

# FACT SHEET

## Increasing Transparency on Council Time Extensions Ordinance

CPC-2024-6096-CA  
ENV-2024-6097-CE  
CF 22-0736


### Summary

In response to instructions from the City Council, the Los Angeles City Planning Department (LACP) has prepared the Increasing Transparency on Council Time Extensions Ordinance (Proposed Ordinance). As instructed by the City Council motion in Council File ([CF](#)) No. [22-0736](#), the Proposed Ordinance amends both Chapters 1 and 1A of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to define a “high value development project” and limit the duration and number of time extensions the City Council and applicant may consent to for the City Council’s time to act on any application for high value development projects, including appeals, and all California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) appeals.

### Background

On August 19, 2020, the City Council introduced three motions aimed at reforming the land use approval process and outcomes in response to concerns over the legislative process. Generally, the motions aimed to explore:

1. updating zoning throughout the City, addressed separately through the Housing Element processes ([CF 20-1042](#)),
2. the pathway for approval of high value development projects ([CF 20-1044](#)) and,
3. increased transparency in the approval process of projects ([CF 20-1045](#)).



On June 17, 2022, LACP provided a report back found in [CF 22-0736](#), that analyzed the second and third motions. Council File No. [20-1044](#) explored differentiating between projects of a certain “value” and providing an alternative approval pathway for certain projects with the intent of avoiding undue influence; and [CF 20-1045](#) discussed the idea of providing more clarity on the development process, focusing on transparency and a faster path to development of much needed housing within the City. The report back provided several recommendations, including potential criteria of a high value development project, as well as clarity on how the City Council can impose limits on the length and number of time extensions available for the Council’s consideration of such projects. Additionally, the report back provided an update on the Processes and Procedures Ordinance (Ordinance No. 188,076), its potential for increasing transparency in the development review process, and how required findings ensure that projects receiving approval are in the public interest or otherwise adhere to established City policies.

On June 28, 2024, in response to the report back, the City Council adopted an amended motion, instructing LACP to prepare and present an ordinance to amend Section 13A.2.5.A.2 of Chapter 1A of the LAMC to limit the delegation of Council’s authority to consent to extensions of time for Council to act on high value development projects, inclusive of the definition proposed in the LACP report back, as well as all CEQA appeals. The Proposed Ordinance has been prepared in response to the Council instruction in CF [22-0736](#).


## Key Provisions

Some key features of the Proposed Ordinance include the following:

1. Adding a definition for “high value development project” to Section 12.03 in Article 2 of Chapter 1 and Article 14 of Chapter 1A of the LAMC.

For purposes of **Chapter 1**, a **high value development project** is defined as new construction that exceeds any of the following criteria:

- 500 Dwelling Units or Guest Rooms; or
- 250,000 square feet of Floor Area of office use; or
- 500,000 square feet of Floor Area of any other commercial use; or
- 650,000 square feet of Floor Area of manufacturing or industrial use; or
- Any combination of the above uses or any new construction which requires a Water Supply Assessment pursuant to the California Water



Code as determined by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).

For purposes of **Chapter 1A**, a ***high value development project*** is defined as new construction that exceeds any of the following criteria:

- 500 dwelling units or lodging units; or
- 250,000 square feet of floor area of office use; or
- 500,000 square feet of floor area of any other general commercial use or heavy commercial use; or
- 650,000 square feet of floor area of light industrial use or heavy industrial use; or
- Any combination of the above uses or any new construction which requires a Water Supply Assessment pursuant to the California Water Code as determined by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).

2. Ensuring that the duration and number of time extensions the City Council can consent to before making a decision on any application for high value development projects, including appeals, and all CEQA appeals are limited to up to three times of 120 days each for a maximum total of 360 days. The City Council must render a decision on a high value development project application, including appeals, and/or all CEQA appeals prior to the expiration of the time extension(s).

## Public Participation and Next Steps

Planning staff released a draft Proposed Ordinance on March 20, 2025 for public comment. A virtual webinar and public hearing will be held prior to the City Planning Commission (CPC) meeting which is tentatively scheduled for May 22, 2025.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### **Why are time limitations being imposed on high value development projects and not other types of projects?**


Projects that are large in scale involve a significant amount of time, resources and costs to obtain necessary approvals from the City, including legislative entitlements. Additionally, this type of project can be worth a significant amount of money and have citywide impacts. For these reasons, high value projects can be prone to a lengthened process. Furthermore, this type of project is not currently defined in the LAMC and goes through various processes and procedures based on the requested entitlement. As such, the City Council instructed DCP to develop criteria to determine what type of project is considered a high value development project and limit the maximum number of days the City Council can have to act on applications for such projects so as to bring the project to a decision within a set and not to exceed timeframe.

### **Why are these changes being made and how will this increase transparency?**

Currently, the LAMC does not establish a limit on the duration and/or number of extensions that an applicant and the City Council can mutually consent to for the time to act on entitlement applications and all CEQA appeals. Unless it is explicitly prescribed for a specific entitlement, extensions by mutual consent do not have time limits. This makes the project's timeline for an approval or denial unclear and uncertain, creating the potential for delays and/or undue influence. Per the City Council's instructions, the proposed Ordinance would limit the duration and number of time extensions the City Council and applicant may consent to for the City Council's time to act on any application for a high value development project and all CEQA appeals, thereby creating a more clear and transparent process and providing the public a forum for public input on decisions.

### **Why are there two definitions for High Value Development Projects?**

Two definitions of high value development projects are added to Section 12.03 in Article 2 in Chapter 1, and Article 14 in Chapter 1A of the LAMC, because currently, the City has two zoning codes, Chapter 1 and Chapter 1A. Chapter 1 is the original zoning code,



and Chapter 1A is the new zoning code that was adopted by the City Council in December 2024 and became operative in January 2025. The zoning codes contain terms that are defined differently but ultimately reference similar things. For example, the term floor area is defined in both Chapter 1 and Chapter 1A. Due to this nuance, there had to be a separate definition for High Value Development Projects in Chapter 1 and Chapter 1A to ensure that properties that are subject to Chapter 1 follow the defined terms in Chapter 1, whereas properties that are subject to Chapter 1A follow the defined terms in Chapter 1A.

### **How do I know which High Value Development Project definition to use for my project?**


If your property is zoned pursuant to Chapter 1 of the LAMC, the proposed project is subject to the high value development project definition for Chapter 1. If your property is zoned pursuant to Chapter 1A of the LAMC, the proposed project would utilize the Chapter 1A definition for a high value development project.

### **Where in the LAMC will the changes be made?**

Amendments will be made to Section 12.03 in Article 2 of Chapter 1 and Articles 13 and 14 in Chapter 1A of the LAMC. Procedural changes related to the maximum three time extensions of 120 days for high value development projects and all CEQA appeals will be reflected in Divisions 13A.2. (General Procedural Elements) and 13B.11 (California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Provisions) in Article 13 (Administration). The definition of a high value development project will be included in Section 12.03 in Article 2 (Specific Planning - Zoning - Comprehensive Zoning Plan) of Chapter 1 and Article 14 (General Rules) of Chapter 1A of the LAMC.

### **How do I know if my project will be subject to the changes made by the Proposed Ordinance?**

A proposed project would be subject to the provisions in the Proposed Ordinance if: (1) the project meets the definition of a high value development project and is subject to a decision by the City Council; or (2) the project's CEQA clearance has been appealed to the City Council.



Please note that if the proposed project is a high value development project, any legislative entitlement or an appeal of other entitlements that requires a decision by the City Council within a prescribed time-to-act period pursuant to the LAMC is subject to the time extension limitations set forth in the Proposed Ordinance.

Under Article 13 (Administration) of the LAMC Chapter 1A, there is an entitlement process summary table ([Table 2 - Process Summary](#)) that states which entitlements are subject to a decision by the City Council either for legislative approval or an appeal. While Table 2 - Process Summary, provides an overview of all entitlements and decision making bodies, it is to be used as a guidance tool. LACP strongly encourages applicants to review the detailed process and procedures outlined in the entitlement section in Part 13B of Article 13.

An applicant may be subject to the Proposed Ordinance based on following scenarios:

#### **Scenario 1**

1. Determine which zoning code (Chapter 1 or Chapter 1A) the project site is subject to.
2. Determine if the proposed project is a high value development project per the applicable definition in the Proposed Ordinance.
3. Review Table 2 - Process Summary in Section 13A.2.2. (Process Elements) of Chapter 1A of LAMC, to determine if the project needs to be heard by the City Council for legislative approval or an appeal.
4. If the proposed project is a high value development project that is subject to a Council decision, please note that the maximum duration and number of time extensions that the City Council and/or an application may consent to is limited to three 120-day extensions for a total of 360 days.

#### **Scenario 2**

1. The proposed project has a CEQA appeal. Please note that the proposed project does not need to be a high value development project if there is a CEQA appeal.