

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Purpose

The Compton Station Specific Plan lays out a vision, regulations, and implementation plan to build a better Downtown Compton, making it into a world-class destination that all our residents can enjoy.

What is a Specific Plan?

A Specific Plan is a regulatory tool that local governments use to implement their General Plan and to guide development in a localized area. While the General Plan is the overall guide for growth and development in a community, the goal of a Specific Plan is to focus on the unique characteristics of a special area by customizing the planning process and land use regulations to that area. The authority for preparation and adoption of specific plans is set forth in the California Government Code, Sections 65450 through 65457. The California Government Code authorizes jurisdictions to adopt specific plans by ordinance as regulatory documents. The law allows adoption of Specific Plans as may be required for the implementation of the General Plan.

1.2 Specific Plan Location

Compton is a city of approximately 100,000 residents located 10 miles south of Downtown Los Angeles, between the I-110, I-105, I-710, and CA-91 freeways. Compton is bordered by the City of Carson to the south, unincorporated Willowbrook to the west and north, the City of Lynwood to the Northeast, unincorporated East Compton to the east, and the City of Long Beach to the southeast.

The Metro A Line (Blue) provides all-day, frequent rapid transit access from two stations in the City, Compton and Artesia Stations, to the Los Angeles metropolitan area including Downtown Los Angeles, and Downtown Long Beach. It recently underwent a \$1 billion refurbishment to improve speed, reliability, and customer experience.

The Compton Station Specific Plan Area encompasses 575.5 acres, encompassing roughly one half-mile buffer from Compton Station. The Plan Area is bordered by Matthisen Avenue to the west, Cressey Street, Douglas Street, and Peck Street to the north, Santa Fe Avenue to the east, and Myrrh Street, Indigo Street, Laurel Street, and Compton Boulevard to the south. The major thoroughfares within the Plan Area are Rosecrans Avenue, Compton Boulevard, Alameda Street, and Willowbrook Avenue, which runs through the middle of the Plan Area. Freeway access to the Plan Area is provided to I-110 by Compton Boulevard, to CA-91 by Alameda Street and Santa Fe Avenue, and to I-710 by Rosecrans Avenue.

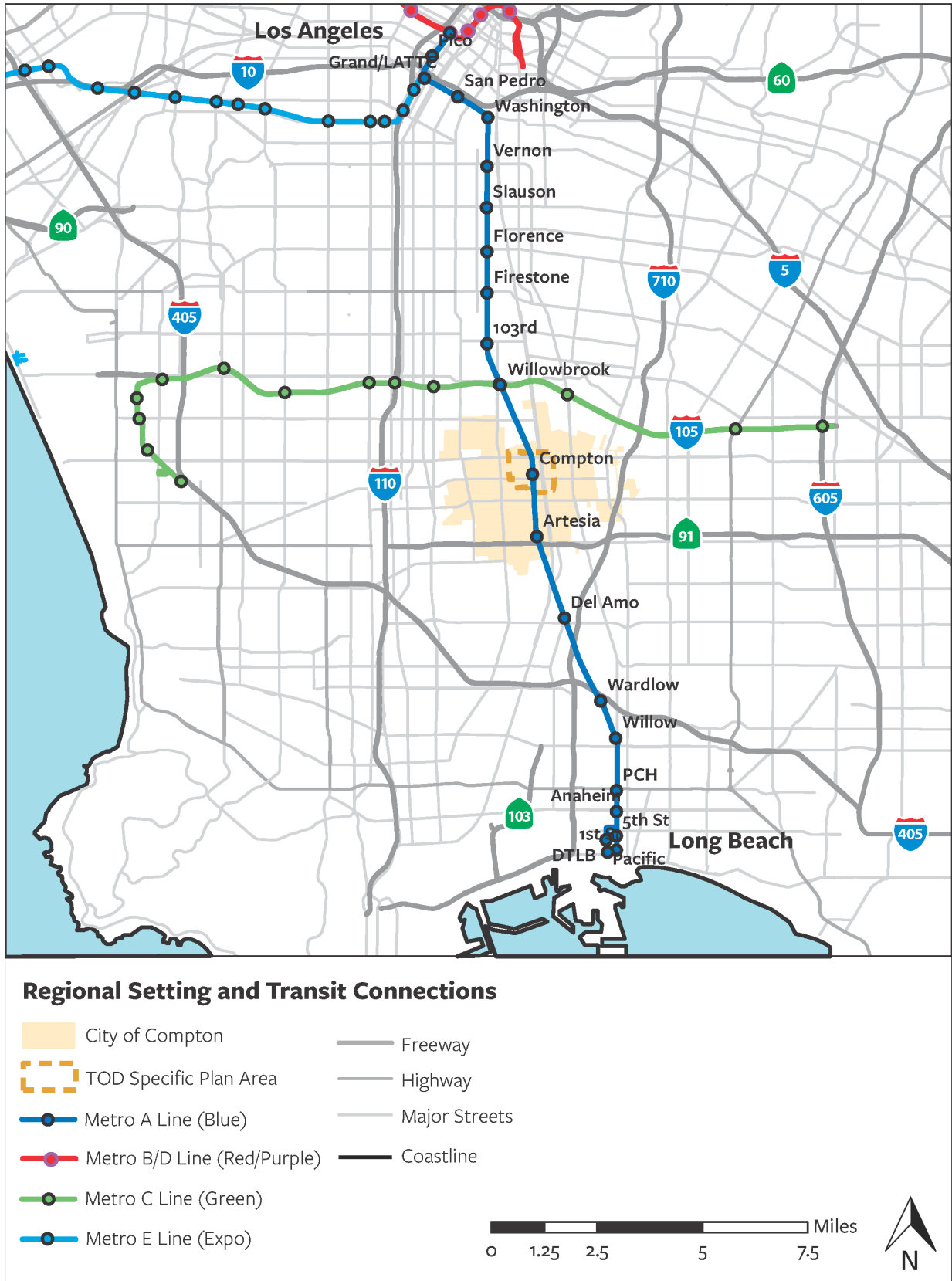


Figure 1-1. Regional Setting and Transit Connections.

1.3 Background and History

Compton is one of the oldest cities in Southern California, the eighth to incorporate. Being located within a day's walk of Los Angeles and Wilmington, and with connections to the Pacific Electric Long Beach Line along with Southern Pacific and Union Pacific freight rail lines in the early 20th century led to Compton being nicknamed the "Hub City". With a boom shortly after World War II, and a decline in the 70's and 80's, Compton has seen its share of ups and downs.



Compton Boulevard as seen in 1962 looking west from Alameda Street (left). Source: Compton (Images of America) by Robert Lee Johnson. The Renaissance Monument on Compton Boulevard (right) was dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez in 2001 as a symbol of Black and Latino unity.

Despite its turbulent history, the City of Compton is a place that continues to inspire devotion and pride. The City has been an important venue for black political leadership with the election of Douglas Dollarhide as the first black mayor in California, Doris A. Davis as the first female black mayor in the United States, and Aja Brown becoming the youngest elected mayor in the state of California. The City is known globally as the center of West Coast Hip-Hop, and its high school basketball games are legendary. Famous people from Compton include:

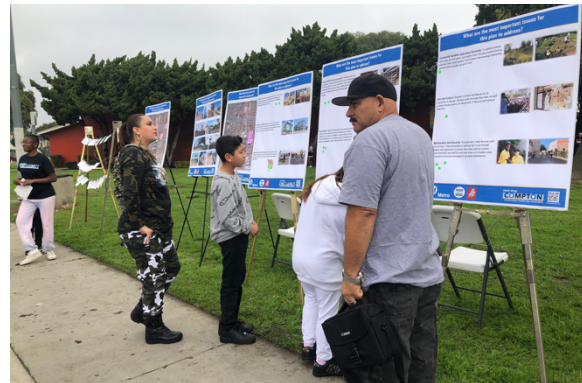
- Duke Snider, MLB Hall of Famer (Compton HS)
- William Hanna, cartoonist/ animator, co-founder of Hanna-Barbera (Compton HS)
- Kendrick Lamar, rapper (Centennial HS)
- N.W.A., rap group: Eazy E, MC Ren, Ice Cube, Dr. Dre, Arabian Prince, DJ Yella
- Coolio, rapper
- Leslie Sykes, KABC-TV midday news anchor
- Larry Allen, Hall of Fame NFL player (Centennial HS)
- Tyson Chandler, NBA player (Dominguez HS)
- DeMar DeRozan, NBA player (Compton HS)
- Tayshaun Prince, former NBA player (Dominguez HS)
- Venus and Serena Williams, tennis players
- Ava DuVernay, film director/writer
- Richard Sherman, NFL player (Dominguez HS)
- Vince Staples, rapper

Recent years have opened new opportunities for Compton. The development of the Metro A Line (formerly Blue Line) in 1990 uses most of the former Pacific Electric Long Beach Line right-of-way, connecting Compton to Long Beach, Los Angeles, and beyond. The Compton Gateway Center, opened in 2007, has added more retail options to the city, building upon the existing Compton Renaissance Plaza. The completion of the Martin Luther King Jr. Transit Center in 2011 has increased the safety and connectivity of public transit, prompting new housing developments to be built in the station area and around the City. The City also has a brand new community center, the first Major League Baseball Urban Youth Academy, and the forthcoming Dr. Dre Performing Arts Center at Compton High School. The future has never looked brighter for The Hub City.

1.4 Community Outreach Process and Guidance

A key component of developing this Specific Plan has been engagement with and solicitation of input from the public. This consisted of workshops, stakeholder meetings, surveys (in-person and online), and information shared online via a website (www.nextstopcompton.org) and social media (@nextstopcompton on Instagram/Facebook).

Prior to the pandemic, some in-person outreach was conducted. Great comments from the City's youth and other music fans were collected at the Compton Open Mic Night on September 26, 2019, at Dollarhide Community Center. Another focus group meeting was held at Compton YouthBuild on September 30 of the same year. Surveys were collected during the 2019 Christmas parade. Finally, interviews were conducted with several community leaders, representing resident groups, the local creative community, business owners and property owners.



Pre-pandemic outreach activities at Compton Youth Build (left) and the Christmas parade (right).

The early outreach process confirmed a vision that Compton deserves to have a great downtown, one which reflects the values of the community and the contributions the city and those hailing from there have made to the larger world. Those values which should be reflected were:

- Brother’s Keeper: Compton is a family-oriented community where people look out for each other.
- Compton Proud: Compton is proud of its unique and historic community.
- Hub of Culture: Compton creates culture that spreads worldwide, yet contributes to the city.
- Building the Future: Compton invests in educational, artistic, recreational, and career opportunities for its youth.

The public also ranked its priorities for the downtown, which were in order of most to least important:

1. Maintenance and Security
2. Housing
3. Retail Amenities and Entertainment
4. Community Gardens and Urban Greening
5. Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility
6. Arts and Culture
7. Quality Job Creation

Although arts and culture and job creation ranked lower than other topics, stakeholder interviews revealed that community leaders believed that the cultivation and celebration of culture could be a key ingredient to achieving many of the other objectives of the plan.

In April 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City and consultant team organized a virtual workshop consisting of an explanatory video, with questions posed by community stakeholders, and an accompanying survey. The purpose of this workshop was to evaluate different features of three alternatives (the Cultural Alternative, the Greening Alternative, and the Commercial Alternative) for the downtown area. Meetings were also held with the Stakeholders Advisory Committee, Planning Commission and City Council in 2020 to receive feedback on these three alternatives. The ultimate Downtown Urban Design Framework (Section 2.3) is based on this feedback. An additional Stakeholders Advisory Committee meeting was also held in summer 2020 to review the zoning, mobility strategy, and equity-focused initiatives.

The draft Specific Plan was reviewed by the Stakeholders Advisory Committee in April 2022; the Plan was then made available to the public for review with the Program Environmental Impact Report. A final virtual public workshop was held to gather the community’s feedback, support, and concerns prior to hearings with the Planning Commission and City Council.

Throughout the process, the Next Stop Compton social media accounts allowed the community the opportunity to follow the progress of the plan in real time, express their excitement, hopes, desires and fears for the development of Downtown Compton.

1.5 Goals and Policies

Vision: In order to **build a better downtown, transforming it into a world-class destination that all our community can enjoy**, the Specific Plan sets out a suite of actions organized under six goals, which derive closely from the values and priorities expressed by the community.

Goal #1: An economically active and vibrant station area which attracts investment and provides quality amenities to the community.

Policy 1.1: Establish zoning and development standards which encourage new higher density housing and mixed-use development in commercial portions of the station area (see Chapter 3).

Policy 1.2: Allow development of appropriate uses, including multi-family housing, by-right (see Chapter 3).

Policy 1.3: Encourage the development of sit-down restaurants and other retail amenities strongly desired by the public. Provide favorable development standards for these uses, such as allowing outdoor dining and reducing parking requirements (see Chapter 3 and Section 4.7).

Goal #2: A safe and well-maintained Downtown where people enjoy public space.

Policy 2.1: Establish a business improvement district to maintain, clean, promote and provide security for the Downtown (see Section 7.2).

Policy 2.2: Create a range of comfortable and attractive publicly-accessible open spaces in large developments in the Downtown (see Chapters 2 and 7, Sections 3.3, 4.14, 4.15).

Policy 2.3: Ensure a mix of uses and orient structures to encourage widespread daytime and nighttime use of public spaces (see Chapter 4, Sections 3.3, 3.4, 3.8, 3.9).

Policy 2.4: Encourage new buildings to be multi-story to increase “eyes on the street” and to provide opportunities for increased residential density (see Section 3.3).

Policy 2.5: Enforce design standards which require appropriate levels of lighting, and avoid blank walls and other underutilized spaces (see Sections 3.8, 4.12).

Policy 2.6: Design streets that are intended for pedestrian activity and low vehicle speeds (see Chapter 5).

Policy 2.7: Address the safety of streets and intersections, including the intersections located along the Metro A Line and Alameda rail corridors (see Chapter 5).

Policy 2.8: Avoid dead spaces (hidden areas) that cannot be seen from the street, storefronts, or residences (see Section 3.8).

Goal #3: A built environment and programming which reflect the history, creativity, and excellence of Compton.

Policy 3.1: Construct, maintain and consistently renew the Compton Walk, the primary pedestrian network which connects all major open spaces and is experienced as a journey through cultural

Compton, with places and elements for history and the arts (see Sections 2.7, 4.14, 4.15, 5.3, 7.4).

Policy 3.2: Program cultural events, such as farmers markets, fairs, and concerts, in publicly-accessible open spaces in Downtown (see Section 7.2).

Policy 3.3: Work with partners to establish a cultural center in the station area (see Sections 2.4, 7.3, 7.4).

Policy 3.4: Engage the broader community to develop a museum or other destination venue that showcases field(s) in which the Compton community has excelled (see Sections 2.4, 7.3, 7.4).

Policy 3.5: Direct a portion of project development costs to public art or artistic facilities (see Section 3.10).

Policy 3.6: Create an Arts Commission for the City (see Section 7.4).

Goal #4: A station area which promotes good pedestrian routes and provides calm and attractive networks for pedestrians and bicycles.

Policy 4.1: Improve first/last mile access to the Metro A Line (Blue) Compton Station with additional infrastructure and programs that support walking and biking (see Chapter 5).

Policy 4.2: Create a hierarchy of streets supportive of different modes of transportation, and develop infrastructure for those modes of transportation along the appropriate streets (see Section 5.2).

Policy 4.3: Reconfigure Willowbrook Avenue to reduce safety concerns, improve wayfinding and add low-stress bicycle facilities (see Sections 2.8, 5.4).

Policy 4.4: Develop a greenway on Alameda Street East for recreational/exercise and transportation uses (see Sections 2.9, 5.5).

Policy 4.5: Reduce minimum parking requirements to encourage station area residents to travel less by car (see Chapter 3, Section 5.15).

Policy 4.6: Use existing and new parking structures to create a shared parking district where residents, employees and visitors can park once and circulate around Downtown on foot (see Section 5.14).

Goal #5: Adequate and affordable housing that enables the residents of Compton to remain in the community for the long-term.

Policy 5.1: Make publicly-owned land available for affordable housing development, and pursue development which maximizes the amount of affordable housing produced on those sites (see Section 7.3).

Policy 5.2: Provide by-right development incentives for the development of affordable housing and other public benefit projects (see Section 3.12).

Policy 5.3: Create zoning and development standards which encourage the private production of quality market-rate housing which retains people who grew up in Compton and nearby communities and want to stay (see Chapter 3).

Goal #6: Increased opportunities for Compton residents to create and grow local businesses.

Policy 6.1: Recognize and strengthen Compton as a place where music, art, and entertainment is produced and exhibited to the community and wider world, and support the economic development of local residents engaged in this industry (see Sections 2.2, 2.6, 2.7, 3.10, 4.15, 7.4).

Policy 6.2: Develop an innovation hub which provides amenities and tools for Compton’s digital media producers (see Section 2.6).

Policy 6.3: Explore the opportunity to create a food incubator or other workforce or small business development facility at the corporate yard or other City facility inside the station area (see Section 2.9).

Policy 6.4: Encourage new commercial developments to set aside space for local small businesses and non-profit organizations (see Section 3.12).

Goal #7: Urban design which reinforces the vision and goals of the Specific Plan.

Policy 7.1: Build the Compton Walk as a network of sidewalks and public spaces which provide a high degree of comfort and activation for the pedestrian (see Sections 2.7, 4.14, 4.15, 5.3, 7.4).

Policy 7.2: Require large private developments along the Compton Walk to build publicly-accessible, active, and culturally expressive plazas (see Chapter 3, Section 4.15).

Policy 7.3: Widen sidewalks and buffer sidewalks from vehicular lanes with increased street tree canopy, on-street parking, and bicycle facilities where feasible (see Chapter 5).

Policy 7.4: Require ground-floor building frontages which engage and are transparent to the street and encourage the removal of any blank walls in the station area (see Section 3.8).

Policy 7.5: Encourage outdoor seating along sidewalks and in open spaces (see Section 4.7).

Policy 7.6: Implement design standards and guidelines to ensure that high-density development is livable and attractive (see Chapters 3, 4).

Policy 7.7: Encourage the creation of green and solar roofs (see Chapter 3, Section 4.10).

Policy 7.8: Provide appropriate accent lighting on buildings and landscaping to increase nighttime visual interest and activity (see Section 4.12).

1.6 Specific Plan Organization

The Specific Plan is organized in seven chapters. Beyond this **Chapter 1 (Introduction)**, the document is organized in the following manner:

Chapter 2 (Urban Design Framework) presents the master plan/vision for the Compton Station Specific Plan area, with a particular focus on the area designated as “Downtown Compton,” along Compton Boulevard between Acacia Avenue and Santa Fe Avenue.

Chapter 3 (Zoning, Development and Design Standards) presents regulatory standards for real estate development in the Specific Plan area. The standards regulate both the physical form and use of property.

Chapter 4 (Design Guidelines) presents guidelines to be used in the design review of projects in the Specific Plan area, including arts and cultural projects.

Chapter 5 (Mobility, Parking and Street Standards) contains both conceptual design and regulatory standards for mobility networks in the Specific Plan area, including modifications to current street right-of-ways and the creation of new streets and passageways.

Chapter 6 (Infrastructure) contains an analysis of the infrastructural needs of the area to accommodate the Specific Plan.

Chapter 7 (Implementation) highlights major activities that the City and community can undertake to realize the plan vision and identifies procedures and funding sources.

All of the Specific Plan chapters are relevant and applicable to projects and actions within the Specific Plan area. However, for expediency, Figure 1-2 below highlights the most relevant sections for different users of the Plan with the abbreviation “MR.”

Key Specific Plan Chapters by User Group					
Chapter	Plan Adopting Authority or Community Member	Property Owner/Developer		Project Review Authority	City Operating Dept (non-Planning)
		Downtown/Major Site	Other		
1 (Introduction)	MR			MR	
2 (Urban Design Framework)	MR	MR		MR	MR
3 (Zoning, Development and Design Standards)		MR	MR	MR	
4 (Design Guidelines)		MR	MR	MR	
5 (Mobility, Parking and Street Standards)		MR		MR	MR
6 (Infrastructure)				MR	MR
7 (Implementation)	MR				MR