

2040 General Plan and Zoning Consistency Update

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the City updating its zoning?

The proposed zoning code updates follow direction set by the Sacramento 2040 General Plan which was adopted on February 27, 2024. The 2040 General Plan established new land use standards to guide future decision making and development. One way the City implements the vision of the General Plan is through zoning. State law requires that the City's Zoning Code and Zoning Map are consistent with the General Plan. The proposed updates ensure that the Zoning Code and Map are consistent with the land use designations, standards, and policies established in the 2040 General Plan.

Will the proposed rezoning impact my property taxes?

No. Property taxes will not change as a result of rezoning. Property taxes are generally reassessed when a property is sold or when new habitable or conditioned living space is added to the property. In those cases, the property's assessed value may be updated by the County Assessor, which could affect property taxes.

If my property is rezoned, how does that affect me?

In most cases, rezoning will not affect how you use your property today. Existing homes, businesses, and other legally established uses can generally continue operating as they do now, even if the zoning designation changes.

The primary impact of rezoning is on future development opportunities. Zoning determines what types of new buildings or uses may be allowed if a property is expanded, substantially redeveloped, or a new project is proposed. Depending on the new zoning designation, future development opportunities may change.

Does rezoning a property render its current uses illegal?

If the use of a property is legally established prior to the property being rezoned, then the use may continue, even if it no longer conforms with the new zoning regulations. It would now be referred to as a "legal, non-conforming use." While it may continue in use, restrictions may apply that would prevent the use from getting larger, being relocated to another location on the same lot, or increasing the number of residential units. If a nonconforming use is discontinued for a continuous period exceeding one year, the right to continue the nonconforming use expires for discontinuance of use. For more detail about

a specific property, please reach out to the Planning Helpdesk (planning@cityofsacramento.org) for more information.

Will the proposed zoning changes affect historic properties?

The proposed zoning changes will not affect a historic property's landmark status or existing historic districts. Landmark designation of an individual property or a property within a historic district remains with the property even when the zoning designation is changed. Historic districts have specific development standards and other historic preservation requirements that would not be affected by the proposed zoning changes.

What is the difference between FAR 1 and FAR 2 areas? What does it mean to be “closer to transit”?

The 2040 General Plan allows greater development intensity in neighborhoods closer to transit. In general, FAR 1 areas allow residential buildings up to three stories, while FAR 2 areas closer to transit allow residential buildings up to four stories.

In the proposed neighborhood zones where missing middle housing standards would apply, properties are considered “closer to transit” if they are within a half-mile walking distance of existing high-frequency bus stops and existing and planned light rail stations. These areas have an FAR of 2 and allow greater development intensity. Neighborhood areas that fall outside of the half mile range generally have an FAR of 1.

This approach implements General Plan Policy LUP-2.4, (*Development Intensity Linked to Transit*) which directs the City to plan for higher development intensities around existing and planned transit to make the best use of public infrastructure and support an accessible, convenient transportation network.

How are temporary shelter facilities impacted by these updates? Can the City place them wherever it wants?

No. These Zoning Code updates do **not** change the City's regulations for temporary shelter facilities. Temporary shelters are governed by a separate [ordinance](#) and are not affected by the proposed rezoning.

The City cannot place temporary shelter facilities just anywhere. Shelters must be located on eligible sites or within eligible zoning districts, and comply with operational, health, and safety requirements.

What is Missing Middle Housing (MMH)?

Missing middle housing (MMH) refers to buildings that contain more than one home such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, and other small multi-unit buildings, usually built in existing lower density residential neighborhoods.

These housing types were common and can be found in many pre-WWII towns and cities across the US. Historically, MMH types have provided more attainable housing options and a path toward homeownership. MMH types are “middle” in scale and form between typical single-unit homes and larger multi-unit buildings. With more modest-sized units, they also are more attainable to middle-income households.

For the past 50-60 years, zoning codes in many cities have restricted MMH. The housing market has prioritized building single-unit homes, creating financing and other hurdles to delivering MMH types. Codifying pathways for developers to build MMH types can be an effective strategy to help provide more attainable multi-unit housing citywide.

Over the past several decades, many zoning codes have limited Missing Middle Housing, making it more difficult to build a wider variety of housing types. Updating these regulations is one strategy to provide additional housing choices throughout the city.

In September 2024, the City adopted the Missing Middle Housing Interim Ordinance. If adopted, the proposed updates would replace the interim ordinance and be incorporated into the City’s Zoning Code.

What standards are being updated with MMH? How do the changes affect what can be built?

The proposed changes to the MMH standards are intended to make it easier to develop a broader range of Missing Middle Housing types. The updates would also align requests for deviations from objective standards with the City's existing site plan and design review processes, providing greater flexibility than the interim ordinance.

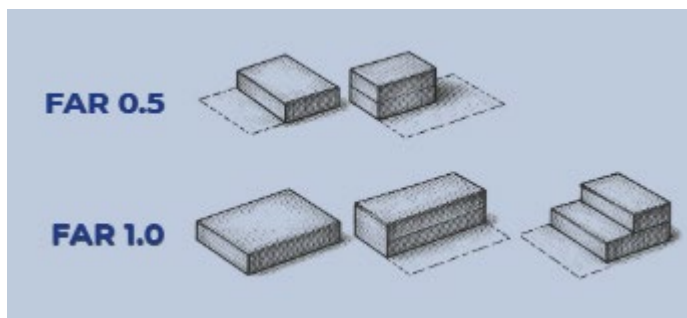
The proposed standards would apply to lower-intensity neighborhood zones with a floor-area-ratio (FAR) of 1.0 or 2.0. In FAR 1.0 areas, the proposal would allow multi-unit residential buildings up to three stories through a staff-level approval process. In FAR 2.0 areas (typically within one-half mile of transit), the proposal would allow multi-unit residential buildings up to four stories through a staff-level approval process. Additionally, proposed standards for multiple buildings on one property would require the buildings to face a public street or shared open space.

What is FAR?

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is a measure of how much building floor area can be built on a property relative to the size of the lot. In general, a higher FAR allows a larger building or more total floor area on a site.

For example:

- A FAR of 1.0 allows building floor area equal to the size of the lot.
- A FAR of 2.0 allows building floor area up to twice the size of the lot.



The maximum FAR standard sets the ceiling for how much building square footage is allowed on a lot based on the size of the lot (think of it as a percentage of the lot's size). The FAR ceiling sets the maximum intensity that a lot can be developed so it is possible that a site could be developed under the maximum FAR to meet the development standards and respond to specific site conditions.

FAR is just one of several development standards. Building height, setbacks, lot coverage, landscaping, and other requirements also influence what can ultimately be built on a property. Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and junior ADUs are generally not counted toward FAR.

How do proposed updates account for Senate Bill 79?

Senate Bill (SB) 79 establishes statewide development standards that allow qualifying residential projects to achieve higher FARs and building standards within certain distances of major transit stops. Projects using SB 79 must also comply with the law's affordability and prevailing wage requirements. A map of areas affected by SB 79 can be found on the City's [Land Information Lookup Application \(or LILA\)](#).

The proposed zoning code update would incorporate similar development standards into the City's zoning regulations for certain higher-intensity neighborhood, mixed-use, and

commercial zones. In some cases, the City's standards allow for greater development intensity than SB 79.

Can neighborhood commercial replace a residence? Will this result in a loss of housing units?

The updated Zoning Code will allow properties in areas designated for neighborhood commercial uses to transition from residential to commercial uses. This provides flexibility for small-scale businesses and services that support surrounding neighborhoods. The City recognizes that, in some cases, this could result in the conversion or demolition of existing residential units.

However, the 2040 General Plan eliminated maximum density limits and allows for multi-unit residential development in all residential zones, meaning that new housing can be built at a greater intensity than was permitted in many areas. The proposed Zoning Code updates implement this policy by expanding opportunities for multi-unit housing throughout the city.

How will the City decide what types of businesses can open where neighborhood commercial is allowed?

The goal of this policy change is to promote walkability and access to neighborhood serving businesses such as markets, cafes, fitness studios and salons in residential neighborhoods. The Zoning Code will identify the types of neighborhood commercial uses that are allowed in each zone. This proposal would not allow auto-oriented businesses such as gas stations and drive through restaurants. Cannabis related uses and alcohol sales would also not be allowed in the proposed N-1 and N-2 zones where neighborhood commercial uses would be allowed.