



# City of San Bernardino

Community and Economic Development Department | Planning Division

**Date:** July 7, 2022

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of a Public Scoping Meeting for the Downtown San Bernardino Specific Plan

**To:** State Clearinghouse, State Responsible Agencies, State Trustee Agencies, Other Public Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Persons

**Lead Agency:** City of San Bernardino  
Community and Economic Development – Planning Division  
201 North E Street, 3rd Floor  
San Bernardino, CA 92401  
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Contact: Oliver Mujica, Planning Division Manager  
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**Notice of Preparation:** This is to notify public agencies and the public that the City of San Bernardino, as Lead Agency, will prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) for the Downtown San Bernardino Specific Plan (referred to as the “proposed project”). The City is interested in the input and/or comments of public agencies and the public as to the scope and content of the environmental information that should be evaluated in the EIR. Public agencies will need to use the EIR prepared by the City when considering applicable permits, or other approvals for the proposed project.

**Project Title:** Downtown San Bernardino Specific Plan

**Regional Location:** City of San Bernardino in San Bernardino County (See Figure 1)

**Project Location:** Downtown San Bernardino – east of Interstate 215 to Sierra Way, and from 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the railroad tracks south of Rialto Avenue (approximate boundaries).

**Public Comment Period:** July 13, 2022 through August 11, 2022

**Scoping Meeting:** July 25, 2022. Starting at 6:00 PM, the City of San Bernardino Community and Economic Development Department will conduct an in-person public scoping meeting to solicit input and comments from public agencies and the general public on the scope of the proposed EIR for the Downtown San Bernardino Specific Plan.

**This public scoping meeting will be held:**

- In-Person at Board Room, 201 North E Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92401

The scoping meeting will include a presentation describing the proposed Downtown San Bernardino Specific Plan, followed by an opportunity for members of the public to comment on environmental topics which should be analyzed in the EIR.

Additional information about the proposed project is available at the following City webpage:

<https://futuresb2050.com>

A copy of the Notice of Preparation is available for review online at: [https://www.sbcity.org/city\\_hall/community\\_economic\\_development/planning/environmental\\_documents](https://www.sbcity.org/city_hall/community_economic_development/planning/environmental_documents)

**Comment Period:** Consistent with the time limits mandated by State law, your input, comments, or responses must be received in writing and sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 5:00 PM on August 11, 2022.

**Comments/Input:** Please send your input, comments, or responses (including the name for a contact person in your agency, if applicable) to:

Attn: Oliver Mujica, Planning Division Manager

City of San Bernardino Department of Community and Economic Development/Planning Division

201 North E Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

San Bernardino, CA 92401

[Mujica\\_Ol@sbcity.org](mailto:Mujica_Ol@sbcity.org)

**If sending input, comments, or responses via email, please write “Downtown San Bernardino Specific Plan NOP Comment” in the subject line.**

**PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING USES**

The proposed project encompasses approximately 621 acres in the Downtown San Bernardino Area (hereby referred to as “Specific Plan Area”). The Specific Plan Area is located east of Interstate 215 to Sierra Way, and from 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the railroad tracks south of Rialto Avenue. Existing uses in the Specific Plan Area include residential, commercial, office, public facilities, industrial, and parks. Figure 2, *Existing General Plan Land Use Designations*, and Figure 3, *Existing Zoning Designations*, show the existing land use and zoning designations for the Specific Plan Area.

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The following are project objectives for the Specific Plan. The plan is envisioned to be a place where there is:

- A concentration of jobs in the public and private sector provides many high-paying career paths for residents in professional, high-tech, and clean industries.
- Arts and culture thrive with unique programming, performances, and events.
- Once empty streets are busy with people drawn to unique shops, outdoor dining, breweries, food halls, and food pop-ups.
- Streets, paseos, and alleys offer safe and convenient ways for people to get around while visiting, working, or living in the Downtown.
- The restoration and reuse of buildings and places of historical or cultural significance, including the Harris Building and the Enterprise Building, have brought back some of the glamour of the early twentieth century.
- New housing options for all household sizes, types, and income levels match the demands of the jobs in the Downtown area.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Downtown San Bernardino Specific Plan envisions the area to be the go-to urban center of the Inland Empire for working, living, socializing, shopping, dining, entertainment, and cultural pastimes. Much of the area is already developed so the Specific Plan includes reuse of existing buildings as well as demolition and replacement of buildings to meet the intent of the Specific Plan. Table 1 shows the extent of existing development and the proposed new development resulting from full development of the Specific Plan.

**Table 1 Existing and Proposed Development by Area**

	Existing Residential Units to Remain	Proposed Residential Units	TOTAL	Existing Non-Residential Square Footage to Remain	Proposed Non-Residential Square Footage	TOTAL
<b>North Residential</b>	776	952	<b>1,728</b>	1,146,787	131,704	<b>1,278,490</b>
<b>North Gateway</b>	173	1,505	<b>1,678</b>	392,335	409,812	<b>802,148</b>
<b>Freeway Commercial</b>	24	44	<b>68</b>	89,279	156,805	<b>246,084</b>
<b>Transit Neighborhood</b>	342	5,872	<b>6,214</b>	310,781	3,288,686	<b>3,599,467</b>
<b>Downtown Core</b>	0	3,768	<b>3,768</b>	1,219,479	4,689,452	<b>5,908,931</b>
<b>County Center</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	551,547	1,057,332	<b>1,608,879</b>
<b>County Mixed-Use Campus</b>	0	1,184	<b>1,184</b>	25,983	662,979	<b>688,961</b>
<b>Rail Adjacent</b>	0	262	<b>262</b>	71,595	854,961	<b>926,556</b>
<b>Transit Center</b>	0	607	<b>607</b>	32,663	528,784	<b>561,447</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,315</b>	<b>14,194</b>	<b>15,509</b>	<b>3,840,449</b>	<b>11,780,515</b>	<b>15,620,963</b>

The proposed Land Use Districts within the Downtown Specific Plan boundaries include the following (see Figure 4, *Proposed Land Use Districts*):

- **North Residential** – These two neighborhoods are located at the northwest and northeast corner of the Specific Plan Area. Compatible infill development of modestly sized, 2- to 3-story residential buildings is the expected future, in addition to the conservation of existing residential uses, especially owner-occupied units.
- **North Gateway** – This district encompasses properties fronting E and D Street between 8<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The future vision for this district includes 4- to 5-story mixed-use structures and residential infill that promote pedestrian activity along E and D Streets.
- **Freeway Commercial** – This district accommodates various auto-oriented businesses such as the Fairview Ford Dealership, carwashes, and drive-through fast-food restaurants that benefit from immediate proximity to the I-215 freeway and the freeway on-off-ramps at 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The future vision for this district is to maintain and expand current auto-oriented uses.
- **Transit Neighborhood** – As this area re-develops, big-box retail with surface parking lots will be replaced with 4- to 8-story mixed-use neighborhoods with an emphasis on residential and mixed-use.
- **Downtown Core** – The future of the Downtown Core includes proposing additional mixed-use with an emphasis on residential; high-rise buildings are encouraged. The Downtown Core would also include a theatre district, restaurants, and retail.

- **County Center** – This district would propose consolidation of County facilities per the County Master Plan to better service the public.
- **County Mixed-Use Campus** – Overlooking both Meadowbrook Park to the south and Secombe Lake to the north, this campus will be built out with 4- to 6-story mixed-use buildings according to a coordinated master plan.
- **Rail Adjacent** – As Downtown develops, this district will maintain an industrial character, but transition from heavy industry to both office and artisan-type manufacturing such as breweries that will both enhance the Downtown and accept rail-adjacencies. Residential is permitted in this district with conditions.
- **Transit Center** – While much of the land in this district is dedicated to transportation uses—rail platforms, bus-layovers, kiss-n-ride drop-offs—other platforms will be improved with transit-supporting developments, including 4- to 6-story transit-supportive development adjacent to the Transit Center. Enhancing pedestrian connections from transit stations to the surrounding downtown is one of the primary goals of this district.

The proposed land use districts would become the new land use designations and zoning districts for all development within the Specific Plan Area (see Figure 4).

As shown in Table 2, the proposed project would result in the net addition of up to 14,194 residential units and 11,780,515 square feet of non-residential development in the Specific Plan Area by 2050. Table 1, *Proposed Development by Area*, shows the proposed breakdown of residential units and non-residential square feet of development.

**TABLE 2          PROPOSED NEW DEVELOPMENT BY DISTRICT AREA**

<b>DISTRICT AREA</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL UNITS</b>	<b>NON-RESIDENTIAL SQUARE FOOTAGE</b>
North Residential	952	131,704
North Gateway	1,505	409,812
Freeway Commercial	44	156,805
Transit Neighborhood (including Mall)	5,872	3,288,686
Downtown Core (including Mall)	3,768	4,689,452
County Center	0	1,057,332
County Mixed-Use Campus	1,184	662,979
Rail Adjacent	262	854,961
Transit Center	607	528,784
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,194</b>	<b>11,780,515</b>

## AREAS OF POTENTIAL IMPACT

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15128 allows environmental issues, for which there is no likelihood of significant impact, to be “scoped out” and not analyzed further in the EIR. Given the urban nature of the Specific Plan Area, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact on several environmental topics. This EIR will evaluate the following environmental topics.

ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS	EVALUATED IN EIR	NOT EVALUATED IN EIR
Aesthetics	X	
Agriculture and Forestry		X
Air Quality	X	
Biological Resources	X	
Cultural Resources	X	
Energy	X	
Geology and Soils		X
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	X	
Hazardous Materials	X	
Hydrology/Water Quality	X	
Land Use/Planning	X	
Mineral Resources		X
Noise	X	
Population/Housing	X	
Public Services	X	
Parks and Recreation	X	
Transportation	X	
Tribal Cultural Resources	X	
Utilities/Service Systems	X	
Wildfire		X

As shown in Figure 3, the entire Specific Plan Area is surrounded by other urban development of the City. There is no agriculture or forestry land use within, or adjacent to the proposed project. As the project area is developed, the soils are suitable for urban land use, and all development will be connected to water and wastewater systems. There is no opportunity for a mine or extraction of mineral resources within the proposed project area. While the wildland urban interface is important for the City overall, the proposed project is within the geographic center of the City and not prone to wildfire. Therefore, these issues will not be discussed in the EIR.

## REQUESTED ACTIONS

This section presents the discretionary and ministerial actions that would be required to implement the proposed project.

### Discretionary Approvals

Implementation of the proposed project would require the following entitlements from the City of San Bernardino:

- Certification of the EIR. Before the City can approve the proposed project, the City must certify that the EIR was completed in compliance with the requirements of CEQA, that the decision-making body has reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgement of the City of San Bernardino.
- General Plan Amendment. The Downtown San Bernardino Specific Plan is the General Plan land use for the downtown area with the specific plan land uses and policies incorporated by reference in the General Plan and would require a General Plan Amendment.
- Downtown Specific Plan. The project includes adoption of the Downtown San Bernardino Specific Plan.
- Zoning Ordinance Amendment. Adopt the Zoning Ordinance amendments and additions to reflect the new land use districts as the zoning classifications for the Specific Plan area.

### Ministerial Permits

Implementation of the proposed project would require ministerial permits from the City of San Bernardino, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Demolition permits for any future redevelopment applications for buildings that are not historic or more than 45 years old.
- Administrative Design Review for projects that meet all Design Review standards and do not require any kind of discretionary action or interpretation.
- Encroachment Permit for any construction within the public rights-of-way.