

# Mesa West

## Residential Ownership

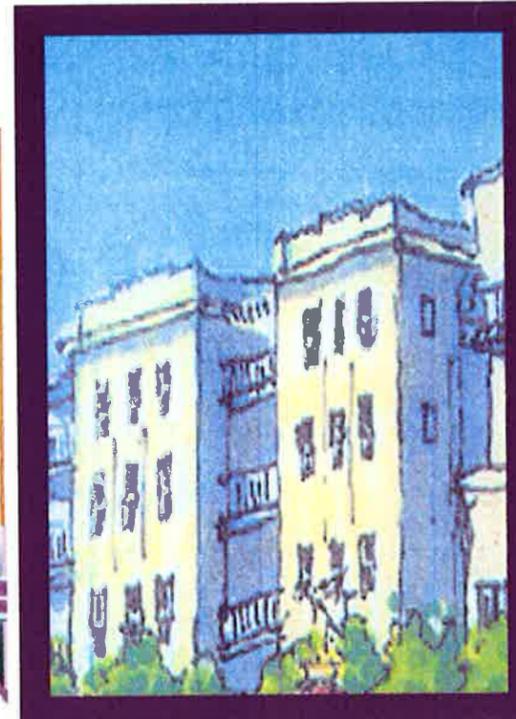
### URBAN PLAN



Development Services Dept.  
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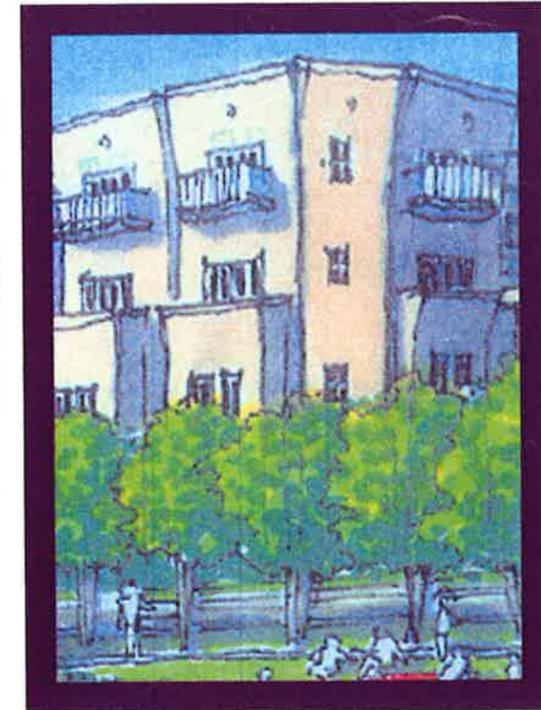
TOWNHOMES



CONDO CONVERSION



% DENSITY BONUS



HOMEOWNERSHIP

RESIDENTIAL OWNERSHIP INCENTIVES

August 2006

ADOPTED APRIL 4, 2006

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In March 2005, City Council approved several strategies aimed at revitalizing the City's Westside (Figure 1). These strategies were based on the Westside Revitalization Oversight Committee's (WROC) Final Report and Implementation Plan that were presented to Council in early 2005 (Figure 2).

Included in Council's overall approval were two strategies that encourage the redevelopment or conversion of existing rental multiple family units to a development of ownership units.

These strategies are as follows:

- **Strategy D1 - Residential Ownership Incentives Overlay Zone**

Encourage development of new owner-occupied condominium and clustered homes by creating an overlay zone for high-density residences in areas that are currently zoned R-2 medium density (12 units per acre), R-2 high density (14.5 units per acre) and R-3 (20 units per acre), to allow R-3 high density (20 units per acre).

- **Strategy D3 - Flexible Development Standards Ordinance**

This represents an additional incentive to promote ownership housing in the multiple-family zones. It is intended to encourage appealing exterior design themes and avoid solid massing, by allowing flexibility in height, setbacks, and alley usage consistent with City codes, but not allowing variances to current City parking standards.

The Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan implements both of these strategies by

specifying the plan area and identifying various development standards to encourage residential homeownership in the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan area. The purpose of the urban plan is to inform landowners and the general public of the residential ownership incentives available in the plan area. Opportunities for condominium conversions or new ownership housing in the Urban Plan area involve properties that may be redeveloped or rehabilitated.

The Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan does not propose any major intensification of land uses. The emphasis is on distributing high density residential land uses throughout the area, providing visual enhancement through conventional architecture, and encouraging the development of ownership housing along major streets such as: W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Victoria Street, Anaheim Avenue, and Wallace Avenue.

Thus, future volumes of traffic will be supported by the roadway network change and should not change significantly from the existing/projected traffic volumes in the plan area. In this regard, it should be emphasized that the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan should not adversely impact levels of services on streets in the area and should essentially maintain the existing traffic patterns.

### Relationship to Other Westside Urban Plans

The Westside Implementation Plan was adopted in March 2005. Three Urban Plans were created to establish overlay zones in specific areas of the Westside: (1) 19 West Village Urban Plan, (2) Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan, and (3) Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan. Each Urban Plan provides guidance to property owners and Developers for new development and redevelopment. All together, these plans will provide a framework for major private market reinvestment and improvements for the

Westside. However, the Urban Plans avoid being excessively restrictive by not dictating architectural design guidelines or establishing exterior building colors.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map of Westside

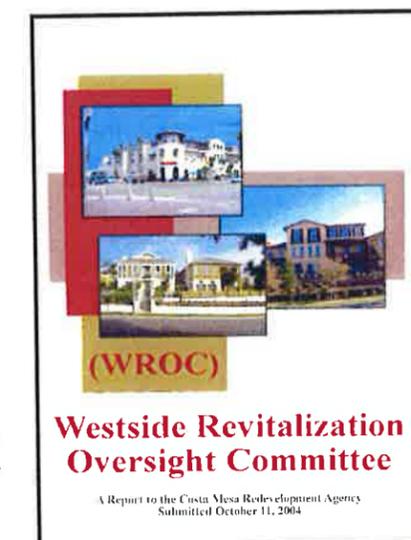
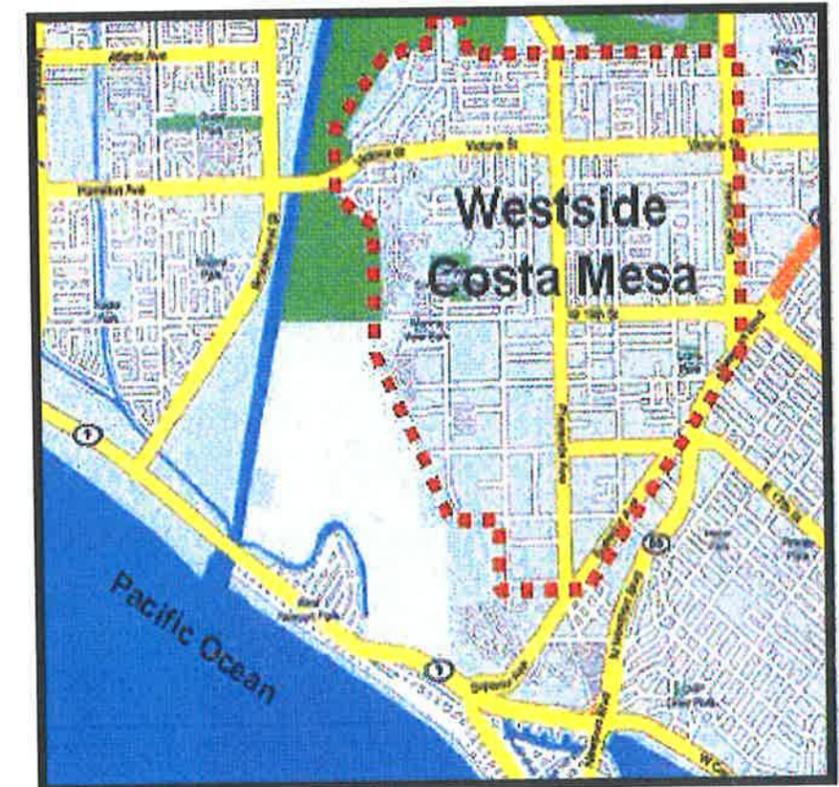
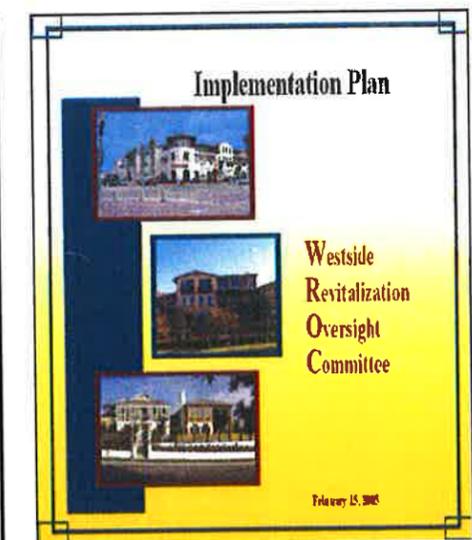


Figure 2: WROC Planning documents



## WROC COMMITTEE

Many cities face similar situations where incompatible land uses are located side-by-side, and where public safety programs are consistently being impacted by a high demand for services from concentrated problem areas within the community. These problems often tend to spread, thus impacting adjoining neighborhoods or business areas. In August, 2003, the Redevelopment Agency appointed 40 members to the Westside Revitalization Oversight Committee (WROC). The WROC's objective was to build upon previous work completed by the Community Redevelopment Action Committee (CRAC). Through the efforts of an intense citizen participation program, the WROC assisted City Council/Redevelopment Agency in developing a long-term vision for the Westside.

Citizen participation was a critical part of the Westside Revitalization Program. The City wished to encourage all residents, especially those living adjacent to industrial properties, to participate in its planning process. In addition, other representatives from the business community were invited. The members of the Westside Revitalization Oversight Committee consisted of representatives of the following groups:

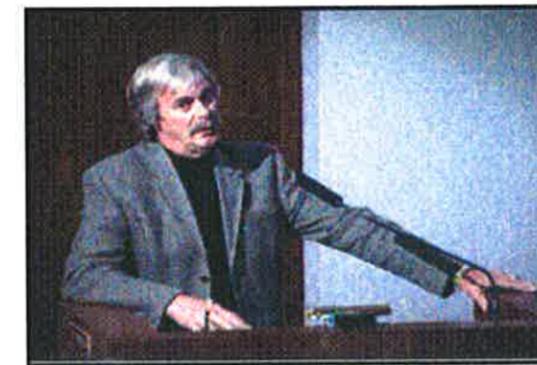
- Homeowners
- Industrial Business and Property Owners
- Rental Property Owners
- Commercial Business and Property Owners
- Residential Tenants
- Community Service Organizations

The public participation process was based on the premise that community planning begins with open communication and the exchange of information and ideas. With this exchange, a comprehensive revitalization plan could be developed which had both effective actions to implement in the short-term future and also broad public support. The WROC provided all persons interested in the Westside with the opportunity to participate and provide feedback on what they envisioned for the future of the Westside. This concept was

unusual because seldom is a committee encouraged to have a large membership. However, this committee of forty members proved that multiple diverse opinions and interest groups could come together to provide valuable input to its City leaders. This was demonstrated by the WROC through their intense commitment, a strong desire for change, diverse representation of the community, and numerous varying ideas and opinions. Compromise was not easily achieved, but when reached it was supported by a supermajority of the membership (Fig. 3A). The WROC's final report and implementation plan are significant since both documents represent the consensus of this 40-member committee. The City of Costa Mesa's Redevelopment Agency and City Council used the WROC's findings and recommendations in their decision-making process to identify the Urban Plan areas and to apply General Plan land use policies for mixed-use development.

The primary difference between this urban plan and the WROC recommendations for the residential ownership incentives is the scope of the overlay zone. The WROC recommendations were limited to the area bounded by Hamilton Street to the north, 18th Street to the south, Placentia Avenue to the west, and Maple/Bernard/Charle Streets to the east. Single-family areas were excluded from the overlay area. This urban plan expands the overlay zone to high-density residential areas north of Hamilton Street, west of Placentia Avenue, and south of 18th Street. These added areas also include Medium Density Residential as shown on page 4A. This urban plan also includes a minimum lot size of 1 acre for a density bonus, while the WROC recommendation was a minimum lot size of 1.5 or 2.0 acres. The WROC also recommended that all parcels currently zoned R2-Medium Density that abut R1 properties remain R2-Medium Density to act as a buffer to the R1 homes. In this urban plan, there is one R2-Medium Density property (773 West Wilson) that abuts existing R1 properties on Wallace Avenue.

Figure 3A:  
Several Westside  
Revitalization  
Oversight  
Committee  
members making  
public comments  
at City Council  
meeting.



**LOCATION**

The 238-acre plan area is depicted in Figure 3B. As can be noted, the plan area includes several multi-family neighborhoods south of West 19<sup>th</sup> Street in proximity to Whittier Elementary School and Lions Park. Additional residential areas north of West 19<sup>th</sup> Street include portions of neighborhoods that are located near Wilson Elementary School, Pomona Elementary School, and Rea Center.

**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan include the following:

- Promote economic viability. Promote economic viability in existing medium-density residential areas by encouraging the construction of residential condominium projects that will add vitality to the neighborhood.
- Encourage owner-occupied housing. The Costa Mesa 2000 General Plan strongly encourages the development of owner-occupied housing where feasible to improve the balance between rental and ownership opportunities in the City (General Plan Policy LU-1A.4).
- Revise Development Standards. The overlay district codifies a number of development provisions that may facilitate condominium conversion or new construction of ownership housing to realize the vision of the Urban Plan.

**PURPOSE OF OVERLAY ZONING**

Overlay zoning is a useful tool in promoting the revitalization and ownership housing in the Residential Ownership Incentives Overlay Zone. By giving a plan the weight of law, an overlay zoning district helps ensure successful implementation of the plan's strategies.

In this case, the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan encourages owner-occupied housing in the plan area, and/or rehabilitation of deteriorated neighborhoods.

Overlay zoning applies another set of zoning provisions to a specified area within an existing zoning district. When activated by an approved Master Plan, the underlying zoning district is superseded by the regulations of the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan, unless otherwise indicated.

**WESTSIDE URBAN PLAN AREAS**

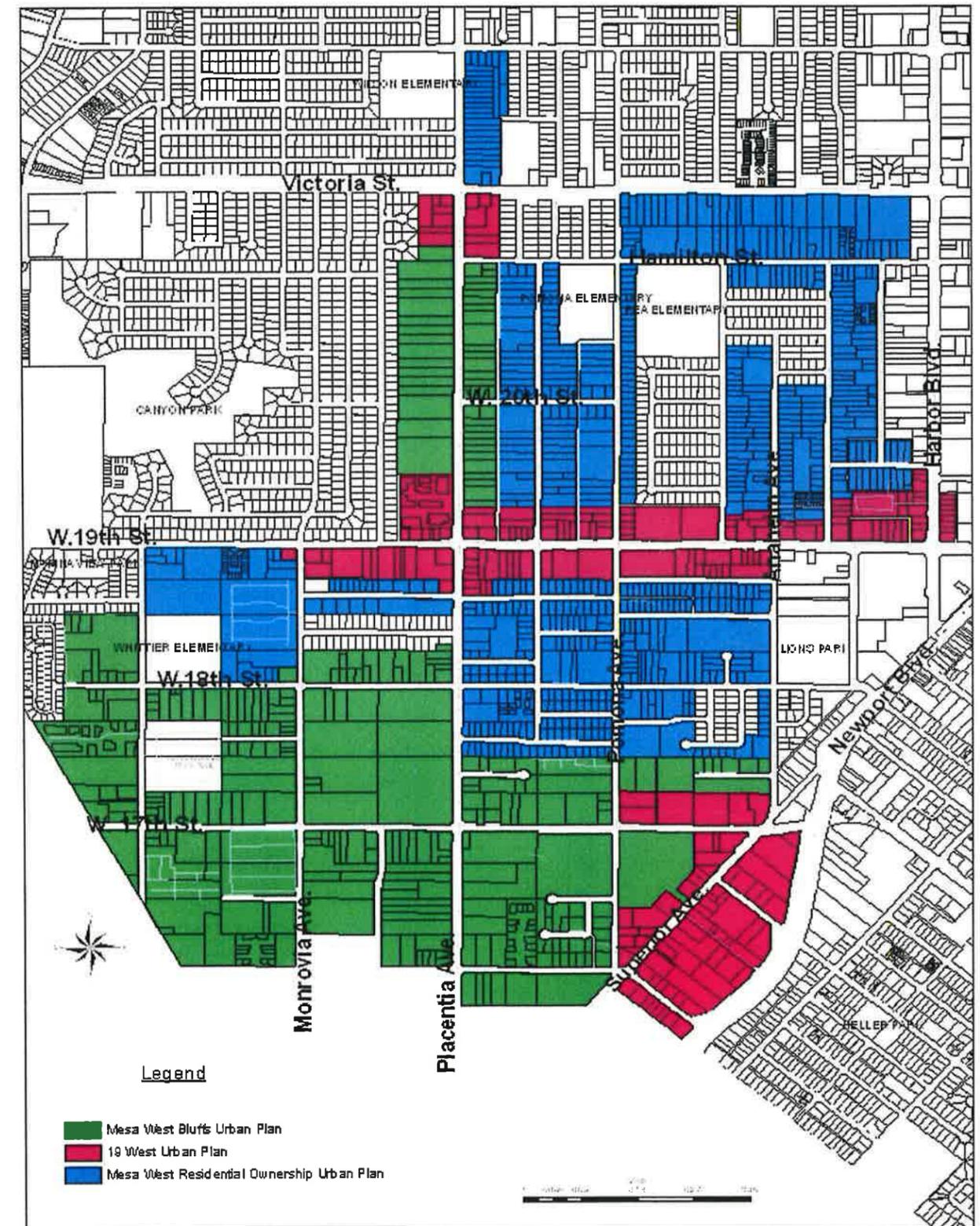


Figure 3B:  
Westside Urban  
Plan Areas

**EXISTING LAND USES**

General Plan and Zoning

The plan area is designated on the General Plan Land Use Map as Medium Density Residential and High Density Residential and is zoned R2-MD, R2-HD, and R-3. See Figure 5 for General Plan land use designations in the plan area.

Housing Inventory

Currently, there are approximately 3,900 dwelling units in the plan area, and they are primarily multiple-family units. Construction of many buildings mainly occurred between the 1950s and the 1990s, with the majority of the units being constructed in the 1960s.

Renter Versus Owner-Occupied Units

Costa Mesa has a disproportionate number of rental versus owner-occupied units compared to countywide and national statistics. According to the 2000 U.S. Federal Census, the number of rental units in Costa Mesa is about 60 percent while the number of owner-occupied units is around 40 percent. In contrast, the countywide average is approximately 39 percent renter-occupied units and about 61 percent owner-occupied units. The national average is approximately 34 percent renter-occupied units and about 66 percent owner-occupied units.

In the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan area, the percentage of renter versus owner-occupied units greatly increases. According to the 2000 U.S., approximately 81% of the units are being rented compared to about 19% listed as owner-occupied. This shows a rental versus ownership ratio of about 4 to 1 in the overlay zone area.



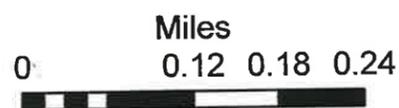
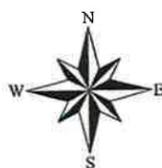
Figure 4: Collection of site photographs of residential structures in the plan area.

# Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan General Plan Land Use Designations

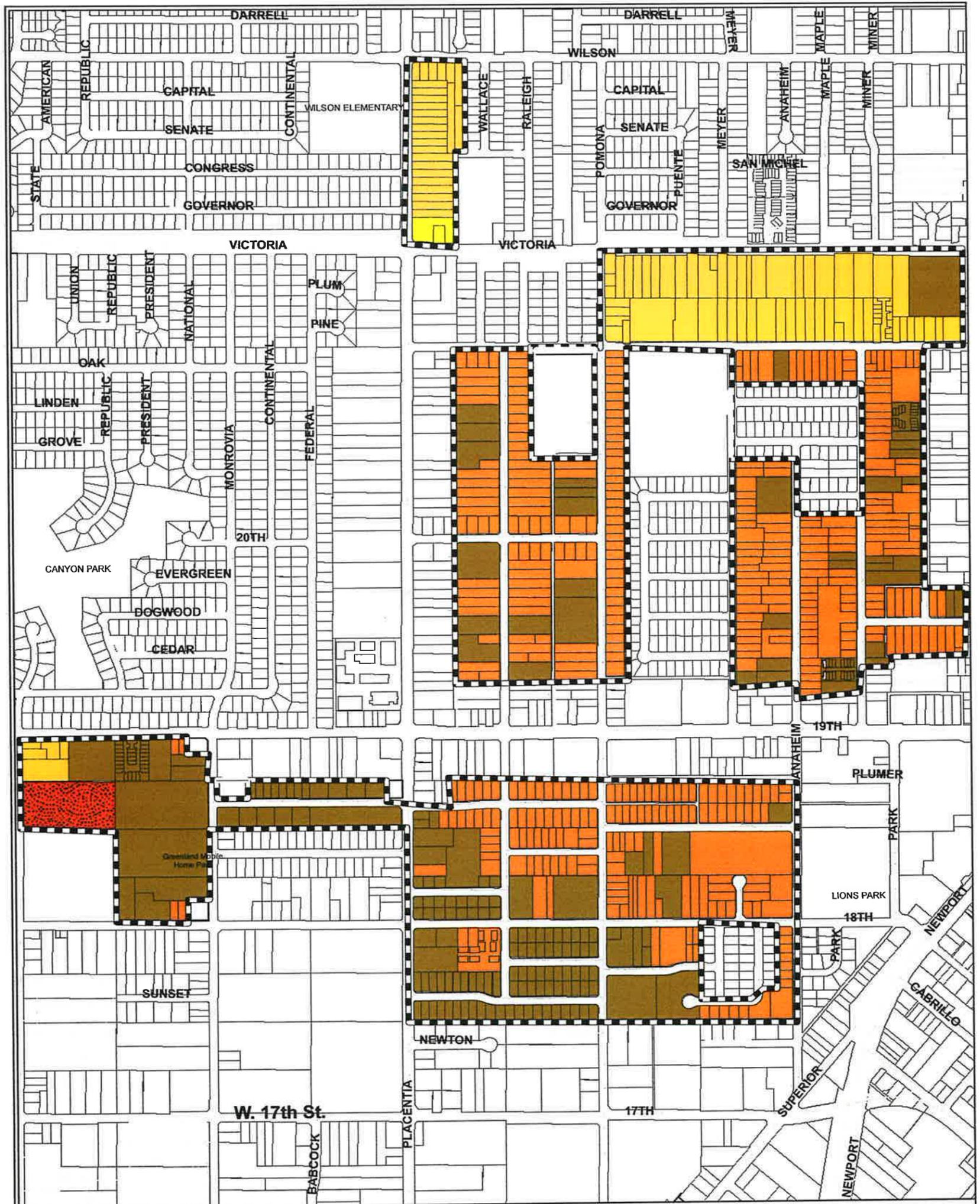


## Legend

- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential

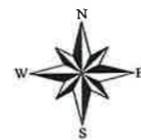


# Mesa West Residential Ownership Overlay District



## Legend

-  Single Family Residential
-  Multiple Family Residential (Medium Density)
-  Multiple Family Residential (High Density)
-  Multiple Family Residential
-  Planned Development Residential - High Density
-  Mesa West Residential Ownership Overlay District



Miles  
0 0.0375 0.075 0.15

**Residential Subdivision Pattern**

The subdivision pattern of the properties in the plan area represents conventional suburban development. This pattern is characterized by the separation of land uses and dispersion of these uses through minimum lot size requirements.

While there is a wide range of lot size and configuration in the Urban Plan area, some generalizations regarding the subdivision pattern can be made. Figure 6 show representative multi-family residential lots in the Urban Plan area.

The parcels in the Urban Plan consist of narrow lots that are greater than 150 long. The smaller lots can be found along Center Street, James Street, Shalimar, and Park. These 6,000 to 8,000 square foot lots are generally 50 to 60 feet wide and greater than 102 feet long. Lots greater than 17,000 square feet are located throughout the Urban Plan area, including along Victoria Street, Hamilton Street, and Palace.

The Zoning Code requires that minimum lot sizes for new subdivisions in the multi-family residential zones be 12,000 square feet. The historic subdivision pattern on the overlay zone consists of nonconforming lot sizes.

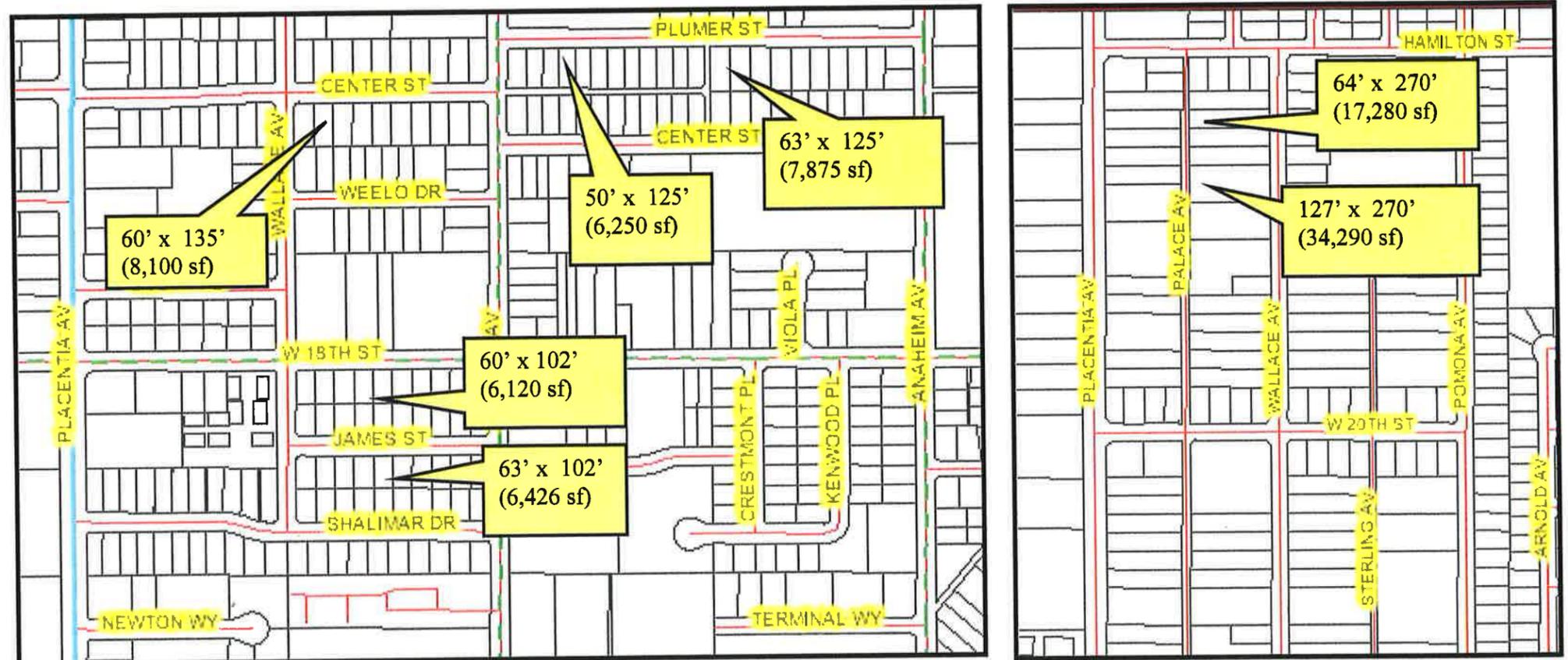


Figure 6: Subdivision pattern of properties in plan area.

**OWNERSHIP INCENTIVE PROVISIONS**

Within the plan area, an applicant may apply for a density bonus in conjunction with an application to develop ownership housing pursuant to the following:

1. **Minimum Lot Size Required:** If a property is zoned either R2-MD or R2-HD, a minimum lot size of 1.0 acre is required to receive any density bonus to a maximum of 20 units per acre. The intent of this standard is to encourage lot consolidation and to improve the overall design quality of the project.
2. **Rebuilding of Existing Units:**
  - a. **R2-MD or R2-HD Properties:** If the minimum lot size cannot be met **AND** the existing number of units on the lot is 3 or more, then the existing number of units can be rebuilt even if it exceeds the current zoning allowance.
  - b. **R3 Properties:** If the existing density exceeds 20 units per acre **AND** the existing number of the lot is 3 or more, then the existing number of units can be rebuilt.

**PLANNING PROCESS**

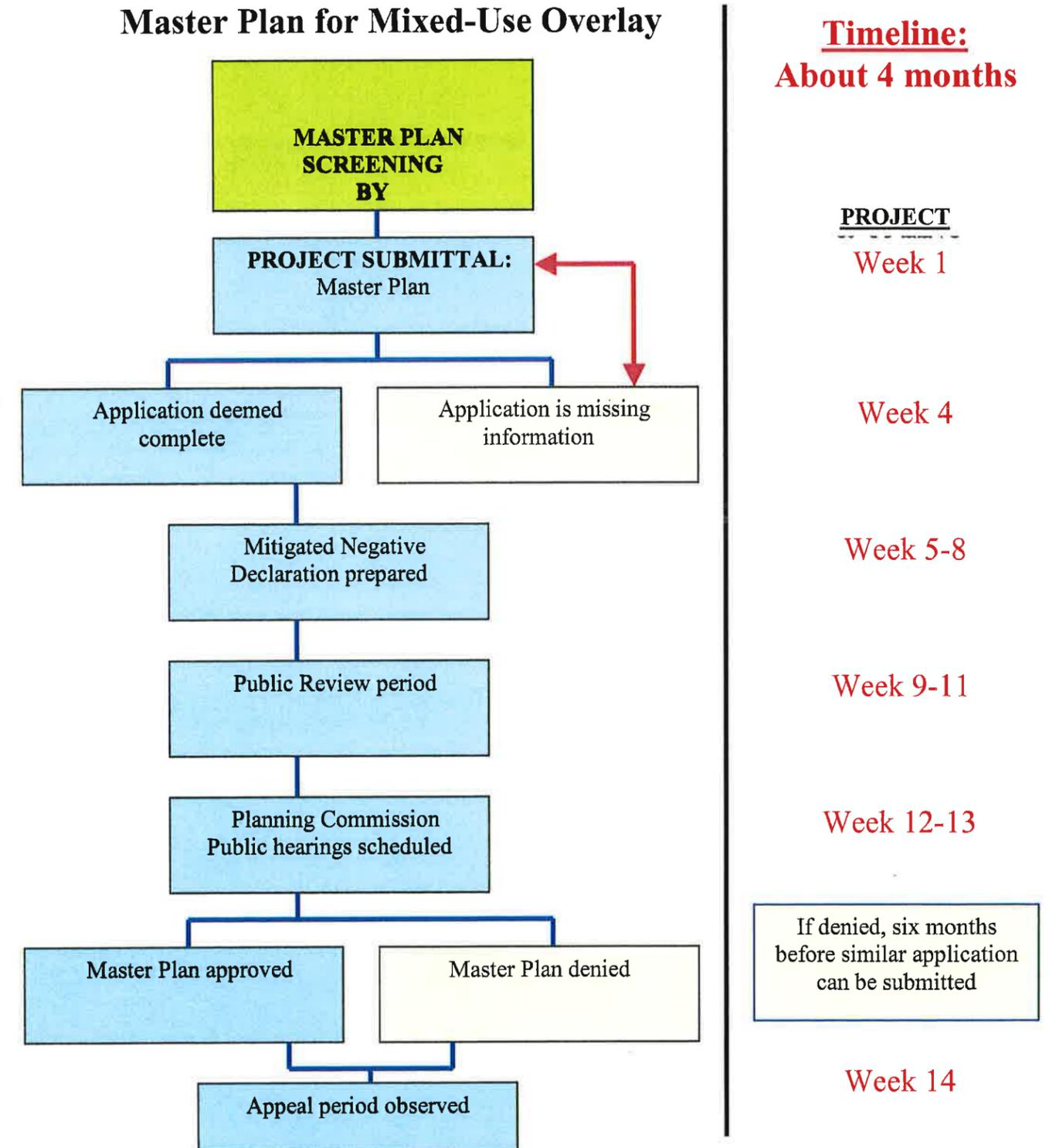
The land use regulations contained in this Urban Plan encourages the following: (1) the conversion of existing apartments to residential common interest developments or (2) for the construction of new common interest developments. These development projects may only be activated through an approved Master Plan. The master plan process is described in Figure 7.

Specific zoning regulations of the Urban Plan supersede those of the underlying zoning district (e.g. medium-density residential zone), unless otherwise indicated.

Proposed development in the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan area requires approval of a master plan pursuant to Title 13, Chapter II, Planning Applications, of the Costa Mesa Municipal Code. In accordance with City procedures, the Planning Commission reviews and considers master plans. Refer to Section 13-28(g), master plan, of the Zoning Code regarding the review process for preliminary master plans and amendments to the master plan.

A deviation from the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan development standards may be approved through the master plan subject to specific findings as described in Title 13, Article 11, of the Costa Mesa Zoning Code.

Figure 7: Timeline/flow chart of Master Plan process



## FLEXIBLE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Within the plan area, an applicant may apply the following development standards in conjunction with a Master Plan application to develop ownership-housing units. These development standards replace the corresponding development standards contained in the Costa Mesa Zoning Code for the R2-MD, R2-HD, and R-3 districts. All other applicable development standards contained in the Zoning Code shall be applied.

1. Building Height: The maximum building height is 3 stories/45 feet. Chimneys may project 2 feet above the maximum building height.

2. Building Setbacks Abutting Single-Family Residential Property: When new construction is proposed, the buildings shall be setback from property lines that are shared with single-family residential properties as follows:

*Interior Side Property Lines:*

1 story and/or 15 feet or less: 5 feet  
2 stories and/or 15-30 feet: 10 feet  
3 stories and/or greater than 30 feet:  
15 feet

*Rear Property Lines:*

1 story and/or 15 feet or less: 10 feet  
2 stories and/or 15-30 feet: 20 feet  
3 stories and/or greater than 30 feet:  
25 feet

3. Critical Vacancy Rate: In conjunction with an application to convert an existing apartment complex to a residential common interest subdivision, the City's critical vacancy rate (3%) for apartments shall not be applied.

4. Parking:

- a. Application of Current Parking Standards: The Zoning Code parking standards shall only be applied to new construction when additional units and/or bedrooms are being added to the development, when compared to existing conditions of the property.
- b. Residential Common Interest Conversions: The proposed conversion of existing apartments shall not require compliance with current parking standards, provided that no additional units or bedrooms are being added to the development.
- c. Tandem Parking: Permitted for "covered" tenant parking requirements in carports or shared garages.
- d. Mechanical Lift Parking: Permitted for "covered" tenant parking requirements in carports or shared garages.

5. Deviation from Zoning Code Development Standards: A Master Plan is required to activate the zoning provisions of Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan. An approved Master Plan will allow new construction that does not fully meet all the applicable sections of the Zoning Code and other code standards. Through the review process, the applicant must demonstrate why strict compliance with a current Zoning Code standard is either infeasible or unnecessary for the proposed project. See "Planning Process" of this Urban Plan for more information.

In exchange for any deviation from any current standard, the project must provide additional amenities such as those listed below:

- a. Shared garages instead of carports for greater security.
- b. Compliance with the City's Energy Star Program for residential structures.
- c. Useable open space with amenities, such as a tot lot.
- d. Turf areas of sufficient size to create useable recreation areas.
- e. Community garden areas.
- f. Masonry planters, potted flowers and shrubs on decks and balcony flower boxes.
- g. Additional landscape materials that exceed Zoning Code requirements in terms of number or size. For example, exchanging required 1-gallon plants for 5-gallon plants.
- h. Provision of landscaping that consists primarily of California native species.
- i. CC&Rs that require garages to be used for vehicle storage only.
- j. Awnings, especially along the front elevations for color and product definition, and a better facade.
- k. Stamped concrete or decorative paving at entrances and driveway intersections.
- l. Meandering rather than straight sidewalks.
- m. Upgraded windows and exterior doors for noise reduction and energy conservation.
- n. Onsite trash enclosures for projects of 4 units or less.
- o. Concrete slab adjacent to trash enclosure, or contract for roll-off trash service so that the trash truck does not come on site.

- p. Orientation of units away from the street toward interior courtyards.
- q. Adequate lighting for security (beyond parking and driveway lighting required by code).
- r. Gates and intercom system for security.
- s. Other amenities that enhance the project and the overall neighborhood.

LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

New development in the mixed-use overlay district shall be evaluated for compatibility with existing development on a case by case basis.

The following considerations shall be incorporated into the proposed project:

- Standard Condition of Approval: For proposed development adjacent to residentially-zoned properties that exceeds two stories, developer shall submit a shade/shadow analysis prepared by a professional aesthetic consultant. The conclusions of the aesthetic analysis shall specifically demonstrate that adequate daylight plane requirements for the abutting residential uses are provided.

At the discretion of the Development Services Director and in consideration of specific site characteristics, additional or modified development standards and conditions of approval may be added to include, but not be limited to, increased setbacks, increased wall height, enhanced landscaping, and other appropriate edge treatments aimed at enhancing the compatibility of urban infill projects.

DISCLOSURES

As part of the Master Plan approval, a condition of approval may require that the Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) disclose the existing noise environment and any odor-generating uses within and surrounding the development.

The provision of the CC&Rs that relates to disclosures will be reviewed/approved by the City Attorney's office prior to recordation. A provision to the CC&Rs will also stipulate that any subsequent revisions to the CC&Rs related to this issue must be approved by the City Attorney's office.

A condition of approval may be included which would require that written notice of the then-existing noise environment and any odor generating uses within the mixed-use development and within a specific radius of the mixed use development be distributed to any prospective purchaser or tenant at least 15 days prior to close of escrow, or within three days of the execution of a real estate sales contract or rental/lease agreement, whichever is longer.

The City Attorney's office shall determine the legal mechanism employed to ensure disclosure of noise and odor generating uses. For example, if this disclosure is required as a deed restriction, it would not need to be included in the CC&Rs.