

2026 Land Development Code Update

Downtown List

3/24/26

* Asterisk denotes an item added, deleted, or substantively changed since Nov. 5, 2025

| Type of Amendment | Number | Name of Item | Why is This Amendment Needed? | What Does This Amendment Do? | Code Section(s) |
|---|--------|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| Align the Code with the City's Climate, Energy or Housing Goals | 1 | Downtown: Rooftop Gardens | The current requirements for screening rooftop mechanical equipment within the Centre City Planned District do not allow flexibility to provide rooftop landscaping. Rooftops within the Downtown area can provide an opportunity to increase urban green space. | Updates the definition of "screen" to allow additional flexibility for using landscaping on rooftops to enclose mechanical equipment. In addition, the amendment expands the existing eco-roof incentive by offering an additional bonus if a development project incorporates a rooftop community garden, and requires the inclusion of trees when using the existing eco-roof density bonus. | 156.0302 156.0309(d)(4) |
| | 2 | Downtown: Permit Process for Development within the Coastal Zone Overlay | Development projects located within the Coastal Zone, including those with affordable housing units, are typically delayed through the approval process. This amendment would remove this burdensome process for developments that utilize a Density Bonus Program and are consistent with the Local Coastal Program. | Reduces the process level from Process 2 to Process 1 for developments within the Downtown Coastal Zone that utilize any of the Downtown Density Bonus Programs and are consistent with the Local Coastal Program, where no such process otherwise exists for projects in the remaining portions of Downtown. | 156.0307(b)(1) |
| | 3 | Downtown: Urban Open Space Bonus Clarification | The current Urban Open Space density bonus requires the provision of amenities that meet a specified point value based on the Parks Master Plan. However, the regulations require further clarification about which specific amenities qualify toward meeting the program's required points. | Clarifies that the amenities qualifying for the Urban Open Space Bonus must be selected from the Amenities/Recreation Opportunities Table in Appendix D of the Parks Master Plan. Expands eligibility for the bonus to development that provides recreational amenities at any existing park or urban open space within downtown, either onsite or offsite. | 156.0309(d)(2) |
| | * 4 | Downtown: Increasing Child Care Facilities | The current Child Care Facilities density bonus requires the provision of a child care facility on-site in exchange for a density bonus. This limits the ability of downtown developments to use the child care facilities bonus, as the cost to locate within new high-rise construction can be prohibitive for many child care facilities, and can increase the costs for families seeking to use the facilities. | Expands upon the existing density bonus for Child Care Facilities to allow the required child care facility to be located near the proposed development. | 156.0309(d)(6) |
| | 5 | Downtown: Increasing Homeownership Opportunities | Residential development projects within the Downtown area are typically offered as rental housing, which limits available housing types and discourages long term residency. | Allows a new density bonus for development projects above a certain size that include a certain percentage of for-sale housing to encourage new homeownership opportunities within the downtown area, diversify the housing stock downtown, and promote long-term residents. Standard subdivision requirements would apply to developments that include for-sale homes. | 156.0309(d)(10) |

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| Align the Code with the City's Climate, Energy or Housing Goals | 6 | Downtown: Small Lot Development Incentive | Small lots under 15,000 square feet within the downtown area are currently underdeveloped due to regulations that limit the feasibility of tower development. | Allows the development of smaller lots under 15,000 square feet by providing a density bonus and exemptions from certain development regulations that typically make tower construction infeasible on small lots. | 156.0309(d)(11) |
| | 7 | Downtown: Increasing Middle Income Housing | The existing Middle Income Housing density bonus has been successful in limited circumstances but needs to be right-sized to address market conditions in order to attract more middle income housing development. | Provides additional incentivizes for middle income housing within the Downtown area by providing additional exemptions from development regulations for projects that provide 100% middle income housing. Renumbers the existing section to accommodate other proposed amendments. | 156.0309(d)(12) |
| | 8 | Downtown: C Street Revitalization Bonus | Much of the area along C Street is currently underdeveloped at densities that are less than the required minimums identified in the Centre City Planned District Ordinance, even though C Street is centrally located within Downtown and provides direct access to the trolley system. | Provides an additional bonus of 100% of the FAR earned through other FAR Bonus Programs to developments located along C Street that use other FAR Bonus programs to incentivize higher density projects and encourage redevelopment of underutilized properties. | 156.0309(d)(14) |
| | 9 | Downtown: Preservation of Tree Canopy | New developments within the downtown area often remove existing mature trees, opting to plant new trees instead of preserving. These actions can result in overall reductions of tree canopy area within downtown, and the loss of existing mature trees, which can have negative ecological and environmental impacts. | Encourages the preservation of mature trees by providing a density bonus of 0.2 FAR for each mature tree preserved, and by requiring downtown developments that remove more than 50% of their mature trees to provide additional trees on or off-site or pay into the FAR Bonus fund to fund the provision of trees within public spaces in the Downtown area. This payment would be in addition to any required payment to the Urban Tree Canopy fund. | 156.0311(m) |
| Clarifications | 10 | Downtown: Alternative Interim Uses | In a previous code update, the Centre City Planned District Ordinance regulations were amended to allow more flexibility in meeting the active commercial use requirements on designated streets by permitting additional uses by right. However, these changes were not incorporated into the "Alternative Interim Uses" regulations, which were intended to provide flexible options for satisfying the commercial use requirements. | Updates the Centre City Planned District Ordinance to delete outdated references to "Alternative Interim Uses" to ensure consistency with the adopted code language in a previous code update. | 156.0302 156.0307(b)(2) 156.0307(b)(9) 156.0315(f) |

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| Clarifications | 11 | Downtown: Clarifying Applicable Development Regulations | The Centre City Planned District Ordinance is unclear about which specific regulations take precedence when conflicts occur with other policy documents. | Clarifies that Centre City Planned District Ordinance regulations take priority when there is a conflict with other policy documents. | 156.0306 |
| | 12 | Downtown: Clarifying When Certain Processes Apply | The Centre City Planned District Ordinance requires further clarification about when certain development review processes apply to additions to existing structures. | Clarifies the applicable processes for additions to existing structures, helping applicants and staff consistently and effectively determine the regulations that apply to various development types. | 156.0308(b)(4) 156.0315(h)(1) |
| | 13 | Downtown: FAR Bonus Program Clarifications | The Downtown Floor Area Ratio Bonus programs require the recordation of covenant restrictions, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&R's) or an easement to ensure development meets all density bonus requirements. However, measures do not exist for cases where developments fail to meet the recorded requirements, causing the loss of public benefits or development amenities tied to the bonus. Additionally, the current formula for calculating density bonuses for affordable housing does not take into account other bonuses that use scaling factors instead of numeric values, which makes calculations difficult. Some Floor Area Ratio Bonus programs are not clearly named, making it difficult for staff to reference programs when working with applicants. | Codifies existing procedures requiring developments that earn a bonus but fail to maintain compliance to make a payment to the Floor Area Ratio Bonus Fund, supporting additional public amenities in the Downtown area; codifies existing practice for calculating affordable housing bonuses on downtown projects; adds names to previously unnamed Floor Area Ratio Bonus Programs to improve staff communication with applicants; and reorganizes existing section 156.0309(d)(11), splitting it into two sections, (13) and (15), to increase clarity. This amendment does not include any substantive changes to the bonuses. | 156.0309(d) 156.0309(d)(1)-(6) 156.0309(d)(8)-(10) 156.0309(d)(13) 156.0309(d)(15) |
| | 14 | Downtown: Greenway Bonus Clarification | The applicability of the Greenway density bonus is unclear, particularly whether it applies anywhere in the downtown area or only in locations specifically designated for a greenway in the Downtown Community Plan. | Clarifies that the Greenway density bonus is applicable to any development in the Downtown area that includes public improvements consistent with what is required for greenways. | 156.0309(d)(9) |
| | 15 | Downtown: Street Wall Exception for Pedestrian Entrances | The mandatory street wall requirements provide an exception for recessed entrances. The code does not specify the types of recessed entrances that are included in the exception. This can lead to confusion for applicants about how the regulations apply. | Clarifies that the street wall exception for recessed entrances only applies to recessed pedestrian entrances. | 156.0310(d)(1)(B)(iii) |

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| Clarifications | 16 | Downtown: Fill-Type Utility Lid Requirements | The materials used for lids for subsurface utility equipment beneath sidewalks are inconsistent throughout the downtown area, even though the Centre City Streetscape Manual currently requires the use of fill-type lids with materials that match adjacent sidewalk materials. This variation in sidewalk material detracts from the overall design of the public realm. | Codifies the existing Centre City Streetscape Manual requirements within the Centre City Planned District Ordinance and Gaslamp Quarter Planned District Ordinance by specifying that utilities need to utilize fill-type lids that match the surrounding sidewalk. It also provides a high-quality alternative for lids that are below a certain size and may not be able to incorporate upgraded paving materials. Requiring fill-type lids ensures a consistent sidewalks appearance, enhancing the pedestrian experience. | 156.0311(c) 157.0110(c)(1) |
| | * 17 | Downtown: Removing Non-Regulatory and Unnecessary Language | Sections 156.0311(k), 157.0102(b), and 157.0103 include nonregulatory text that adds unnecessary length to the Centre City and Gaslamp Quarter Planned District Ordinances. Additionally, Section 156.0315(j) contains outdated provisions for Social Service Institutions, Transitional Housing, and homeless facilities that are inconsistent with current citywide regulations, and Section 157.0105(a)(1) references itself for approval processes instead of the Citywide approval processes. | Removes nonregulatory language, consolidating Sections 156.0311(k), 157.0102(b), and 157.0103 into shorter and clearer sections. It also removes outdated provisions in Section 156.0315(j) and clarifies Section 157.0105(a)(1) to align the Downtown regulations with the citywide regulations. | 156.0311(k) 156.0315(j) 157.0102(b) 157.0103 157.0105(a)(1) |
| | 18 | Downtown: Live Entertainment Clarification | The regulations related to live entertainment require further clarification, particularly the distinctions between acoustic and non-acoustic performances, which creates confusion for applicants regarding what uses require a discretionary permit. | Clarifies the distinction between types of live entertainment that require a discretionary permit as amplified versus non-amplified. A discretionary permit is still required for amplified live entertainment. | 156.0315(c) |
| | 19 | Downtown: Programming Activities in Promenades | The current downtown regulations require further clarification regarding how an entity can permit multiple recurring activities within designated promenades. | Clarifies the process for obtaining a permit for multiple recurring activities hosted by the same entity within a designated promenade in both the Centre City Planned District and the Gaslamp Quarter Planned District. | 156.0315(c)(6) 157.0110(c)(2) |
| | * 20 | Downtown: Reorganizing Development Regulations | The existing development regulations in the Gaslamp Quarter Planned District Ordinance lack clarity regarding when they apply, which creates confusion for applicants and staff. | Reorganizes and clarifies the development regulations for the Gaslamp Quarter into distinct sections that clearly indicate when regulations apply to all sites, sites with no contributing historical resource, and sites with a contributing historical resource. No substantive changes are proposed as a part of this item. | 157.0106 157.0107 157.0108 157.0109 |

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| Clarifications | 21 | Downtown: Sidewalk Cafe and Streetary Design Regulations | The Gaslamp Quarter Design Guidelines and Streetary Design Regulations for sidewalk cafes and streetaries are not currently included in the Gaslamp Quarter Planned District Ordinance, which can create confusion for applicants and staff when trying to determine the applicable regulations for sidewalk cafes and streetaries in the Gaslamp Quarter. | Codifies the existing regulations for sidewalk cafes and streetaries from the Gaslamp Quarter Design Guidelines and Gaslamp Quarter Streetary Design Regulations into the Gaslamp Quarter Planned District Ordinance, making them easier to locate alongside the other regulations for the Gaslamp Quarter. | 157.0115 |
| Compliance with State Law | 22 | Downtown: Community Plan Minor Amendments | The Downtown Community Plan has not been amended to reflect adopted updates to the Centre City Planned District Ordinance or Gaslamp Quarter Planned District Ordinance, which has resulted in outdated references, maps, figures, or to reflect the dissolution of the Redevelopment Agency. | This amendment would provide consistency between the Downtown Community Plan and previously adopted updates to the Centre City Planned District Ordinance and Gaslamp Quarter Planned District Ordinance, as required under State law. This amendment would also remove outdated references and text, including references to redevelopment and CCDC and outdated graphs, pictures, and figures. This would amend the City's General Plan due to the Downtown Community Plan being a component of the General Plan. | Draft Downtown Community Plan |
| Corrections | * 23 | Downtown: Formatting, Reference, and Labeling Corrections | The Centre City Planned District Ordinance is missing complete references for uses within the Use Table and contains inconsistent labels to designate Limited Uses, sometimes identifying them with just an "L" and sometimes with an "L/N". The Centre City and Gaslamp Quarter PDOs also use defined terms which incorrectly lack italicization. | Updates the use table to ensure the accuracy of relevant references to applicable use regulations and make the labels for all limited uses consistent with the citywide format. Corrects a reference in section 156.0307(b)(7) that was not fixed when section numbering was changed in previous LDC amendments, and moves the placemaking on private property use to the separately regulated institutional section to match the citywide use table. Corrects instances where defined terms are not properly italicized. | 156.0307(b)(7) 156.0308(b)(2) 156.0308 - Table 156-0308-A 156.0308 - Table 156-0308-A Footnotes 3, 12, and 13 156.0309(b) 156.0309(d)(1)(B)(iv) 156.0309(d)(8)(A)-(C) 156.0309(d)(13) 156.0309(e) 156.0309(f) 156.0310(c) 156.0310(d)(1)(B)(v) and (vii) 156.0310(d)(1)(E) 156.0310(d)(3) 156.0310(e) 156.0310(g) 156.0310(j) 156.0311(h)(3) 156.0313(d) 156.0313(f) 156.0315(e) 157.0107(b) 157.0108(a) |
| | 24 | Downtown: Encroachments Clarification | The section "Other Projections" is unnecessary, as it only references citywide regulations for encroachments that apply regardless of their inclusion in the Centre City Planned District Ordinance. | Removes references to "Other Projections" Section to simplify and reduce the length of the Centre City Planned District Ordinance. | 156.0311(h)(3) |
| | 25 | Downtown: Use Table - Alignment with Citywide Code | The existing use table in the Gaslamp Quarter Planned District Ordinance includes outdated use categories that do not align with citywide land use regulations. | Updates the use categories in the Gaslamp Quarter Planned District Ordinance use table to align with the current citywide use categories. | 157.0110 - Table 157-0110-A |

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| Regulatory Reforms | * 26 | Downtown: Off-Site Alcoholic Beverage Sales | The Centre City and Gaslamp Quarter Planned District regulations limit when an establishment can receive exceptions from alcohol regulations for off-site sales; however exceptions are permitted on a case-by-case basis. Due to the absence of a defined process, this discourages grocery stores from locating in the Downtown area. In addition, the use of different terminology to describe establishments that sell alcohol for off-site consumption that is manufactured by the business (such as, brewpubs, brewpub tasting rooms, and brewery tasting rooms) creates confusion for applicants attempting to understand which regulations apply. | Provides a clear and defined process for large establishments, such as grocery stores, to obtain exceptions from specific off-site alcohol beverage sale restrictions. These exceptions include bottle sizes and hours of operation, and provide a limit on the amount of floor area dedicated to alcohol beverage sales while ensuring adequate security measures. In addition, the amendment consolidates the regulations for establishments that manufacture their own alcohol for off-site consumption under a single term, craft beverage producer. | 156.0302 Table 156-0308-A 156.0315(a) 156.0315(b) 157.0111(a) 157.0111(b) |
| | 27 | Downtown: Outdoor Activities | The use of private property for temporary community-focused uses in the Centre City Planned District Ordinance currently requires a discretionary permit, which creates barriers that discourages property owners to use these spaces for the benefit of the community. | Updates the definition and use regulations for outdoor activities, allowing them as a permitted use in all Centre City Planned District zones. Additionally, specifies that live entertainment within these spaces would continue to require a temporary use permit, including for placemaking on private property. | 156.0302 Table 156-0308-A 156.0310(h) 156.0315(e) |
| | 28 | Downtown: Transparency Alternative to Main Street Overlay | The Centre City Planned District Ordinance currently requires development on designated main streets to have active commercial uses on 80 percent of the ground-floor street frontage, with a limited exception for smaller lots. This requirement restricts businesses' ability to locate along main streets, leading to an increased number of vacant tenant spaces in locations intended to be the most active. | Provides greater flexibility to reduce the amount of space dedicated to active commercial uses, provided the development includes clear windows along most of the street facing building façade, providing views into the internal space. | 156.0307(b)(9) |
| | 29 | Downtown: Temporary Construction Yards | The Centre City Planned District requires applicants to obtain a Neighborhood Use Permit to operate a temporary construction yard, which adds additional processing time and costs to large development projects. | Allows temporary construction yards as a limited use to reduce the burden on developments, while still requiring the use to comply with specific provisions. | 156.0308 - Table 156-0308-A |
| | 30 | Downtown: Traffic Calming at Garage Entrances | Many driveways within the downtown area are steeply sloped, causing drivers to exit buildings at high speeds. This can negatively impact the pedestrian experience on sidewalks adjacent to these buildings. | Requires the installation of a speed-reducing measure (i.e., speed bump) on sloped driveways between the sidewalk and exit gates to ensure drivers slow down before crossing pedestrian walkways. | 156.0313(j) |
| | 31 | Downtown: Limiting Reductions in Sidewalk Area for Vehicle Loading | The Centre City Planned District Ordinance currently allows developments to move the curb line to accommodate passenger loading zones. This can lead to meandering sidewalks, where sidewalks do not continue in a straight line, forcing pedestrians to walk in a curved, side-to-side pattern. | Prohibits the movement of the curb line for the purposes of passenger loading areas. It also ensures that sidewalks do not meander, requiring a straight path in order to provide a positive pedestrian experience. | 156.0313(k) |
| | 32 | Downtown: Daytime Commercial Activation at Entertainment Venues | Many establishments that operate night clubs within the Gaslamp Quarter are only open at night, leaving storefronts closed and the streets inactive during the day. This detracts from the pedestrian experience within the Gaslamp Quarter. | Reduces the process level for live entertainment located entirely below the ground floor and for live entertainment that provides an active commercial use along the entire ground-floor façade from Process 3 to Process 2 in order to encourage more street-level, daytime activation. | 157.0111(c) |