

# ZONING IN ON HEALTHY FAST FOOD

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## Why should we be concerned about the types of restaurants in our community?

- In South Los Angeles, **over 40 percent** of what we spend on food is bought at restaurants.<sup>i</sup>
  - **Over 70 percent** of the restaurants in South LA are fast food outlets<sup>ii</sup> offering nutritionally deficient food and promoting “super-sized” portions.
  - **Over 50 percent of children and 42 percent of adults** in South LA eat fast food at least once a week, compared with less than 30 percent of children and adults in nearby West LA.<sup>iii</sup>
  - **Over 35 percent of adults** in South LA are obese compared with only 10 percent of adults in nearby West LA and 22.2 percent of adults Countywide.<sup>iv</sup>
  - Students who go to schools **within a half-mile** of a fast food restaurant are more likely to be overweight or obese.<sup>v</sup>
  - Pregnant women who live within a half-mile of a fast food restaurant are at a higher risk of gaining **more than 44 pounds** during pregnancy.<sup>vi</sup>
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## What has the City of Los Angeles done?

The City of Los Angeles **defines fast food restaurants** as those that sell food to eat there or take out and that have a limited menu, items prepared in advance or heated quickly, no table orders, and disposable wrapping or containers.

In 2008, the LA City Council passed an **Interim Control Ordinance (ICO)** that placed a moratorium on the development of new stand-alone fast food restaurants in the West Adams/Baldwin Hills, South and Southeast Community Plan Areas. The ordinance, sponsored by Councilmembers Jan Perry (District 9) and Bernard Parks (District 8), was to last for a **maximum of two years** or until appropriate permanent regulations are adopted.

The LA City Department of Planning has been working on developing regulations on fast food restaurant development into the three Community Plan Updates, but the updates will not be complete until 2011. The ICO will **expire on September 14, 2010**.



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## What are our options?

Many communities have passed zoning restrictions on fast food restaurants to protect the character of the community and reduce nuisances created by fast food restaurants like litter, noise, traffic, loitering, air pollution, and odors. City zoning restrictions can also be used to **create a better balance** between access to healthy food and fast food in South LA.

Below are examples of the types of restrictions that South LA could adopt:

- **Limit the total number of fast food restaurants:** A cap could be placed on the total number of fast food restaurants. The City of Berkeley, California limits the number of fast food restaurants in the Elmwood Commercial District (located south of the University of California, Berkeley) to seven.
- **Regulate the density of fast food restaurants:** New fast food restaurants could be limited based on how close they are to existing fast food restaurants. In the Town of Warner, New Hampshire, a new fast food restaurant cannot be established within 2,000 feet of an existing one. In the Westwood Village area of Los Angeles, a street cannot have more than a ratio of one fast food restaurant for every 200 feet.
- **Prohibit fast food restaurants near certain uses:** New fast food restaurants could be prohibited within a certain distance from places where kids and families gather. In the City of Arden Hills, Minnesota, new fast food restaurants cannot be established within 400 feet of a school, church, public park, or residential area.
- **Ban fast food restaurants and/or drive-through windows:** New fast food restaurants could be banned entirely or only allowed with a conditional use permit. New drive-through windows could also be banned, which could have the same effect as an outright ban because 60 percent or more of fast food business is from drive-through service. The City of Carlsbad, California in San Diego County bans all new drive-through restaurants and the City of Concord, Massachusetts bans both fast food restaurants and drive-through windows.
- **Limit or ban “formula” or “chain” restaurants:** The options described above could also be applied to “formula” or “chain” restaurants. These are restaurants that have one or more similar restaurants in the area. The City and County of San Francisco also prohibits all “formula retail uses” (including fast food restaurants) in the Hayes-Gough Neighborhood Commercial District and requires conditional use permits in certain other districts.

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<sup>i</sup> Food Desert to Food Oasis: Promoting Grocery Store Development in South Los Angeles. Community Health Councils. 2010.

<sup>ii</sup> Park A, Watson N, Galloway-Gilliam N. South Los Angeles Health Equity Scorecard. Community Health Councils. 2008.

<sup>iii</sup> Key Indicators of Health by Service Planning Area. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. 2009.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>v</sup> Davis B, Carpenter C. Proximity of fast-food restaurants to schools and adolescent obesity. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2009; 99: 505-510.

<sup>vi</sup> Currie J, DellaVigna S, Moretti E, Pathania V. The Effect of Fast Food Restaurants on Obesity. National Bureau of Economic Research. 2009.