

“If you do not take an interest in the affairs of your government, then you are doomed to live under the rule of fools.”

~ Plato

## The Draft Community Plan Update is Just One Part of the City’s Density Plan For Us

By Tracy Thrower Conyers,  
NCWP Board Member

For almost a year we’ve been in an uproar in our community over our Community Plan Update (“CPU”). The update process started out normal enough in 2019, with lots of community engagement opportunities and a first draft that raised eyebrows with what felt at the time like extensive upzoning along Manchester. Those were the “good ole days.”

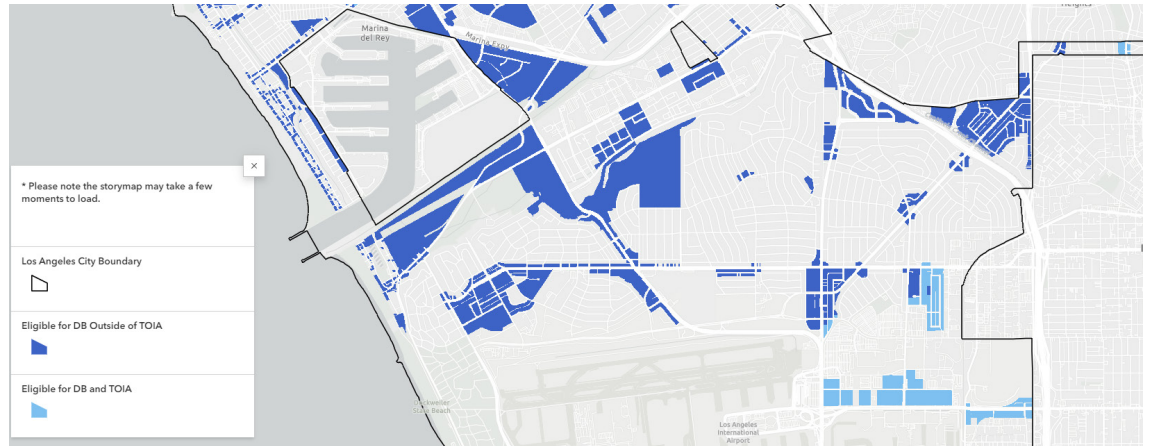
Fast forward to today, and the third draft of our CPU was recently released. We all breathed a sigh of relief because we had to fight hard, but most of what our community asked for was reflected in the new draft.

But the CPU is just the zoning aspect of the bigger density plan. The builder incentives to exploit that zoning is part of another program called the Citywide Housing Incentive Program (“CHIP”), an 85-page document outlining loads of density incentives for builders.

CHIP consists of three programs: (1) the State Density Bonus Law, (2) the Mixed Income Incentive Program (“MIIP”) and (3) the Affordable Housing Incentive Program (“AHIP”). The CPUs, CHIP and three other ordinances constitute LA’s Housing Element.

The city provides a visual of the potential CHIP impacts in a series of maps (link at the bottom). In our plan area, the Density Bonus Map and the AHIP Map are something to be watched, debated and likely pushed back on. These projects are coming to any lot near you that isn’t zoned R-1.

The State Density Bonus Program is for projects with 5+ residential units and offers developers a density increase of 35% and a reduction in parking requirements, as well as a menu of other options including increased height, increased floor area, increased lot coverage and reductions to setbacks, yard size, open space and lot width requirements. Off-menu requests will be entertained as well. The program is complicated and subject to extra incentives with bonus transit incentives, but the percentage of affordable units required to qualify can be as low as 15-20%. These projects are the most troublesome because they represent a lot of burden to neighbors and infrastructure in exchange for not so many affordable units.



The AHIP Program is easier to support in principle for its affordable units, but is still a program to be scrutinized. Specifically, churches and parking lots have special incentive programs that can lead to high rise density projects in the heart of our neighborhoods. These projects get extra density, floor area ratio increases, reduced parking and increased height, and only have to deliver 80% affordable units. And let’s not forget that schools, with their declining enrollment, could be put up for development, according to the map.

CHIP was initially proposed by the Planning Department for single family neighborhoods, but community



backlash caused Planning to pull the plug in October on pushing these programs for R-1 lots. The maps are eye opening because it’s easy to assume all the lots around you are zoned just like yours. So take a look to see what is proposed near your home on a lot you never thought could be a high rise apartment building (like the R-2 duplex that backs up to my own lot).

CHIP is not a done deal yet. We still have time to push back. It was supposed to be in Environmental Review in Winter 2024, but I haven’t seen any indication of that yet. After the review, a revised draft will be issued and then there will be a public hearing, followed by Planning Commission, Land Use Committee and City Council hearings, culminating in a City Council vote for approval.

Find the interactive maps and share your feedback (bottom of the page) at <https://planning.lacity.gov/plans-policies/housing-element-rezoning-program#concept-explorer>.

The interactive map can be hard to navigate. Find screenshots of the maps for our plan area at [www.concernedforwestchesterplaya.com/housing-element](http://www.concernedforwestchesterplaya.com/housing-element).

To keep abreast of changes to our CPU and the Housing Element, join the Neighborhood Council’s Community Plan Update Ad Hoc Committee for monthly meetings on the fourth Monday of each month. Find meeting details at [www.ncwpdr.org](http://www.ncwpdr.org).

Tracy Thrower Conyers is a member of the Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa’s Community Plan Update Ad Hoc Committee and a resident of the Kentwood neighborhood in Westchester.

Next Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa Board Meeting:

6:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 7, 2024

@ CD11 Community Room | 7166 W. Manchester Ave., in Westchester

