



Date: February 16, 2024  
To: Planning Commissioners  
RE: Downtown Code Initiatives in 2024

The Metro Planning staff is currently working on several initiatives for the city center of Nashville. We are committed to frequent communication with commissioners and the public regarding the progress and outcomes of these initiatives. Please find below a summary of key project updates:

1. You may recall a work session from March 7, 2023 where commissioners recommended staff update the Bonus Height Program of the Downtown Code. After a period of internal investigation, the Downtown Market Study is currently underway and is being prepared by a consultant, HR&A. The consultant will be delivering recommendations in the summer of 2024. This study will inform Planning staff regarding amendments to the [Bonus Height Program](#) and the Downtown Code more generally.
2. In 2021, the Downtown Code was amended to add Concept Plan review to the responsibilities of the Downtown Code Design Review Committee (DTC DRC) in order to align processes more closely with the MDHA Design Review Committees, which oversee a significant portion of Downtown. Since then, the DTC DRC has reviewed dozens of concept plans. Additionally, earlier this year, the Planning Commission adopted Rules & Procedures for the DTC DRC to follow. In order to support the DTC DRC in their work, staff has drafted Design Guidelines. These draft guidelines will be shared with the DTC DRC at their March meeting, and will be posted online for 60 days of public comment. Staff will revise the draft guidelines based on feedback from the public and the DTC DRC. Planning staff anticipates bringing the guidelines to the Planning Commission for adoption in the summer of 2024.
3. In late January, our staff joined Bob Mendes, Chief Development Officer in the Mayor's Office, to brief the Ad Hoc East Bank Committee at Council regarding several aspects of the East Bank work, including potential changes to zoning. We anticipate extending the Downtown Code to the east side of the river for the Initial Development Area (IDA). This will require two steps – a text amendment to create an East Bank Subdistrict in the Downtown Code zoning, and a rezoning of the IDA to Downtown Code zoning. We anticipate the text amendment and rezoning requests coming before the Planning Commission late in the summer or early fall, pending decisions made by the Metropolitan Council this spring. Both applications will appear on the same agenda. Per recent conversations at Planning Commission meetings, we will schedule a work session to update you on the East Bank work.
4. As part of the East Bank rezoning, no substantive changes will be made to the Downtown Code as a whole, and there will be no changes to requirements or entitlements on properties currently zoned DTC. Any substantive changes to the DTC will be proposed after the delivery of the Downtown Market Study, and after community engagement.

5. The Second Avenue Recovery is underway with the construction of the new streetscape along the north block (between Church Street and Union Street) nearing completion this spring. In January, construction started along the south block (between Broadway and Commerce Street). Once completed, the new streetscape will feature a carefully coordinated right-of-way with larger pedestrian sidewalks, street trees and plantings, and outdoor dining.

Should any commissioner prefer to be briefed on one or more of these initiatives, please contact Design Studio Manager, Joni Williams, at [joni.williams@nashville.gov](mailto:joni.williams@nashville.gov) or 615-979-3558.

Best regards,

Lucy Alden Kempf  
Executive Director  
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