

The 2021 AIA LA Advocacy Platform

Adopt The Zero Code To Achieve Carbon Neutrality

On October 19, 2021, Los Angeles City Council passed a [motion \(CF 21 – 1042\)](#) to direct numerous city departments to report back by the end of 2022 with “a robust, world leading plan to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality without offsets in Los Angeles by 2030.”

Our Request:

As an integral part of that goal, we request to have City Council officially adopt the [2022 Zero Code For California](#). At present, 52+ cities in California have adopted all-electric reach codes and the City of Los Angeles has the opportunity to go one step beyond. The Zero Code For California expands on the 2022 energy efficiency standards adopted by the California Energy Commission by:

- + requiring on-site or off-site renewable energy,
- + eliminating the direct use of fossil fuels in buildings, and
- + specifying beyond-code energy efficiency

Adopting the Zero Code will also directly benefit LADWP’s renewable energy programs with both on-site generation and/or off-site procurement of 100% clean energy.

We look forward to collaborating with the Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance, the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office, and the LA Cool City Challenge Team to integrate the Zero Code and other building decarbonization strategies into the plan.

Streamline, for real this time!

It takes too long to get housing built and it’s too expensive to navigate City of LA’s complex and unwieldy permitting process. Delays, lack of accountability, and technical uncertainties are also impacting site-feasibility and further impacting our affordable housing and homelessness crisis.

Our Request:

For LA City Council to champion and financially support a comprehensive audit of the inter-departmental clearance process with the aim to:

- + Streamline the process to clarify outcomes, save time, and lower the cost overhead of city personnel
- + Sunset clearances that are either no longer socially relevant and/ or at cross-purposes to our larger goals for housing affordability and community resilience.
- + Optimize a technological interface (Build LA) to quicken interaction and improve customer service
- + Update and modernize the policy & regulatory outcomes that City Council is hoping to achieve and re-assign the policy agenda upstream so that goals and objectives do not rely so heavily on project-by-project feasibility.

This request aligns in support of the recent motion ([CF 21-0658](#)) from Councilmembers Nithya Raman and Marqueece Harris-Dawson to expedite the approval process for affordable housing and a motion ([21-0054](#)) Councilmembers DeLeon, Price, Rodriguez, and Blumenfeld to streamline the permitting process for permanent supportive housing.

With more architects at the table, we will be able to share on-the-ground insight about how the existing departmental clearance process is causing severe snags, delays, and uncertainties that damage our ability to deliver housing to all Angelenos.

Invest & Prioritize Trees for Resilience, Shade Equity, & Environmental Justice

AIA LA is grateful for the leadership of the City Forest Officer, City Plants, and Streets LA and applaud their recent initiatives: [The First Steps Report](#), [Los Angeles Urban Forest Equity Assessment Report](#), and the [Urban Forest Equity Streets Guidebook](#). These resources serve as a framework to advance more robust, catalytic opportunities for a healthier urban forest.

However, City of Los Angeles currently does not have a Capital Improvement Expenditure Plan and we are currently not doing enough to protect and maintain our existing street trees or plant new ones. In fact, empty tree wells become a strident reminder that more must be done.

The motion ([CF 21-0039](#)) to develop a Capital Improvement Expenditure Plan from Council President Nury Martinez and Councilmember Curren Price is a positive next step. In addition, we need to advance the motion ([CF 19-0302](#)) from Councilmembers Buscaino, Cedillo, and Martinez for a ballot measure to provide funding for capital improvements, land acquisition for new parks, and tree planting & maintenance.

Our Request:

AIA LA requests that City Council update its Capital Improvement Expenditure Plan to ensure more equitable, safe, and healthy communities, and to establish a viable funding source to expand tree canopy, especially in underserved neighborhoods.

Furthermore, to ensure that we are prioritizing our investment in trees, AIA LA recommends:

- + Prioritize urban forest equity at the front-end of reviewing development projects and analyze its relationship to trees at the inception of the permitting process.
- + Create a “save/protect the tree” & “grow the canopy” culture
- + Integrate the concepts of LASAN’s 2020 Biodiversity Report across all city departments.
- + Fully fund a street-level prioritization plan with an inventory of each street in Los Angeles.
- + Maximize space for larger trees by re-designing our streets, sidewalks, and parkways.
- + Expand the equity framework to include parks, expand tree canopy in existing parks and on all public facilities), and add additional park space in underserved communities.
- + Update the Street Tree Space Guidelines to optimize flexibility and ensure more locations for street trees.
- + Collect GIS data for all infrastructure (such as utility meters, pipes, poles, overhead power-lines, street signs, etc), consolidate their placement/ impact on the public right-of-way, and optimize more space for trees.

EXPAND ACCESS TO HOME OWNERSHIP FOR BIPOC COMMUNITIES

For more than six-decades, government policies and regulations and business practices segregated access to homeownership, severely impacting people of color. This caused generations of poverty and low-income impactation. Followed by the 'war on poverty', which led to more than five-decades of building affordable housing limited to elderly and/or very-low-income households added to the existing low-income impactation.

To reverse these inequities, Los Angeles needs a public-private ecosystem that advances a community-based neighborhood vision and combines capital, professional services, and facilitates land assembly at scale.

Specifically, community development must be driven to target home ownership for Black and Brown people, with development of commercial, industrial, technology and retail facilities adjacent to and in proximity to transit stations of underserved communities. Achieving this will create the economic chemistry necessary for a community to thrive and grow into self-sustaining environment that makes a safe, healthy place to raise children, live, work and play.

Our Request:

AIA LA requests to have City Council support the "Accelerated Equity Housing and Transit Development" Pilot Program.

The program will create a 65/35 loan ratio for Black and Brown people to afford a home, plus 3-income units. If adopted, the program will create nearly 300,000 rental units, improves the quality of life around transit stations, and generates \$2 billion in new county tax revenues.

The pilot program will create a new business model and advance urban design solutions for underserved communities. This model will occur through a facilitations team in a public-private partnership with local and county government that serves as a master developer. The master developer can utilize existing Metro TOD visioning and strategies for underserved communities combined with scattered site developments of four-plexes as new homes for Black and Brown first-time home buyers. It includes existing single-family homeowners who wish to add accessory dwelling units, along with first-last mile corridor improvements, development of commercial, industrial, technology and retail facilities adjacent to and in proximity to transit stations.

This pilot program aims to: (1) replenish the culture of communities of color, (2) grow household incomes safely, (3) bring a new generation of the existing culture home to create a new vibrancy along the commercial corridors and be role models for the young children, and (4) provide affordable rental units for family and friends of the existing neighborhood and most important, (5) for government and banks to make amends and correct economic damages caused through historical redlining practices.

To create success in the absorption of Black and Brown families to afford a four-plex or remodel Mom's house and add 3 ADUs, the pilot program seeks a 30% federal subsidy for each buyer and/or remodeler. This enables a person or family to make a low-down payment of approximately \$50k. In addition, we are making a business transaction that is mutually beneficial to community, government, and business market. It generates new revenue and grows local market economies while mitigating the impact of gentrification, creating vibrant diverse communities that still reflect the local culture.

For more information, please contact:

Will Wright, Hon. AIA LA
Director, Government & Public Affairs
American Institute of Architects, Los Angeles Chapter
Architecture for Communities Los Angeles
3780 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 701, Los Angeles, CA 90010
O: (213) 639-0764
E: will@aialosangeles.org
www.aialosangeles.org