



May 20, 2020

Santa Monica Planning Commission
1685 Main Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401

RE: Item 9-A Oppose

Dear Chairperson Lambert, Vice-Chairperson Landres, and members of the Planning Commission:

We are writing to express SMRR's strong opposition to Staff's proposed amendments to the Downtown Community Plan ("DCP"), proposed text revisions to the definition of a "housing project", and proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance covered by your Item 9-A. SMRR opposes these Staff proposals because they:

- Eliminate any meaningful involvement by the City Council (the only body with democratic legitimacy in the City), as well as the State Constitutional referendum rights of the residents, with respect to the wisdom for the City of **projects of any square footage without limit** in the Transit Adjacent zone.
- Eliminate for **projects of any square footage without limit** in the Transit Adjacent zone the current requirement of the DCP that projects greater than 90,000 square feet "are expected to provide community benefits that contribute to Downtown's priorities and fees in excess of Tier 3 fee requirements," without providing any supporting economic analysis. See DCP at 29-30 & Table 2A.3.
- Make additional changes of economic benefit to developers that are applicable to **projects of any square footage without limit** in the Transit Adjacent zone, (1) without providing any analysis of the size of that benefit and whether that benefit warrants an increase in community benefit requirements from developers, (2) without expressly limiting these benefits to projects that deliver housing for permanent City residents, rather than furnished, short-term or medium-term rentals, to unnatural persons, and (3) without expressly providing that projects taking advantage of these new rules necessarily are subject to the affordable housing requirements applicable to post-11/10/16 applications (i.e., without expressly precluding an assertion that developers can amend applications submitted prior to 11/11/16 and still take advantage of the proposed new standards). These additional proposed economic benefits include (1) increasing the amount of commercial usages in a housing project from 25% to 33%, with the commercial uses allowed on floors other than the ground floor, and (2) reducing the time and risk associated with development through use of a Development Review Permit process rather than a Development Agreement process.
- Make a change of economic benefit to developers **in any zone within the DCP**—increasing the amount of commercial usages in a housing project from 25% to 33%, with the commercial uses allowed on floors other than the ground floor—again (1) without providing any analysis of the size of that benefit and whether that benefit warrants an increase in community benefit requirements from developers, (2) without expressly limiting these benefits to projects that deliver housing for permanent City residents, rather than furnished, short-term or medium-term rentals, to unnatural persons, and (3) without expressly providing that projects taking advantage of these new rules necessarily are subject to the affordable housing requirements applicable to post-11/10/16 applications (i.e., without expressly precluding an assertion that developers can amend applications submitted prior to 11/11/16 and still take advantage of the proposed new standards).
- Replace the Downtown Community Plan process—a process that thousands of Santa Monicans participated in in order to help design and shape the community in which they live and work—with an unnecessarily rushed process of Staff proposals based primarily on input from developers and their paid lobbyists.

We urge you to reject the changes before you, and to insist instead that any process for considering changes to the DCP requirements be a thoughtful, open, and analytically sound process that evaluates what best serves the goals of the City and its residents.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Denny Zane in cursive.

Denny Zane
Co-Chair, Santa Monica's for Renters' Rights

Handwritten signature of Mike Soloff in cursive.

Mike Soloff
Co-Chair, Santa Monica's for Renters' Rights