An ordinance amending Section 12.03 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), and adding Subdivision 30 to Subsection A of Section 12.22 of the LAMC, to implement the Downtown Design Guide.

Section 1. Section 12.03 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended by adding a new definition for the term “Downtown Design Guide Project Area” in proper alphabetical order to read:

**DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDE PROJECT AREA.** Those portions of the Central City Community Plan Area as shown in the shaded portion of Map A, dated ______ and attached to Council File No. _______, generally bounded by:

- U.S. Highway 101 on the north, Alameda Street on the east, Second Street on the south, and Harbor Freeway (110 Freeway) on the west;
- Fourth and Fifth Streets on the north, the alley easterly of Hill Street (Lindley Place), Grand Avenue, and Olive Street on the east, Olympic Boulevard and James M. Wood Boulevard on the south, and Harbor Freeway (110 Freeway) on the west;
- Olympic Boulevard and Eleventh Street on the north, Figueroa Street on the east, Santa Monica Freeway (Interstate 10) on the south, and the Harbor Freeway (110 Freeway) on the west; and,
- Ninth Street on the north, Crocker Street on the east, Twelfth Street on the south, and Main Street on the west.

Section 2. Subdivision 30 of Subsection A of Section 12.22 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is added to read:

30. **Downtown Design Guide. (Amended by Ord. No. ________, Eff. ________.)**

(a) **Purpose.** The purpose of this Subdivision is to implement the standards and guidelines in the Downtown Design Guide (the “Design Guide”), adopted by the City Planning Commission and incorporated as part of the Central City Community Plan, an element of the General Plan of the City of Los Angeles. Given the importance of Downtown Los Angeles as the civic, cultural, institutional, governmental, social and economic center of the region, the urban form is critical to its continued vitality and economic viability and the preservation and enhancement of its historic fabric. The Downtown Design Guide regulates projects that have the potential to affect the urban form, pedestrian orientation and street-level activity, and its implementation will ensure a quality built environment.

(b) **Definition of Project.** For the purposes of this subdivision, a Project is the construction, erection, addition to or alteration of any building or structure, or a use of land or
change of use on a lot located in whole or in part within the areas described in Subparagraph (b) of this Subdivision and shown on the adopted ordinance map, which requires the issuance of a grading permit, foundation permit, building permit, sign permit or use of land permit.

A Project does not include demolition; adaptive reuse of an existing building which conforms to Section 12.22.A.26 of this code; remodeling of designated Historic Resources; exterior remodeling of any other existing building, unless the aggregate value of the work, in any one 24-month period, is greater than 50% of the replacement value of the building or structure before the alterations or addition as determined by the Department of Building and Safety; and, interior remodeling of any other existing building, except for interior alterations to the ground floor that will result in the alteration of windows, display windows, entrances, storefronts or otherwise minimize ground floor transparency.

(c) Downtown Design Guide. Every project within Project Area must comply with the Downtown Design Guide standards and guidelines. The Director shall have the authority to review projects for compliance with the Downtown Design Guide prior to the issuance of a building permit in the Project Area.

(1) Exception. Projects conforming to the Downtown Design Guide shall be exempt from the mini-shopping center and commercial corner development regulations set forth in Section 12.22 A.23.

(d) Administrative Clearance – Authority of the Director for Sign Off

(1) Application, Form and Contents. To apply for an Administrative Clearance, an applicant shall file an application with the Department of City Planning, on a form provided by the Department, and include all information required by the instructions on the application and any additional submission requirements. The Director shall determine if the application qualifies for Administrative Clearance and whether the Project complies with all applicable District regulations.

(2) Application Fees. The application fee for an Administrative Clearance shall be as set forth in Section 19.01 E or 19.01 I. The fee in Section 19.01 E shall be charged for administrative clearance of new construction permits only. The fee in Section 19.01 I shall be charged for all other building permit sign-offs.

(3) Procedures. Applicants for Projects that comply with the provisions of the Downtown Design Guide shall submit plans to the Director for conformance review and administrative sign off. The Director or his/her designee shall review the Project for compliance with the standards and guidelines in the Downtown Design Guide. Projects that fail to demonstrate compliance with the Downtown Design Guide shall follow relief procedures set forth below.

(e) Adjustment - Authority of the Director with Appeals to the Area Planning Commission. If an application fails to conform to the provisions of the Downtown Design Guide, the Director or the Director’s designee shall have initial decision-making authority to
grant an Adjustment in accordance with Section 11.5.7 E 1(a) and with the procedures set forth in Section 11.5.7 C 4-6 of this Code.

(1) **Limitations.** An Adjustment shall be limited to deviations from regulations which do not substantially alter the execution or intent of those regulations as applicable to a proposed Project.

(2) **Findings.** The determination by the Director shall include written findings in support of the determination. In order to approve a proposed project pursuant to this subsection, the Director must find that:

(a) There are special circumstances applicable to the project or project site which make the strict application of the Design Guide regulations impractical;

(b) In granting the adjustment, the Director has imposed project requirements and/or decided that the proposed project will substantially comply with the purpose and intent of all Design Guide regulations;

(c) In granting the adjustment, the Director has considered and found no detrimental effects of the adjustment on surrounding properties and public rights-of-way;

(d) The project incorporates mitigation measures, monitoring of measures when necessary, or alternatives identified in the environmental review which would mitigate the negative environmental effects of the project, to the extent physically feasible; and

(e) The project is compatible with the neighborhood character of the surrounding district.