

Frequently Asked Questions

Zoning Improvement Program for Housing (ZIP)

Housing Element Implementation

Is ZIP required by state housing law?

Every jurisdiction in California must keep an adopted, State-certified Housing Element to demonstrate enough zoning capacity to meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). West Hollywood's 6th-Cycle Housing Element (2021-2029) was certified in 2023 and includes programs that require the City to monitor RHNA progress and evaluate additional strategies if the City is not on track. ZIP is the City's local planning effort to study and recommend those zoning and incentive strategies. The Housing Element explicitly requires the City to monitor progress in 2024 and devise new tools (like ZIP) within six months if we're off-track. At the current rate of housing development, the City is forecasted to fall short of providing all income RHNA housing categories. ZIP is also directly derived from Housing Element objectives that were reviewed and adopted by the City Council. ZIP is not a state-written rezoning program; it is the City's own Housing Element implementation effort.

Would ZIP change zoning in lower-density neighborhoods?

The Housing Element only directs staff to study whether additional density could work in low-density districts; any change would return to the Planning Commission and City Council for public hearings. No zoning map amendments have been proposed, presented, or adopted yet. ZIP is evaluating housing choices citywide, but any future changes would come back through a public process with Planning Commission and City Council review.

How tall and how dense could new buildings be?

ZIP is still in the technical analysis and policy development phase. Staff are testing building prototypes and financial feasibility before proposing any numbers relating to the scale or density of buildings. Staff anticipates presenting a comprehensive policy report to the Planning Commission and City Council in summer 2026. After policy direction is received, work would move into preparation of General Plan and zoning amendments and environmental review in fall 2026 through spring 2027, followed by formal hearings beginning in summer 2027.

How is ZIP addressing parking, traffic, and mobility?

Parking strategy is under study along with traffic, walkability, and transit access. Community feedback has flagged both the desire to reduce car dependence and concerns about spill-over parking; those trade-offs are being analyzed. Parking requirements are already shaped in part by state law, and ZIP is evaluating these issues alongside broader questions about mobility, access to transit, neighborhood amenities, and project feasibility.

What about affordable housing—does ZIP help or hurt?

Creating more deed-restricted affordable units is a core goal. ZIP's guiding principles emphasize "Affordability & Accessibility" and the program is evaluating incentive structures that can better support affordable housing and other community benefits. Existing Housing Element policies already require inclusionary set-asides, and ZIP also remains the City's main tool for coordinating zoning strategy with affordability requirements and local housing programs.

How will ZIP prevent displacement?

Every zoning scenario is being tested with an equity and anti-displacement lens. Strategies under review include preserving rent-stabilized buildings, enhanced "no-net-loss" replacement requirements, and focusing new density in high-opportunity areas. The program's stated approach is to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing where possible, evaluate replacement requirements, and consider how future housing opportunities are distributed across the city.

Why not just build on commercial corridors?

Focusing future growth on commercial corridors is already a core element of ZIP. Community members showed strong support for locating the highest densities along transit corridors such as Santa Monica Blvd., La Brea, Fairfax, and La Cienega. Staff are evaluating how much RHNA capacity those areas can accommodate before considering infill elsewhere. At the same time, community perspectives were mixed about how much additional density is appropriate in existing single-family and lower-density areas, so ZIP is studying both corridor-focused growth and broader citywide housing choices.

Is community input actually shaping ZIP?

Yes. ZIP's engagement plan has two large phases; Phase 1 included workshops, surveys, pop-ups, presentations, and targeted outreach to groups historically underrepresented in civic affairs, including low-income residents, older adults, and non-English-speaking residents. At least 368 community members participated in Phase 1 outreach, including 103 workshop participants and 265 survey responses, with 72 non-English responses. That community input is being used alongside the City's technical analysis as staff prepares recommendations for policy discussion.

Will property values drop and neighborhood character be lost?

ZIP does not require the redevelopment of property nor obligate property owners to take any action. The City is studying what zoning changes, objective standards, and neighborhood transitions may be appropriate in different parts of West Hollywood. Community feedback has shown support for more housing along commercial corridors, while also raising concerns about preserving neighborhood character, minimizing displacement, and ensuring context-sensitive design.

What is SB 79, and when does it take effect?

SB 79 is a state law that establishes minimum zoning standards for eligible housing development projects in qualifying transit-oriented development zones in urban transit counties. It takes effect on July 1, 2026. In West Hollywood, the practical local effect of SB 79 still depends on state guidance and regional mapping that is expected in June 2026.

Does the recent K Line action automatically change zoning around future station areas in West Hollywood?

No. The K Line Locally Preferred Alternative is an important planning milestone, but it does not by itself determine parcel-level SB 79 applicability in West Hollywood. The controlling question is whether future stops meet SB 79's definitions and how they are reflected in SCAG's official mapping prepared under HCD guidance.

Does SB 79 replace ZIP?

No. SB 79 is a state baseline where it applies; it is not a full local zoning program. ZIP remains West Hollywood's main vehicle for modernizing development standards and incentive programs citywide, coordinating local affordability requirements, and planning proactively for future station areas.

Would SB 79 apply to every parcel near a future station?

Not necessarily. SB 79 use in West Hollywood would likely concentrate on underutilized non-residential sites and residential sites that do not require demolition of tenant-occupied rent- or price-controlled housing. Even where SB 79 zones overlap lower-intensity residential areas, projects must still meet SB 79's minimum thresholds, which may limit feasibility on sites.

What's next and how can I stay involved?

- **Summer 2026:** Planning Commission and City Council review of recommended ZIP policy choices. Council provides policy direction to staff.
- **Fall 2026 through Spring 2027:** Staff prepares necessary General Plan amendments, zoning amendments, and environmental review.
- **Summer 2027:** Public hearings are conducted before the Planning Commission and City Council on the completed legislative package.

Stay informed: follow the Engage WeHo ZIP page for updates, meeting materials, and future opportunities to participate. <https://engage.weho.org/zip>

