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Massive expansion plans renewed near Angel Stadium

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ANAHEIM – Despite a sluggish economy that has stalled housing and commercial projects inside the Platinum Triangle, the city is moving forward with plans that could dramatically increase the amount of residential and retail units inside the 820-acre project area.

The city has released an environmental report that would allow for more than doubling the square-footage of office and commercial space and nearly doubling the housing units allowed.

The Platinum Triangle was approved in 2004 as a downtown-like mix of condos, cafes and shops in the shadow of Angel Stadium.

Approved residential uses would increase from 10,266 to 18,909 units; commercial use from 2.3 million square feet to 4.9 million; and office space from 5 million square feet to 14.3 million.

Some of the Platinum Triangle has been built: for example, 1,600 housing units and several eateries.

"When we first started planning for this, the economy had not hit the skids yet, and some developers were wanting to build larger developments," said Sheri Vander Dussen, the city's planning director.

"This plan is not for the next couple of years, but to accommodate build out over the next couple of decades," she said.

Anaheim officials also worked with planners in Orange to ensure that local streets could handle the increased traffic.

Eric Altman, executive director of Orange County Communities Organized for Responsible Development, said he has not fully reviewed the new report.

"Our goal was never to stop development but to ensure that what goes in the Platinum Triangle is responsible planning that reflects the community's vision, too," Altman said. "So we'll be looking to make sure this new plan does that."

In 2007, Anaheim had proposed expanding the allowable uses inside the Platinum Triangle – when the economy was still riding a wave of optimism. The City Council approved those plans, but it pulled back and agreed to more study in September 2008 when two residents' groups filed a lawsuit challenging whether the city had sufficiently studied how increased development could strain traffic and sewer and water systems.

The new plans mark a reduction in proposed uses from that first revision, but still could mean a lot more development.

Copies of the draft environmental impact report are available for review at Anaheim Central and Sunkist Branch libraries and online at anaheim.net/planning.

Comments must be received in writing by Sept. 27. The Planning Commission is expected to consider the plan in October before it moves on to the City Council for final consideration in November.

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