

Zoning Change to Support Tech Manufacturing Proposed By LA City Council Member

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Technology advances can render zoning laws out-of-date and ineffective. When new industries arise, often the result of technological innovation, entrepreneurs and business owners may find their leading edge companies unable to secure manufacturing or other space in suitable or desirable locations due to zoning requirements that fail to address their particular circumstances.

Light industrial zones are a perfect example. These zones are generally “set aside for businesses and manufacturers that are clean, high-tech and have a low impact on the surrounding community (noise and emissions)”, as reported by the [San Fernando Valley Business Journal](#) in a May 14, 2012 article.

A Los Angeles City Council Member wants to update the City’s restricted light industrial zones, which are currently suitable for machine shops, computer support and other uses. Mitchell Englander’s [Motion](#) to the Council’s Planning and Land Use Management Committee wants zoning laws “updated and expanded to better reflect changes that have occurred in the computer, technology, manufacturing industry, and green technology sectors”.

Light industrial zones often occupy prime space because the noise, pollution and other impacts from such businesses are minimal and allow them to be located in areas that are adjacent to residential or other businesses that would not sustain or permit a heavy manufacturing facility nearby. Even so, a lengthy and expensive variance process is often required to qualify for a light industrial zone.

Cities and municipalities across the state and country would do well to update their zoning laws and make it easier to attract light industrial uses, especially those that are technologically advanced. These types of businesses offer the potential for economic development, broadening of the local tax base and employment opportunities for area residents, all worthwhile benefits especially in a challenging economy.

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