

White Paper: Green Development Code Structure

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Policy Direction

The 2030 General Plan contains goals and policies that support growing smarter through infill development, sustainable and healthy neighborhoods, and a diverse and vibrant economy. The structure and layout of the Green Development Code will assist in encouraging and facilitating desired development that supports these General Plan themes by providing for consistent application and ease of use.

The General Plan implementation measure, Administrative Program 13, states: “The City shall review and update the Sacramento Code, Zoning Ordinance, and applicable guidelines, consistent with the policies and diagrams of the General Plan.”

Purpose

The Green Development Code will be organized and formatted to be highly accessible and to provide a clear understanding of required actions. It will also be structured to be clearly aligned with the 2030 General Plan.

Background

There has not been a comprehensive update of the zoning code in over 50 years. The zoning code has been amended throughout the years to reflect new development practices, including updated development standards, revised and new uses, modified review processes, and the codification of new strategies such as transit oriented development. Portions of development-related ordinances have also been placed in other titles, e.g. the sign ordinance is in Title 15, and subdivision regulations are in Title 16. Title 18 includes several aspects of development, including street dedication and fees.

The Problem

As the city has grown, so has the complexity of the development code. The existing structure of the zoning code, which may have been adequate 50 years ago, now requires referencing multiple sections when determining a required action. For example, the land use chart, a matrix that matches allowed uses with zoning, has 85 footnotes of use conditions, ranging from residential minimum lot area requirements to medical marijuana dispensaries. Site and building development standards are provided in an entirely different chapter.

Additionally, cross referencing different code chapters is often required for other regulatory functions, such as sign requirements, subdivisions standards, street dedication, and fees. This labyrinth of development codes is time-consuming to navigate, difficult to understand, and can result in inconsistent interpretations of the code.

Recommended Solution

Consolidate all development codes into one title; list allowed uses and development standards together for each zoning category; redistribute footnotes to appropriate sections; and add new sections generated from the Climate Action Plan and Green Building program.

The proposed outline of the Green Development Code is provided below:

- 1) General Provisions (purpose and authority, definitions, non-conforming uses and buildings, property maintenance)
- 2) Zoning Districts and Land Use Regulations.
- 3) Special Use Regulations
- 4) Site Development Standards (landscaping and tree shading, street dedication, paving, grading, etc.)
- 5) Parking
- 6) Signs (exempt and prohibited, maintenance, etc.)
- 7) Subdivisions
- 8) Development Impact Fees
- 9) City-wide Programs
- 10) Administration (applications and fees, development review process, appeals, administrative permits)

Zoning Districts and Land Use Regulations. Allowed uses and development standards for categories of zoning (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) will include graphics for additional clarity (See example from Livermore, California, on this page.) The development requirements will be aligned with the General Plan’s design guidelines and minimum/ maximum densities and floor-area-ratios.

3.02.070
Transect Zones

T3 Neighborhood (T3N) Standards

Key

- ROW / Property Line
- Setback Line
- Building Area
- ▨ Facade Zone

C. Building Placement

Setback (Distance from ROW / Property Line)	
Front	20' min. ¹ ; 30' max. ²
Front facade within facade zone	50% min.
Side Street or Civic Space	10' min.; 15' max.
Side	5' min.
Rear	5' min.

¹ Setback may match an existing adjacent building. The building may be set to align with the facade of the front-most immediately adjacent property, for a width no greater than that of the adjacent property's facade that encroaches into the minimum setback.

² No maximum front setback for Carriage Houses.

D. Building Form

Lot Size	
See Part 5 (Building Types).	
Building Height ^{3,4}	
Lot depth ≤ 100': Within 75' of street property line or	2 1/2 stories max
Lot depth > 100': Within 90' of street property line	2 1/2 stories max
To Eave or Parapet	24' max.
Overall	35' max.
Other lot area	
Stories	1 1/2 stories max
To Eave or Parapet	15' max.
Overall	24' max.
Ground Floor Finish Level: Main Building	18" min. above sidewalk
Ground Floor Ceiling	9' min. clear
Upper Floor(s) Ceiling	8' min. clear

³ Does not apply to accessory structures. See 4.02.030 (Accessory Structures)

⁴ See Part 5 (Specific to Building Types) for additional height regulations.

Miscellaneous

Mansard roof forms are not allowed.

E. Allowed Use Types

Ground Floor ⁵	Residential
Upper Floor ⁵	Residential

⁵ See 3.02.070.H (T3N Use Table) for specific uses

3-14
Livermore Development Code

A typical outline to a zoning category would look like this:

Zone Category: Residential

- Uses: Permitted and Conditional
- Standards:
 - Height
 - Minimum/Maximum FAR
 - Lot width, size, and coverage
 - Setbacks
 - Parking
- Architectural Design Standards
- Parking
- Signs (number, type, and size)

Challenges to Achieving the Solution

Although the Green Development Code will be easier to use, the transition to the new code structure will be difficult for many. Staff training and outreach to the development community and property owners will be required.

Discussion Questions

1. Will the proposed structure work well with anticipated changes, e.g. plan review /design review process, parking, green incentives, etc.?
2. Would this structure easily accommodate future amendments? Is it flexible enough to be responsive to changing policy, laws or development trends?
3. Will the proposed structure be easy to understand by all users (staff, property owners, real estate professionals, land developers, etc.).