



Administrative Report

J.1., File # PC24-1553

Meeting Date: 9/19/2024

To: PLANNING COMMISSION

From: MARC WIENER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

TITLE

PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER, DISCUSS, RECEIVE PUBLIC INPUT AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL ON UPDATES TO FIVE (5) GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS (LAND USE, OPEN SPACE & CONSERVATION, NOISE, AND SAFETY), ASSOCIATED AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCES AND LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM, AND CERTIFICATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

DEPARTMENT'S RECOMMENDATION

1. Open the public hearing, administer the oath, take testimony from staff, the public and other interested parties, and deliberate; and
2. Approve Resolution No. 2024-**-PCR-*** recommending that the City Council certify the Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the "Redondo Beach Focused General Plan Update, Zoning Ordinance Update, and Local Coastal Program Amendment and approve the Environmental Findings, Statement of Overriding Considerations, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Programs and adopt a General Plan Amendment to update the city's Land Use, Open Space and Conservation, Noise, and Safety Elements with proposed changes/edits attached as "Exhibit A", adopt amendments to the Redondo Beach Municipal Code, Title 10 Planning and Zoning, Chapter 1 Subdivisions attached as "Exhibit B", adopt amendments to the Redondo Beach Municipal Code, Title 10 Planning and Zoning, Chapter 2 Zoning and Land Use attached as "Exhibit C", adopt amendments to the Redondo Beach Municipal Code, Title 10 Planning and Zoning, Chapter 5 Coastal Land Use Plan Implementing Ordinance attached as "Exhibit D", and adopt amendments to the City of Redondo Beach's Coastal Land Use Plan of the Local Coastal Program attached as "Exhibit E", to make consistent and implement the General Plan Update and the Housing Element Housing Sites and Programs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California Government Code Section 65354 requires the Planning Commission to make recommendations to the legislative body (City Council) on the adoption or amendment of a General Plan. A resolution has been prepared for the Planning Commission to recommend that the City Council approve, as modified, updates to the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Local Coastal Program (LCP), along with certification of the associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The City Council is scheduled to begin reviewing the General Plan, Zoning Ordinances, and Local Coastal Program on Oct 1, 2024.

BACKGROUND

In late 2016, the City Council initiated the process of updating the General Plan by awarding the contract for planning and environmental consulting services to Placeworks, Inc. for updates to the “Land Use Element” and “Conservation, Recreation and Parks, and Open Space Element” of the City’s General Plan and preparation of the required environmental documents (EIR) and appointing the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) to work with staff and the consultant and help guide the project. The GPAC participated in amending the General Plan, which included updates to the Introduction, along with updated Goals, Policies, and Implementation Measures for the Land Use, Open Space and Conservation, Safety, and Noise Elements. The GPAC conducted a total of twenty-eight (28) meetings, with the final one occurring on January 31, 2024. A full history of the project is contained within the recitals of the attached Resolution.

The Planning Commission reviewed the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance update on three prior occasions. At the June 20, 2024 Planning Commission meeting, staff provided a high-level introductory overview (Discussion Item) of the pending updates to the City’s General Plan Land Use Element, Open Space and Conservation Element, Safety Element, and Noise Element along with associated Zoning Ordinance and Local Coastal Program amendments required for consistency and to implement the Housing Element. Attached to this report is a copy of the June 20, 2024 Administrative Report (inclusive of attachments).

At the August 1, 2024 Special Meeting of the Planning Commission, staff introduced a public hearing item with the specific updates to the City’s General Plan Land Use, Open Space & Conservation, Noise, and Safety Elements and requested that the Planning Commission receive public testimony, review, deliberate, and make recommendations on the proposed updates and continue the public hearing to their next regular scheduled meeting on August 15, 2024 for further consideration. The Planning Commission reached consensus on a number edits and recommended changes to multiple Goals, Policies, and Implementation Measures within the Land Use and Open Space & Conservation Elements. A redline version of Planning Commission’s recommendations are included as “Exhibit B” of the attached Resolution, which will be considered for adoption by the City Council.

At the August 15, 2024 public hearing, Staff introduced the specific Zoning Ordinance and Local Coastal Program amendments required for consistency with the update to the General Plan, including implementation of the Housing Element Programs and Housing Sites. The Planning Commission did not propose any edits to the draft Zoning Ordinances or Local Coastal Program amendments at this meeting. The Planning Commission recommended Zoning Ordinance and Local Coastal Program amendments are included as “Exhibit C” (Subdivision), “Exhibit D” (Zoning and Land Use), “Exhibit E” (Coastal Land Use Plan Implementing Ordinance), and “Exhibit F” (Local Coastal Program) of the attached Resolution, which will all be considered for adoption by the City Council.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Institutional Zone

During the Planning Commission hearing process, several public comments were made pertaining to the Public Institutional (PI) Zone, specifically, the floor area ratio. The updated General Plan defines

PI as providing *“for governmental administrative and capital facilities, schools, libraries, hospitals and associated medical offices, public cultural facilities, and other public uses, ancillary parks, recreation and open spaces.”* This is consistent with the definition in the original/current General Plan. Staff is seeking the Planning Commission recommendations on the following three topics pertaining to the PI Zone:

Floor Area Ratio

The floor area ratio (FAR) dictates how much floor area (enclosed space) can be constructed based on the size of the lot. For example, a 4,000 square-foot lot with a FAR of 0.5 would be allowed to construct a 2,000 square-foot building. The General Plan and Zoning Ordinance currently do not place a cap on the FAR for most of the PI zones, with the exception of City Hall and the Annex located on the northeast corner of PCH and Vincent Street, which have a FAR of 1.25. The updated General Plan proposes to maintain the 1.25 FAR at City Hall and the Annex, and place a .75 FAR cap on the remaining PI designations.

The City has received numerous public comments, both for and against, limiting the FAR in the PI zones. Those in support of capping the FAR at .75 have expressed concern that allowing a higher limit would lead to developments that are large and out of scale with the surrounding neighborhoods. Those in support of allowing a larger FAR have expressed concern that it would negatively impact the future development of the Beach Cities Health District, and other governmental institutions, and have requested that a 1.25 FAR be applied to all PI zones. To better understand the implications of the setting the FAR at either intensity, staff has prepared an analysis of how much square-footage would be allowed in the PI zones under both the .75 and 1.25 scenarios. See attachment entitled, “PI FAR Analysis” for a table that includes all the existing PI designated properties with property square footages, existing building square footages, the existing FAR, and square footages permitted under both a .75 and a 1.25 FAR for all PI Zoned properties.

Staff has also provided photographic examples of developments in the City that visually represent a range of FARs. See attachment entitled “FAR Examples”.

Staff is requesting that the Planning Commission make a recommendation to the City Council on the FAR limits in the PI zones. Some of the options include maintaining the FAR as currently proposed, increasing the FAR to 1.25 for all PI zones, or increasing the FAR so that it is greater than .75, but still less than 1.25. Staff notes that the EIR and associated buildout methodology would need to be update and recirculated for an increase of above .85 FAR.

School Sites

On July 17, 2024, a letter was submitted to the City by the attorney for Redondo Beach School District (RBUSD), noting that under the current General Plan, all RBUSD properties are appropriately designated PI. However, in the proposed Updated General Plan, the following three RBUSD properties are incorrectly designated as Open Space (OS), which is contrary to their current use and intended purpose:

1. Lincoln Elementary School Fields and Blacktop Area - A space for physical education and student recreation, integral to the school’s program.

2. Alta Vista Elementary School Fields - An outdoor play area that supports RBUSD students' health and well-being through physical education.
3. The former Franklin School Site - Property that is currently being developed by the Friendship Foundation to provide specialized educational and developmental services, especially for students with special needs, aiming to impart crucial life skills for independence.

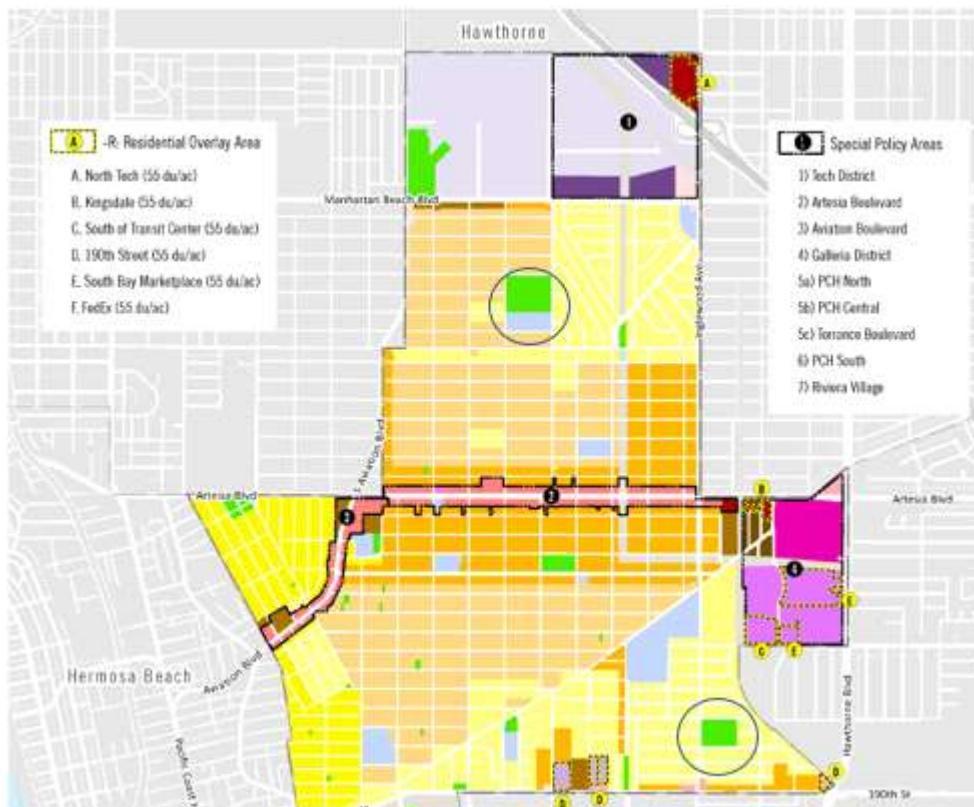


Figure 1. Land Use Map (Lincoln Elem. and former Franklin Elem.)



Figure 2. Land Use Map (Alta Vista Elem.)

Staff concurs with the School District that the three subject properties should remain designated as Public Institutional, which is consistent with the current and future intended use of the property. These three sites were not factored into the open space calculations included in the Open Space and Conservation Element and reverting the properties back to their original designation will have no material effect on the EIR or General Plan policies.

AES Site and SCE Right-Of-Way (ROW)

The current General Plan includes a “P” (Public or Institutional) designation for the AES powerplant site and the SCE ROW and the only permitted uses allowed by the Zoning Ordinance and LCP for the AES site are park/open space and utilities. The SCE ROW also conditionally permits agricultural uses, parking lots, and accessory structures in addition to the uses allowed on the AES site. The updated General Plan proposes to change these properties to a newly created designation, Public

Utility (PU), which is defined as providing “for utility uses including easements with public access for recreation and parking.”

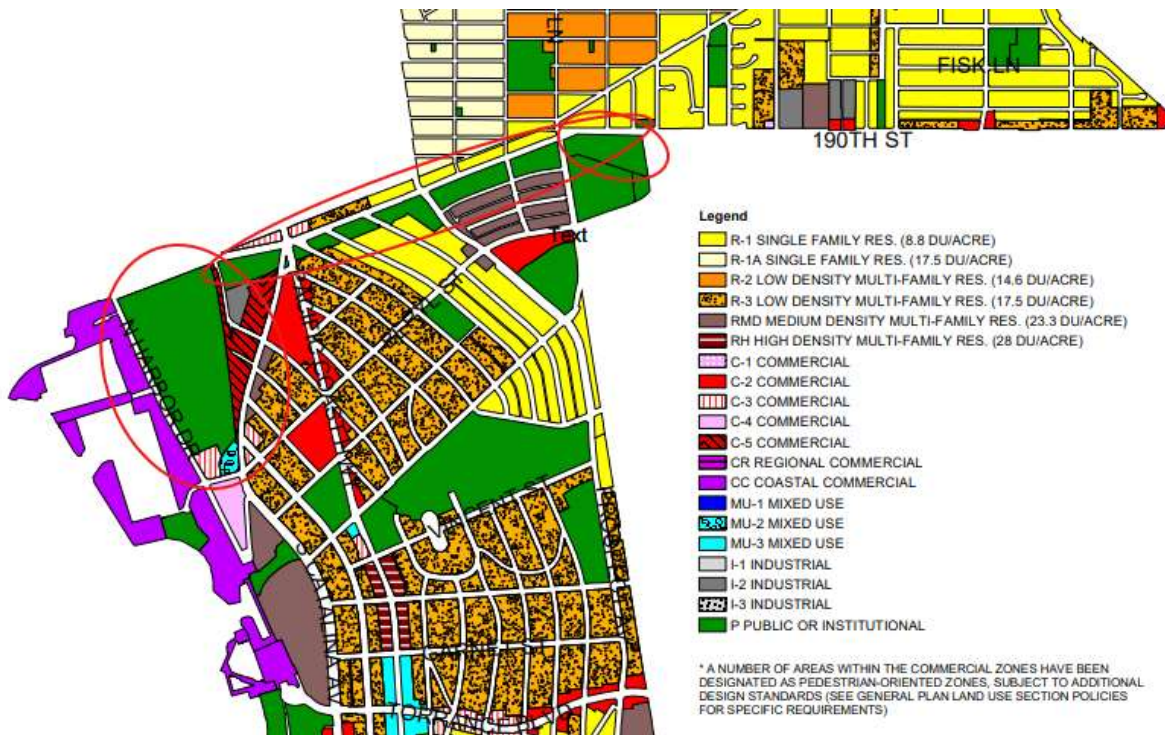


Figure 1a. Original designation for AES site and SCE ROW (southern portion).



Figure 1b. Updated GP designation for AES site and SCE ROW (southern portion).

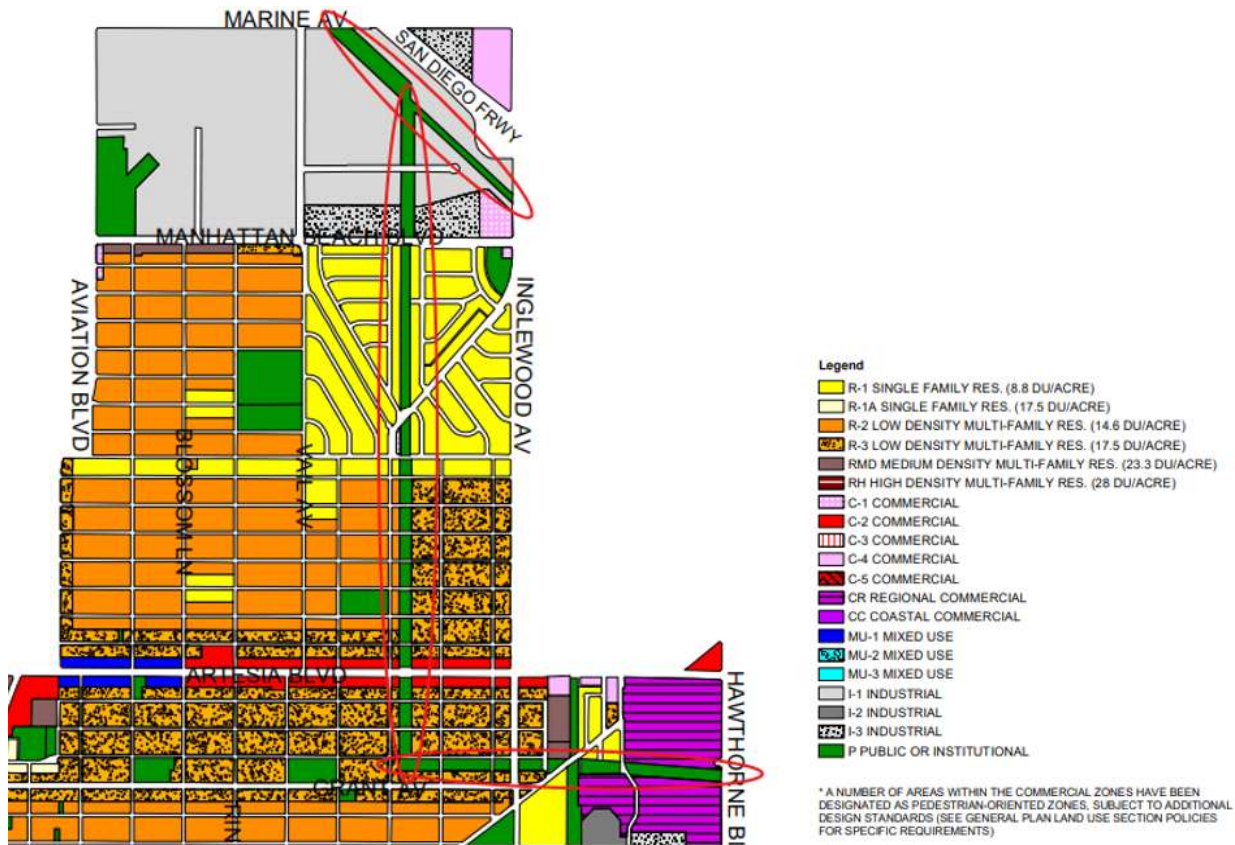


Figure 2a. Original designation for SCE ROW (northern portion).

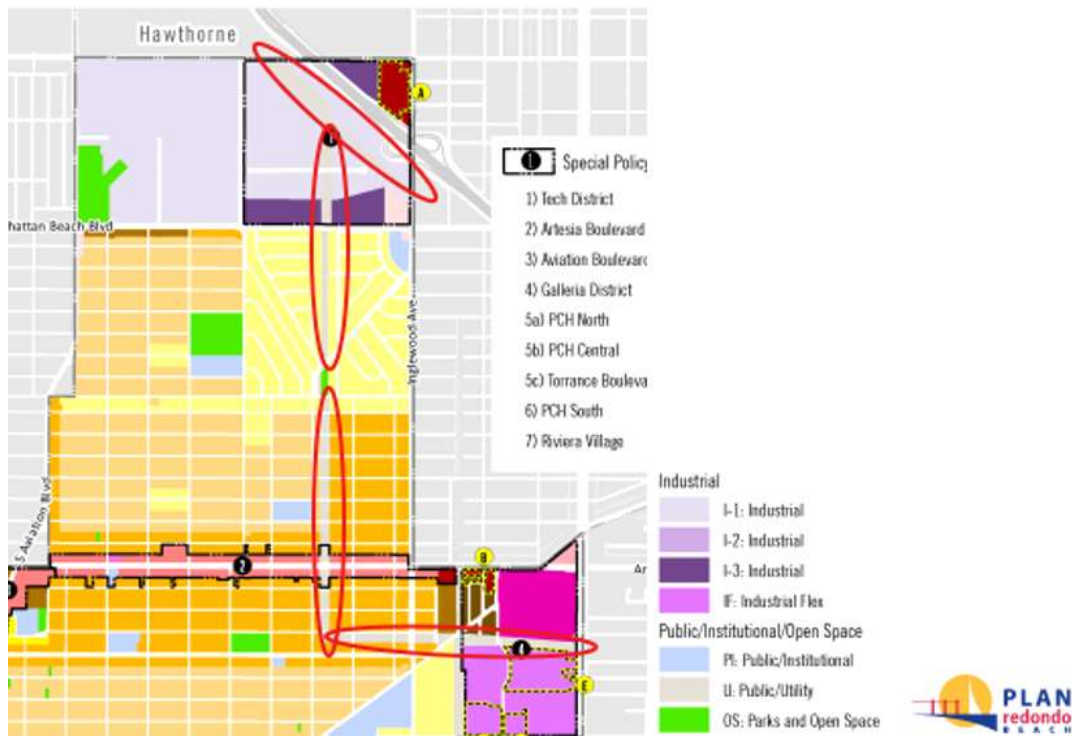


Figure 2b. Updated GP designation for SCE ROW (northern portion).

Since the time that this designation was created, the powerplant has been decommissioned and is no longer in operation. Additionally, some changes are likely to the associated SCE ROW infrastructure in the future. Staff therefore recommends maintaining the original designation of these properties as “P” (Public or Institutional), which provides *Governmental administrative and capital facilities, parks, schools, libraries, hospitals and associated medical offices, public cultural facilities, public open space, utility easements, and other public uses.*

Mixed-Use Zone

The General Plan description of the Mixed-Use (MU) Zoning District is that it “*provides for an integrated mix of commercial retail, service, office, entertainment, and residential uses.*” The Zoning Ordinance states that the purpose of the MU District is to “*encourage residential uses, including those units used as transitional housing, supportive housing or employee housing, in conjunction with commercial activities in order to create an active street life, enhance the vitality of businesses, and reduce vehicular traffic.*”

Both the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance give equal preference to commercial and residential uses; however, the Zoning Ordinance only requires a minimum commercial floor area ratio of .35 for mixed-use projects. Commercial uses are important for maintaining an adequate jobs/housing balance within the City, and help provide necessary sales tax revenue to support services for residents and visitors. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission consider recommending that the minimum commercial floor area ratio be increased to .40 to ensure a more equitable balance between commercial and residential uses within the Mixed-Use Zoning District. Furthermore, the Commission should consider recommending minor modifications to the text of the Zoning Ordinance to place some emphasis on the importance of the commercial component in a mixed-use project.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a program Environmental Impact Report was prepared and will be presented to the Planning Commission at the same time as the final draft of the General Plan Update and Zoning Ordinance Amendments. The overall purpose of this program Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is to inform the City, responsible agencies, decision makers, and the public about the potential environmental effects resulting from full implementation of the proposed Redondo Beach General Plan Update, and the associated Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance for the Coastal Zone, and Local Coastal Program amendments that are required by the Housing Element and for consistency purposes. This DEIR addresses effects that may be significant and adverse; evaluates alternatives to the project; and identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to reduce or avoid identified potentially adverse effects. Included as an appendix to the program Environmental Impact Report is a document that explains the buildout assumptions and methodologies utilized for projecting the potential growth in the City over the next 25 years. The horizon year of the General Plan Update is 2050. An attachment to the DEIR entitled “Appendix A_Buildout Methodology” which explains the projections used to analyze the “project” was provided to the Planning Commission with the General Plan Update documents. The DEIR was released for a 47-day public comment period which started August 1, 2024 and ended on September 16, 2024.

Included as “Exhibit A” to the attached Resolution is a “Link” to the Draft PEIR inclusive of its referenced appendices for the “Redondo Beach Focused General Plan Update, Zoning Ordinance Update and Local Coastal Program Amendment”.

ATTACHMENTS

1. RESOLUTION NO. 2024--PCR-GPU-ZOA-CZOA-LCPA
2. EXHIBIT A - LINK TO DRAFT PEIR WITH APPENDICES
3. EXHIBIT B - PC RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS - GPU-IM
4. EXHIBIT C - PC RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS - CHAPTER 1 SUBDIVISIONS
5. EXHIBIT D - PC RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS - CHAPTER 2 ZONING AND LAND USE
6. EXHIBIT E - PC RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS - CHAPTER 5 COASTAL LAND USE PLAN IMPLEMENTING ORDINANCE
7. EXHIBIT F - PC RECOMMENDED LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM AMENDMENTS
8. FAR Examples
9. PI FAR Analysis
10. Planning Commission June 20, 2024 Item L.1. Overview of GPU/ZOA
11. Planning Commission August 1, 2024 Item J.1. Introduction of GPU
12. Planning Commission August 15, 2024 Item J.2. Introduction of ZOA/LCPA
13. Public Comments 8-16 to 9-13 2024