



Item #:

Meeting Date: 10/20/2026

TITLE: CITY OF COSTA MESA NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE WE ALL BELONG PROPOSED ZONING CODE AMENDMENT, ZONING MAP UPDATE, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF CITYWIDE MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED-USE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS, AND REPEALING OF URBAN PLANS; PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER OVERRULING THE ORANGE COUNTY AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION'S DETERMINATION THAT THE NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE WE ALL BELONG ZONING UPDATES AND HOUSING ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE JOHN WAYNE AIRPORT ENVIRONS LAND USE PLAN; CERTIFY THE NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE WE ALL BELONG ZONING UPDATES AND HOUSING ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION FINAL PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT; AMENDMENTS TO THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS OF THE COSTA MESA GENERAL PLAN: CIRCULATION, COMMUNITY DESIGN, LAND USE, NOISE, AND OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION; RE-ADOPT THE HOUSING ELEMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN; AND AMENDMENTS TO THE NEWPORT BOULEVARD SPECIFIC PLAN, NORTH COSTA MESA SPECIFIC PLAN, AND ONE METRO WEST SPECIFIC PLAN (PCTY-26-0004)

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT / ADVANCED PLANNING AND HOUSING DIVISION

PRESENTED BY: MICHELLE HALLIGAN, SENIOR PLANNER; ANNA MCGILL, ADVANCED PLANNING MANAGER; CATHY TANG SAEZ, DUDEK

CONTACT INFORMATION: MICHELLE HALLIGAN, SENIOR PLANNER, (714) 754-5608

RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends the City Council:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 2026-XX titled "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Costa Mesa, California, overruling the Orange County Airport Land Use Commission's Determination that the City of Costa Mesa's Neighborhoods Where We All Belong Zoning Updates and Housing Element Implementation is inconsistent with the John Wayne Airport Environs Land Use Plan;" and
2. Adopt Resolution No. 2026-XX titled "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Costa Mesa, California, Certifying the Final Program Environmental Impact Report and Adopting Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Neighborhoods Where We All Belong Zoning Updates and Housing Element Implementation;" and
3. Introduce Ordinance No. 2026-XX titled "An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Costa Mesa, California, Amending Several Chapters, Articles, and Sections of the City's Zoning Code, Chapter I, Article 2, Chapter II, Chapter III, Chapter V, Article 1, 2, 2.5, 5.5, 6, and 9, Chapter

VI, Article 1 and 2, Chapter VII, Chapter VIII, Article 3, Chapter IX, Article 21, Chapter XII, Article 4, Chapter XIII, and repealing and replacing Chapter IV Citywide Land Use Matrix, Chapter V Development Standards, Article 11 Mixed-Use Overlay District, and Chapter IX Special Land Use Regulations, Article 4 Density Bonuses and Other Incentives, and Amend the Zoning Map.”

4. Adopt Resolution No. 2026-XX titled “A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Costa Mesa, California, Amending the Land Use, Circulation, Community Design, Noise, and Open Space and Recreation Elements of the General Plan, Amending the Newport Boulevard Specific Plan, North Costa Mesa Specific Plan, and One Metro West Specific Plan; and Re-Adopting the Housing Element (Previously Adopted on September 1, 2026);”
5. Adopt Resolution No. 2026-XX titled “A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Costa Mesa, California, Establishing Citywide Multifamily Residential and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards;” and
6. Adopt Resolution No. 2026-XX titled “A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Costa Mesa, California, Repealing the SoBECA, 19 West, Mesa West Bluffs, and Mesa West Bluffs Residential Ownership Urban Plans.”

BACKGROUND:

Neighborhoods Where We All Belong (NWWAB) is the City of Costa Mesa’s multifaceted initiative to:

- Comply with State-mandated housing regulations.
- Implement the Housing Element.
- Implement Measure K.
- Address the City Council’s goal to “diversify, stabilize and increase housing to reflect community needs.”

The City’s adopted Housing Element is a State-mandated strategic blueprint for addressing Costa Mesa’s existing and projected housing needs through 2029. The Housing Element describes housing characteristics, establishes housing programs, and identifies sites to meet a housing target called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). Costa Mesa’s current RHNA allocation is 11,760 units.

The City has completed zoning and land use updates described in the Housing Element to address State law, achieved adequate development capacity at a variety of income levels, and in the process of obtaining Housing Element certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). In addition to Housing Element certification, NWWAB additionally encourages housing development in line with the Council’s strategic priorities (noted above) by expanding additional housing opportunities along commercial corridors and providing more transparency and certainty in the entitlement process. These efforts reflect the City’s ongoing commitment to create new high-quality housing opportunities that meet the needs of current and future residents. To keep the community informed of progress, the City hosts a project webpage to provide updates and ongoing information regarding the NWWAB process: costamesaneighborhoods.com.

In November 2022, Costa Mesa voters approved Measure K, an ordinance to allow updates to zoning and land use on specific commercial and industrial sites without a citywide vote (Housing Element Program 3G). Several efforts to encourage and facilitate housing development comprise NWWAB,

including Zoning Code amendments, amendments to specific plans where there are Housing Element and Measure K sites, General Plan amendments for consistency, as well as the establishment of objective design standards for multifamily and mixed-use development. Public engagement is also an important component of implementing the Housing Element and Measure K. A variety of community visioning activities were conducted in three general “rounds” as part of this effort.

On October 22, 2024, the City released a Request for Proposals for the rezoning of Housing Element sites and related amendments, subsequently receiving and evaluating five proposals. Of the five proposals, Dudek was selected as the qualified consultant to complete the scope of work. On February 18, 2025, the City Council approved the agreement between the City and Dudek pursuant to the RFP.

In July through October 2025, the City conducted the first round of community visioning for NWWAB. In Round One, the City provided background on the Housing Element, Measure K, and asked the community about priorities for new developments, what makes a good neighborhood, and opportunities and concerns about increasing development in the community. The outreach effort included an open house, community workshops, a walking tour, high density residential design discussion, focused discussions with local stakeholder groups, pop-up outreach at community events and organizations, coffee shops, and a pub, as well as in-person and online community surveys. A summary of Round One is available online: <https://www.costamesaneighborhoods.com/resources>.

On November 10, 2025, staff presented an update to the Planning Commission about public visioning and engagement activities for NWWAB and next steps.

November 10, 2025, Agenda Report and Presentation:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7725804&GUID=F6AACD62-DC13-4F57-AE23-CA4A99B0D519>

On December 8, 2025, staff presented an update to the Planning Commission regarding the potential approach to rezoning Housing Element sites. This included an overview of Senate Bill 131, which established new California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) statutory exemptions effective July 1, 2025, for implementing Housing Element programs. The exemption would allow the City to rezone Housing Element sites in advance of sites within the boundaries of Measure K that are not Housing Element sites.

December 8, 2025, Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7773717&GUID=27C0C59C-E645-40FE-9970-1CF616A43895>

On January 26, 2026, the Planning Commission held a Study Session to discuss the bifurcation of the rezoning effort: one work stream focusing on expediting the rezoning of Housing Element sites to comply with State law, and a second work stream focusing on creating residential development opportunities on Measure K sites on the City’s original NWWAB timeline.

January 26, 2026, Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7826361&GUID=F156048D-17ED-4207-AD1F-00C34ADD4BC9>

On Feb 9, 2026, the Planning Commission recommended the City Council amend the Housing Element to add and remove specific sites due to property owner requests, as well as make amendments to the Zoning Code, Zoning Map, and North Costa Mesa Specific Plan to rezone the remaining Housing

Element sites via the Mixed-Use Overlay District (MUOD). This also bifurcated the NWWAB effort to expedite the rezoning of Housing Element sites for compliance.

February 9, 2026, Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7869925&GUID=46ADE2E0-93B1-4307-BB85-FCF45BA3A0C2>

In March 2026, the City completed the second round of community visioning activities for NWWAB. In Round Two, engagement focused on conceptual development standards such as density, floor area ratio, envisioning density and building heights, and considering potential mixed-use and residential land use scenarios. Draft revisions to the MUOD and potential Objective Design Standards, were discussed. Outreach events included two in-person community workshops, one virtual workshop, and two focused discussions with local stakeholders. A summary of Round Two is available online: <https://www.costamesaneighborhoods.com/resources>

On March 17, 2026, the City Council approved an amendment to the Housing Element to add and remove specific sites, resulting in a temporarily inadequate RHNA capacity. Per State law, the City had 180-days to identify additional sites to accommodate the RHNA. At the meeting, the City Council also gave first reading to amendments to the Zoning Code, Zoning Map, and North Costa Mesa Specific Plan to rezone Housing Element sites via the updated MUOD and implement Housing Element programs.

March 17, 2026, Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7949569&GUID=A43BC48B-BB4A-4B37-9245-5F818392F704>

On April 7, 2026, the City Council adopted amendments to the Zoning Code, Zoning Map, and North Costa Mesa Specific Plan to rezone Housing Element sites. This adoption implemented all or components of Housing Element programs: 2B, 2E, 2F, 2H, 2J, 2K, 2L, 2M, 2N, 2O, 2P, 3C, 3D, 3F, 3N, 3Q, 3R, 3S, 4E, and 4G.

April 7, 2026, Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7969847&GUID=67D7ED02-CEB9-4795-9C70-1915758F32C9>

On May 18, 2026, draft revisions to the Zoning Code, including the Mixed-Use Overlay, as well as draft objective design standards, General Plan amendments, and draft specific plan amendments were published for public review and comment. In June 2026, the City conducted an in-person open house and two focused discussion groups to collect input on those draft documents as well as newly proposed Housing Element sites. On June 8, 2026, the draft Housing Element was published for public review and comment. Summaries of this round of community visioning is available online: <https://www.costamesaneighborhoods.com/resources>.

The public review and comment period for the Draft NWWAB Zoning Updates and Housing Element Implementation Program Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) took place between June 16 and August 3, 2026.

On July 16, 2026, the Orange County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) determined that the NWWAB effort, including applying the MUOD to properties in proximity to John Wayne Airport, was inconsistent with the Airport Environs Land Use Plan (AELUP). Public Utilities Code (PUC) section 21676(b) and section 4.3 of the 2008 AELUP require the City to submit certain zoning and land use changes to the ALUC for review. Following ALUC's determination, City staff collaborated with ALUC staff

resulting in a minor modification to the scope of NWWAB. As currently proposed, the City would not apply the MUOD to non-Housing Element properties within airport safety zones 1-3 and/or within the 65-and-over decibel noise contour around John Wayne Airport. However, ALUC's determination included other issues that the NWWAB effort cannot address such as existing heights allowed in the North Costa Mesa Specific Plan. When the ALUC determines that an action is inconsistent with the AELUP, the City may overrule the Commission by a two-thirds vote of the City Council. The Costa Mesa City Council has the final authority.

July 16, 2026 ALUC Staff Report for NWWAB: https://files.ocair.com/media/2026-07/3.%20Costa%20Mesa%20Neighborhoods%20Where%20We%20All%20Belong.pdf?VersionId=6jZGsJI76e_E.Bz3H5OvuD9j7Jk37tb.

On August 17, 2026, the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve an amendment to the Housing Element to establish adequate sites capacity. At the same meeting, the Planning Commission held a study session to discuss the NWWAB draft documents. Staff incorporated feedback, where appropriate, from the Planning Commission and public comment into the documents being presented to the Planning Commission tonight. Additionally, the Planning Commission requested additional information regarding the Newport Boulevard Specific Plan, particularly information on why City staff determined not to sunset this plan.

August 17, 2026, Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=8170161&GUID=2D8B6155-B196-4744-887D-ED14A5D36DA7>

A City Council public hearing to initiate the overrule process was held September 1, 2026. The City Council voted 7-0 to initiate the overruling of the ALUC's determination. Following this hearing, the City submitted the letter of intent to overrule the Orange County ALUC's determination on September 2, 2026. The City received a response from ALUC on October 1, 2026 provided in Attachment 11.

September 1, 2026, Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=8193683&GUID=28B731EA-C108-47E4-BC4B-CA37E5E9190A>

The draft City Council Resolution to complete the overrule process is provided in Attachment 1 to this October 20, 2026 City Council Agenda Report.

On September 1, 2026, the City Council approved a General Plan amendment to amend the Sixth Cycle Housing Element (2021-2029) to establish adequate sites capacity and associated revisions comply with State Housing Law. Following this meeting, on September 2, 2026, City staff submitted the adopted Housing Element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), beginning the 60-day review period for Housing Element certification. Staff continued to keep HCD updated on progress regarding the adoption of the Fairview Developmental Specific Plan (FDC-SP) following the September 15 and October 6, 2026 City Council meetings.

September 1, 2026, Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=8193682&GUID=E4AE116D-B1F8-4742-910A-A2E1872146F8>

On September 14, 2026, the Planning Commission considered making a recommendation to the City Council on the revised draft NWWAB documents. Several revisions were proposed in a first motion, but the Planning Commission voted on a substitute motion to continue the item to a date certain, September

28, 2026, to give the Commission, public, and staff more time to review the potential changes. Additionally, prior to the meeting, the Sakioka Company, Inc. provided a public comment letter that included proposed revisions, many of which were also noted by Planning Commissioner Martinez in the first motion.

September 14, 2026 Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=8207183&GUID=2391E6EB-D442-48B4-9B65-8FB80089D0F1>

On September 28, 2026, the Planning Commission continued the public hearing on the revised NWWAB draft documents. To further assist the Planning Commission and the public, staff provided a table (included in Attachment 8 of this staff report) including additional analysis and considerations, and in some cases staff recommendations, for proposed revisions included in the first Planning Commission motion and in a Sakioka Company, Inc. letter. The Planning Commission re-opened the public hearing, allowing the public to make additional comments regarding staff analysis of the 32 proposed revisions analyzed in Attachment 8.

The Planning Commission made a recommendation to the City Council, moving the staff recommendation on:

- CEQA
- Zoning Code and Zoning Map Amendments
- Repealing the urban plans
- General Plan Amendments
- Specific Plan Amendments
- Citywide Multifamily Residential and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards (ODS)
- Staff-proposed revisions, such as non-substantive text edits related to the State Density Bonus Law Ordinance, and other edits highlighted in Attachment 8.

The motion additionally included:

- Proposed revision no. 6 - Allows projects in the MUOD to utilize the permitted use standards of the base zone if it is more permissive than the MUOD.
- Staff proposed 'alternative' for revisions nos. 29 and 30 on façade standards within the ODS
- Directed staff to correct any grammar, spelling and numbering prior to City Council
- Include Attachment 8 that was referenced as part of the motion for City Council reference
- Continue to work with property owners to discuss appropriate entitlement pathways, which could include--but is not limited to--utilizing the MUOD, a master plan in Planned Development zones, State Density Bonus Law (SDBL) and other state law, as applicable.

September 28, 2026 Planning Commission Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=8237531&GUID=58193A31-19E7-48DC-AD9D-FC86CE078ECE>

ANALYSIS:

There are a number of actions for this agenda item. The first is that the City Council adopt a Resolution to overrule the ALUC finding of inconsistency in regard to the City's NWWAB Zoning

Updates and Housing Element Implementation.

ALUC Overrule Process

To overrule the ALUC inconsistency decision regarding the NWWAB Zoning Updates and Housing Element Implementation, the City Council must make two findings, with an affirmative two-thirds vote, that the project is consistent with the purposes of PUC Division 9, Part 1, Chapter 4, Article 3.5 as stated in section 21670. The specific findings are set forth below. Once the City Council makes these findings, the City is required to provide ALUC a notice of the intent to overrule the ALUC inconsistency determination with the applicable PUC findings at least 45 days prior to the City's final decision to overrule ALUC. ALUC may provide comments to the City upon receiving the notice and findings. The City must include the ALUC comments in the public record of any final decision to overrule ALUC's determination.

Following the July 16, 2026 ALUC meeting concerning the City's Request for Consistency Determination regarding NWWAB Updates and Housing Element Implementation and subsequent communications, City staff adjusted the scope of the NWWAB project to not apply the MUOD to Measure K sites within the 65 dBA CNEL contour around the airport, Safety Zone 1, Safety Zone 2, and non-Housing Element Measure K sites in Safety Zone 3. The City has diligently addressed ALUC's recommendations from the July 16, 2026 meeting where feasible.

On September 1, 2026, the City Council adopted a resolution to notify ALUC of its intention to overrule the ALUC decision. Staff thereafter provided formal notice to ALUC of the City's intent to overrule pursuant to PUC section 21676(b) of the City's intention and to move forward with scheduling a second public hearing. The City received a response from ALUC on October 1, 2026, provided in Attachment 11.

September 1, 2026 Agenda Report and Attachments:

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=8193683&GUID=28B731EA-C108-47E4-BC4B-CA37E5E9190A>

Overrule Findings

The two required overrule findings pursuant to PUC section 21670 are shown in *italics* below, followed by the City's justification to overrule.

PUC Overrule Finding No. 1- Provide for the orderly development of areas surrounding airports so as to promote the overall goals and objectives of the California airport noise standards adopted pursuant to section 21669 and to prevent the creation of new noise and safety problems.

PUC Finding No. 1 justification for overrule:

Section 2.1.1 of the AELUP establishes community CNEL guidance. The AELUP defines noise exposure in the 65 dBA CNEL noise contour as "High Impact" while also identifying residential uses as "conditionally consistent" in the 65 dBA CNEL noise contour. The AELUP does not prohibit residential uses in the 65 dBA CNEL noise contour; it requires residential uses to have insulation or other systems to bring sound attenuation to no more than 45 dB indoors.

The Noise Element of the City's General Plan includes several policies to address potential airport/residential noise impacts.

- N-1.1: Enforce the maximum acceptable exterior noise levels for residential areas at 65 CNEL.
- N-1.4: Ensure that appropriate site design measures are incorporated into residential developments, when required by an acoustical study, to obtain appropriate exterior and interior noise levels. When necessary, require field testing at the time of project completion to demonstrate compliance.
- N-1.5: Apply the standards contained in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations as applicable to the construction of all new dwelling units.
- N-1.6: Discourage sensitive land uses from locating within the 65 CNEL noise contour of John Wayne Airport. Should it be deemed by the City as appropriate and/or necessary for a sensitive land use to locate in the 65 CNEL noise contour, ensure that appropriate interior noise levels are met and that minimal outdoor activities are allowed.
- N-1.7: Support alternative methods for the reduction of noise impacts at John Wayne Airport while continuing to maintain safety and existing limitations on aircraft daily departures.
- N-2.1: Require the use of sound walls, berms, interior noise insulation, double-paned windows, and other noise mitigation measures, as appropriate, in the design of new residential or other new noise-sensitive land uses that are adjacent to arterials, freeways, or adjacent to industrial or commercial uses.
- N-2.4: Require that all proposed projects are compatible with adopted noise/land use compatibility criteria.
- N-2.6: Allow a higher exterior noise level standard for infill projects in existing residential areas adjacent to major arterials if it can be shown that there are no feasible mechanisms to meet the exterior noise levels. The interior standard of 45 dBA CNEL shall be enforced for any new residential project.

The City's Land Use Element includes Policy LU-3.17: New residential developments within the 60 dB CNEL noise contour of the airport shall provide designated outdoor signage informing the public of the presence of operating aircraft.

The proposed MUOD amendment includes two airport related regulations:

- Applicable MUOD projects shall be subject to a noise study prepared by a qualified acoustical engineer. Applicable MUOD projects include those abutting a freeway or within the Airport Planning Area, as defined by the Airport Environs Land Use Plan (AELUP) for John Wayne Airport. The noise study shall certify compliance with CMMC Title 13, Chapter XIII (Noise Control) and the AELUP.
- MUOD projects on properties located within the Airport Planning Area, as defined by the Airport Environs Land Use Plan (AELUP) for John Wayne Airport, shall comply with applicable requirements of the AELUP, unless overridden per State law.

Of the 1,079 parcels within the boundaries of Measure K, only 16 sites are wholly or partially within the 65 dBA CNEL contour (only 1.5 percent of NWWAB sites). Following the July 16, 2026 ALUC meeting, City staff adjusted the scope of the NWWAB project to not apply the MUOD to non-Housing

Element Measure K sites within the 65 dBA CNEL contour.

One Housing Element site remains within the contour because a Project Homekey motel conversion to very low income single-room occupancy units was completed and the affordable housing units support the City's obligation to satisfy its 6th Cycle Housing Element RHNA of 11,760 units, of which 2,919 units must be affordable to very low income households. This site, the Avon River Apartments, includes 76 Extremely Low Income Permanent Supportive Housing units for people experiencing homelessness (10 veterans, 24 MHSA clients, 14 Project Based Vouchers for Chronically Homeless with disability, and 28 units with Permanent Supportive Housing services). It is appropriate and necessary for the City to encourage and facilitate the development of housing, including lower and moderate income housing, to meet State law. Implementation of the 6th Cycle Housing Element, including implementing Measure K, is required to ensure the provision of adequately zoned land to accommodate the largest RHNA in Costa Mesa history, the City's share of regional growth, and comply with State Housing Law.

As shown by modifying the scope of the application of the MUOD, the City has diligently addressed airport noise while also pursuing compliance with State Housing Law. The NWWAB effort will provide for orderly development in areas surrounding JWA and elsewhere in Costa Mesa. Therefore, the City is justified to make the finding to overrule the ALUC inconsistency determination in regard to PUC Finding No. 1.

Additionally, the CNEL noise contours of the AELUP Master Plan were established in 1985. Advances in aircraft technology, including quieter fleets, warrant study and subsequent revisions to the noise contours. The Noise Chapter of EIR No. 617 for the 2014 John Wayne Settlement Agreement Amendment utilized contemporary modeling (FAA Integrated Noise Model Version 7.0d) to describe how dBA CNEL noise contours have decreased in size. EIR No. 617 explained that "one of the most important factors in generating accurate noise contours is the collection of accurate operational data."

PUC Overrule Finding No. 2- Protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to safety hazards within areas around public airports to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses.

PUC Finding No. 2 justification for overrule:

Safety Compatibility Zones of the AELUP recommend which land uses are acceptable in various JWA environments. As indicated in the above section entitled "Justification for finding," the City's Noise Element Policies adequately address the public exposure to excessive noise.

As originally proposed, of 1,079 sites with the Measure K boundary, an approximately 1,000-square-foot corner of one Measure K property is located within Safety Zone 1, one property is within Safety Zone 2, and six other sites are within Safety Zone 3. After the July 16, 2026 ALUC meeting, the City modified the project to not apply the MUOD to properties in Safety Zone 1, Safety Zone 2, and non-Housing Element properties in Safety Zone 3.

With the project modification, the MUOD would only be applied to one site within Safety Zone 3. The California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook states that Safety Zone 3 can "allow infill at the

average of surrounding residential area.” The one NWWAB site that remains in Safety Zone 3 is a two-story Project Homekey motel conversion to very low income single-room occupancy units, as discussed above. As previously stated herein, the very low income affordable housing units support the City’s obligation to satisfy its 6th Cycle Housing Element RHNA of 11,760 units, of which 2,919 units must be affordable to very low income households. It is appropriate and necessary for the City to encourage and facilitate the development of housing, including lower and moderate income housing, to meet State law. Implementation of the 6th Cycle Housing Element, including implementing Measure K, is required to ensure the provision of adequately zoned land to accommodate the largest RHNA in Costa Mesa history, the City’s share of regional growth, and comply with State Housing Law.

The NWWAB project will apply the MUOD to Measure K and Housing Element sites within Safety Zone 6, where the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook establishes a maximum density of “no limit” and an average number of people per gross acre of “no limit.”

The ALUC staff report concludes that the application of the MUOD to sites south of JWA along Bristol Street could have maximum heights that “would come very close” to penetrating the JWA transitional surface of 92 feet but would “not penetrate the Obstruction Imaginary Surfaces for JWA.” The City is no longer proposing to apply the MUOD to sites on Bristol Street between Santa Ana Avenue and City of Newport Beach City Limits. Additionally, the City of Costa Mesa General Plan includes policies regarding airport and land use compatibility including:

- LU-3.14: Certain development proposals which may include the construction or alteration of structures more than 200 feet above ground level may require filing with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) pursuant to federal and State law. If a filing requirement is determined to be necessary in accordance with the procedures provided by State/federal agencies, the filing of a Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration (FAA Form 7460-1) shall be required prior to review and consideration of the proposed development.” Land Use Element (page LU-18) refers to the threshold stated above. It shall be amended to refer to Filing FAA Form 7460-1 Notice of Construction and Alteration, and not to Form 7480-1.
- Policy LU-3.15. The City will ensure that development proposals, including the construction or operation of a heliport or helistop comply fully with permit procedures under State law, including referral of the project to the ALUC by the applicant, and with all conditions of approval imposed or recommended by the Federal Aviation Administration, ALUC, and Caltrans, including the filing of Form 7480-1 (Notice of Landing Area Proposed) with the FAA. This requirement shall be in addition to all other City development requirements.
- Policy LU-3.16. The City shall refer certain projects to the Airport Land Use Commission for Orange County, as required by section 21676 of the California Public Utilities Code to determine consistency of the project(s) with the Airport Environs Land Use Plan for John Wayne Airport.

Additionally, the MUOD includes regulations to address potential airport-related conflicts such as:

- MUOD projects on properties located within the Airport Planning Area, as defined by the Airport

Environs Land Use Plan (AELUP) for John Wayne Airport, shall comply with applicable requirements of the AELUP, unless overridden per State law.

AELUP as Related to the North Costa Mesa Specific Plan

At the July 16, 2026 meeting, ALUC expressed that the heights allowed in the existing North Costa Mesa Specific Plan permit a maximum building height that could result in building construction that exceeds the 206-foot John Wayne Airport Imaginary Horizontal Surface. ALUC's determination of inconsistency is not based on proposed regulations in the NWWAB MUOD, but rather existing provisions of the North Costa Mesa Specific Plan. NWWAB would apply the MUOD, with a maximum building height of 108 feet in the North Costa Mesa Specific Plan area, to Measure K and Housing Element sites. This is a lower maximum building height than allowed in the specific plan. Should a property owner choose to develop via the provisions of the MUOD instead of the specific plan, the development would not exceed the obstruction imaginary surfaces.

In 2007, the City submitted a project for ALUC consideration that included a mixed-use development with both hotel and residential uses (The Wyndham Hotel and High Rise Residential Project) in the South Coast Plaza Town Center area. This area already contains Plaza Tower and Center Tower which exceed 20 stories. The project included a General Plan Amendment, a Specific Plan Amendment, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), a Final Master Plan and a proposed subdivision. The ALUC determined that the project and the General Plan/Specific Plan amendments were inconsistent in regard to the inclusion of height standards that penetrate the AELUP horizontal imaginary surface, and the City subsequently overruled the ALUC determination. The City's overrule finding was based on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) findings that the then proposed building height of 304 feet AMSL "would not adversely affect air safety" and the FAA subsequently issued a "no hazard determination." Additionally, the FAA conditioned that any future buildings proposed in this area with height proposed above 173 feet above grade level would require a specific determination of "no hazard" by the FAA in order to move forward. This requirement is included in the height standards of the North Costa Mesa Specific Plan. Therefore, potential safety risks associated with future construction on the five Housing Element sites in the North Costa Mesa Specific Plan area are addressed by the FAA requirement and the Specific Plan requirements. It should be noted that the AELUP declares the FAA as the authority to determine impacts on airport or aeronautical operations. It is inappropriate for the ALUC to make a secondary finding of inconsistency for the same issue. Based on the above facts, the City is justified in making the finding to overrule the ALUC inconsistency determination in regard to PUC Finding No. 2.

Therefore, Staff is recommending that the City Council adopt a Resolution (Attachment 1) to overrule the ALUC finding of inconsistency in regard to the City's NWWAB effort.

Housing Element Implementation

The City of Costa Mesa is actively implementing programs identified in the adopted Sixth Cycle (2021–2029) Housing Element and is working toward certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Establishing a local regulatory framework that encourages and facilitates higher density and mixed-use housing development supports this effort.

The proposed Zoning Code amendments would provide more specificity, objectivity, and allow higher densities in the MUOD to apply to Housing Element Sites (with the exception the Fairview Developmental Center, which is governed by a new Specific Plan) and most Measure K sites. It would also update definitions related to uses and application processing, improve the organization of the Land Use Matrix, refine application review procedures, remove references to urban plans, update the Accessory Dwelling Units Ordinance and the Density Bonus Ordinance for compliance with State law, identify additional incentives for affordable housing development, update Residential Common Interest Development standards to include opportunities from the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan, other zoning amendments for consistency and compliance, and add references to the new objective design standards for multifamily residential and mixed-use developments. The Zoning Map would be revised to reflect the updated locations where the MUOD is applicable.

The proposed amendments to the Newport Boulevard Specific Plan, North Costa Mesa Specific Plan, and One Metro West Specific Plan are generally limited in scope to recognize new development opportunities and regulations via the application of the MUOD on Measure K and Housing Element sites.

The proposed General Plan amendments to the Land Use, Circulation, Community Design, Noise, and Open Space and Recreation elements for the NWWAB effort are limited in scope to include the application of the MUOD, remove references to urban plans, and other text edits for clarity and consistency.

While no direct development is proposed as part of NWWAB, the rezoning and other amendments would facilitate future development on over 1,000 parcels via the MUOD. Based on assumptions and projections, the “rezoning” would create development capacity for approximately 22,441 new dwelling units and 10,459,263 square feet of non-residential uses on Measure K properties over the next 30 years.

Finally, the proposed Citywide Multifamily Residential and Mixed-Use ODS, would apply to all new construction of multifamily residential and mixed-use buildings (consistent with California Government Code sections 65913.4 and 66300(a)(7) of three or more stories in height located in any zone. ODS is intended to provide more certainty to project applicants and the wider community by establishing requirements that are readily available, easy to understand, and objectively verifiable, so a project can be designed to meet those requirements before submittal to the City.

Should the City Council adopt the proposed amendments, the mixed-use, live/work, and residential common interest development opportunities once enabled by urban plans would be built into the Zoning Code and therefore, the urban plans could be “sunset” or repealed.

Related Housing Element Implementation Items

Through the NWWAB effort, including the rezoning of Housing Element sites, the City has also implemented 23 of its Housing Element programs. In early 2026, the City obtained grant funding from the Southern California Association of Governments Regional Early Action Planning Grant Program (REAP 2.0) to implement Housing Element programs.

Between March 2026 and September 30, 2026, the City advanced numerous Housing Element

implementation programs, including:

- Zoning Code amendments pertaining to accessory dwelling units (Program 3E) and
- Zoning Code amendments pertaining to density bonus law (Program 2I),
- Development of Environmental Justice policies in the General Plan (Program 2G),
- Outreach to faith-based and educational non-profit organizations regarding the potential for housing on their sites via Senate Bill 4 (Program 3K).
- Conducted a survey to a wide network of affordable housing and housing developer to spread to word about SB 4, gain feedback on interest in utilizing SB 4 for future development and understand any potential constraints. (Attachment 9)
- Production of a memorandum, providing an overview of the City's existing housing policies, programs and regulatory initiatives that support housing production and affordability, as well as potential opportunities for additional housing incentives and implementation actions (Program 2B) (Attachment 10). This information will continue to be utilized for the implementation of the City's Housing Element and potential future Zoning Code updates, including updates to the City's Affordable Housing Ordinance (Program 2A).

Proposed Zoning Code Amendments

Throughout the Zoning Code sections proposed to be revised as part of the NWWAB effort, references to the Community Development Department's previous name, Economic and Development Services, would be updated. The draft City Council Ordinance to amend the Zoning Code and Map is provided in Attachment 3.

Chapter I, Article 2, Definitions

Changes and additions to definitions in the Zoning Code are proposed for comprehensiveness, clarity, and to reflect information provided in other revised sections of the Zoning Code. The proposed amendment would help implement Program 2B. The proposed amendment, provided in Attachment 3, Exhibit A in ~~striketrough~~ and underline format, would refine the definitions of:

- Development review
- Open space
- Open space, common
- Open space, private
- Planning application
- Townhouse

The proposed amendment would define:

- Live/work unit
- Mixed-use, horizontal
- Mixed-use, vertical
- Open space, publicly accessible
- Rowhouse
- Zoning district
- Zoning district, overlay

Following the August 17, 2026 study session, the definition of Zoning district and overlay were refined to respond to Planning Commissioner input regarding when superseding the base zoning can occur and the definitions of Townhouse and Rowhouse were revised to be consistent with the proposed ODS. Following the September 28, 2026 Planning Commission meeting, the definition of Rowhouse was revised to "See Townhouse."

Chapter II, Zoning Districts Established

The proposed amendment would expand the base zoning districts to which the MUOD can be applied. It would also remove the requirement for mixed-use development to be located within an urban plan and permitted via a master plan. To develop via the MUOD, an urban plan and master plan are no longer necessary as the updated provisions of the MUOD establish applicability, objective development standards, permitted uses, and other regulations for MUOD projects. Additionally, the proposed ODS would provide design standards for proposed projects in the MUOD. The proposed revisions to are provided in strikethrough and underline format in Attachment 3, Exhibit A. The proposed amendment helps implement Programs 2B and 3S.

Chapter III, Planning Applications

Following the April 2026 amendments to Chapter III, refinements are proposed to specify that residential development permitted by right, consistent with the Zoning Code and Government Code, qualify for streamlined development review, clarify that 1-2 residential development will continue to be reviewed as a building permit under streamlined development review, and specified that multifamily residential and mixed-use projects of three stories or more must comply with the proposed objective design standards. This is in compliance with State law. Additionally, the final review authority for density bonus requests was changed from the Planning Commission to the Planning Division (staff) in compliance with SDBL and consistent with the entitlement process for housing projects subject Development Review. Findings for density bonus requests were removed (an update to the City's Density Bonus Ordinance is also proposed as part of NWWAB). The proposed revisions to Chapter III are provided in strikethrough and underline format in Attachment 3, Exhibit A. The proposed amendment helps implement Programs 2B, 2L, and 3S.

Chapter IV, Citywide Land Use Matrix

The Land Use Matrix is proposed to be reorganized into alphabetical order for ease of use and to enable the addition of new uses in the future without renumbering. Other amendments would clean-up the code by removing unnecessary "reserved" and "reserved for future use" categories. The reorganization of the Land Use Matrix does not change how uses are permitted in any zoning district. The entire reorganized matrix is provided in Attachment 3, Exhibit A.

Chapter V, Article 1, Residential Districts (Accessory Dwelling Units)

The revisions to the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance reflect minor and targeted text revisions to comply with state law and address comments received by HCD in May 2026. The City is also working on additional user-friendly handouts that further clarify ADU review timelines. Finally, the City has strengthened its ADU and JADU monitoring by requiring additional affordability and rental assumptions by applicants submitted with the building permit process to better ascertain and track ADU and JADU affordability levels through the Housing Element planning period. These efforts serve

to implement Housing Element programs 3E and 3M. Following the September 28, 2026 Planning Commission meeting, minor text edits regarding detached ADUs on single-family lots were made for compliance with AB 956, which goes into effect January 1, 2027. The proposed amendment is provided in strikethrough and underline format in Attachment 3, Exhibit A.

Chapter V, Article 1, Residential Districts (Additional property development standards for the multiple family residential districts)

Section 13-38 of the Municipal Code is proposed to be renamed “Additional property development standards for residential districts” and would establish an objective window offset standard for residential projects that are not subject to the proposed ODS. The proposed revision is provided in strikethrough and underline format in Attachment 3, Exhibit A.

Chapter V, Article 2, Residential Common Interest Developments

Currently, the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan facilitates the conversion of rental housing to ownership housing, as well as the construction of new condominium projects within a subset of Westside Costa Mesa. Staff proposes to repeal or “sunset” this urban plan without removing the development potential it offers. The proposed amendment to the Residential Common Interest Developments section of the Zoning Code would build in the development potential from the urban plan for sites within the “Mesa West Residential Ownership Incentive Program” including allowing three-stories and up to 45-foot-tall residential common interest buildings on sites where the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan used to apply. This clarification was added after the Planning Commission meeting on September 28, 2026. A map of the sites eligible for the “Mesa West Residential Ownership Incentive Program” would be added to the Zoning Code. The amendment would remove subjective design criteria for compliance with the California Housing Accountability Act. Additionally, the proposed update would apply the Citywide Multifamily Residential and Mixed-Use ODS to Residential Common Interest projects. The draft is provided in strikethrough and underline format in Attachment 3, Exhibit A. The proposed amendment implements Program 3D.

Chapter V, Article 2.5, Residential Small Lot Subdivisions

Following the Planning Commission study session, a revision to the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance is proposed to reflect that applications would be processed pursuant to Chapter III Planning Applications for consistency with other amendments. The revision is provided in strikethrough and underline format in Attachment 3, Exhibit A.

Chapter V, Article 5.5, Non-Residential Common Interest Developments

Conversions of occupied or previously occupied non-residential development to common interest developments are currently permitted in the urban plan areas if they meet applicable regulations. The proposed revision would change urban plan to mixed-use overlay district. The draft amendment is provided in Attachment 3, Exhibit A in strikethrough and underline format.

Chapter V, Article 6, Planned Development

The proposed amendment would remove a reference to existing residential design guidelines due to the guidelines being subjective and therefore not compliant with the California Housing Accountability

Act. The proposed revision is provided in Attachment 3, Exhibit A in strikethrough and underline format.

Chapter V, Article 9, General Site Improvement Standards

The proposed revision would apply the Citywide Multifamily and Mixed-Use ODS to multifamily residential and mixed-use development projects of three or more stories. See Attachment 3, Exhibit A for the draft amended text in strikethrough and underline format.

Chapter V, Article 11, Mixed-Use Overlay District

Staff proposes a comprehensive update of the MUOD to reflect the expanded application of the MUOD to Measure K sites and codify residential and mixed-use development opportunities provided in the urban plans into the MUOD in a clear, objective manner. Development standards and performance standards are included for compatibility between new development, adjacent uses, and mixed-uses onsite. For example, following the Planning Commission Study Session, the commercial hours performance standard was refined to specify that commercial uses within MUOD projects shall be prohibited from operating outdoor activity between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. inclusive of loading, unloading, and delivery of goods. Also, in response to Planning Commissioner and public feedback, the list of specific off-site improvements was removed from the MUOD in favor of directing applicants to Title 13-72 for citywide off-site improvement requirements given the variety of project types and scales that would be permissible via the MUOD.

Following the August study session, staff refined the proposed publicly accessible open space requirement to provide a scale of thresholds and minimum requirements. The scale better reflects the variety of site sizes within Measure K, trending market and consumer behavior favoring smaller format retail uses, and case studies. The proposed revised threshold and standard for publicly accessible open space is the total minimum area equivalent to the following percentages of total commercial floor area:

- For 20,000 square feet to less than 30,000 square feet: 2 percent;
- For 30,000 square feet to less than 40,000 square feet: 3 percent;
- For 40,000 square feet to less than 50,000 square feet: 4 percent; and
- For more than 50,000 square feet: 5 percent.

To respond to a public comment, staff also edited the MUOD to specify that alternative development standards could be established for projects in Planned Development zones via a master plan. In response to Planning Commission direction on September 28, 2026, staff revised the Permitted Uses section of the MUOD so if the underlying base zoning district establishes a less stringent use permit requirement for a use, the less stringent use permit requirement shall be utilized, except where the base zoning is industrial.

The proposed densities and maximum heights to be permitted via the MUOD are described in Table 1, below. Density locations are described in Figure 1 on the following page.

Once the urban plans are repealed or “sunset,” the properties within their former boundaries will be sub-areas of the MUOD, except for the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan, which would

be addressed in the Residential Common Interest Developments section of the Zoning Code as stated above.

Key features of the proposed amendment include:

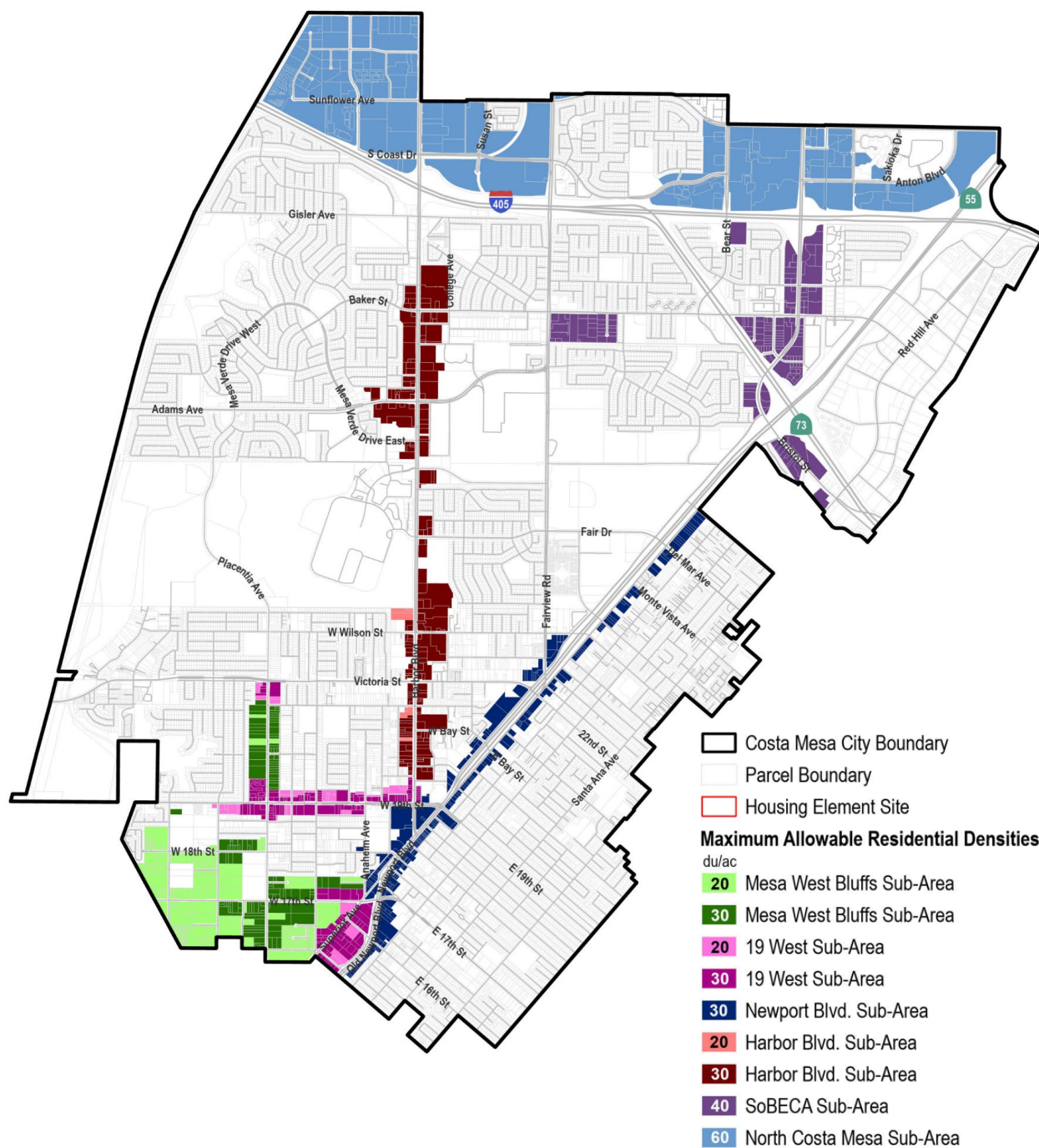
- Removing the requirement for a master plan (subjective)
- Require projects to submit:
 - Phase 1 Environmental Assessment
 - Traffic study
 - Noise study
- Establishing detailed development standards (vs. “excellence in design”)
- Establishing a detailed permitted uses table (revised post Planning Commission direction)
- Establishing a variety of potential densities and heights depending on the property location
- Consolidating the Harbor-Mixed-Use Overlay area into the MUOD
- Increasing the maximum density allowed in some sites within the Mesa West Bluffs and 19 West Sub-Areas from 20 to 30 units per acre
- Increasing the maximum density in the SoBECA Sub-Area from 20 to 40 units per acre
- Applying the MUOD with a maximum density of 30 units per acre to non-Housing Element Measure K sites within the Harbor Boulevard and Newport Boulevard Sub-Areas
- Applying the MUOD with a maximum density of 60 units per acre to non-Housing Element Measure K sites in the North Costa Mesa Sub-Area
- Open space requirements with flexibility to increase common and publicly accessible open space
- All MUOD projects shall be subject to the applicable Multifamily Residential and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards

Table 1. Draft MUOD Maximum Densities and Building Heights

MUOD Sub-Area	Maximum Residential Density	Maximum Residential-Only or Vertical Mixed-Use Height	Maximum Non-Residential Height
Mesa West Bluffs	20-30 du/ac	60 ft.	40 ft.
19 West	20-30 du/ac	60 ft.	
Newport Boulevard	30 du/ac	60 ft.	
Harbor Boulevard	30 du/ac	60 ft.	
SoBECA	40	60 ft.	
North Costa Mesa	60 du/ac	72 ft.	
North Costa Mesa Housing Element Sites	90 du/ac	108 ft.	

See Attachment 3, Exhibit A for the proposed revised version of the MUOD in strikethrough and underline format to demonstrate changes made after the Study Session. The proposed amendment helps implement Program 3A. Research conducted as part of this update also implemented Programs 3H and 3I.

Figure 1. Draft MUOD Sub-Areas with Housing Element Sites



Chapter VI, Article 1 Off-Street Parking Standards (Residential Districts)

The proposed revision of Table 13-85(A) is a formatting change and not a change of parking standards. The other proposed revision would add a reference to the applicability of the ODS and remove a reference to urban plan parking requirements. The proposed ODS would not regulate the number of parking spaces required; it would regulate the design of parking lots and parking structures where applicable. Following the August 17, 2026 study session, staff further reviewed this section of the Zoning Code and identified a cleanup opportunity address a common inquiry regarding multifamily tandem parking. The proposed revision would allow tandem parking when two parking spaces are required for a multifamily unit. Guest parking would not be allowed to be provided in tandem. See Attachment 3, Exhibit A for the amendment in strikethrough and underline format. The proposed amendment helps implement Programs 2E and 2M.

Chapter VI, Article 2, Off-Street Parking Standards (Non-Residential Districts)

The proposed revision of Table 13-89 would confirm that required parking for non-residential components of mixed-use developments is per the Mixed-Use Overlay District and not an urban plan. Ultimately, the non-residential component of a mixed-use project would follow the nonresidential parking standards in Table 13-89 per the Mixed-Use Overlay District. See Exhibit A of Attachment 3 for the revision in strikethrough and underline format.

Chapter VII Landscaping Standards

The landscaping standards would be revised to specify that multifamily and mixed-use projects would be subject to additional, applicable standards in the ODS. The proposed revision is provided in Attachment 3, Exhibit A in strikethrough and underline format.

Chapter VIII, Article 3, Sign Regulations

The sign regulations are proposed to be updated to remove a reference to urban plans for signage in mixed-use developments, and clarify allowances for residential open house, temporary, and balloon signs in the MUOD. See Attachment 3, Exhibit A for the revision in strikethrough and underline format.

Chapter IX, Article 4, Density Bonuses and Other Incentives

The Zoning Code section on Density Bonuses is proposed to be updated for consistency with State SDBL, identify local criteria such as submittal of additional information related to the affordable units through an SDBL application or affordable housing plan, where appropriate, and reflect that the final review authority will be the Planning Division instead of the Planning Commission, consistent with housing projects subject to Development Review. See Attachment 3, Exhibit A for the proposed new density bonus ordinance. This proposed amendment implements Program 2I.

Chapter IX, Article 21, Location of Cannabis Distributing, Manufacturing, Research and Development, Testing Laboratories, Retail Storefront and Retail Nonstorefront Uses

The proposed revision removes references to urban plans. The amendment is provided in strikethrough format in Exhibit A of Attachment 3.

Chapter XII, Article 4, Park and Recreation Impact Fees

The proposed revision updates a reference to a Government Code related to accessory dwelling units. See Attachment 3, Exhibit A for the revision in strikethrough and underline format.

Chapter XIII, Noise Control

The noise control regulations would be updated to remove references to master plans for mixed-use development and to add references to specific table numbers within the chapter. See Attachment 3, Exhibit A for the revision in strikethrough and underline format.

Draft Zoning Map Update

The Zoning Map would be updated to reflect the repealing of urban plans and the expansion of the MUOD to most Measure K sites. The Zoning Map update is a component of implementing Housing Element Program 3A. See Attachment 3 Exhibit B.

As stated earlier in this report, following the July 16, 2026 ALUC meeting, the MUOD is no longer proposed to be applied to select Measure K sites in a collaborative effort to acknowledge ALUC recommendations. There are 16 Measure K sites within the 65 dbA CNEL noise contour and/or John Wayne Airport Safety Zones 1-3, and two congruent parcels sharing ingress/egress, parking, and landscaping with those properties, for a total of 18 Measure K properties. Additionally, the MUOD would not be applied to three Measure K sites in Westside Costa Mesa to reflect a commitment made by the City of Costa Mesa during the adoption of the urban plans in 2006 to not allow residential uses on or within 50 feet of the Cla-Val property. In discussions with the neighboring property owner that would be impacted by the 50-foot-buffer from Cla-Val, that property owner opted to forgo inclusion in the MUOD for their two congruent properties. At this time, the MUOD is not proposed to be applied to 21 Measure K properties. However, the properties remain within Measure K and therefore a property owner could pursue a zone change in the future if conditions change.

General Plan Amendments

The proposed General Plan amendments are technical in nature and not comprehensive updates. The proposed technical, or targeted amendment to the Land Use Element would refine the discussion of mixed-use projects, live/work projects, the MUOD, specific plans, and commercial and industrial districts where the MUOD would apply. Two new Land Use Policies are proposed:

- Policy LU-1.6: Balance housing, retail and employment opportunities by facilitating the development of residential and mixed-uses within the Mixed-Use Overlay.
- Policy LU 2.12: Concentrate new housing in the Mixed-Use Overlay where infrastructure and services can support higher densities.

Revisions to the Land Use Element would also remove references to the urban plans and to development standards and permit processing procedures that would no longer be applicable. Following the Planning Commission study session, Land Use Policy 2.8 would be refined to exclude all MUOD projects from a four-story limitation, rather than just those on Housing Element sites.

The proposed amendments to the Noise, Circulation, Community Design, and Open Space and Recreation Elements, are also very limited. The revisions would remove references to urban plans

and master plans for mixed-use development (the City will be utilizing the MUOD and objective design standards), remove references to broad districts to reduce confusion with actual land use districts, and other simple text edits for clarity and consistency with the Housing Element and Measure K implementation. The General Plan elements that are being revised, are provided in strikethrough and underline format online here:

<https://www.costamesaca.gov/home/showdocument?id=65110&t=639273977095142991>

The draft City Council Resolution to amend General Plan Elements and Specific Plans is provided as Attachment 4.

Finally, the Housing Element revision, as was adopted by the City Council on September 1, 2026, is included in this package of General Plan amendments as it needs to be re-adopted following the formal ALUC overrule, given its potential implications for density and height on newly adopted Housing Element sites.

Specific Plan Amendments

In April 2026, the North Costa Mesa Specific Plan was amended to add a new section specific to the application of the MUOD to Housing Element sites and other edits for consistency. Now that the MUOD is proposed to be expanded and applicable to non-Housing Element Measure K sites, the North Costa Mesa Specific Plan would be amended to update the discussion to include non-Housing Element Measure K sites. Following comments provided by a North Costa Mesa Specific Plan property owner, the proposed amendment was edited to remove references to a collector street that was removed from the General Plan Circulation Element during the 2015 General Plan update. The draft amendment would implement Program 3C.

Limited text amendments are also proposed to the Newport Boulevard Specific Plan and One Metro West Specific Plan to acknowledge that the MUOD would apply to Measure K and Housing Element sites within the boundaries of those specific plans. Housing Element program 3J identifies analyzing the potential of modifying the Newport Boulevard Specific Plan to promote residential uses along this corridor. During the planning period, the City implemented this program by analyzing both Housing Element sites and Measure K sites in this area through the NWWAB effort. Housing Element sites identified in this area have already been rezoned pursuant to State Law, while additional Measure K sites are proposed to be rezoned as part of the recommendation for tonight.

Early in the NWWAB process, the City Council inquired into the possibility of sunseting the Newport Boulevard Specific Plan as part of the overall NWWAB effort. Staff analyzed this possibility but ultimately decided not to sunset the plan as part of this effort for several reasons. Firstly, the intent of the specific plan is to encourage viable commercial businesses along the boulevard, strengthen the identity of Newport Boulevard, improve public safety and circulation, and facilitate other types of redevelopment and public improvements. In contrast, the NWWAB effort is focused on creating new residential and mixed-use development opportunities on Measure K sites and implementing Housing Element programs. Sunseting the specific plan would require broader consideration of economic development, preservation of development rights created in the specific plan, area identity, circulation and public improvements, and the future balance of commercial and residential uses within the specific plan area. Additionally, the specific plan includes both Measure K and non-Measure K sites, limiting the City's ability to make comprehensive land use changes. With those constraints in mind, the NWWAB effort was not the appropriate mechanism to sunset the plan and provide an alternative

to meet the goals of the plan, including economic development, and maintain the development rights on non-Measure K sites. The proposed amendment to the Newport Boulevard Specific Plan applies the MUOD to Measure K sites and provides text cleanups that reflect implementation.

On Housing Element sites, the MUOD would supersede the base zoning and specific plan unless the specific plan allows for more flexibility, density, height, etc. for residential development. The proposed amendments to the specific plans are provided in strikethrough and underline format online here: <https://www.costamesaca.gov/home/showdocument?id=65114&t=639273979671350212>

The draft City Council Resolution to amend these specific plans is provided as Attachment 4.

Citywide Residential Multifamily and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards (ODS)

Enacted by state legislation, including the Housing Crisis Act of 2019 (Senate Bill 330), objective standards are those “that involve no personal or subjective judgment by a public official and is uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant or proponent and the public official before submittal” (California Government Code sections 65913.4 and 66300(a)(7)). The proposed ODS would apply to new multifamily residential and mixed-use construction of three or more stories in height.

Objective standards provide more certainty to project applicants by making the building and site design requirements clear so a project can be designed to meet those requirements before submittal to the City. They also ensure the community that design standards will be applied consistently. This objective approach is intended to reduce applicant and staff time spent on multiple rounds of application reviews due to subjective and confusing standards, while still ensuring high-quality development that respects the context of a proposed project.

Building design standards include building mass and form, façade design, and ground floor design. For example, the ODS proposes upper story setbacks when abutting properties in the R1, R2, and R3 zones to help minimize the perceived height and mass of the new buildings and allow for space, light, air, and privacy. Maximum street-facing façade lengths without a break (a projection or recess of at least 4 feet by 8 feet) are proposed to discourage blank walls and encourage visual interest in long building facades. Building façade modulation standards were also revised per the Planning Commission’s September 28, 2026 motion as described in Attachment 8.

The draft ODS proposes site design standards including access and circulation, private open space, common open space, publicly accessible open space, landscaping, walls/fences, building equipment, utilities, trash and recycling areas, outdoor lighting, and parking/vehicle loading. An example of an objective site design standard is that private open spaces shall extend a minimum of 5 feet in any direction and be located locations at-grade, on upper levels, or on the roof, so long as the private open space is contiguous to and directly accessible from the dwelling unit. Following the Planning Commission study session, revisions include removing the limit of six townhomes in a row given the application of other objective standards for façade breaks and maximum façade lengths. Staff refined the standard width of paseos to be more specific when utilized as emergency access and updated the ratio of required seating area in publicly accessible open spaces to provide more design flexibility.

As the City accommodates additional housing and mixed-use opportunities, these objective standards would help ensure that new development contributes positively to the surrounding community through

thoughtful site planning, building design, circulation, open space, and transitions to surrounding uses. Additionally, establishing objective design standards would help implement Programs 2B and 3S. A strikethrough and underline version of the proposed ODS is provided online here: <https://www.costamesaca.gov/home/showdocument?id=65112&t=639273978045753485>

The draft City Council resolution to adopt the ODS is provided in Attachment 5.

Sunseting the Urban Plans

On April 4, 2006, the City of Costa Mesa applied the MUOD to three areas on the Westside and an area around Bristol Street and SR-73. At the same City Council meeting, the City adopted four Urban Plans by resolution—the SoBECA Urban Plan, 19 West Urban Plan, Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan, and Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan. The first three urban plans listed were intended to encourage mixed-use and live/work development at approximately 20 units per acre and up to 60-foot-tall via a master plan. The Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan was intended to facilitate the construction of condominiums or the conversion of rental housing to ownership housing through a master plan.

Developing via the urban plans included a multi-step process beginning with designing a project around a mixture of objective and subjective standards, a City Council Master Plan Screening, revising a master plan for staff review, preparing CEQA documentation, and then review by the Planning Commission for approval or denial of the master plan.

Although initially several residential and live/work projects were entitled on the Westside, success stalled, and no projects were implemented in SoBECA. Over time, the urban plans were not as productive as originally anticipated to facilitate residential and mixed-use development, neighborhood character, and other improvements originally envisioned, potentially in part due to the subjective entitlement process. In line with direction received by the City Council at their meeting on October 15, 2024 regarding Housing Element implementation, staff is proposing to repeal or “sunset” the urban plans as part of the NWWAB rezone effort. To avoid taking away the residential and mixed-use development potential that was created by the urban plans, the proposed amendments to the Mixed-Use Overlay and Residential Common Interest Developments sections of the Zoning Code, supported by other amendments and the new Citywide Multifamily Residential and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards, would ensure adequate residential and mixed-use development capacity remains. In some Measure K areas, the MUOD and Housing Element would increase residential and mixed-use capacity beyond the possibilities provided in the urban plans. This implements Program 3D.

The proposed Zoning Code amendments and new ODS would encourage and facilitate multifamily residential, mixed-use, and live/work development in a more straightforward, objective manner that provides more certainty to the applicant as well as the application reviewer. Sunseting the urban plans in favor of objective standards and a simplified review process is important component of the Housing Element implementation strategy. The draft City Council Resolution to repeal the urban plans is provided as Attachment 6.

Planning Commission Refinements

The Planning Commission included a list of revisions in their recommendation to City Council at the September 28, 2026, meeting. As noted in the Background section of this report, the full list of

revisions considered by the Planning Commission are included in Attachment 8. Direction provided by the Planning Commission at the September 28, 2026 meeting are highlighted in Attachment 8. These revisions are considered non-substantive in nature and are intended to provide additional clarity, correct outdated references and typos, and would provide additional flexibility regarding permitted uses in the MUOD and building façade design for projects subject to the ODS. The continuance of the September 14, 2026 hearings allowed additional time for the Planning Commission and public to review, discuss and consider the additional proposed revisions and allowed time for staff to provide additional analysis and recommendations to better facilitate Planning Commission input. Additionally, the Planning Commission directed staff to go back through the exhibits and correct any typos, grammatical errors and incorrect numbering. To this end, staff have reviewed the City Council approval documents and have made minor revisions in line with this direction.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

An Initial Study was prepared for the NWWAB effort, and the City issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on October 16, 2025, which started the environmental review process. The NOP was available from November 17, 2025 to December 19, 2025. A public scoping meeting was also held on December 10, 2025. The purpose of the NOP is to notify potential Responsible Agencies (Agencies) that the City, as Lead Agency, plans to prepare a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the project and to solicit comments and suggestions regarding (1) the scope and content of the PEIR and (2) the environmental issues and alternatives to be considered in the PEIR, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines) (Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations) section 15082. The NOP also provides agencies, organizations, tribes, and interested parties of the preparation of the PEIR and requests for comments on the scope and contents of the environmental document. The NOP was submitted to the State Clearinghouse per statute, and the following project number was assigned: SCH No. 2025110783. All subsequent project related environmental documents can be accessed on the State Clearinghouse webpage utilizing this project number.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) was issued on June 16, 2026, which began a 48-day public review and comment period that began on May 14, 2026, and concluded on August 3, 2026, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21092 and CEQA Guidelines section 15087. The Draft PEIR was prepared to analyze potential impacts of the project and identify measures to mitigate the environmental effects. The Draft PEIR is a high-level environmental review of this large-scale action to apply the MUOD to most Measure K sites and Housing Element sites, except for the State-owned Fairview Developmental Center site which was evaluated in a separate Environmental Impact Report. Given the broad scale of the rezoning effort and inability to pinpoint which sites will develop, the mix of uses that may occur, and timing of future development, the Draft PEIR utilized assumptions to establish a NWWAB buildout for the year 2056 (30 years). The Draft PEIR identified the following project impacts as significant and unavoidable: aesthetics, air quality, agriculture and forestry, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, population and housing, recreation, and tribal cultural resources. Mitigation measures are proposed for all the categories identified as significant and unavoidable, except agriculture and forestry and recreation.

Responses to public comments on the Draft PEIR are included in the Final PEIR (Final PEIR). The

Final PEIR incorporates the removal of 21 sites from the MUOD, resulting in a buildout of 22,441 dwelling units and 10,459,263 square feet of non-residential uses through the year 2056. Responses to public comments on the Draft PEIR and the Statement of Overriding Considerations are included in the Final PEIR. In addition, the public comments do not warrant recirculation of the PEIR and response to public comments are included. Those who submitted comments were notified on September 4, 2026, that the Final PEIR was available according to statutory requirements, and the Final PEIR is included for Planning Commission recommendation to City Council to certify the Final PEIR and adopt the statement of overriding considerations.

Table 2 describes topics the Draft PEIR identified as no impact, less than significant impact, or significant and unavoidable.

Table 2. No Impact, Less than Significant, and Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

No Impact or Less than Significant Impact	Significant and Unavoidable Impacts
Aesthetics	Aesthetics (Impact 4.1-1)
Agriculture and Forestry	Agriculture and Forestry (Cumulative)
Air Quality	Air Quality (Cumulative)
Biological Resources	Biological Resources (Cumulative)
Cultural Resources	Cultural Resources (Cumulative)
Energy	Geology and Soils (Cumulative)
Geology and Soils	Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Cumulative)
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Cumulative)
Land Use and Planning	Noise (Cumulative)
Noise	Population and Housing (Cumulative)
Population and Housing	Recreation (Cumulative)
Public Services	Tribal Cultural Resources (Cumulative)
Recreation	
Transportation	
Utilities and Service Systems	
Wildfire	

Links to the Final PEIR and related CEQA documents are provided in Attachment 2, Exhibit A.

CEQA Alternatives

The Draft PEIR evaluated the proposed project against 4 alternatives including a No Project Alternative, Housing Element sites only, Reduced density of non-Housing Element sites and No rezone on non-Housing Element industrial sites and Safety Zone 3. Chapter 6 of the Draft PEIR includes a more detailed description of each alternative. The Draft PEIR identified the No Project alternative as the environmentally superior alternative, but it would not meet all of the City's goals and would not eliminate any of the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the project, though it would likely reduce the severity.

All applicable environmental documents referenced above (IS/NOP, NOA and Draft PEIR and Final PEIR) are available on the following City webpage:

<https://www.costamesaca.gov/government/departments-and-divisions/community-development/planning/environmental-notice-and-reports>

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council alternatives include the following:

1. Approve the resolutions and ordinance with modifications. The City Council may identify specific modifications to one or more of the proposed documents and adopt them as modified.
2. Provide additional direction and continue the item. The City Council may request additional information or revisions and continue consideration to a future meeting.
3. Not approve one or more of the proposed resolutions and ordinance. Should the City Council chose to not approve one or more of the proposed resolutions and ordinance, staff would require further direction to address the connections between the documents.

FISCAL REVIEW:

A total of \$2.4 million was set aside in Housing Authority Fund (Fund 222) for the overall efforts associated with the NWWAB efforts, including the revisions to the Housing Element of which, approximately \$340,000 remains in the project balance at the time of the City Council hearing date. Staff anticipates utilizing any remaining balance to implement remaining Housing Element programs through the end of the planning period (2029) and to better facilitate the entitlement process through improved clarity around application requirements and procedures by updating the City's website, developing additional checklists and handouts for the applicants and the public and internal improvements to TESSA and the overall review process to streamline entitlement review.

Additionally, as described in the March 17, 2026 staff report when the City Council rezoned the Housing Elements sites, staff anticipates rezoning actions and streamlined planning application processing will generate an increase in residential and mixed-use development through ministerial approvals. With the transition to more staff-level, ministerial review process, there will also be a shift in processing time and associated discretionary review tasks. At the April 7, 2026 hearing, the City Council adopted new flat fees and cost recovery fees for housing projects. These fees cover the cost of staff time associated with application processing, based on the size and complexity of the project. The adopted fees will also be applied to the remainder of Measure K (non-Housing Element) sites, following adoption of these proposed revisions.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed the report, resolutions and ordinance and has approved them as to form.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Pursuant to Government Code 65854(a), a public noticed was published once in the Daily Pilot newspaper on Friday, October 9, 2026. Additionally, the NWWAB email list was notified of the public hearing on October 12 and 16, 2026 and an article was published in the City Hall Snapshot online newsletter on October 16, 2026. A public notice was posted at City Hall on October 9, 2026.

Any public comments received for the October 20, 2026, City Council meeting, may be viewed at this link: [CITY OF COSTA MESA - Calendar \(legistar.com\)](https://legistar.com/CITY_OF_COSTA_MESA_Calendar)

CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

The NWWAB meets the following City Council Goal and Priority:

- Diversify, stabilize and increase housing to reflect community needs.

CONCLUSION:

The NWWAB effort is a comprehensive, critical step forward in implementing the City's Housing Element, Measure K, and the City Council's goal to diversify, stabilize, and increase housing opportunities to reflect community needs. This effort implements 23 Housing Element programs. By expanding opportunities for housing and mixed-use development, NWWAB would help accommodate existing and future housing demand, provide greater housing choice, and address the needs of Costa Mesa residents across a range of household sizes, income levels, and stages of life. Applying the Mixed-Use Overlay District to targeted commercial and industrial properties would facilitate the reuse of underutilized sites, encourage more compact and walkable development patterns, and create opportunities for housing near businesses, services, and employment. This approach would expand housing and mixed-use development opportunities while avoiding broad increases in allowable residential density without rezoning residential neighborhoods.

Staff recommends that the City Council overrule ALUC's determination and certifies the Final PEIR and adopt Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and adopt the attached Zoning Code amendments, Zoning Map update, amendments to the General Plan and specific plans, re-adopt the Housing Element, establish the Citywide Multifamily Residential and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards, and repeal the urban plans. Overall, the proposed amendments balance the City's responsibility to plan for substantial housing growth with community priorities related to neighborhood compatibility, design quality, and walkability. Adoption of the proposed amendments would establish the regulatory framework necessary to accommodate future housing demand, expand housing choice, support affordable housing opportunities, and facilitate thoughtful reinvestment in Costa Mesa over the coming decades.