

# ZONING CODE UPDATE

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

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*The new zoning system takes into account the metrics of traditional development in order for new homes to respond to context more appropriately.*



*Dealing with "mansionization" issues is one of the primary goals for the single family zones.*

## SERVICES:

- » Single Family Zoning Standards
- » Multi-family Zoning Standards
- » Transition Zoning Standards
- » Neighborhood Typologies
- » Case Studies
- » Modeling
- » Analysis

## CLIENT:

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City of Los Angeles

## DATE:

2013-Current

## re: code LA Zoning Code Update

The City of Los Angeles is currently updating their citywide zoning code, known as **re:code LA**. This 5-year planning project is led by Code Studio (Austin, TX). Winter & Company is responsible for all residential zone districts, as well as developing "transition" design standards for higher-intensity zones when they are directly adjacent to single family zones.

The re:code LA effort includes analyzing existing residential neighborhood character, classifying neighborhoods into typologies, and developing a series of case studies to understand where the existing zoning works and where it falls short. In the end, a new zoning system that aligns with potential policy goals of individual neighborhoods as well as regulatory tools that help maintain the traditional scale of residential neighborhoods will be developed.

Objectives for this work effort are:

- » Combine the existing residential requirements into a new zoning system that better reflects the diverse neighborhood character and future development goals.
- » Continue to protect historic resources and established neighborhoods.
- » Address negative impacts related to "mansionization" within single-family residential neighborhoods.
- » Enhance multi-family residential design standards.
- » Develop new standards for the "transition areas" between corridors and neighborhoods.
- » Retain the rural lifestyle in particular areas of the city.

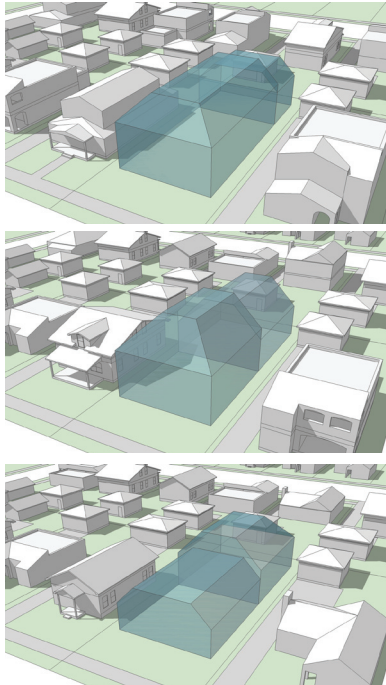


Numerous case studies of new residential development were used to illustrate the differences in what makes new development appropriate versus inappropriate.



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A range of bulk planes and other building and site design standards allow for a neighborhood to choose the condition that best suits them.



Issues include loss of front yard, excessive parking on street-facing facade, and overall mass and scale as viewed from the street and neighboring side yards.



Tall, long side walls that tower over neighboring properties and invade privacy is another issue.

### Single Family Zoning

The majority of the city's single family neighborhoods are zoned "R1." However, there are additional layers of Specific Plans and Overlay Zones making a total combination of 266 different zoning options for single family alone! This overly-simplistic "one-size-fits-all" does not provide predictability for the neighborhoods.

The new zoning system seeks to find a balance between simplicity and "right-size" zoning. It recognizes that individual neighborhoods will have different objectives for regulating new development. For example, some may want to restrict the overall size and scale of new homes so that they respect the traditional character while others may be okay with larger new homes being developed within certain parameters. The new system provides an array of single family zoning "flavors" within the base zones, which range from permissive to more restrictive.

Some key zoning parameters include:

- » A variety of "bulk planes" or "building envelopes" which restrict overall height and scale.
- » A variety of floor area ratios (FAR)
- » Cumulative side setbacks as a percentage of lot width
- » A series of "frontage packages" which dictate parking placement, entry location/form, and front massing.
- » Context-sensitive rules for sloping sites or hillside areas.

### R1 Zoning Strategy

Minimum Lot Size = 5,000 SF

R-1 Zones: Standard					R-1 Zones: Special		
	R1-A	R1-B	R1-C	R1-D	R1-E	R1-F	R1-G
OVERVIEW	Larger mass than current R1 (BMO); Very little articulation of massing	Mass is similar to current R1 (BMO) with modest reduction in FAR; Moderate articulation of massing	Moderate reduction in FAR; More articulation of massing	Further reduction in FAR; More articulation of massing	FAR same as R1-C; Lower mass in front; Taller mass located in rear	FAR same as R1-D; Lower mass throughout	Current BMO with same amendments
Design Standards							
BUILDING COVERAGE	40% - 50% (depends on lot size)				40% - 50% (depends on lot size)		
SETBACKS	Front: 20 ft. min. (or prevailing setback) Side: cumulative total: 20% of lot width Side, min.: 5 ft.				Front: 20 ft. min. (or prevailing setback) Side: cumulative total: 20% of lot width Side, min.: 5 ft.		
FAR max. (based on lot size)	Highest 55 - 65	Moderate 45 - 55	Standard 35 - 45	Lower 30 - 40	Standard 35 - 45	Lowest 30 - 40	Moderate 50
BUILDING ENVELOPE	Front & Rear Building Envelope				Front & Rear Building Envelope	Single Building Envelope	Single Building Envelope
	Taller mass in front, Lower mass in rear (limited depth)		Taller mass in front (limited depth), Lower mass in rear		Lower mass in front (limited depth), Taller mass in rear	Lower mass throughout	Taller mass in center of lot
HEIGHT (in stories)	Front envelope: 3 stories in center; 2 stories at perimeter Rear envelope: 2 stories in center; 1.5 stories at perimeter		Front envelope: 2 stories in center; 1.5 stories at perimeter Rear envelope: 1.5 stories		Front envelope: 1.5 stories Rear envelope: 2 stories in center; 1.5 stories at perimeter	1.5 stories throughout	Same as current BMO

Each zone district has standards for: lot criteria, building placement, bulk and mass, and activation.



# ZONING CODE UPDATE

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## HILLSIDE NEIGHBORHOODS

Hillside neighborhoods have specific standards relative to their unique sloping conditions. Some of the issues the new code deals with include: street presence, overall massing, basement FAR exclusions, height measurement, grading and retaining walls.



## CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

The base zoning strategy for single family zones includes an approach for potential conservation districts. The progressive array of base zones allows for conservation district areas to choose the base zone which fits them best. Then, the frontage packages are customized to fit each neighborhood. The frontage packages for Conservation Districts include additional "character-based" standards such as: front yard planting area, materials, roof form, etc.

## LOS ANGELES STATISTICS

- » 3.9 Million Inhabitants
- » 224 Languages Spoken
- » 95 Recognized Neighborhoods
- » 35 Community Plan Areas
- » 7 Planning Commissions
- » 16% City Zoned R1



## RESIDENTIAL TYPOLOGIES | GROUP A



### A.1 GRIDDED - UNIFORM MEDIAN LOTS

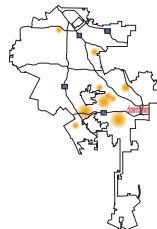
#### DESCRIPTION:

This typology consists of a common linear street grid with narrow, rectangular-shaped lots and no alley. Streets are a 60-foot R.O.W. with on-street parking. Lots are accessed via private, narrow driveways leading to detached garages in the rear of the lot. This pattern of driveways allows for separation between neighboring buildings. Buildings address the street with consistent setbacks and semi-private porches and entries facing the street.

This typology has a high degree of consistency. Typically developed in the 1920s, but spanning into the 1940s, the houses are of modest scale. Original construction sizes range from 1,200 to 1,800 square feet. Front yards are open and inviting while back yards are private.

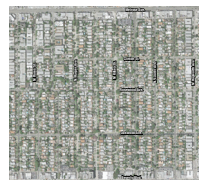
#### PREVALENT CHARACTERISTICS:

This typology is common throughout Los Angeles. Many of these neighborhoods are experiencing substantial built development while others remain quite stable. Therefore, it will be important to consider a wide range of development trends and options when developing standards in this typology.

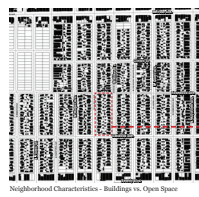


#### NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS:

**STREET PATTERN:** Linear grid  
**TOPOGRAPHY:** Flat/Minor Topography  
**BLOCK WIDTH:** 200-300 feet  
**STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY:** 60 feet  
**SEWALLES:** Detached  
**SETBACKS:** 15-25 feet (front)  
**CONSISTENCY LEVEL:** High  
**TRANSITION TYPE:** Medium (low-scale comm. corridor)



Neighborhood Characteristics - Aerial Photograph



Neighborhood Characteristics - Buildings vs. Open Space

#### SITE/LOT CHARACTERISTICS:

**LOT SIZE:** 5,000 - 8,000 square feet  
**LOT SHAPE:** Rectilinear (corner lots/curb cuts)  
**LOT ORIENTATION:** Narrow side facing street  
**LOT WIDTH:** 40-55 feet  
**LOT COVERAGE:** High  
**LOT ACCESS:** Driveway  
**BUILDING PLACEMENT:** Very uniform  
**GARAGE:** Detached



Original Structures  
Front Setback Pattern  
Auto Access  
Lot Characteristic Diagram

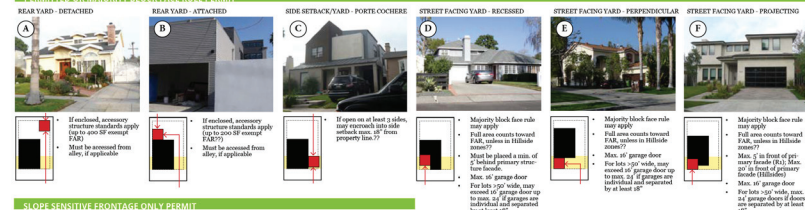
#### BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS:

**CONSTRUCTION ERA:** 1900-1940s (mainly 1920s)  
**ORIG. BUILDING SIZE:** 1,200-1,800 square feet  
**FLOOR AREA RATIO:** 0.25 - 0.40 FAR  
**BUILDING HEIGHT:** 1 and 2 stories  
**SIDE WALL VS. LOT LENGTH:** approx. 40-60%  
**FRONT WALL VS. LOT WIDTH:** approx. 60-70%  
**ROOF FORM:** Hip & Gable  
**PORCH/ENTRY:** Street-facing

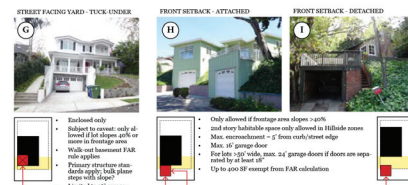


Single family neighborhood typologies were identified throughout Los Angeles. These typologies display the current state of development, and identify specific characteristics such as lot and block sizes, building orientation, location of parking, and more.

#### PERMITTED OR MAJORITY BLOCK FACE RULE PERMIT



#### SLOPE SENSITIVE FRONTAGE ONLY PERMIT



#### THREE TYPICAL FRONTAGE PACKAGES

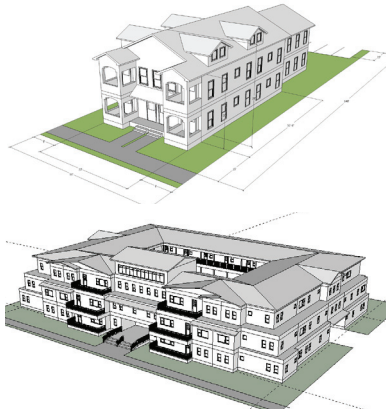


Frontage packages are being developed, which seek to establish context-sensitive standards for how a new home appears from the street and how it fits in with established neighborhoods. For example, some neighborhoods may want to restrict street-facing garages because the traditional parking pattern is to locate a detached garage in the rear of a property. Frontage packages allow these additional elements to be controlled within the base zoning structure.



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*The process toward arriving at final design standards included modeling various building types in order to understand ideal massing, scale, and proportions.*



*The new standards require parking to be subordinate to the primary structure.*



*The new standards encourage buildings to address the street with transparency and entry requirements.*



*The new standards address transitioning to single family zones with compatible uses and buffering.*

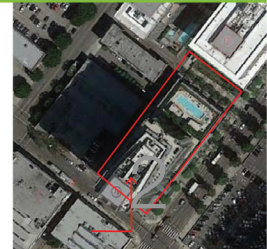
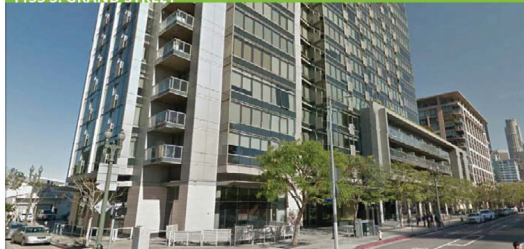
### Multi-Family Zoning and Transitions

Multi-family zones are generally located in between single family zones and commercial zones - though they are often mixed into commercial corridors and higher intensity arterials throughout the city. Demand for multifamily housing choices are increasing in Los Angeles, especially as home prices continue to rise.

Key objectives for multifamily zones include applying design standards that:

- » Provide a friendly street edge
- » Address access and parking,
- » Encourage building articulation, and
- » Sensitive transition into single family zones

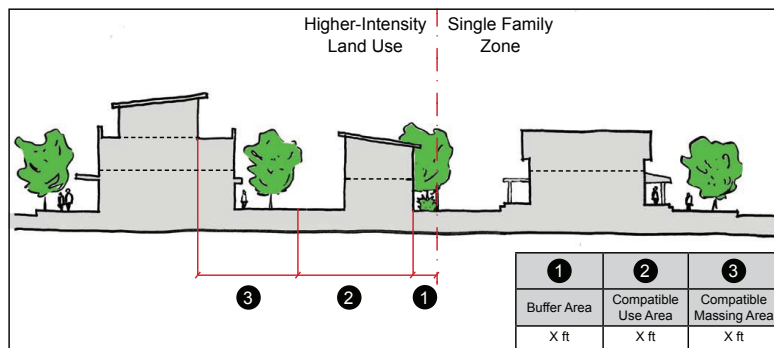
#### 1155 S. GRAND STREET



#### STATISTICS

- » Lot Size = 51,682 square feet
- » Lot Width = 355 feet
- » Lot Depth = 145 feet
- » Building Coverage = approx. 100%
- » Building Size= Approx. 400,000 square feet; 311 Units
- » Building Height = 100+ feet
- » FAR = 7.8
- » Parking = Below grade/adjacent parking garage
- » Side Wall Length = 130 feet
- » Front Setback = 0 feet
- » Side Setbacks = 0 feet min.
- » Rear Setback = 0 feet
- » Transition Type = Abuts high density office, mixed use and retail, no buffering
- » Typical Zoning = R5

*Case studies of on-the-ground examples were used to analyze building forms, FAR, parking, setbacks, and more.*



*A preliminary transitions diagram showing two transition areas: one for "compatible uses" and one for "buffer area".*