NORTH LAKE SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE

Planning Commission Study Session #6 July 23, 2025

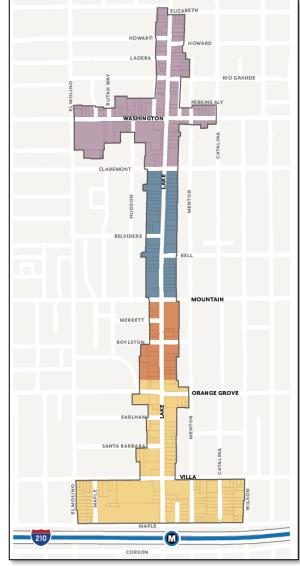


Study Session on North Lake Avenue's Public Realm

- Discussion on the NLSP update related to the public realm
- NLSP area is along North Lake Avenue (Maple to Elizabeth), East Washington Boulevard, (El Molino to Catalina), and along Villa (El Molino to Wilson)
- No action required at this time, but discussion will inform the preparation of the final chapters of the NLSP

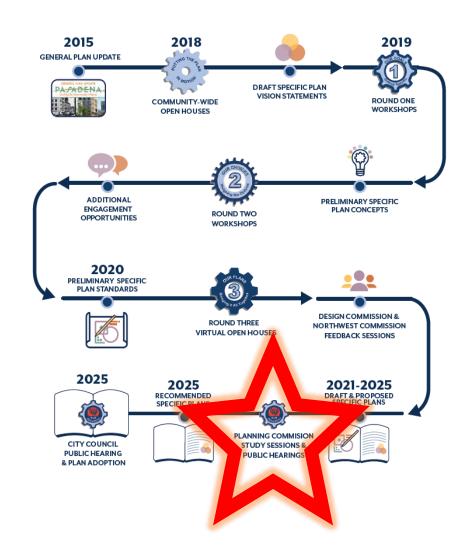






Study Sessions with the Planning Commission Last Year

- Study Session #1: May 2023 Planning background, plan vision & subarea concepts
- Study Session #2: January 2024 Plan boundary, uses of land & residential density
- Study Session #3: April 2024 Drive-through businesses & potential redistribution of residential density
- Study Session #4: May 2024 Discussion on the public realm
 - Department of Transportation presentation
 - Public Works Department presentation
 - Public Realm Subcommittee created
- Study Session #5: November 2024 Presentation by Public Realm Subcommittee on their recommendations on transforming North Lake Avenue into a 'Great Street'
- No Study Sessions December 2024 through April 2025 due to the Eaton Fire



Public Realm Subcommittee Meetings in 2024

- Meeting #1: May 28 Subcommittee met with Planning & Public Works staff
- Meeting #2: June 7 Member of Subcommittee met with Transportation staff
- Meeting #3: July 15 Subcommittee met with Executive Director of South Lake Business Association
- Meeting #4: August 17 Subcommittee met with invited community members
 - A 10-member working group was formed
 - Working Group Meetings met on August 26 & September 9



Public Realm Subcommittee Recommendations

• Goals (9)

 Building sense of place, attracting businesses and mixed-use projects with housing, providing a clean and safe corridor, calming traffic movement, emphasizing transit, reducing congestion, addressing heatisland effect and stormwater runoff, embracing public art.

Objectives (4)

 Emphasized preparing comprehensive streetscape plan for North Lake Avenue.

Policies (25)

- Public Realm
 - Function of corridor and mobility options, pedestrian safety through new and more visible crosswalks, eliminating some onstreet parking, new and more resilient street trees, replacing center turn lanes with landscaped medians, and enhancing pedestrian experience with paseos and green spaces.

Private Realm

 Reducing amount of existing and new parking, redeveloping existing parking lots, reducing number of curb cuts along North Lake Avenue, supporting façade improvements for existing businesses. DATE: September 12, 2024

TO: Community Members and City Staff

FROM: Planning Commission Subcommittee on the North Lake Specific Plan "Public Realm" Section (Commissioners Cole, Delgado, Hunt Hernandez, Sims)

North Lake Specific Plan "Public Realm" Section Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

North Lake Avenue is the most prominent boulevard in the northern half of the City and a central artery for our community. Unlike South Lake Avenue, a successful retail and commercial street, North Lake Avenue functions as a strode, with the worst characteristics of both a street and a road. As a street, the current space and scale of North Lake Avenue are devoted to cars and trucks with a right-of-way disproportionately wide that does not accommodate well pedestrians and bicycles. As a road, it conveys a high volume of through traffic without a walkable, attractive public realm to support a healthy mix of uses for a successful street.

To ensure it lives up to its highest potential, reflecting the strength and vitality of the surrounding neighborhoods, North Lake Avenue needs a realistic community-based placemaking and placekeeping design and structure. The City of Pasadena, not the private sector, is responsible for creating and maintaining the Public Realm. Rather than being leftover space between buildings, the Public Realm is the communal expression of place that reinforces the vision and quality of life in the planning area. It cannot be left to chance. A vibrant Public Realm is the key to creating a valuable community as well as improving the value of private development.

Absent a sustained and bold commitment by the City to transformation and revitalization (akin to its successful effort in Old Pasadena), this North Lake Specific Plan Update will suffer the same failure as the earlier j

DEFINITIONS (insert into text here or at end in separate 'Definitions' Section)

To comply with and implement the City's 2015 General Plan, the North Lake Specific Plan shall address North Lake Avenue as a *complete street* and *greenstreet*, as well as its *streetscape*.

Complete Street

Smart Growth America's definition of a complete street—embodied in Pasadena's Mobility Elementfocuses on sustainable means of transportation to minimize environmental impacts while creating streets that are safe for everyone regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. Complete streets include physical improvements that benefit pedestrians, bicyclists, and mass-transit users while minimizing the focus on single-occupancy vehicles. The complete street concept also embraces the greenstreet principles of incorporating methods of mitigating stormwater runoff.

Greenstree

Closely related to the definition of a *complete street*, the City of Seattle further describes a *greenstreet* as a public right-of-way that through design and operations prioritizes pedestrian and open space over

reinforcing desired spect of mitigating in become a major

e between building ublic open spaces, hing that makes up eenstreets. Typical street lights, street public or publicly-, a place for people

REALM

corporated into the area into a special 007 Amended North

> ort is an instrument street for people.

and residential uses les including transit, ng, and living. These

> ne most important cific Plan Area, the e, where the public Avenue now lacks a vibrant 'outdoor utdoor living room, r conduct business. om; the sidewalks, ling', the canopy of her and sky above.

Experiencing North Lake Avenue will be protective while celebrating its history and mountain views.

2

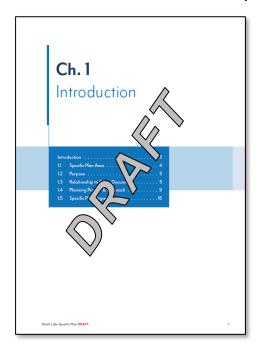
Public Realm Subcommittee Meetings in 2025

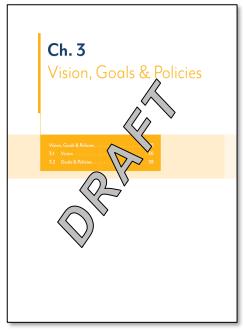
- Meeting #5: May 7 Subcommittee met with Planning, Transportation & Public Works to discuss the Subcommittee's recommendations
 - Staff presented a spreadsheet showing ways recommendations could be added to Draft NLSP
 - Subcommittee supported overall approach asked for more emphasis on Policies
- Meeting #6: June 18 Subcommittee met with Planning to discuss the city's approach on addressing the Subcommittee's recommendations
 - Staff presented revised Draft NLSP Chapters (1-3, 5 & 7)
 - Subcommittee was pleased with progress

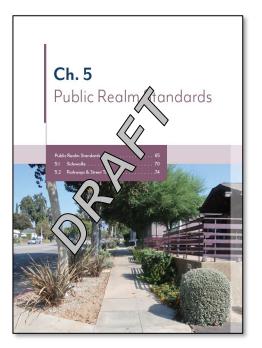


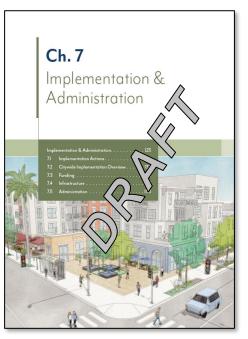
How the Subcommittee's Recommendations are Included in the Draft NLSP

- Recommended Goals, Objectives & Policies were incorporated throughout the NLSP draft
 - Goals were incorporated in Chapter 1 as 'Community Priorities'
 - Objectives were incorporated as Implementation Actions in Chapter 7
 - Policies were incorporated as part of Vision, Goals & Policies in Chapter 3, as guiding principles & Public Realm Standards in Chapter 5, and/or as Implementation Actions in Chapter 7









Goals as 'Community Priorities'

 Goals were redrafted as 'Community Priorities' in Chapter 1

For example:

 Goal 1: Build a sense of place for the community and individuals by changing the current space and scale to create a vibrant outdoor living room.

Community Priority

 Sense of Place: Create a Great Street with a strong sense of place through public realm design that offers safe and visually interesting pedestrian connections, generates community gathering and activity, and respects, preserves, and celebrates North Lake Avenue's historic fabric and context.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

for Transformative Placemaking and Streetscape Design on North Lake Avenue

- » Sense of Place: Create a Great Street with a strong sense of place through public realm design that offers safe and visually interesting pedestrian connections, generates community gathering and activity, and respects, preserves, and celebrates North Lake Avenue's historic fabric and context.
- » Mixed-Use District: Foster a supportive environment for investment in businesses and development of mixeduse projects that help meet housing and retail service needs within the NLSP area and its surrounding neighborhoods.
- Well Maintained Corridor: Provide a high standard of care and maintenance that contributes to a clean and safe environment along the entirety of the corridor and uplifts North Lake's feeling of community pride and ownership.

- » Traffic Calming: Support strategies to calm traffic movement along North Lake Avenue such as public realm infrastructure and streetscape design that promote pedestrian travel and bicycle use and safety.
- Encourage a metered pace of travel along the corridor that reflects North Lake Avenue's identity as a pedestrianscaled social and economic destination via all modes of transportation, not simply a vehicle thoroughfare.

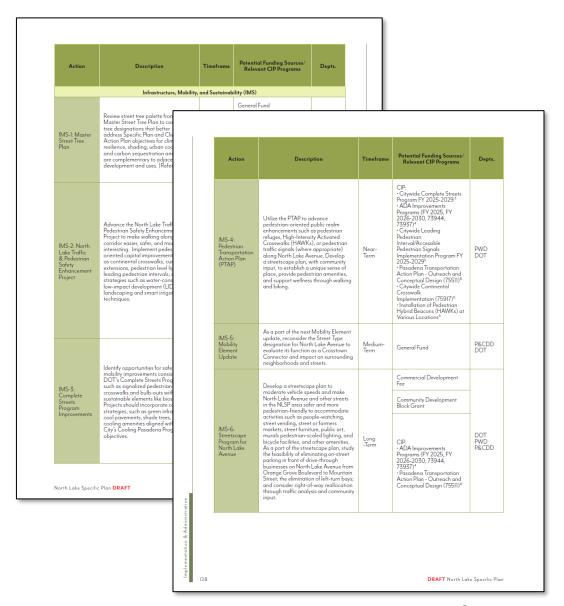
» Managed Congestion:

» Accessible Destination: Reinforce North Lake's identity as a destination by improving public and active transportation connections to and within the NLSP area rather than prioritizing movement through the area to other destinations.

- » Sustainable District: Advance climate change mitigation goals, reduce environmental impacts, and support a walkable and sustainable environment through strategies that de-emphasize singleoccupancy vehicles, reduce impermeable paving, increase tree canopy, and create memorable and delightful experiences for pedestrians.
- » Green and Creative Landscaping: Promote creative and sustainable landscaping techniques that beautify the corridor while mitigating the environmental impacts of stormwater runoff.
- » Public Art and Community Identity: Encourage murals and public art programming that reinforce a strong sense of place and continuity between North Lake's past, present, and future.

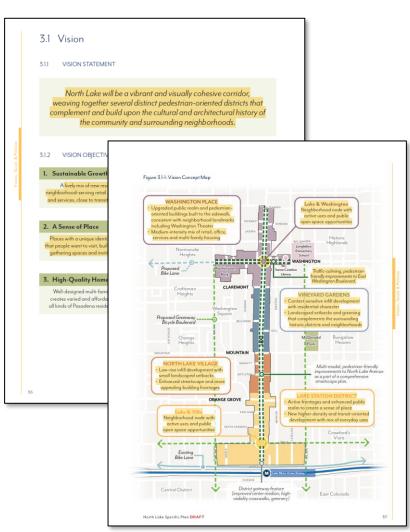
Objectives as Implementation Actions

- Objectives were added as Implementation Actions in Chapter 7.
- For example:
 - Objective 1: Fund and Develop a Pedestrian Plan and Implementation Strategy.
 - The Pedestrian Plan will provide the foundation for planning and developing the Public Realm for the North Lake Specific Plan Area. It will provide the blueprint for implementing pedestrian-oriented capital improvements to make it easier, safer, and more interesting to walk along the Avenue as well as to and from adjoining neighborhoods. The Plan will describe the existing conditions facing pedestrians on North Lake Avenue, analyze walking data and trends, describe best practices successfully used in other cities, and provide the basis and justification for funding and implementing capital improvements aimed at walking.
 - Implementation Action: Infrastructure, Mobility, and Sustainability (IMS)
 - O IMS-2: North Lake Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Project Advance the North Lake Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Project to make walking along the corridor easier, safer, and more interesting. Implement pedestrian-oriented capital improvements such as continental crosswalks, curb extensions, pedestrian level lighting, leading pedestrian intervals, and strategies such as water-conserving low-impact development (LID) landscaping and smart irrigation techniques.



Policies as Vision, Goals & Policies / Implementation Actions

- Policies were added/revised as Policies, Vision Objectives, and Vision Concept Map in Chapter 3, and/or Implementation Actions in Chapter 7.
- For example:
 - o Policy 4: Maximize off-street parking as much as possible.
 - Eliminate on-street parking from Orange Grove to Mountain Streets where fronting drivethrus. Where critically needed to serve businesses without onsite parking, reduce the number of on-street spaces or re-configure them to be more efficient (i.e. install diagonal parking, create parking inlets, etc.).
 - Development & Design Policy 4.j. Parking.
 - Locate onsite parking underground or in the rear of the lot with access from a secondary street to prevent the introduction of new curb cuts or new surface parking lots abutting North Lake Avenue.
 - Implementation Action: Infrastructure, Mobility, and Sustainability (IMS)
 - Outlest Streetscape Program for North Lake Avenue
 Develop a streetscape plan to moderate vehicle speeds and make North Lake Avenue and other streets in the NLSP area safer and more pedestrian-friendly to accommodate activities such as people-watching, street vending, street or farmers markets, street furniture, public art, murals pedestrian-scaled lighting, and bicycle facilities, and other amenities. As a part of the streetscape plan, study the feasibility of eliminating on-street parking in front of drive-through businesses on North Lake Avenue from Orange Grove Boulevard to Mountain Street; the elimination of left-turn bays; and consider right-of-way reallocation through traffic analysis and community input.



Policies as Guiding Principles for a 'Great Street'

- Subcommittee recommendations influenced Chapter 5 (Public Realm Standards)
 - Ten qualities of a 'Great Street'
 - Attractions & Activities,
 - Unique Image & Identity,
 - Active Street Edges,
 - Essential Amenities,
 - Ongoing Management,
 Seasonal Strategies,
 - Design for Diverse Users
 - Balanced Transportation
 - Blended Spaces, and
 - Neighborhood Integration.

Towards a Great North Lake Avenue

GREAT STREETS are more than transportation corridors they are dynamic public spaces that foster community, support local economies, and invite people to gather, linger, and return. They are places people want to be.

The Planning Commission Subcommittee's vision for North Lake Avenue aims to transform the corridor into a 'Great Street.' This vision prioritizes the creation of a cohesive and inviting streetscape, and the public realm standards outlined in this chapter were developed to support the Subcommittee's long-term plan for North Lake Avenue. The sidewalk and parkway requirements of the NLSP will facilitate the establishment of a high-quality public realm that's capable of accommodating various uses and users, enhancing North Lake's identity and sense of place.

Placemaking is a collaborative, community-centered approach to planning, designing, and managing public spaces that that turns a space into a place, prioritizing people and their experiences. Instead of facusing solely on aesthetics or infrastructure, placemaking asks: How do we create spaces where people want to gather, interact, and feel a sense of belonging? Placemaking can improve not just the physical environment of a space, but the social and economic health of a community as well.

The Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a nonprofit dedicated to creating and sustaining public spaces that build strong urban fabrics through placemaking, defines the following ten qualities of a Great Street. By applying these principles, North Lake Avenue can become not only functional but also a place of community connection and everyday life.



1 Attractions & Activities

People are drawn to places that offer engaging activities and they're more likely to come back. Without things to do, spaces stay empty and can fall into decline. Successful destinations offer a diverse range of experiences that appeal to all ages, genders, times of day and year, and group sizes. A well-planned destination links these experiences along an inviting path that encourages exploration and repeat visits.

2 Unique Image & Identity

The most memorable streets have a interesting identity, shaped by their architecture, history, culture, or even the type of businesses they host. This image should feel authentic and be reinforced through signage, public art, street design, and upkeep. Cleanliness and maintenance are crucial to preserving a positive image and sense of pride. Local stories, materials, and design elements that reflect the community's character should be celebrated.

3 Active Street Edges

The ground level of buildings should engage the street, with features that promote interaction between indoor and outdoor spaces. Active uses like shops, cafes, or galleries make streets more vibrant and walkable than blank façades or empty lots. At a minimum, the edges should offer visual interest and transparency; blank walls, parking, and other dead zones along the sidewalk should be avoided. Uses should be designed for year-round activity and help tie both sides of the Street Together.

4 Essential Amenities

Well-designed amenities support a lively and functional street. These include lighting, bus shelters, bike racks, waste bins, and diverse seating options such as single seats, benches, and café chairs. Giving people choices in where and how they sit is often overlooked but essential. Grouping amenities together encourages use and enhances comfort and convenience.



5 Ongoing Management

Effective management is the backbone of a successful street. This involves more than maintenanc—it includes tenant coordination and programming regular events to keep the space active. Programming can range from small performances and sales to larger civic, cultural, or seasonal events. Frequent small-scale events-like musicians, walks, or pop-up vendors can help build habit and presence.

6 Seasonal Strategies

To maintain vibrancy year-round, especially in places with less formal management, seasonal events like holiday markets, festivals, and recreational programs are vital. These strategies help draw people in during different times of the year, keeping the street animated regardless of season. Temporary elements such as seasonal installations or decor can keep the street dynamic and fresh.

7 Design for Diverse Users

A Great Street is for everyone. It should serve a mix of ages, cultures, income levels, and physical abilities. Public space feels truly vibrant when everyone feels welcome and no single group dominates. To best achieve this from the start, spaces should be designed with input from community members, including those historically excluded from planning processes, in order to ensure the design reflects their needs, values, and desires. It's about equity, representation, and flexibility.

8 Balanced Transportation

A successful street supports multiple modes of transportation, ensuring safe access for all by prioritizing walking, biking, and public transit. Use traffic calming strategies (like narrowed lanes, curb extensions, and reduced speed limits) to ensure that vehicles don't overwhelm the space. Pedestrian safety and comfort should come first; intersections and crossings must be safe spaces for people.

9 Blended Spaces

Public life often happens where public and private spaces overlap. Patios, sidewalk cafés, retail displays, and shared street designs help blur this boundary, with businesses like shops and restaurants spilling onto sidewalks. Encouraging this interaction adds energy to the street and supports local businesses.



10 Neighborhood Integration

Great streets don't exist in isolation—they connect to the broader urban context of the city. Thoughfull transitions from district to district (e.g., commercial businesses to quieter residential neighborhoods) help maintain community character and reduce conflicts. Simple measures such as changes in scale, building type, street width, or landscaping can signal this shift in pace and use.

Adapted from Qualities of a Great Street, Project for Public Spaces.

Policies as Elements of a 'Great Street'

- Subcommittee recommendations influenced Chapter 5 (Public Realm Standards)
 - Six Elements of a 'Great Street'
 - Furniture
 - Public art
 - o Shade
 - Bike facilities
 - Lighting, and
 - Wayfinding

Elements of a Great Street



A variety of permanent, temporary, and/or modular furniture should be widely accessible and distributed throughout, inviting people to stop and stay in the public realm.



Murals, sculptures and other forms of art can be incorporated into all kinds of projects, including streetscape plans, development projects and infrastructure works.



Shade trees and human-made shade structures offer protection from the sun and can contribute to pedestrian comfort in the high heat of summer.



Bike racks, corrals, lockers create an environment where people feel encouraged to use alternative modes of transportation (and confident in the security of their bike).



Street lamps and other forms of lighting, from string lights to building-mounted sconces to ground lighting, play a major role in the identity and safety of a street after dark.



Signage with directions and walking distances to nearby destinations and landmarks, biking and transit routes, and/or other local and historical information can help orient visitors.

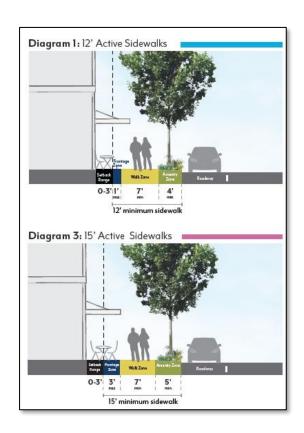
Policies as Vision, Goals & Policies

- Conceptual illustrations will also be part of the NLSP
- For example:
 - North Lake Village Subarea
 - Just south of Chick-fil-a
 - Mixed-use project with elements such as sidewalk dining, bicycle parking, landscaped median, and street trees.



Policies as Public Realm Standards & Guidelines

- Additional Public Realm Standards also address:
 - Minimum sidewalk width
 - Canopy trees
 - Landscaped parkways
 - Stormwater management





STORMWATER & IRRIGATION GUIDELINES

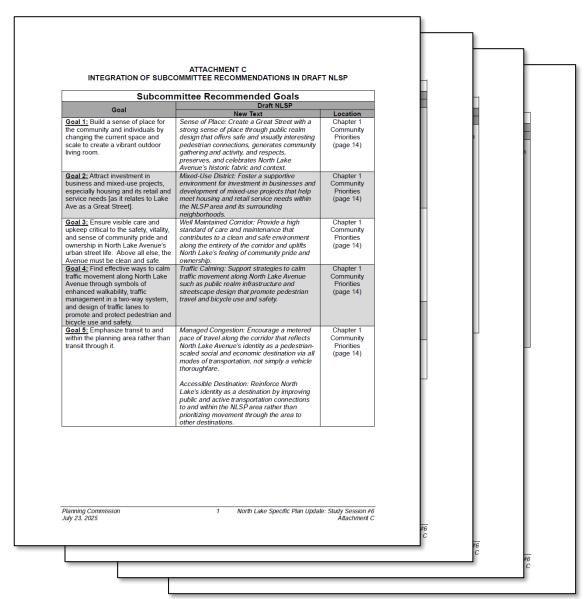
- » Parkways should be designed to treat and/ or capture stormwater run-off from the adjacent to the greatest extent feasible given soil conditions.
- » Suspended pavement systems are encouraged as a means of controlling runoff volume and should be implemented under and adjacent to large pedestrian walkways.
- » If impermeable surfaces are used within parkways, they shall be constructed to drain to permeable areas.
- » Low-volume, sub-surface/drip irrigation or other non-spray irrigation systems or hand-watering is preferred where irrigation is needed.



Mid-block curb extensions can be used for street trees and stormwater retention

North Lake Specific Plan and the Public Realm

- All 38 Subcommittee recommendations addressed in the Draft NLSP
 - Attachment C lists each Goal, Objective, and Policy, how it has been included in the Draft NLSP, and where.
- In concert with the Public Realm standards and previously drafted Vision, Goal, Objectives, and Policies, the added input from the Subcommittee has put a spotlight on the public right-of-way in the North Lake Specific Plan area.

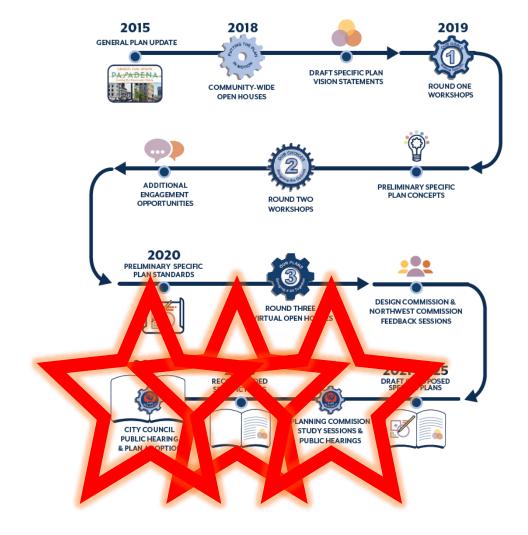


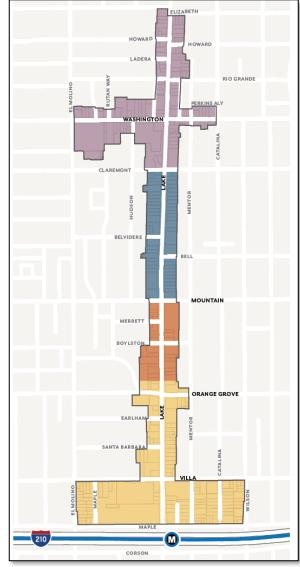
Next Steps



Next Steps

- Planning Commission Public Hearing (Fall 2025)
- City Council Public Hearing (Fall 2025)





Thank you

