

Notes on Zoning Update for Oct. 5, 2023 from Jim Smith

Guiding Principles and Objectives for the Comprehensive Code Update:

No. 6: Allow increased intensity of development and compact form while retaining the character and scale of the community's neighborhoods.

To me this language is code for exercising "white privilege" and minimizing minority home ownership.

No. 8: Address sustainability concerns including the heat island effect. Facilitate appropriate and increased tree planting and preservation.

To me no amount of tree planting and preservation will diminish the rapidity of climate change. Tree planting is to be encouraged, yes, but there also needs to be emphasis on use of recycled materials, home-based energy generation and recycling of water as well as low-water landscape design.

No. 9.: Respect the existing community fabric and groundwork while reflecting current best practices in evaluation of uses, activities, and development patterns.

I have no specific problem with this but what is a true definition of "existing community fabric"? That's vague and also again, relates to No. 6, in that it promotes white homeownership and minimizes minority home ownership.

No. 10: Encourage mixed-use nodes, districts and corridors. Allow the integration of commercial uses within residential districts as well as residential into commercial districts.

I have no problem with the overall intent of this statement. However, I believe it needs to include some aspect governing safety for residential homeowners. Putting a "commercial use" microchip manufacturer within a residential zone might look good, but that manufacturer is going to generate increased traffic, water use and necessitate more power, which means more power lines, etc.

Comprehensive Code Features

No. 8.: Updates the standards that apply to all properties, such as fencing, outdoor storage, landscaping, parking, and lighting.

I have no specific objections except for the use of the word "fencing," which can mean many things. Californians, for example, prefer redwood fencing to maintain backyard privacy. However, the city should also encourage cyclone fencing in smaller neighborhoods to promote community.

No. 9.: Provides design standards and criteria that apply to specific uses such as alcohol, auto services, bed and breakfast, bee keeping, emergency shelters, mobile vendors, and temporary uses, etc. 10. Identifies height, setbacks, coverage, and other development standards that apply to each district.

I have no problem with most of this, but why the necessity to include “bee keeping?” I would speculate there are more people keeping chickens in their backyards than bees. Shouldn’t that be included as well? How detailed do we want to be?

Code highlights and key changes

The final sentence reads: Development standards and design standards were assessed, taking into consideration limited resources, such as land and water, while also taking into account environmental and climate considerations, as well as housing and jobs, in order to allow for a resilient and prepared community to face 2050 and beyond.

The phrase “to face 2050 and beyond” is vague. I would recommend modifying it to read: “...community through the year 2050 and beyond.”

Update entitlement review processes to provide clear direction as well as to allow streamlined review for projects that are compliant with objective standards

Please explain what is “entitlement review process” for greater clarity.

Zoning and General Plan Map Amendment Discussion

Reflects the existing regional commercial wave park use.

I have no issue with this but shouldn’t there be some way of recognizing that someone else may want to build a “wave park.”?

General Notes based on Zoning maps

1. Neighborhood Preservation Zone seems very limited and could have to change should the city grow larger. Should it be expanded farther west beyond West Street?
2. South of Maxwell Avenue to E. Gibson Road and south of East Gibson Road to the Heritage Parkway extension are shown as “white” or seemingly outside the city limits. Don’t they fall under the Urban Limit Line? Shouldn’t this area be identified as being off limits for building? What I’m concerned about is if these areas will at some point in the future be included as part of the Southeast Area Development Area, which would allow single-family residences in a flood zone.

3. Division II: "Districts and Regulations" is shown in the Zoning Guide but it is listed as "Zone Regulations" in the actual document. This is confusing.
4. Yolo County Fairgrounds is shown as "Residential Low" it should be rezoned to be state land.
5. County Fair Mall acreage is shown as "Community Commercial Mixed Use." I would prefer it be rezoned to "Corridor Mixed-Use Flex."
6. Considering that the Zoning Code is looking out to 2050 and beyond, shouldn't the new Woodland Research and Technology Park be included in this document?