

UPLAN Newsletter

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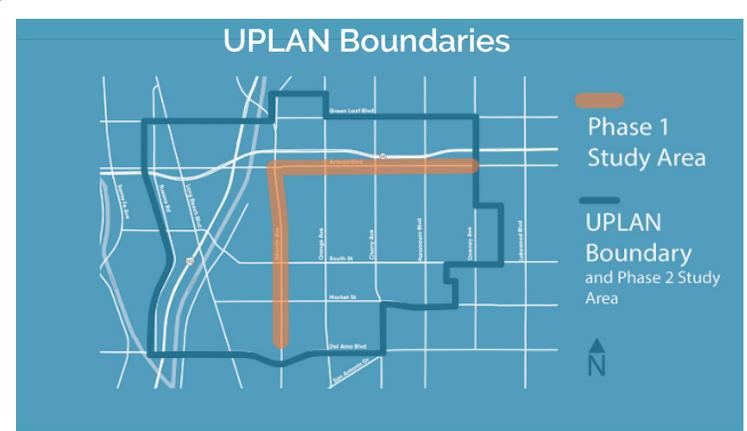
LONG BEACH
DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES

New Zoning Regulations for North Long to be considered by Planning Commission on June 4th

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on June 4th to consider a proposal to rezone commercial properties on Atlantic Avenue and Artesia Boulevard in North Long Beach to new zones that were developed for the area during a multi-year planning and public engagement process. The new zoning regulations will encourage a mix of uses that prioritizes community-serving commercial and institutional uses along these two key corridors as well as multifamily housing.

Among the actions the Planning Commission will consider are amendments to the Long Beach Municipal Code to establish a new Title 22 (Updated Zoning Code) of the Long Beach Municipal Code and 12 new zoning districts that have been developed to implement the City's General Plan Land Use Element Update, which was adopted in 2019. The proposed regulations include zoning districts that have been tailored to the needs and concerns of North Long Beach stakeholders and others that are intended to be applicable to commercial corridors Citywide.

These zoning recommendations are part of the City's Uptown Planning Land Use and Neighborhood Strategy (UPLAN) efforts. UPLAN is a collaborative effort between the City and the North Long Beach community to come up with new land use, housing and transportation strategies to improve quality of life and access to jobs, services, and community resources in North Long Beach.



This zoning update is only for the orange areas shown on the map

UPLAN is a two-phased initiative that is focused on the **90805** zip code. Phase 1 of UPLAN was completed in Spring 2019 with a set of new zoning recommendations for the **Atlantic Ave. and Artesia Blvd.** corridors to better support community priorities. Phase 2 focuses on the rest of the zip code and is expected to conclude in 2021.

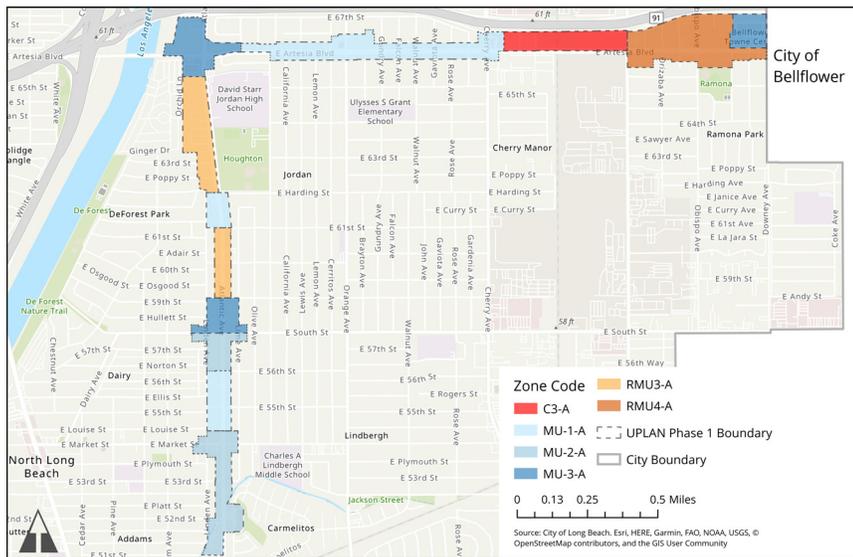
New Zoning Regulations Expected to Facilitate Housing and Activate Vacant Storefronts

The UPLAN zones are expected to encourage new development that combines housing and commercial uses that will improve the overall access by area residents to shopping and services. New housing on these corridors can help address housing shortages and housing affordability concerns, while removing barriers to new businesses can bring new community-serving uses to vacant storefronts. The zoning regulations create incentives for uses that community members said were wanted, such as, grocery stores, medical facilities and sit-down restaurants, and prohibits new uses the community indicated were overconcentrated in the area, such as motels. The proposed regulations were crafted to achieve development that better reflects residents' vision for the community and makes the area more walkable, vibrant, and livable. More information on this process and community feedback can be found on the [UPLAN website](#) .



ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed zoning recommendations establish twelve new zoning districts for the City of Long Beach, six of which will be applied to Atlantic Ave. and Artesia Blvd. Two residential mixed-use zones (RMU-3-A and RMU-4-A) focus primarily on residential uses and only allow limited non-residential uses. Three mixed use zones (MU-1-A, MU-2-A and MU-3-A) allow both residential uses and a range of commercial uses at different building scales and intensities, with taller buildings of up to five stories being permitted at the intersection of major streets and less intense development being permitted in between. The last zone is a commercial zone (C3-A) that only allows commercial uses and prohibits residential uses; this zone is applied in limited locations along the Artesia and Atlantic corridors.



Residential Mixed-Use 3	(RMU-3-A)
Residential Mixed-Use 4	(RMU-4-A)
Mixed-Use 1	(MU-1-A)
Mixed-Use 2	(MU-2-A)
Mixed-Use 3	(MU-3-A)
Commercial 3	(C3-A)

Zoning Focus: Land Uses

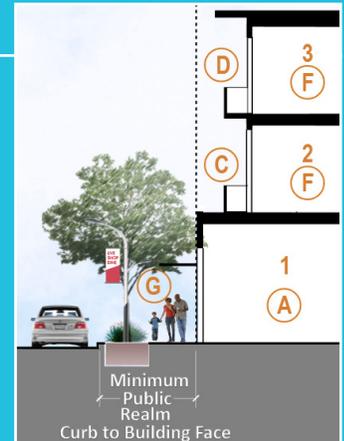
In establishing allowable uses within the proposed zoning districts, the goal is to transform the major corridors into safe, vibrant, and walkable mixed-use environments. Specially tailored for North Long Beach and guided by community input, the proposed zones allow and promote health-focused uses identified by the North Long Beach Community, including grocery stores and educational, community-serving, and institutional uses. Conversely, they prohibit uses that have been deemed incompatible with the goals for the area, such as automobile-oriented uses and motels.





Zoning Focus: Urban Design

A major focus of the new zoning districts is on creative development standards that expand the public realm and foster a more lively, walkable and active environment along these key North Long Beach corridors. The requirement for a minimum building setback that is measured from the curb to the building facade rather than to the property line (as is customary) will allow the required setback to function as an expanded sidewalk, remedying current conditions where there are narrow sidewalks and improving the comfort and safety of pedestrians. This required building setback expands the physical space between the building and the sidewalk so that additional sidewalk, seating, landscaping and other pedestrian amenities can be accommodated over time. The diagram here shows how setbacks are regulated and measured in the new code; in addition to expanded sidewalks, new developments will have additional setback requirements for upper stories of buildings to provide adequate separation from the street. This will help ensure the comfort of both future residents who will occupy the residential units on these corridors as well as existing residents of nearby low-density residential communities. Finally, ground floor requirements for “active” uses, such as retail, community spaces, and dynamic residential designs that use stoops and street-fronting patios will help to ensure that these corridors are vibrant and safer for everyone at all hours.



Zoning Focus: Parking

While parking availability has been raised as a concern in North Long Beach, like many areas of the City, community feedback during UPLAN outreach largely focused on concerns about safety, vacant storefronts and blight caused by empty lots. Additionally, residents highlighted the need for community amenities and essential businesses such as grocery stores, affordable housing, and local jobs. The proposed regulations respond to these concerns, in part, by adjusting parking requirements to remove barriers to investment in the area in the form of new businesses and housing development. Parking is costly to provide, and high parking requirements can make housing more expensive and deter new businesses. The proposed standards directly address community concerns around blight, safety, and lack of amenities by making it easier for new businesses, such as restaurants, fitness centers, and grocery stores, to locate in existing buildings without having to provide additional parking that cannot be accommodated on the site due to the built-out nature of the lots. The standards also make it less expensive to develop new housing of all types to address existing overcrowding and affordability concerns in North Long Beach.

As previously noted, one of the main barriers to activating existing vacant storefronts along Atlantic Ave. and Artesia Blvd. has been the requirement to provide additional parking spaces in order to open a business. Facilitating reuse of existing buildings improves community access to needed goods and services and encourages environmental sustainability and economic vitality by putting existing structures to productive use and allowing residents to meet their basic daily needs within their own neighborhood. In addition to the updated parking standards, UPLAN is focused on improving transportation options throughout North Long Beach by maximizing on-street parking, improving pedestrian and bike infrastructure, and identifying other street improvements that will give residents more options for getting around, beyond driving. Together, the proposed zoning regulations and transportation strategies achieve a number of community priorities for the area, including reducing blight attributable to vacancies and creating walkable, bikable and safe neighborhoods and active streets.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will this affect my house/street/neighborhood?

The proposed project would only change the zoning of properties on the Artesia and Atlantic corridors in North Long Beach, which is defined as the area north of Del Amo Blvd. [Click here](#) for a map of the areas of proposed change. No other areas in North Long Beach will see a change in zoning through this update, and all existing regulations for single-family neighborhoods will remain in place. Once the new zones are adopted and added to the Zoning Code, eligible applicants may request a property be rezoned to one of the new districts which will only be allowable in areas planned for commercial and mixed uses (as indicated by the General Plan Land Use Element PlaceType and Height Map). Areas planned and zoned exclusively for residential uses would not be eligible for such requests.



More broadly, over time, the new districts are expected to help improve walkability, sustainability, and economic resilience along two of the main streets in North Long Beach. The zoning districts will implement the City's new Land Use Element and modernize regulations that are restrictive and outdated and are inhibiting revitalization of the area.

2. Why do we need to do this? The current rules are fine, I don't want my community to change. Does this change the height limits for North Long Beach?

In 2019, the Long Beach City Council adopted an updated General Plan Land Use Element that generally encourages a greater mix of uses and accommodates housing, services and jobs on major corridors and areas served by transit. Current zoning regulations have not been updated since the 1980s and therefore do not serve today's community needs, nor does it permit the type of development envisioned in the General Plan. The [UPLAN planning process](#) has resulted in a set of proposed zones for the area that is consistent with both the recently updated General Plan and with the Community's vision for the area. The updated plan and the proposed zoning have been developed to respond to the significant changes that have taken place in Long Beach and globally since the plan and zoning code were last comprehensively updated in 1989. Since 1989, Long Beach has had an increase in over 40,000 residents, an increase in Port activity, changing industries, and an introduction of the Metro Blue Line, all of which have shaped the way we live, work, shop, and play in the City.



The General Plan Land Use Element update establishes a vision and blueprint for accommodating the population, housing units and jobs anticipated in the City through the horizon year of 2040. State law requires that cities' zoning regulations be consistent with that long-term vision and the UPLAN zoning recommendations are the first step in bringing Long Beach's zoning regulations into compliance with the plan, starting in North Long Beach.



3. Does this change the height limits for North Long Beach?

The height limits for all zoning districts were established in the General Plan Land Use Element update adopted by the Long Beach City Council on December 3rd, 2019. The proposed zoning code update maintains the same height limits adopted by the plan and establishes additional development standards for the new zoning districts that are tailored to unique context of North Long Beach and the concerns of its residents. These standards are intended to maintain compatibility with the scale and character of neighborhoods through innovative design standards, such as building setbacks and requirements for active uses on the ground floor of buildings.



4. How do the proposed zoning districts address housing affordability? Will this rezoning lead to displacement?

The proposed zoning districts increase the availability of land in the City that is zoned for multifamily residential uses and mixed residential and commercial uses and allows for additional height and building area to accommodate those uses, as compared to current zoning regulations. These zoning changes are proposed in limited areas—the major corridors like Artesia Blvd. and Atlantic Ave. While the UPLAN zones do not have specific affordability requirements, the City is in the process of establishing a Citywide Inclusionary Housing Policy to require that a percentage of all new units are set aside for low income households (typically defined as households whose incomes are 80% or less of area median income). Additionally, the UPLAN regulations include a provision for City staff to explore additional affordable housing policies if the Citywide inclusionary housing policy is delayed and not adopted within 6 months of the UPLAN zones being established. Finally, to address business displacement, the UPLAN-specific zones (known as the “A-Series” zones) include an incentive program to provide commercial spaces for legacy businesses in North Long Beach, as well as partnerships with the City’s Pacific Gateway Workforce Development job-training programs.





Frequently Asked Questions

5. How will these new rules affect parking? Parking is already in short supply.

The proposed zoning districts do not change on-street parking in North Long Beach nor remove any existing public or private parking on Artesia Blvd. and Atlantic Ave. The proposed regulations adjust private parking requirements (also known as “off-street” parking) for future businesses and development from what the current zoning code requires to make new housing development and the location of community-serving businesses in area more feasible, consistent with community feedback. While community members voiced concerns around parking, they also expressed a desire for safer streets, more walkable neighborhoods, more local amenities and businesses, and more local job opportunities that can be facilitated by the modified parking requirements.



There are a number of factors that contribute to the perceived lack of parking in the area. North Long Beach statistically has some of the highest rates of overcrowding in the City, and many existing residential and commercial buildings were built decades prior to the current zoning regulations and thus have little to no parking. The proposed regulations will add to the area’s housing stock and consequently are anticipated both to improve housing affordability and reduce overcrowding, and may help alleviate some of the area’s parking constraints, since new development will be required to provide parking. Additionally, the more flexible parking regulations are expected to allow new local businesses to locate in currently vacant, blighted commercial buildings. Often, the only obstacle for would-be entrepreneurs is parking requirements for an existing building, where providing additional parking is not feasible. The modified parking standards were based on community input on goals for the area and technical research, which included a parking demand study for both the Artesia and Atlantic corridors. Additionally, while in some instances the parking requirements will be lower than current regulations, they are comparable to other major California cities and in many cases provide a net increase in parking supply over existing development, when a building is redeveloped or new construction occurs.





Frequently Asked Questions

6. Traffic is bad enough, this is just going to make things worse.

A core aim of the UPLAN zones is to make North Long Beach more sustainable and resilient against the effects of climate change. The proposed land use regulations aim to reduce car trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through a combination of policies, such as expanded commercial uses to provide more local amenities and jobs to residents thereby helping reduce long commutes. The proposed zones also better link land uses with existing and planned transit improvements, including the expanded North Long Beach facilities for Long Beach Transit and better connections to Metro rail and bus stations, by locating housing and jobs near transit. Finally, the second phase of UPLAN currently underway will develop a Neighborhood Mobility Enhancement Plan to provide a roadmap for improving transportation options in North Long Beach for all modes of transportation, so that residents don't have to take all trips by car and can more feasibly opt for other modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, for shorter trips.

7. How does COVID-19 affect this update?

The proposed UPLAN zones are the result of a multi-year engagement and research process to provide regulations tailored to the unique context of North Long Beach. While the current pandemic has affected all City operations, the zoning recommendations have been slated for adoption since 2019. Looking ahead, these recommendations are geared towards making North Long Beach more resilient and better prepared to adapt to a changing landscape. Based on resident input in the process, the regulations also make it easier for new health-oriented land uses to locate in North Long Beach, such as health clinics, urgent care, fitness uses and grocery stores.

8. How can I learn more? How can I get involved?

To learn more about the UPLAN process and all the engagement and technical analysis that went into the first phase of this initiative, please visit the [UPLAN website](#) . [Click here](#) to sign up for updates on Phase 2 of UPLAN and upcoming events. If you'd like to get more involved, contact the UPLAN Project Manager at Alejandro.Sanchez-Lopez@longbeach.gov or (562) 570-6553. Virtual walk audits to collect community input on mobility challenges and to identify future mobility improvements for streets like Long Beach Blvd. and Del Amo Blvd., are planned for June, with the first one scheduled for Saturday, June 13th. You can also read about past events and activities here and access past presentations to the Long Beach Planning Commission [here](#) and [here](#) .



UPLAN Phase 1 Engagement Activities

8 
Advisory Committee Meetings

14 
Stakeholder Interviews

1 
Workshop

6 
Walk Audits

1 Demonstration Project & Workshop