

RESOLUTION NO. 2026 – 07

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LEMON GROVE, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT THE LEMON GROVE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN, INCLUDING AMENDMENTS TO THE LEMON GROVE GENERAL PLAN AND GENERAL PLAN MAP, AND AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 17 (ZONING) OF THE LEMON GROVE MUNICIPAL CODE AND THE ZONING MAP

WHEREAS, the existing Downtown Village Specific Plan (DVSP) was adopted by the Lemon Grove City Council in 2005. The goal of the DVSP is to implement the 1996 General Plan's vision for the Downtown Village: to create a lively mix of retail, offices, condominiums and apartments supported by a variety of transportation options; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 the City of Lemon Grove received a \$175,000 SANDAG Smart Growth Incentive Program (SGIP) grant with the City providing an additional \$50,000 in local matching funds to update the 2005 DVSP and expand the specific plan area from 59 acres to 219 acres. The City contracted with RICK Engineering using SGIP grant funds that resulted in the preparation of the 2018 Downtown Specific Plan (DSP); and

WHEREAS, on April 17, 2018 the City Council introduced Ordinance No. 479 approving the March 2018 DSP (General Plan Amendment GPA-180-0001) and certifying the Mitigated Negative Declaration (ND18-01) authorizing a comprehensive amendment to the DVSP and Expansion of the Specific Plan Area from 59 acres to 219 acres. On May 1, 2018 the City Council denied the DSP on second reading of the Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the City filed a SANDAG planning grant application under the Housing Acceleration Program Cycle 2 (HAP 2) that awarded \$300,000 in grant funds with a \$33,500 (10%) in-kind match for a total project cost of \$333,500 to update the 2018 DSP. The HAP2 planning grant was awarded in 2025; and

WHEREAS, the City of Lemon Grove prepared the Draft DSP (September 2026) with the assistance of RICK Engineering. This effort builds upon the 2018 DSP, which expanded the original 2005 DVSP from approximately 58 acres to approximately 219 acres; and

WHEREAS, extensive public outreach was conducted from May to September 2026 and the provisions of the DSP were adjusted to respond to public input; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission received a staff report and a copy of the Draft DSP (September 2026) and deliberated on the issues surrounding Downtown Lemon Grove; and

WHEREAS, the DSP is established through the authority granted to the City by California Government Code Sections 65450 through 65457, as a means of systematically implementing the General Plan. The DSP, through text and diagrams, identifies the following:

1. The distribution, location and extent of the uses of land, including open space, within the area covered by the plan.
2. The proposed distribution, location and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan.
3. Standards and criteria by which development will proceed and standards for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, where applicable.
4. A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out paragraphs 1. 2. and 3. above; and

WHEREAS, Mitigated Negative Declaration (ND18-01) certified by the Lemon Grove City Council on April 17, 2018 is the appropriate environmental review document for the DSP under the California Environmental Quality Act; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission makes the following findings in the affirmative pursuant to Lemon Grove Municipal Code (LGMC) Section 17.28.090 B. as follows:

The Draft DSP (September 2026) is consistent with the following General Plan Community Development Element Policies, including:

- Policy 1.2 “Promote a lively, pedestrian-friendly downtown village with a mix of shops, offices, condominiums, apartments and public facilities served by a variety of transportation options.”
- Policy 2.2 “Focus new apartment and condominium development in the downtown village, next to the Massachusetts Avenue trolley station and in other emerging multiple-family areas while stabilizing the established neighborhoods.”
- Policy 2.3 “Require that new condominium and apartment development provides quality housing opportunities that uplift the visual quality of the surrounding area.”
- Policy 4.4 “Attract economic growth and increase property values by investing in public improvements throughout the City.”
- Policy 5.4 “Create and maintain attractive public areas that contribute to a scenic community.”

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission further finds that the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment to implement the DSP is consistent with the general plan, in accordance with California Government Code, Section 65860, as amended, and that the public health, safety, and general welfare benefit from the adoption of the proposed amendment, in accordance with LGMC Section 17.28.020 B.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Lemon Grove, California, hereby recommends City Council approval of the Downtown Specific Plan with the following modifications:

1. Add an implementation action requiring a more thorough evaluation of historic resources within the plan area.
2. Require native, drought tolerant, and pollinator plants.
3. Revise Footnote No. 2 regarding the minimum commercial ground floor requirement to require Planning Commission approval rather than Community Development Manager approval.
4. Reduce the ground floor height requirement from 15 feet to 13 feet.

5. Revise the setback requirement within the Village Commercial district to apply at the third floor rather than the fifth floor.
6. Reduce the maximum building height within the Village Commercial district from 75 feet to 55 feet.
7. Revise Section 7.4 to require that the final design of wayfinding and gateway improvements be reviewed by the Planning Commission.
8. Request that the City Council consider dark sky standards when reviewing the lighting guidelines in the Downtown Specific Plan.
9. Require that landscaping follow the plant palette established by the City.
10. Increase the minimum landscape area requirement from 5 percent to 8 percent of the project site.
11. Increase the minimum points required under the Appendix B sustainability standards from 10 points to 15 points.

The Planning Commission further recommends City Council adoption of the following proposed amendments, shown in ~~strike through~~/underline format, to the Lemon Grove Municipal Code:

Title 17 ZONING

Chapter 17.16 ZONING DISTRICTS

Section 17.16.100 Light Industrial (LI) zone.

~~B. 10. Moving and Storage Facilities. Uses engaged in the moving of household or office furniture, appliances, and equipment from one location to another, including the temporary indoor storage of those same items.~~

Chapter 17.20 SPECIAL OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Section 17.20.010 Special treatment area (STA) overlays.

~~D. Special Treatment Area I, Downtown Specific Plan Village. The downtown village contains the traditional downtown commercial district located around the intersection of Broadway and Lemon Grove Avenue. Properties within special treatment area I (STA I) shall be governed by the requirements and regulations of the Downtown Specific Plan~~

~~adopted by the City Council on October 20, 2026. zoning categories currently in place until such time as the city prepares and adopts a specific plan for the area. The specific plan shall incorporate the elements set forth in the city's general plan.~~

- ~~1. Minimum Area Required for Development. No subdivision of land shall be permitted which causes fragmentation of land ownership prior to development pursuant to the proposed specific plan. The smallest unit of land to be developed shall be an individual lot of record as of the effective date of this title. No parcel shall be subdivided for the purpose of developing portions of it independently, unless a development and phasing plan, consistent with the proposed specific plan, is prepared and approved for the entire STA.~~
- ~~2. Properties located within special treatment area I (STA I) are subject to the requirements of the city of Lemon Grove downtown village specific plan.~~

~~F. Special Treatment Area III, Regional Commercial, STA III was rescinded with the adoption of the Downtown Specific Plan adopted by the City Council on October 20, 2026. The regional commercial STA is planned for continued redevelopment with large retail stores. Uses within this STA shall serve both local residents and attract shoppers from adjacent communities. Until new land use regulations are developed to implement the regional commercial policies of the general plan, land use will be governed by the regulations of the zoning categories currently in place as well as requirements in subsections (F)(1) through (5) of this section.~~

~~1. Planned Development Permit Required. No development shall occur within the STA unless such development has been approved pursuant to the planned development provisions of Section 17.28.030. A planned development permit is required for all development regardless of the size of the property, the intensity of the proposed activity of the size of proposed structures.~~

~~2. Minimum Area for Development. No subdivision of land shall be permitted which causes fragmentation of land ownership, prior to development, pursuant to the adoption of the proposed regional commercial land use regulations. The smallest unit of land to be developed shall be an individual lot of record as of the effective date of the ordinance~~

~~codified in this title. No parcel shall be subdivided for the purpose of developing portions of it independently, unless a development and phasing plan, determined by the city to be consistent with the proposed regional commercial land use, is prepared and approved for the entire parcel.~~

~~3. Incentives for Large Lot Development. It is the city's intent that this area shall be developed with large lot retail uses on parcels of land comprising at least one city block or having a minimum area of three acres. In order to encourage such development, the city will cooperate with developers and will consider providing development incentives including, but not limited to, the following:~~

- ~~a. Expedited processing of land use and development permits;~~
- ~~b. The closing of public streets within proposed developments;~~
- ~~c. Flexible application of sign regulations.~~

~~4. Use of Existing Developed Properties.~~

- ~~a. The use, and change of use, of existing developed properties shall be governed by the regulations of the current underlying zoning. Except as otherwise stated in subsection (F)(4)(b) of this section, modifications to existing buildings, other improvements and overall site development shall be governed by the non-conforming use regulations set forth in Section 17.24.090 of this title.~~
- ~~b. Within the area bounded by Vista Avenue, North Avenue, the western boundary of the lots abutting West Street and the alley to the north of the properties that abut the north side of Broadway, the maintenance, establishment, and expansion of uses consistent with either the requirements of the general commercial (GC) zone or the heavy commercial (HC) will be permitted to occur, until large lot retail uses are established consistent with the goals of the general plan.~~

PASSED AND ADOPTED on September 28, 2026, the Planning Commission of the City of Lemon Grove, California, adopted Resolution No. 2026 – 07, passed by the following vote:

AYES: MORRISSEY, CLARK MANSON, BEARCE, CLARK

NOES: NONE

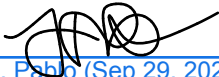
ABSENT: ECKLER

ABSTAIN: NONE

Jacquelyn Clark

Jacquelyn Clark, Chair

Attest:



Joel G. Pablo (Sep 29, 2026 18:41:56 PDT)

Joel G. Pablo, City Clerk

Approved as to Form:



Timothy Campen, Deputy City Attorney

Reso 2026-07 - Downtown Specifc Plan

9-28-2026 FINAL

Final Audit Report

2026-09-30

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