

# Adaptive Reuse Zoning Code Amendments

City Council

September 30, 2024





# Background

## Planning & Community Development

- Adaptive Reuse is the process of reconfiguring a building to accommodate new uses, other than what it was originally designed for.
- With diminishing demand for nonresidential space, there is a need to reevaluate the City's vacant or underutilized nonresidential buildings.
- The City recognizes the need to incentivize local housing production that is suitable for the varied needs of Pasadena residents.
- The proposed Zoning Code Amendments would reduce regulatory barriers to:
  - > Incentivize the conversion of nonresidential buildings to multifamily and mixed-use;
  - > Accommodate innovative housing types;
  - > Accelerate the production of additional housing units; and
  - > Encourage the productive use of underutilized buildings.



# Planning Commission Recommendation

## Planning & Community Development

- On July 10, 2024, the Planning Commission considered the proposed Zoning Code Amendments and recommended that the City Council approve the Amendments as presented by staff, with the following changes:
  1. Remove the maximum density limits for existing buildings. However, density limits would apply to new construction with units;
  2. Require an average unit size of 450 square feet for projects with 10 or more units. However, 100% affordable housing projects would be exempt;
  3. Reduce parking requirements when on-site car/vehicle sharing is provided; and
  4. Reduce open space requirements for properties in proximity to public parks.
- The Planning Commission made two additional recommendations that the City Council direct staff to study:
  1. Whether adaptive reuse to housing should be allowed in zones that do not currently allow housing (e.g., Industrial General and Commercial General zones); and
  2. Financial incentives to facilitate adaptive reuse projects.



# Outreach and Research Efforts

## Planning & Community Development

- Staff researched existing ordinances throughout California, including the cities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Long Beach, and Santa Ana.
- Staff reviewed existing projects such as the conversion of an office building into housing at 388 Cordova Ave, met with the developers to understand the barriers to development, and incorporated feedback into the proposed amendments.
- Staff met with industry professionals and also attended a workshop with Pasadena Heritage to discuss existing regulations, barriers to adaptive reuse, and obtain feedback. Participants included architects, developers, planners and preservationists.
- The following feedback and research was incorporated into the amendments:
  - > Apply the updates citywide, rather than just one geographic area;
  - > Allow for flexibility in current regulations, including parking requirements;
  - > Consider by-right approvals for adaptive reuse projects to streamline the development process and reduce delays; design review is seen as too cumbersome;
  - > Consider reduced requirements for ADA or minimal requirements to meet state code;
  - > Reduce or consolidate the number of required City inspections.



# Existing City and State Efforts

## Planning & Community Development

### **Nonresidential to Multifamily or Mixed-use with Housing:**

- **New Specific Plans**
  - No new parking required for projects within designated historic resources and structures built prior to 1970.
- **Religious Facilities – Affordable Housing**
  - Reduces common open space requirements and parking requirements for existing religious structures reused as affordable housing.
- **Incentives for Preserving Historic Resources**
  - Reduces parking requirements, building permit fees, construction tax for designated historic resources, use of the State Historic Building Code.
- **Variances for Historic Resources**
  - Provides relief from the Zoning Code to accommodate historic resources on properties that are undergoing development, are adaptively reused or are being relocated onto a new property.
- **Conversion of a Hotel or Motel to Affordable Housing**
  - Allows for the conversion of an existing hotel or motel with affordable housing.
  - Provides for the modification of FAR, lot coverage, setbacks, common area requirements, landscaping, and parking.



# Existing City and State Efforts

## Planning & Community Development

### **Nonresidential to Nonresidential:**

- **New Specific Plans**
  - > Removes the requirement to increase parking due to a change of use for projects within designated historic resources and structures built prior to 1970.
  - > Standardized parking ratios for most commercial uses to ease change of uses.
- **Research and Development Land Uses**
  - > Eases restrictions on floor area, open space, and parking requirements, and provides greater allowances for building heights and rooftop equipment.

### **Building and Fire Safety Codes:**

- Assembly Bill (AB) 529 requires state agencies to identify challenges and opportunities that help support adaptive reuse residential projects and will recommend possible updates to state building standards.



# Adaptive Reuse Amendments

## Planning & Community Development

### Amendments Focus on Nonresidential to Multifamily and Mixed-Use:

#### 1. Eligibility

- Projects would be defined as any change of use of nonresidential buildings to multifamily or mixed-use with housing, where multifamily housing is currently permitted.
- Buildings would be eligible five years after Certificate of Occupancy is issued.

#### 2. Density

- No density maximum limits for adaptive reuse projects within an existing building.
- Average unit size of 450 square feet:
  - 100% affordable projects or projects with less than 10 units would be exempt from this requirement.

#### 3. Setbacks

- Additions required for the purpose of complying with building and/or fire safety codes would be exempt from setback requirements.



# Adaptive Reuse Amendments

## Planning & Community Development

### 4. Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

- The building's existing square footage or maximum FAR (whichever is greater) could be increased by 10% to provide residential amenities (anywhere on site).
- New mezzanines and floor area added solely for the purpose of complying with the Building Code and/or life safety requirements shall not be counted toward FAR.

### 5. Height and Appurtenances

- The building's existing height or maximum height permitted (whichever is greater) could be increased by 15 feet for appurtenances (e.g., roof mounted equipment) and residential amenities (e.g., community rooms, trellises).

### 6. Off-Street Parking

- No new parking required. Code-required parking could be further reduced for residential uses when on-site car sharing is provided.
- One car-share space would count as five required parking spaces, with a maximum parking reduction of 20% and no more than 10 car-share spaces eligible for the reduction.





# Adaptive Reuse Amendments

## Planning & Community Development

### 7. Open Space

- Require a minimum of 150 square feet of open space per unit, which may be common, private or any combination of both (i.e., no specific minimums or maximums for either).
- Remove maximum percentages for indoor common open space.
- Reduce minimum dimensions for common open space.
- Allow lobby areas to qualify as common open space (provided they include amenities like workstations, seating, meeting areas etc.).
- Allow rooftop common open space to be calculated at a rate of 1.5 to 1.0 (e.g., a roof deck of 1,000 square feet would count as 1,500 square feet).
- Allow street setbacks and existing or voluntarily proposed publicly accessible open space to qualify as common open space (provided they include amenities like seating, fountains, public art, etc.).
- Allow a maximum reduction of 25% if the project is located within ½-mile of a public park.



# Adaptive Reuse Amendments

## Planning & Community Development

### 8. Design Review

- Allow adaptive reuse projects, including new construction that does not increase the number of units by more than 50%, to go through Consolidated Design Review.
- Change review authority to the Director (can still be appealed/called for review to the Design Commission).



# Other Zoning Code Amendments

## Planning & Community Development

### **Applicable Citywide:**

#### Shared Parking

- Assembly Bill (AB) 894 requires the City to amend the shared parking ordinance to allow for shared parking when at least 20% of a development's parking is underutilized during the period in which shared parking is proposed
- Update to comply with AB 894, remove the Minor Conditional Use Permit (MCUP) requirement and change the review authority from the Hearing Officer to the Director.

#### Tandem Parking

- Allowed by-right for residential uses and with a Minor CUP for nonresidential uses.
- For nonresidential uses, change the review authority for the Minor CUP from the Hearing Officer to the Director (can still be appealed/called for review to the Board of Zoning Appeals).



# Other Zoning Code Amendments

## Planning & Community Development

### Variance for Historic Resources

- Update the first finding to more directly correlate with the purpose of the Variance section.
- Expand the finding to include resources being adaptively reused, relocated, or on sites undergoing development:
  - > *Existing Finding #1 – “The Variance for Historic Resource is necessary to facilitate the appropriate use of an existing historic structure.”*
  - > *Revised Finding #1 – “The Variance for Historic Resources is necessary to facilitate development on properties with historic resources, historic resources that are adaptively reused, and/or relocation of historic resources”.*
- Change the review authority from the Hearing Officer to the Director (can still be appealed/called for review to the Board of Zoning Appeals).



# Recommendation

## Planning & Community Development

### Staff recommends that City Council:

1. Find that the Addendum to the 2015 Pasadena General Plan Environmental Impact Report addresses the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendments have been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
2. Adopt the Findings for Zoning Code Amendments; and
3. Approve the recommended Amendments.

# Adaptive Reuse Zoning Code Amendments

City Council

September 30, 2024





# Density Example #1 – 155 N Lake

Planning & Community Development

## 155 N Lake

Lot Size= 91,254 sq ft

Building Size= 383,924 sq ft

**87 du/ac = 182 units**





# Density Example #2 – 70 S Lake

Planning & Community Development

## 70 S Lake

Lot Size= 34,673 sq ft

Building Size= 107,484 sq ft

**87 du/ac = 69 units**







# Density Example #3 – 80 S Lake

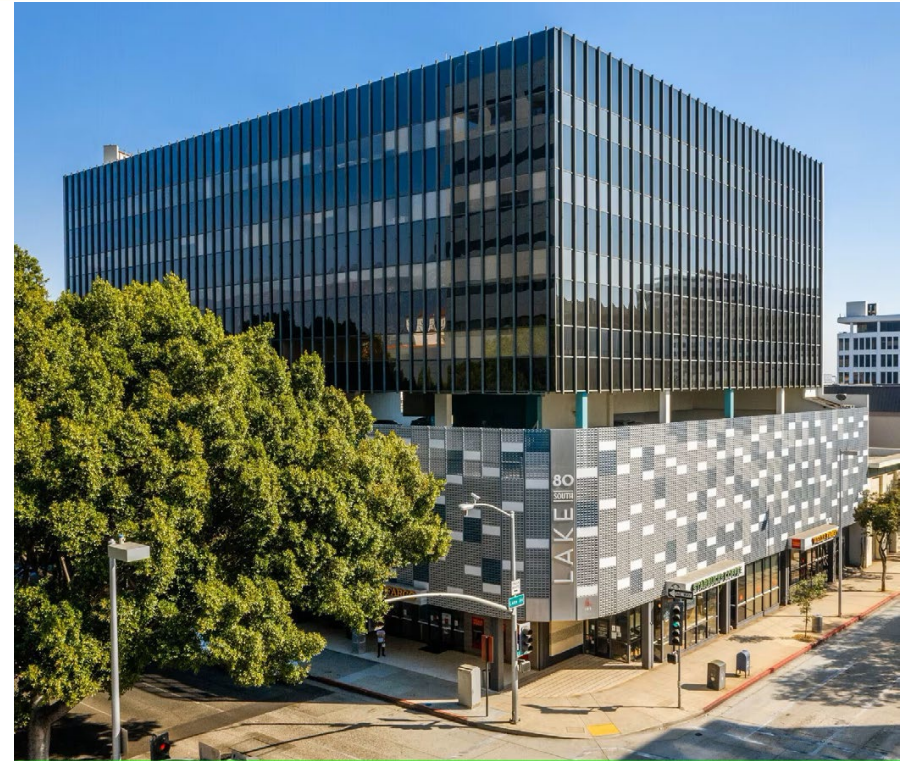
Planning & Community Development

## **80 S Lake**

Lot Size= 25,536 sq ft

Building Size= 150,037 sq ft

**87 du/ac = 51 units**

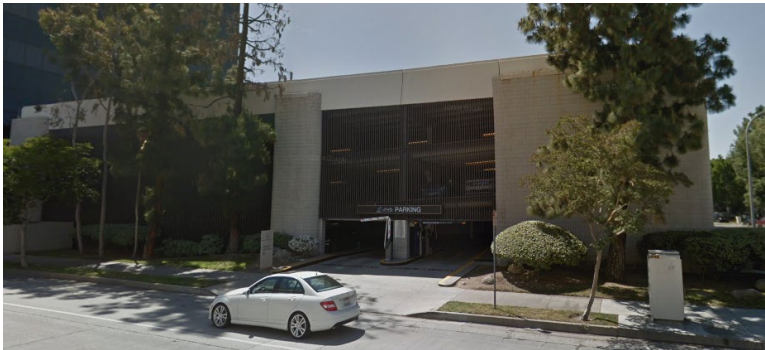




# Recent Example of Adaptive Reuse

## Planning & Community Development

### 388 Cordova Street



- Conversion of an existing garage into parking and additional 65 units
  - > 8 very low-income units
- Required an Affordable Housing Concession Permit which allowed a 25% density increase and a height of 68 ft.
- Example of successful parking wrapping



# Recent Example of Adaptive Reuse

## Planning & Community Development

### 388 Cordova Street



- CD-2 (Central District, Civic Center/Midtown subdistrict)
- Conversion 9-story 1970s office building into a 32,109 sq. ft. mixed-use building
  - > Commercial- Basement, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> floors
  - > 66 residential units – 3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> floors
- Challenges to the Zoning Code:
  - > Height of appurtenances
  - > Private open spaces



# Pasadena Heritage Lake Avenue Study

## Planning & Community Development

- Commissioned by Pasadena Heritage, analysis completed by architect David Thurman.
- A total of 10 buildings on Lake Avenue were analyzed.
- Average vacancy rate was 24.7 percent.
- Criteria determined the likelihood of conversion:
  - Vacancy rate;
  - Floor plate size/depth;
  - Building form; and
  - Site context/location.

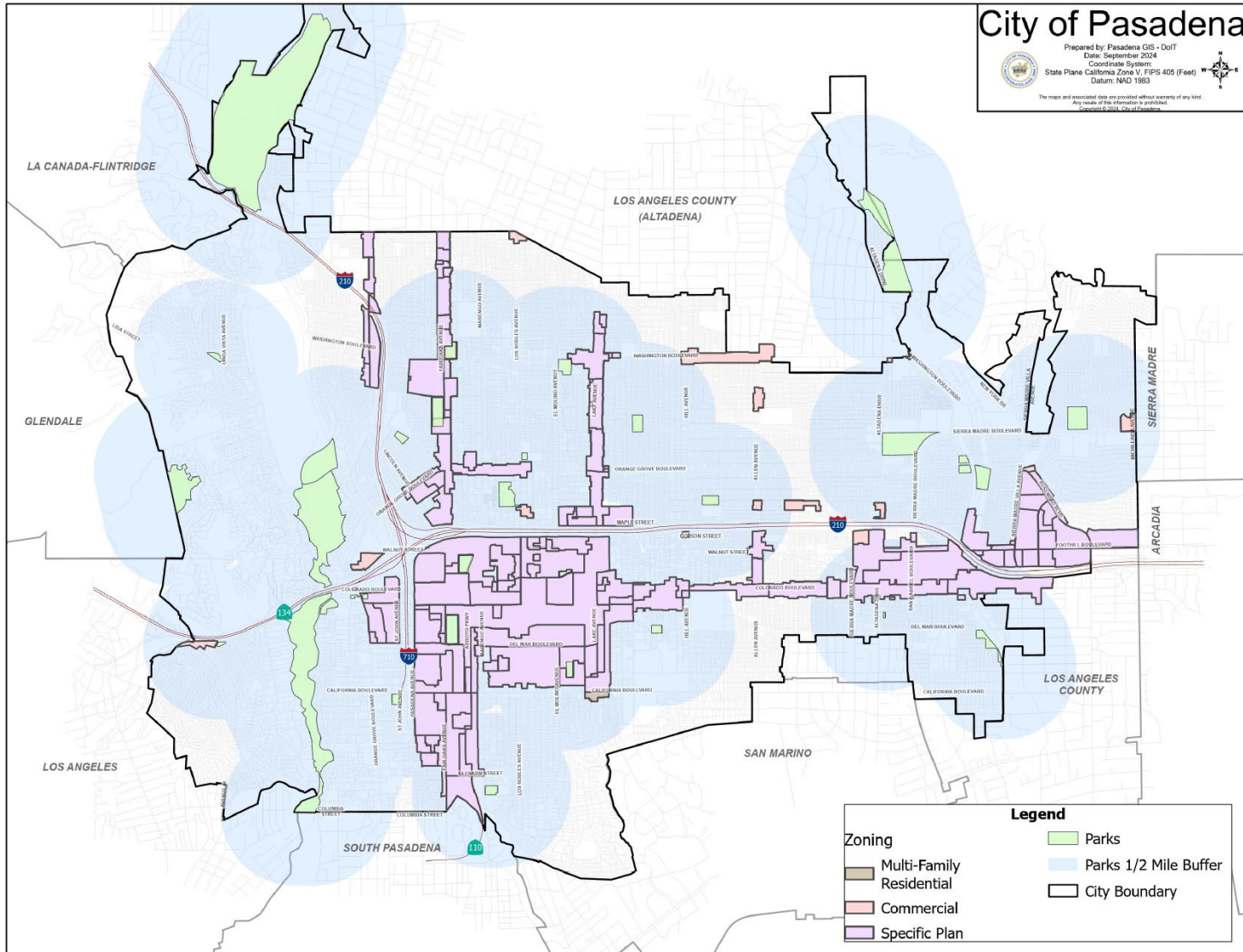


*Analysis concluded that three of the buildings would be good candidates for reuse, consistent with other studies, which state an average of 30 percent of downtown office buildings could be candidates for conversion.*



# Parks and 1/2-mile buffer area

## Planning & Community Development





# Variance for Historic Resource

## Planning & Community Development

- **Purpose of a Variance for Historic Resource**
  - > “It is intended to accommodate historic resources that are undergoing development, change in use or are being relocated.”
- **Existing Finding #1**
  - > “The Variance for Historic Resource is necessary to facilitate the appropriate use of an existing historic structure.”
- **Revise Finding #1**
  - > Revise the finding to align with the purpose.
  - > *“The Variance for Historic Resources is necessary to facilitate development on properties with historic resources, historic resources that are adaptively reused, and/or relocation of historic resources”.*



# General Plan Housing Element

## Planning & Community Development

- **Housing Element Goal 2.5:**
  - > **Adaptive Reuse.** Support innovative strategies for the adaptive reuse of office, retail, hotels/motels, and industrial buildings, consistent with land use policy, to accommodate innovative housing types and productive use of underused buildings.
- **Housing Element Implementation Program #6 (Housing Sites) requires the City to:**
  - > Investigate new and creative approaches to providing housing, such as allowing units to be constructed on top of or wrapping parking structures and easing conversion of office buildings and commercial space to housing. Amend the Zoning Code to allow housing in commercial zones, where consistent with General Plan objectives, and to incentivize the adaptive reuse of nonresidential buildings for residential uses.
  - > Explore land use and zoning tools to facilitate additional and diverse housing opportunities in Northwest Pasadena either through alternative housing types and/or acquisition/rehabilitation/adaptive reuse.
  - > Amend the Zoning Code to establish an ordinance to allow the adaptive reuse of nonresidential buildings for residential uses, including eliminating Pasadena Municipal Code requirements that are not related to fire/life safety requirements.



# General Plan Land Use Element

## Planning & Community Development

- Goal 8. Historic Preservation. Preservation and enhancement of Pasadena's cultural and historic buildings, landscapes, streets and districts as valued assets and important representations of its past and a source of community identity, and social, ecological, and economic vitality:
  - > **Policy 8.4 (Adaptive Reuse).** Encourage sensitive adaptive re-use including continue the historic use of historic resources to achieve their preservation, sensitive rehabilitation, and continued economic and environmental value.
- Goal 10. City Sustained and Renewed. Development and infrastructure practices that sustain natural environmental resources for the use of future generations and, at the same time, contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and impacts on climate change:
  - > **Policy 10.6 (Adaptive Reuse).** Encourage adaptive reuse of structures, including non-historic structures, as a means of supporting environmental sustainability.





# Existing State Legislation

## Planning & Community Development

### Assembly Bill 1490 (Affordable Housing Development Projects: Adaptive Reuse)

- Nonresidential buildings can be converted to 100% affordable housing projects (minimum 50% to be very-low income and remaining can be very-low or lower income).
- No maximum density or FAR; no additional parking or open space.
- Applicants can opt to use this bill in its entirety.
- STATUS: *Effective January 1, 2024*

### Assembly Bill 529 (Adaptive Reuse Projects)

- Requires the HCD, in consultation with the State Fire Marshall, to research and develop revisions to state adaptive reuse building codes to better facilitate conversion projects
- STATUS: *Deadline of December 31, 2025 to submit findings and recommendations to the State Legislature.*



# California Historic Building Code

## Planning & Community Development

- Must be a designated historic resource or within a historic district to be eligible to use the State Historic Building Code (SHBC).
- Allows the City to approve reasonable alternatives to standard building and mechanical requirements for historic buildings.
- Allows some non-conforming conditions to remain without modification to meet current standards, and it allows some pliancy in meeting specific requirements in building codes.
- The City uses the SHBC at the request of the property owner.
- The SHBC applies to both the interior and exterior of a building.



# Los Angeles ARO

## Planning & Community Development

- The Los Angeles Ordinance, first adopted in 1999, has resulted in over 12,000 new housing units in the historic downtown area.
- The ordinance is currently being updated to expand the program citywide, reduce the minimum age of structures to be eligible and provide more flexibility in meeting zoning requirements.

# City of Pasadena Zoning Map

Base Zoning Districts	Overlay Zoning Districts	Specific Plans
RG Single-Family Residential	AD Alcohol	CD Central District
RM Multi-Family Residential	HD Hillside	EC East Colorado
CO Commercial, Office	HL Height Limit	EPSP East Pasadena
CL Commercial, Limited	HH Hospitality Home	FGSP Fair Oaks-Orange Grove
CG Commercial, General	IS Interim Study	LA Lincoln Avenue
IG Industry, General	LD Landmark	SP-1 North Lake
OS Open Space	ND Neighborhood	SP-2 South Fair Oaks
PS Public, Semi-Public	OC Office Conversion	WGSP West Gateway
PD Planned Development	PK Parking	
	SS Specialty Shop	

Scale: 0 0.5 1 Miles  
 Projection System: State Plane California Zone 10 FIPS 405 (Foot Datum 1603)  
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 The Zoning Code is available online in Title 17 of the Pasadena Municipal Code at library.municode.com/pasadena.  
 Map current through Ordinance #584, July 19, 2022.

