

# Economic Development, Placemaking and Branding/ Marketing Committee

*City of Arts & Innovation*

**TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLACEMAKING  
AND BRANDING/MARKETING COMMITTEE**

**DATE: JUNE 17, 2021**

**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

**WARDS: 1 AND 2**

**SUBJECT: RECEIVE AND FILE AN UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED LAND USE  
REGULATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE INNOVATION DISTRICT**

## **ISSUE:**

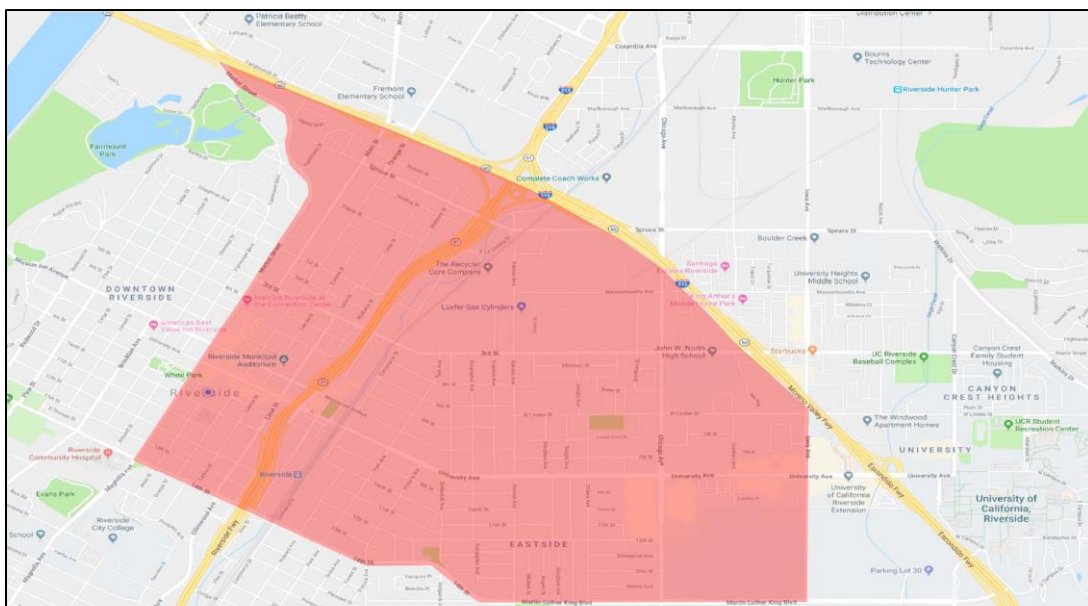
Receive and file an update on the proposed land use regulation framework for the Innovation District.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Economic Development, Placemaking and Branding/Marketing Committee receive and file an update on the proposed land use regulation framework for the Innovation District.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On December 19, 2017, the City Council unanimously approved the concept of creating innovation districts across the City as a way to attract new investment, retain local talent, and create jobs. The City's first Innovation District encompasses Downtown and the geographic area between Downtown and the University of California Riverside (UCR), including portions of the Eastside and University Avenue neighborhoods (see map below).



The Innovation District is home to several under-utilized former packing houses and industrial buildings with the potential to serve a variety of needs ranging from business incubators/accelerators to co-working space for startup firms to established companies looking to expand or relocate. Businesses focusing on research and bringing to market various green transportation solutions could find ideal partnerships with the nearby UCR Center for Environmental Research & Technology and the coming California Air Resources Board (CARB) campus, given the close proximity.

To facilitate implementation of the Innovation District, staff previously determined that a visioning charrette, a common technique to consult with community stakeholders early in a project, would help in identifying a shared vision. Charrette's involve intensive meetings, whereby stakeholders are invited to gather and discuss issues, challenges, and desires of a project. In addition, differences are identified and resolved through a common understanding of the issues, opportunities, and challenges from different perspectives.

Several visioning charette sessions were held between August – October 2019. Attendees included the Mayor and City Councilmembers from Wards 1 & 2; representatives from UCR and Riverside Community College District; representatives from the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce; and City staff. The outcome of the visioning charette sessions is summarized in Attachment 1 – Visioning Document.

On February 25, 2020, the City Council received and filed an update on the Innovation District Visioning Charrette, which included, among other things, the creation of a “freestyle” zone in the 3rd Street industrial area. Specifically, as detailed in the Visioning Document, the area generally bounded by the 91 Freeway, 60 Freeway, 215 Freeway and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (Triangle). This space could be transformed into an area that encourages transit-supported, high density residential, using innovative “freestyle” flexible zoning regulations and development standards that minimize “red tape”. This could maximize diverse development opportunities with a streamlined process. Like the revolutionary process employed in Detroit that implemented “pink zone” techniques, the City could redesign the current land use a regulatory framework to provide a process that facilitates a wide mix of diverse and innovative uses.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The City recognizes that the development community is seeking a predictable, flexible, and streamlined permitting process that also allows for creativity in the uses proposed and the site's design. The City contracted with AVR Studio of San Diego, led by Howard Blackson (AVR), to develop a Land Use Regulation Framework for the Innovation District. AVR's ongoing scope of work includes identifying the best approach to facilitate development that meets the goals and initiatives illustrated in the City Council-approved vision document for the Innovation District.

The Innovation District, and specifically the Triangle, has also been identified as an area that can help the City meet its 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) obligations. AVR is developing a draft master plan that refines the visioning document. AVR is also preparing preliminary regulations, in conjunction with the Planning Division, to help meet the RHNA needs as part of the Housing Element Update.

AVR, as part of its due diligence, conducted research and data collection in coordination with the City's Planning Division, to identify how other jurisdictions approach flexible and creative regulations. Jurisdictions researched include the cities of San Diego, Oklahoma City, and

Fresno. In consultation with City staff, AVRP determined that an overlay zone is the best implementation tool for Innovation District regulations in the Triangle. An overlay zone is a regulatory tool that creates special zoning requirements that are placed over an existing base zone(s). These zoning requirements apply on top of those in the underlying base zone.

AVRP is preparing a draft master plan and associated zoning for the Triangle that creates a walkable streets and blocks pattern; identifies center/edge and quarters as part of the open space/park network; designates use-emphasis areas based on specific site characteristics; calculates potential build out of land uses that result from the use-emphasis areas; proposes a permitting and administration process; and considers steps needed to create an Innovation District operation and maintenance authority.

The draft master plan and associated zoning will be presented to the Economic Development, Placemaking and Branding/Marketing Committee in the Summer of 2021 for input and staff direction prior to presentation to City Council in Fall of 2021.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report. If new policies are recommended and implemented, the fiscal impact, if any, will be defined during City Council approval for those policies.

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### **Attachments:**

1. Visioning Document
2. Presentation