehensive placemaking strategy for Livable Communities to link transit-rich areas to housing opportunities, while creating world-class public realm enhancements to improve the quality of Los Angeles' public realm. The motion was referred to several Council Committees including the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM), Housing, Transportation, Economic Development and Jobs, and Budget and Finance before being adopted by the full City Council on December 7, 2022.

With Citywide housing strategies and several Community Plan updates underway or recently completed, there are opportunities to coordinate across departments to consider mobility investments in areas targeted for land use changes, or where community engagement combined with data driven analyses indicate investment needs.

Identifying potential locations of greatest opportunity and need, where housing, mobility, and sustainability goals are interwoven will require a coordinated strategy across multiple city departments to determine how to equitably realize corridor-wide and network-level investments.

This report lays out current programs that address opportunities to expand programs that lead to this type of holistic transportation and land use planning, and recommends a pilot initiative to meet additional gaps. This report also details the staff and consultant resources that would be needed to support the Livable Communities Initiative, to identify areas of greatest need and opportunity and short- and long-term financial strategies for implementing such transportation investments.

DISCUSSION

The Livable Communities Initiative seeks to support more affordable housing typologies on commercial corridors while enhancing the City's public realm. More specifically, the initiative is attempting to enable smaller commercial sites, promote more human-scale development patterns and include strategies that can create more naturally affordable housing such as smaller unit sizes and reduced parking. While promoting housing near transit has been a long-standing strategy of Los Angeles' adopted plans and policies, as well as the 16 Community Plan updates that are currently underway, many of the City's transit-rich corridors would benefit from additional public right-of-way investments along with zoning revisions to support future growth, promote infrastructure for safe walking and bicycling, and encourage the use of public transit, commensurate with anticipated investment in the private realm. This report will look at tools available, inter-departmental partnerships, and programs currently in process that integrate investments in our right-of-way and create healthy, vibrant and more climate-adapted communities.

The Council motion instructed City Planning to consider a number of zoning strategies to encourage mid-scale development; including, but not limited to:

- Waivers or reductions of setback, unit, floor area, and other development standards to more easily permit the redevelopment of smaller commercially zoned lots;
- An inclusionary housing requirement to increase access to affordable housing;
- A minimum density requirement to promote smaller, more naturally affordable multifamily and mixed-use development;
- Provisions to encourage greater lot density such as allowing for micro-units, shared housing, or increasing floor area ratio (FAR) allowances;
- The elimination or reduction of parking minimums in “high quality transit areas” or “transit-rich areas”
- Exclusions and/or mitigations for lots located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ), an identified historic district, or areas designated as open space; and
- Exclusions for Projects that may result in the demolition of buildings subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance or the loss of covenanted affordable units.

There are many ways to effectuate such zoning strategies ranging from more global Citywide zoning approaches to Community Plan Update efforts tailored to smaller geographic areas using carefully calibrated systems of community benefits using base and bonus density, to fine-grained neighborhood-based approaches through zoning overlays. Currently, LA City Planning is engaged in all levels of targeted zoning strategies in geographic areas throughout the City. This report recommends creation of a new Livable Communities Initiative pilot program, building upon the Department of City Planning’s work programs that align with the motion’s stated objectives.

Current Citywide Planning Programs

Many of the strategies requested in the motion are embedded in the 135 implementation programs identified in the City’s 2021-2029 Housing Element of the General Plan - an ambitious Plan to address Los Angeles’ significant housing needs, for the City to provide greater housing access and meet its state housing obligations. The plan includes implementation programs to explore inclusionary zoning (program 126), facilitate micro-units (programs 48, 62, 121), Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH) (program 124) and a Rezoning Program (program 121) to address the City’s housing deficit.

The Rezoning Program proposes an equitable strategy to increase allowances for housing in exchange for affordable housing, particularly in resource-rich neighborhoods, while protecting economically vulnerable and ecologically sensitive communities. It includes a Citywide Housing Incentive Program (CHIP) tentatively slated for Council consideration in Summer 2024, as well as several active Community Plans currently undergoing community engagement and slated for Council consideration in 2024-2026 as well as Transit Neighborhood Plans active and slated for consideration in 2024-2027.

The CHIP will be implemented through zoning code amendments developed simultaneously over a two year period (2023-2025). Incentives will offer density, floor area, height, parking, and other incentives in exchange for providing on-site affordable housing units. Consistent with the direction of the Housing Element Rezoning program, the CHIP will avoid environmentally sensitive communities such as Sea Level Rise areas and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and designated historic resources. The program includes six strategies which were presented during a series of public webinars in March of 2023 and were presented to the Planning and Land Use Management Committee in a verbal report on June 6, 2023 (CF 21-1230). In March of this year, the first draft of the Citywide Housing Incentive Program was released to the public, alongside two other supporting ordinances, the Resident Protections Ordinance and the Housing Element Sites Ordinance. The draft CHIP Ordinance includes updates to the Density Bonus program to align with recent state law changes, building upon the Transit Oriented Communities programs to tailor affordability and serve as the overarching program framework, creating livable walkable corridors in high opportunity and transit rich areas, creating specialized incentives for 100% affordable housing developments, facilitating the construction of lower scale housing typologies adjacent to corridors, and improving processes by expanding ministerial review.

Central to the CHIP and most relevant to the Livable Communities vision is the opportunity corridor strategy, which creates incentives for housing developments along transit-rich corridors in areas identified by the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) as having access to higher opportunities. As described in the January 2023 DCP report on equity indicators and methodologies (CF 21-1230-S3), higher opportunity areas of the City have been shown to support positive economic, educational, and health outcomes for low-income families and children. By focusing new mixed-use and mixed-income housing opportunities along the City's transit-rich corridors, the strategy aims to increase access to jobs and other opportunities and improve the livability of the City's corridors.

In particular, the strategy proposes varied scaled incentives for commercial and residential corridors served by transit. The program will offer tailored incentives for corridors near Major Transit Stops, High Quality Transit Corridors (HQTC) served by buses with a frequency of 15-minutes or less, and Corridors with the frequent bus service of 30-minutes or less. These Opportunity Corridors will be able to access new development incentives, including higher densities, and mid-rise scale floor area ratios, with building massing scaling down, depending on its transit corridor type. Building upon the Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) program framework, unique base incentives for density, floor area, height and parking will be available, as well as a tailored menu for additional incentives such as reductions of setbacks, alternative options to calculate open space requirements and transitional height, and other development standards to streamline the redevelopment of corridor lots. Projects that utilize the pre-vetted menu of base and additional incentives would be eligible for streamlined ministerial review. These new incentives will be accompanied by additional requirements to protect tenants and increase affordable housing access including deeper affordability requirements in higher resource areas, extended covenant lengths and expanded affordable housing replacement and right to return requirements.

Alongside the Opportunity Corridors strategy, the Citywide Adaptive Reuse strategy, currently undergoing public review, will further implement the vision of the Livable Communities Initiative by removing zoning barriers to allow the quick conversion of vacant commercial spaces to housing. The Citywide Adaptive Reuse strategy will enable more properties to take advantage

of existing provisions in the code to help spur the reuse of existing buildings, addressing our housing crisis, climbing commercial vacancy rates, and reducing carbon emissions in the process by utilizing existing resources. The Citywide Adaptive Reuse strategy will help to energize commercial corridors by activating existing, underutilized commercially-zoned properties, while the Opportunity Corridor strategy provides incentives for infill.

Public feedback on the CHIP program has been solicited through a public survey, webinars, office hours, and a concept explorer tool designed to detail the different Citywide Housing Incentive Program concepts and providing ongoing dialog about the program before the draft release later this fall. Through the concept explorer and survey, over 80 unique corridors have been identified by the public as areas where they would like to see more housing. Potential strategies to facilitate corridor development on smaller parcels include:

- Regulating residential density on smaller sites based on FAR and height
- Removing the two unit maximum densities on small multifamily residential sites
- Modifying maximum allowable FAR and heights
- Modifying how public/private open space requirements are calculated
- Allowing for reduced setbacks if an interior courtyard or light well is provided
- Including a minimum density requirement to incentivize the construction of more naturally affordable housing
- Eliminating parking requirements in additional areas beyond a half-mile of a major transit stop in Opportunity Corridors
- Including objective design requirements
- Include procedural reforms to streamline projects that meet livable communities objectives
- Support efforts outside City Planning to streamline development approvals, promote equitable provision of infrastructure costs, reform fees so as not to penalize smaller units, protect legacy businesses, and evaluate the Los Angeles Municipal Code (see discussion of Vertical Shared Access below) and permitting processes to make them more conducive to providing high quality housing

Together with several recently enacted State laws that have removed barriers to creating new housing such as AB 2097 (parking relief in transit-rich areas) and AB 2011 (by-right approval for affordable and mixed-income housing on commercial land), the City's CHIP initiative will further ensure that opportunity corridor projects will be reviewed on a faster timeline, moving away from discretionary reviews and toward a more fast-tracked, by-right process. Through Housing Element implementation programs, new zoning strategies will implement the latest State laws which help to further LCI objectives.

Inclusionary Zoning

As described above, the Livable Communities Initiative aims to provide a more naturally-occurring affordable housing typology, attainable for those at middle and moderate

income levels without a public subsidy. The motion requests that the program consider an inclusionary zoning strategy to ensure deed-restricted affordable units are a part of the Livable Communities program. Requiring affordability to access incentives is at the core of the Department's affordable housing incentive strategies, including the CHIP program and its Opportunity Corridors, the updates to the TOC and Density Bonus programs, as well as the corridor-based incentive programs developed for recent Community Plan Updates through Community Plan Implementation Overlays (CPIOs). The City also assesses an Affordable Housing Linkage Fee on most new development unless it includes a set percentage of affordable housing.

The City Council has recently approved funding to carry out a second Inclusionary Zoning Study to evaluate financial feasibility of a citywide inclusionary zoning policy, and to prepare recommendations for a proposed ordinance (see Council File 18-0315). Pending further direction, the Livable Communities Initiative may be carried out in a variety of contexts and approaches, and will require a financial feasibility study to evaluate affordability options. One of the topics that will be evaluated in the Inclusionary Zoning Study is the feasibility of requiring on site affordability in smaller mixed-use projects. The City is conducting an economic analysis to help inform whether an incentive-based approach or an inclusionary affordable requirement is better suited for smaller projects and determine which approach will result in the best policy outcomes.

Community Plan Program

LA City Planning's Community Plan Program includes 16 active updates to Community Plans (nearly half of the City's 35 Community Plans) and three neighborhood plans. Similar to the Citywide Housing Incentive Programs, Community Plans, which include the recent City Council-adopted Downtown and Hollywood Plans, and next the Boyle Heights and the Harbor Area Community Plans, will have corridors identified for additional capacity with incentive-based zoning to promote housing and jobs in targeted areas around existing and proposed transit infrastructure. In some instances (Downtown and Boyle Heights), the Community Plan update also includes an inclusionary housing mandate. The City's Community Plan program evaluates both zoning conditions and mobility corridors at a finer grain, through multi-year community engagement, culminating with recommended changes in land use, zoning, and mobility designations.

Going forward, as each of the City's new Community Plans are adopted, they will utilize the City's new Zoning Code which includes tailored zoning solutions to support place-based planning strategies for each distinct neighborhood. For example, as appropriate for the urban core of the City, the Downtown Community Plan Area is utilizing Districts from the new Zoning Code with no minimum parking requirements, thoughtful design standards for parking structures that are provided, and pedestrian access standards to enhance walkability. The Downtown Community Plan Area is also applying a District from the new Zoning Code which has no maximum density limit; in this area, density will be limited only by floor area instead. The new Zoning Code offers additional zoning measures that support LCI objectives across multiple geographic areas. For example, the new Zoning Code:

- Stimulates new and emerging industries by broadening allowable uses through new use groups

- Increases neighborhood tree canopy by requiring trees for all types of development, including commercial, industrial and residential
- Allows for a wider range of multi-family housing typologies, at a variety of scales established through objective development standards
- Supports both private and public amenities and flexibility in providing climate-appropriate solutions in buildings by expanding opportunities and establishing standards for balconies, ground floor plazas, and other types of outdoor spaces.
- Provides a wider range of mixed-use districts, allowing for the expansion of areas where housing is allowed
- Increases transparency and predictability of development by folding standards traditionally found in overlays into the base zoning, thereby rendering more projects ministerial so long as they comply with these standards.
- Provides predictable community benefits through a standardized base and bonus floor area incentive program

Planners work with communities during the Community Plan update process to address both housing and job needs and to adopt best practices to enhance building design, update the mobility network classifications of Mobility Plan 2035, and improve the urban fabric. In this way, the Community Plans establish a long-range plan that balances housing and job opportunities, community benefits, process streamlining, mobility connections, and articulates community needs and expectations to ensure that they are being met. While rezoning occurs at the time of Community Plan adoption, future mobility network improvements and placemaking opportunities derived through engagement with neighborhood stakeholders are typically identified for longer-term implementation.

Los Angeles' regional partner, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), through its [Livable Corridors Strategy \(see page 50 of linked report\)](#), has identified corridors in Los Angeles that enhance the connection between transit and land use. As part of the Priority Growth Areas in SCAG's Connect SoCal, the Livable Corridors strategy comprises three components: high-quality bus frequency for transit improvements, increased active transportation through dedicated protected bikeways, and higher density residential and employment at key intersections as land use policies.

LA City Planning has preliminarily identified at least 50 potential corridors for further investment in areas where Community Plans are currently undergoing updates; 16 corridors or street segments in recently adopted Community Plan Areas in South LA and the Harbor areas; and at least 40 corridors or street segments in recently adopted or active Transit Neighborhood Plan (TNP) areas and the Cornfield Arroyo Seco (CASP) Specific Plan which is currently undergoing targeted updates. It will be important to compare SCAG's identified corridors with City of LA identified corridors as there may be areas of overlap. Each of the City-identified corridors and nearby street networks could be a candidate for further investment because they have been identified as areas where rezoning for housing and mixed-use development is likely to occur. LA City Planning recommends further exploration of potential for public realm amenities along these priority corridors and mobility networks through a Pilot Livable Communities Initiative.

In light of the programs detailed above, LA City Planning recommends an approach that builds upon existing Community Planning, Transit-Neighborhood Planning, and Citywide Housing Incentive Program efforts in place and tailoring the LCI work program to work alongside these existing programs. This report recommends leveraging existing programs and adding support staff as the most expedient way to deliver the goals of the LCI. From a community engagement standpoint, existing work programs are continually active and have built constituencies among community stakeholders over a matter of years. The LCI Pilot program presents an opportunity to tap into these active community conversations as a starting point for defining the LCI vision and corridor priorities.

Citywide Programs that Address Design and Housing

Landscape and Site Design Ordinance. LA City Planning's Healthy Building, Healthy Places initiative launched in 2021 in response to the pandemic and the changing ways that we interact with the built and natural environment. The department has recently released a Draft Landscape and Site Design ordinance that will tie in to many of the Livable Communities Initiative objectives for new multifamily residential and non-residential projects. The ordinance will have a significant positive impact in elevating the quality of building and site design by addressing not only design within the private realm but also the building's relationship to the street in a broader community context. Implementation will be handled through a streamlined, entirely ministerial process. The Landscape and Site Design Ordinance will be implemented through a performance-based point system developed as part of the shift to objective design standards in keeping with the 2019 Housing Crisis Act (SB330). The Landscape and Site Design ordinance is expected to advance sustainability and resilience goals, result in more functional and climate adapted outdoor spaces and streets, and promote healthier, more livable communities.

Potential Building Code Amendments to allow Vertical Shared Access. A major barrier identified by LCI to developing smaller sites into housing are building code requirements unique to most American cities that prevent "Vertical Shared Access" (Point Access Blocks) in buildings over three stories. A Vertical Shared Access building allows for additional units per floor as it allows an efficient organization of units around a vertical core consisting of stairs, an elevator or usually both instead of a single, long corridor connecting two points of egress. This is key for smaller parcels, which are common in many commercial and residential areas. The accessibility in single-core buildings also has been found to be important in creating efficient family-sized units. Other benefits include better acoustic privacy, access to light and air, higher quality open space such as balconies and decks, and better accessibility. This reform can help create a missing housing type in between 2-4 unit buildings and larger (30-unit) infill projects.

Governor Newsom recently signed Assembly Bill (AB-835) which requires the State Fire Marshal to research standards for single-exit, single stairway multi-unit residential buildings above three stories and provide a report to the California Building Standards Commission by January 1, 2025. The bill will require this report to address fire and life safety or emergency activities in single-exit, single stairway multi-unit residential buildings above three stories. It will be important for LADBS, LAFD, and Planning to monitor the reforms being proposed to determine how the City will be prepared to implement any potential statewide code amendments locally.

Current Programs and Policies that Improve the Public Realm

As the 2021-2029 Housing Element provides the policy framework for the City's housing strategy, the City's Mobility Plan 2035 provides the guiding vision and policy framework for Citywide mobility networks that could guide a Livable Communities Initiative. There are multiple ways in which the Mobility Plan is implemented, whether initiated by City departments and external agencies, led by community groups or non-profit organizations, or carried out by individual development projects through the provision of public right-of-way improvements.

The Mobility Plan's Enhanced Networks lay out a vision for prioritizing mode-specific transportation improvements (pedestrian and bicycle-enhanced, transit-enhanced, and neighborhood-enhanced networks) across the City. These network improvements are implemented through a range of programs citywide, including but not limited to: Active Transportation Program, Vision Zero, LADOT DASH, the Sidewalk Transit Amenities Program (STAP), Sidewalk Program, Metro's Bus Speed and Reliability Improvements partnership with LADOT, etc. However, with the recent passage of Measure HLA, the Mobility Plan is now an implementation plan that needs to be reflected in the work programs of departments that deliver infrastructure improvements within the public right of way. Through Measure HLA, the City will likely accelerate the implementation of the modal networks identified in the Mobility Plan. Implementation will occur at the time of street repaving or resurfacing. City departments responsible for Measure HLA implementation are currently in the process of identifying key next steps in the identification of streets and corridors to begin this work. This effort also presents an opportunity to align LCI corridors with streets already slated for resurfacing, as discussed further under the **Equitable Selection and Prioritization of Livable Communities Opportunity Areas** section of this report.

Downtown LA and Citywide Mobility Investment Plans (MIP)

LADOT is leading the Downtown Los Angeles Mobility Investment Plan (DTLA MIP). The [DTLA MIP](#) is a comprehensive list of projects and programs developed through a community first engagement process that asked residents and workers of Downtown Los Angeles about their specific mobility barriers and needs. The DTLA MIP builds upon relevant planning efforts, including the [Downtown Los Angeles Community Plan](#), to advance priority transportation projects and programs for DTLA. This list prioritizes inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and healthy growth for DTLA, with a goal of addressing mobility and access gaps.

The City has the opportunity to build upon the DTLA MIP example to more systematically align LADOT- and Department of Public Works-identified capital investments with LA City Planning's Citywide Housing Implementation Program and Community Plan updates. This alignment would ensure that areas of potential rezoning are evaluated for priority transportation investment upgrades that can support existing and future residents and employees, and their demands for mobility options.

LADOT is also currently in the process of developing a citywide short-range transportation investment plan to identify and prioritize citywide transportation needs. With additional staffing and contractual resources, this approach could be leveraged to identify and implement Livable Communities investments.

Zero Emission Areas (ZEAs)

In 2017, Los Angeles signed C40's Green and Healthy Streets Declaration, which includes a commitment to establish a major area of the City as zero-emission by 2030. A zero-emission area (ZEA) seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution by working with the community to transition to zero-emission mobility. A ZEA is a diverse set of mobility interventions that support reduced reliance on vehicles overall and a move towards all trips as zero-emission. Through an internal working group that included the Department of City Planning and Department of Transportation, the City developed a planning guide identifying parts of the City that would be ideal for establishing ZEAs, in part informed by conducive and supportive land-use, and how to phase in ZEAs by 2030. Downtown, Central Hollywood, Westlake MacArthur Park, and Chinatown were identified as ZEAs. Through the LCI Pilot program recommended in this report, there may be opportunities to further develop zero-emissions areas in additional locations that align with LCI goals.

Developer-Required Street Improvements

Highway Dedications and Improvements

The Mobility Plan is also carried out through development-related street improvements, implemented as properties are developed. The authority to require street dedications and improvements is in the Los Angeles Municipal Code's Highway Dedications and Improvements Section (LAMC Section 12.37) as well as the Division of Land Article (LAMC Section 17.05) which applies to subdivisions. While developer-required dedications and improvements are one way to achieve street improvements, there are drawbacks to this approach. Improvements can occur in a piecemeal manner and can take decades to effectuate the type of corridor-level changes envisioned in the Mobility Plan. A separate Council Motion, under Council File 22-1476 is requesting departments to evaluate ways to improve procedures for developer-required street dedications and improvements, and achieve better mobility-oriented results. Highway Dedications and Improvements are implemented primarily by the Bureau of Engineering, as well as by the Department of City Planning through Project Conditions for discretionary projects, incorporating input from the Department of Transportation and the Urban Forestry Division of StreetsLA, as necessary.

The Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program is another tool that aligns new development with transportation improvements. This state grant, administered locally by LAHD, is a competitive state funding program that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by funding compact affordable housing in conjunction with sustainable transportation improvements. It provides funding for affordable housing development and related infrastructure, as well as transportation-related amenities, and programs that encourage residents to walk, bike and use transit. In past years, LAHD has awarded the funding to several development projects in Los Angeles.

Mobility Impact Fees

Another strategy that has been employed to fund enhancements to streets is the assessment of mobility impact fees. This has been implemented in Planning overlays such as the West Los Angeles Transportation and Improvement Specific Plan, Coastal Transportation Corridor Specific Plan, Warner Center Specific Plan, and Ventura/Cahuenga Corridor Specific Plan through the assessment of fees associated with new development. To create a Mobility Fee of this type, expected improvements need to be identified with community input; then the cost of improvements must be evaluated through a Nexus Study. A Nexus Study is an analysis that

illustrates the connection between new development and its impact on city infrastructure and provides a legal justification for the proposed fee level applied to new development projects. Mobility Fees provide a district- or neighborhood-level approach to infrastructure planning and are generally implemented by the Department of Transportation and the Department of City Planning.

City-Initiated Street Improvements

Adopted Streetscape Plans

Streetscape Plans refer to a plan that was approved by the Board of Public Works and/or City Planning Commission, or the City Council. Streetscape Plans are sometimes adopted with Planning overlays and are an implementation method used to improve the aesthetic character of the street and encourage the use of transit and active transportation. Streetscape Plans generally require extensive community engagement to address trade offs such as potential lane reconfiguration, loss of parking, and prioritization of non-vehicular modes. Unlike impact fees, which are collected by the City and then expended on capital programs, streetscape plans can be implemented incrementally as new development occurs. Streetscape Plans guide new development to incorporate improvements in the Streetscape Plan area, such as street trees and parkways, expanded sidewalks, street lighting, street furniture, paving and materials, and require that specific street improvements are implemented by projects of a certain size or threshold.

Grant Funded, City-Initiated Street Improvement Programs

Federal, State, and Regional Grant programs such as US DOT's Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), California's Active Transportation Program (ATP), and the Safe, Clean Water Program provide opportunities for the City to fund the design and construction of street improvement projects that have already been extensively vetted through a community engagement process. The purpose of many of these grant opportunities is to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities through Vision Zero improvements, create neighborhood linkages, and to provide greening opportunities along City streets. Increasingly, grant-funded projects are expected to meet multiple benefits that support the City and State's equity goals.

Examples of grant-funded street improvement programs underway include the Bureau of Engineering-led La Brea Avenue Street Improvements, the Mission Mile Sepulveda Project led by StreetsLA, the Hollywood Blvd. Vision Zero Project led by LADOT, and the Sun Valley Green Infrastructure Project led by LA Sanitation.

The Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities Grant Cycles are providing funds directly to the City to construct transportation/pedestrian improvements around Affordable Housing sites.

Looking ahead at the 2028 Olympic games, grant opportunities are also being pursued or considered to improve corridors that connect to Olympic venues, as there is potential to align neighborhood placemaking and legacy public realm improvements that also align with current Community Planning effort, planning for housing, as well as LCI objectives.

Quick-Build Implementation

The City can introduce changes to the streetscape through the use of temporary materials and restriping of roadway to improve safety or update the onstreet transportation infrastructure. Examples include projects such as LADOT's protected bike lanes on Avalon Boulevard and protected bike lanes and priority bus lanes on corridors such as 5th Street, 6th Street, Olive Street, and Venice Boulevard. LADOT often coordinates with Metro to design and deliver Metro-identified NextGen priority corridors. Such changes often occur in tandem with street resurfacing and upgrades to access ramps, as required by the American Disabilities Act. Quick build approaches allow the City to test certain configurations and iterate before committing to a more time intensive and costly infrastructure, implemented with concrete, planted landscaping, and other more permanent features. While the vision for quick-build implementation improvements is to ultimately transition to having a permanent status, in reality the "temporary" quick-build improvements remain in place longer than anticipated.

Ongoing City-initiated Public Right-of-Way Improvement Programs

In addition to, or in conjunction with, the program described above the City is also engaged in making our streets and sidewalks more accessible to all users through the City's financial obligation under Measure M. The City must meet its obligation to pay 3% of the total cost of new transit investments, such as the Purple Line Segments 2/3 and the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor. In lieu of paying this obligation down through cash transfer to Metro, the City has the option of building out first last mile infrastructure equivalent to 3% of the cost identified per rail line, currently estimated at \$183M. The City is in the process of identifying resource needs to plan, design, implement, and maintain a new First Last Mile program to meet this financial obligation. Examples of qualifying first/last mile investments that would be implemented through this program within the vicinity of Metro rail stations include:

- New or improved sidewalks, access ramps, crosswalks, and pedestrian infrastructure
- Traffic calming, curb extensions, street lighting, street trees and landscaping
- Protected and striped bicycle infrastructure
- Wayfinding signage to key destinations and transit connections

Additionally, the City is actively involved in investing millions of dollars each year as part of the Willits sidewalk accessibility settlement to make the necessary public realm improvements to assure that its pedestrian facilities are readily accessible to individuals with limited mobility.

Future Opportunities and Financing Tools

The Council motion instructed the Economic Workforce Development Department and the City Administrative Office, with the assistance of LA City Planning, Chief Legislative Analyst, and other relevant City departments, to report back on the feasibility of any new regulatory tools, fees, grants, and/or strategies that can help fund substantial improvements along corridors identified by the Livable Communities Initiative.

In addition to mobility fees, streetscape plans and grant opportunities discussed above, Enhanced Infrastructure Finance Districts (EIFDs) are an economic tool increasingly being contemplated as a way to fund capital improvements.

EIFDs are funded by future property tax revenue increment allocations. Revenue from EIFDs may be used to fund infrastructure, affordable housing, and community revitalization improvements. EIFDs and other Tax Increment Financing tools were established by the State Legislature to fill in gaps left behind by the dissolution of the Community Redevelopment Agencies, which once served as the primary agency charged with local revitalization activities.

EIFDs freeze a portion of property tax revenues collected by the City, County, and other taxing entities within a designated project area at a “base level” in the current year. This “base level” amount of property tax revenues is always paid to the General Fund. In the years which succeed the base year, a portion of property tax revenues earned in excess of the base year amount, known as the tax increment, is then allocated to an EIFD District (District) to pay for improvements within the District directly, or to pay back bonds issued against the anticipated TIF revenue. The portion of tax increment that is allocated to the District is usually between 25% and 50%, and the portion of increment that is not allocated to the District is allocated to the General Fund. EIFDs may cover one or more geographic areas and need not be contiguous.

It is anticipated the City’s current adopted EIFD policy will be updated to require County participation in City EIFDs. Without County participation, EIFDs are funded only by tax revenue that is redirected from the General Fund base. However, if the County participates, matching County funds will be pledged as a direct investment in the designated project area.

Only a handful of EIFDs have been established in California and none have been created in the City of Los Angeles to date. The City’s Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) is currently in the process of evaluating the City’s first EIFDs in San Pedro, the Downtown Community Plan Area and in Hollywood. Pending an agreement with the County of Los Angeles, and approval by the City Council, these EIFDs will commit City and County tax increments to specific projects as outlined in an Infrastructure Plan.

The Downtown EIFD could support the DTLA MIP efforts to plan for transportation-supportive infrastructure in Downtown Los Angeles. EWDD and the other departments could pursue EIFDs for individual LCI corridors, but it may be more feasible to explore a single EIFD covering multiple geographies. There is a current discussion within the City family about the efficacy of EIFDs as a tool.

Integration of Transportation and Public Realm Investments with New Housing Opportunities

Identifying potential corridors of greatest opportunity where housing, mobility, and sustainability goals are intertwined will require a coordinated strategy across multiple city departments to determine how to effectively achieve community focused transportation investments. The DTLA MIP plans for transportation investments in the Downtown LA community plan areas to support existing and future residents and workers. This integrated planning approach could be expanded to additional community plan areas, such as Hollywood and Boyle Heights, if provided staff and contractual resources. Additional staff resources would be needed to support LADOT and DPW staff in the planning, engagement, design, and delivery of the planned transportation and sidewalk investments as a result of this integrated land use and transportation planning process.

Potential Funding Opportunities

This report outlines resource needs for staffing and contractual services to begin a Pilot Livable Communities program as soon as Fall 2024. LA City Planning is exploring grant opportunities to supplement the budget recommendation below. In addition to grants, future street improvements can potentially be funded through City Special Funds/General Funds identified as part of the budget process once a comprehensive plan is developed along with a list of projects/improvements, similar to other large public works projects. Through the budget process, Departments may submit a request as part of the annual Capital and Technology Improvement Expenditure Program (CTIEP) which includes proposed capital infrastructure programs for: clean water, municipal facilities, physical plant and technology. Public Right of Way expenditures can fall under Municipal Facilities and Physical Plant programs. The Program covers a rolling five year window and is updated annually. Partial or full funding can be provided through this process as funds are available.

RECOMMENDATION

Developing a Livable Community Pilot Work Program

The Livable Communities motion seeks to address connections between the City's zoning efforts and broader mobility goals. With respect to housing opportunities, there is an opportunity to leverage initiatives already underway such as the Citywide Housing Implementation Program (CHIP), Community Plan updates, and Neighborhood Plans where many of the strategies aimed at streamlining approvals, ensuring mixed-income housing, and exploring a variety of neighborhood housing typologies are already being shaped with community engagement and input. With several Community Plan updates underway or recently completed, LA City Planning recommends focusing on areas targeted for land use changes, or where communities have already identified the need for corridor improvements that would serve to complement land use changes. Similarly, LADOT and Public Works are exploring programs that match mobility priorities with other multi-benefit public realm investments that support walkability, transit-ridership, bicycle infrastructure, urban cooling and stormwater capture.

As a potential path forward, the City Council may wish to explore a Pilot Program for the Livable Communities Initiative. The following represents a recommended initial two-year work program to initiate the Livable Communities Pilot.

Year 1: The process will begin by identifying those corridors where new housing opportunities intersect with high quality public transit and opportunities for meaningful public realm improvements. This stage would involve both community engagement and input from Council offices. Working jointly with City Planning, LADOT and the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA), a list of priority public right-of-way capital improvement locations (ranging in scope from 1/4 mile up to 2 mile segments) could be developed and vetted through the MIP prioritization criteria and the Mobility Plan's Enhanced Networks. Similarly, the MIP prioritization criteria will be informed by areas of greatest housing opportunity and in consideration of pilot corridors in low resource areas where public improvements should be prioritized.

At the end of year 1, the LCI Pilot program could establish a short list of LCI corridors that includes both short-term (5-year horizon) and long-term improvements (10-year horizon). A selection of 10-15 corridors, ranging in size from one quarter mile to two miles in length, would enable the City to test this approach.

Year 2-3: For each LCI corridor identified in the pilot program, LA City Planning will prepare initial plans and zoning ordinances that support affordable housing and transit linkages, and seek community input in coordination with City staff, Council Offices and communities. Public realm plans will be developed interdepartmentally and be of an appropriate level of detail necessary for capital improvement grant applications or funding through impact fee assessments or other funding mechanisms. Street improvement plans and objective design standards for new development will be focused on roadway and sidewalk enhancements that support active transportation, prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety, and promote neighborhood placemaking for each selected pilot corridor. At the end of Year 3, cost estimates for each pilot LCI corridor plan (low- to high- range) will be provided.

During Years 4 through 5, Departments will coordinate to pursue grant funding opportunities or other funding mechanisms to realize corridor improvements, begin preliminary design for more intensive street improvements, and initiate construction of any potential quick-build improvements.

Equitable Selection and Prioritization of Livable Communities Opportunity Areas

With the passage of ballot measure HLA, it will be important to coordinate across departments on the selection and prioritization of corridors, taking into account the Mobility Plan 2035 modal networks and where near-term resurfacing is expected. In the first year of the proposed LCI Pilot program, the selection of Livable Communities project areas will be determined based upon the Mobility Plan and established City equity metrics and indices endorsed by the City Council and relevant City Departments which take into consideration socio-economic and environmental factors to achieve social equity.

While there are ongoing efforts by the Controller's Office and the Bureau of Engineering to develop citywide equity metrics, LADOT has adopted interim guidelines relying upon The Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles' Community Health and Equity Index for its projects, programs, and initiatives. LA City Planning's active Citywide Housing Incentives Policy program draws upon the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) / Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Opportunity Map. If the Livable Community Pilot program is advanced, during its first year, the responsible City Departments will study the above-mentioned equity indicators and tools to take a data-driven approach in prioritizing capital improvements and land use decisions to serve the public good and specifically uplift underserved communities as part of this program.

In January 2022, multiple City Departments entered into a formal Interdepartmental Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Improving Project Planning and Delivery in the Public Right-of-Way which included the Department of City Planning, Department of Transportation, Department of Public Works, and the Department of Water and Power among others. The MOU supports capital improvement projects that ensure safe and reliable access for all, climate action, and equitable project planning and delivery. It is structured to ensure equitable planning

of Capital Improvements and encourage departments to proactively pursue multi-benefit projects that can improve project outcomes and reduce overall costs.

Should the City Council pursue a Livable Communities Initiative Pilot work program, it will be important to ensure an approach that delivers project benefits such as safe and reliable access to transit, climate responsiveness, and opportunities to connect communities, all derived from the PROW Protocols to ensure projects provide the greatest impact. It will therefore be important to rely upon the Interdepartmental MOU and City-established Public Right of Way Protocols in selecting multi-benefit investments equitably to ensure the greatest impact.

Finally, many of the Livable Communities concepts overlap with current or recently completed Planning Department work efforts. This includes the Housing Element Rezoning Program, its CHIP Program and several active Community Plans (Boyle Heights, South San Fernando Valley, West LA, and the Harbor) as well as Transit Neighborhood Plans. There are opportunities to accomplish the goals of the LCI in the most expedient and efficient manner, by leveraging active land use and zoning initiatives.

This report recommends building upon existing zoning work programs that are aiming to achieve the motion's stated objectives to create more streamlined housing opportunities along underutilized commercial corridors, remove barriers to allow a wider range of housing types such as smaller-scale multifamily and mixed-use development, create opportunities for community benefits such as inclusionary affordable housing, and ensure that development supports a thriving, high quality public realm.

Staffing and Resources

In order to successfully establish a Livable Communities Initiative, the City departments responding to this motion recommend an interdepartmental work plan with staff and budget to identify candidate communities and corridors for further study, engage in a community outreach program to determine community needs, design and develop improvement plans for each corridor, and then determine the funding mechanisms available to deliver the improvements consistently and within a reasonable timeframe. This is envisioned as a multi-year program.

LACP has identified the following requests that build upon existing and planned City initiatives:

- Initiation of an LCI work program to begin the identification of communities and potential corridors that align housing opportunities and public improvements.
- LCI Staffing for LACP, Department of Public Works, EWDD, and LADOT to develop, manage, and execute a work program that focuses on identifying holistic transportation and green infrastructure priorities through community engagement, conceptual planning, the development of corridor design alternatives, a priority project list, and identification of funding strategies.

Public realm improvements will include mobility improvements within the roadway (planned by LADOT) and improvements to the sidewalk, ADA access ramps, street trees, street furniture, and street lighting (planned by the Department of Public Works) to create more walkable, bikeable, safer and greener streets.

The following positions are needed to establish a cross-departmental LCI Pilot Program in the City: within LADOT, a minimum of one Supervising Transportation Planner position, three Transportation Planning Associate II and two Transportation Engineer Associate II; within LA City Planning, one Senior City Planner, two City Planners and five City Planning Associates within the Citywide Policy and Community Planning Bureaus and one Management Analyst to oversee administration of contracts; within EWDD, a .5 FTE Principal Project Coordinator and a .5 FTE Management Analyst; and within StreetsLA, one Civil Engineer, one Civil Engineering Associate and one Landscape Architect Associate to identify corridors, seek funding, and design and construct streetscape and landscape elements associated with the LCI work program.

Please see the staffing justification below.

LADCP - Citywide Policy Bureau and Admin Services		
Resource Need	Duties	Costs (Salary and Related Costs)
Senior City Planner (1)	Experienced manager to oversee outreach activities and deliverables for the LCI Pilot Program; coordinate across multiple City Planning teams, including Housing Policy, Mobility Policy, and the Urban Design Studio, as well as with other City departments	Salary: \$163,783 Related Costs: \$167,812 Total \$331,595 per fiscal year
City Planner (2)	Community engagement, placemaking, design and policy expertise, coordinating engagement with DOT, Department of Public Works, EWDD, and other City departments as needed. Manage contractual services and grants.	Salary: \$279,138 Related Costs: \$286,005 Total \$565,143 per fiscal year
City Planning Associates (5)	Support community engagement, prepare design alternatives and standards. Each City Planning Associate will manage community engagement and deliverables for 3-5 LCI corridors.	Salary: \$574,902 Related Costs: \$589,044 Total \$1,163,946 per fiscal year
Management Analyst (1)	Reporting, grant administration, and administrative support	Salary: \$106,304 Related Costs: \$108,919

		Total \$215,224 per fiscal year
DCP Contractual Services	Transportation Consultant, Urban Design Consultant, Economic Consultant, and Environmental Consultant	<p>Total Between \$750,000 and \$1,500,000*</p> <p>*Total contractual services costs will depend upon whether CEQA analysis will be required. A \$490,000 State REAP 2.0 grant request was submitted in 2023 and has been pending approval and execution through SCAG. Should REAP funding become unavailable due to State Budget cuts, it is recommended that City Council allocate funds for contractual services which are essential for completing the Pilot Program.</p>

LADOT		
Supervising Transportation Planner (1)	Oversee TPAs conducting transportation investment planning, design, implementation, community engagement, etc.	Salary: \$131,669 Related Costs: \$121,965 Total \$253,634 per fiscal year
Transportation Planning Associate II (3)	Coordinate transportation investment planning, design, implementation, community engagement, etc.	Salary: \$325,416 Related Costs: \$301,433 Total \$626,849 per fiscal year
Transportation Engineer Associate II (2)	Review transportation investment conceptual plans and pre-design	Salary: \$235,986 Related Costs: \$303,880 Total \$539,866 per fiscal year
LADOT Contractual Services	Transportation Planning Consultant	Total \$600,000

Department of Public Works		
Civil Engineer (1)	Bureau of Street Services Oversee planning, design and coordination of LCI improvements; point of contact for all LCI improvements, assist other agencies with identifying and scoping LCI locations, prioritize and schedule work to meet program milestones.	Salary: \$147,019 Related Costs: \$189,316 Total \$336,335 per fiscal year
Civil Engineering Associate II (1)	Bureau of Street Services Identify improvements required at each LCI locations and coordinate with Urban Forestry, transit amenities, street lighting etc to coordinate design elements	Salary: \$117,993 Related Costs: \$151,940 Total \$269,933 per fiscal year
Landscape Architectural Associate II (1)	Bureau of Street Services Prepare plans, site layouts, contract documents, and assist with community engagement by preparing schematics and renderings.	Salary: \$119,789 Related Costs: \$154,252 Total \$274,041 per fiscal year

Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD)		
.5 FTE Principal Project Coordinator	Manage the study and implementation of an EIFD and other funding mechanisms to fund the Livable Communities Initiative	Salary: \$83,191 Related Costs: \$92,058 Total \$175,249 per fiscal year
.5 FTE Management Analyst	Perform administrative functions related to the study and implementation of an EIFD and other funding mechanisms to fund the Livable Communities Initiative	Salary: \$55,805 Related Costs: \$61,809 Total \$117,614 per fiscal year
.1 FTE Accountant	Perform accounting and grants management functions related to funding the study and implementation of an EIFD and other funding mechanisms to fund the Livable Communities Initiative	Salary: \$8,330 Related Costs: \$9,452 Total \$17,782 per fiscal year

	Initiative	
.1 FTE Auditor II	Review grant documents, transactions, and related financial records to ensure compliance with financial resources secured for the study and implementation of an EIFD and other funding mechanisms to fund the Livable Communities Initiative	Salary: \$9,097 Related Costs: \$10,321 Total \$19,418 per fiscal year
Contractual Services	Economic Consultant. Grant funding may be available, if not, will require direct funding.	Total \$300,000

FISCAL IMPACT

LA City Planning

Source	Category	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	Total
General Fund	Salaries	\$2,275,908	\$2,275,908	\$2,275,908	\$6,827,724
	Consultant	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,500,000
Annual Total		\$2,775,908	\$2,775,908	\$2,775,908	\$8,327,724

Department of Transportation

Source	Category	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	Total
General Fund	Salaries	\$440,242	\$880,483	\$880,483	\$2,201,208
	Consultant	\$0	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$600,000
Annual Total		\$440,242	\$1,180,483	\$1,180,483	\$2,801,208

Department of Public Works - Bureau of Street Services

Source	Category	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	Total
General Fund	Salaries	\$443,117	\$886,233	\$886,233	\$2,215,583
	Consultant	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Annual Total		\$443,117	\$886,233	\$886,233	\$2,215,583
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Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD)

Source	Category	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	Total
General Fund	Salaries	\$330,063	\$330,063	\$165,032	\$825,158
	Consultant	\$50,000	\$200,000	\$50,000	\$300,000
Annual Total		\$380,063	\$530,063	\$215,032	\$1,125,158

CL:ml/vb