

DOING BUSINESS IN DOWNTOWN SANTA MONICA

Thanks to simplified zoning & permitting rules, more businesses can open or expand in Downtown Santa Monica with staff-level approvals, bypassing the time and expense of public hearings.



Photo Credit: Michael Ade Ojo

ALCOHOL & NIGHTLIFE

An Interim Zoning Ordinance to promote economic recovery in Downtown Santa Monica was approved unanimously by City Council, encouraging more nightlife and entertainment. These include:

- Relaxed restrictions on dancing, arcade games, and amplified music requirements
- Expanded eligibility of Alcohol Exemption permits on Third Street Promenade and at Santa Monica Place
- Restaurants up to 5,000 sq. ft. allowed by-right, including the ability to provide off-site alcohol per ABC allowances
- No public hearing required for restaurants providing alcohol within established operational conditions, subject to ABC licensing approval
- Expanded opportunities for outdoor dining on sidewalks, parklets, and private property

SIMPLIFIED RULES

Commercial Signage: Staff-level approvals for more signage options, including upper-level and portable signs with lettering up to 18".

Parking: New businesses located within the Downtown area are not subject to parking minimums.

Upper Floor Businesses: Entrances to upper floors are allowed directly onto the sidewalk.

Active Commercial Use Depth: Requirements reduced from 50' to the first 25' of the property.

Change of Use: Existing restaurants can change use without a public hearing.

More Uses: Food Halls are conditionally allowed. Health clubs, physical training, and yoga studios up to 5,000 sq. ft. are allowed by-right in more areas.

Zoning: Non-conforming retail, food, and beverage establishments can be reoccupied by a new tenant of the same type without new zoning approvals.

Less red tape for existing land uses, reduced zoning restrictions, and Conditional Use permits (CUPs), Minor Use Permits (MUPs), or discretionary approvals for a wide range of uses have been eliminated.

Temporary Use Permits supporting economic recovery are extended up to 6-months.

CITY RESOURCES

- **Online appointment** for in-person permit center services
- New **Virtual Counter Review** service for minor projects
- **311 online portal**
- **Walk-in consultation** available at City Hall



Outdoor Dining at Blue Plate Taco



Change of Use: Retail to Commercial Entertainment and Recreation Use



SCAN FOR MORE CITY RESOURCES