

Notes on Zoning Update for Oct. 18, 2023 from Jim Smith

Please recognize these are questions and observations. I'm only giving my observations and not putting any "line in the sand," so to speak. I'm open for greater clarification and explanation.

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. Couldn't you just borrow from the Neighborhood Preservation Zone description of stabilizing "and protecting the established diverse character of older, predominately residential neighborhoods where a mix of housing types exist."?

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 in housing development, 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. And, yes, I know this the intention, but think of it from the perspective of brown and black people.

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.

Residential Zones/Zoning Regulations

I have no specific comments other than the lot sizes seem too large for today's generation. I don't want to be like one of my fellow commissioners and rewrite lot sizes, but I do think that that large front- or backyards are unnecessary. I think there needs to be more flexibility in the number of lots per acre to provide for a greater mix of housing sizes within a given area. My issue, I think, is that you're allowing 8 units an acre under low-density residential and this increases housing costs. My personal preference (given the success of the David Snow developments) is that "Low-Density Residential" should be between 20 and 25 units an acre (although this may be too much). Given that you also have Residential Low-Medium and Residential Medium zones, perhaps forgo the entire concept of Low-Density Residential.

However, given there is so little low-density single-family residential remaining within the city the zoning area I don't know how you could add any additional "higher density" residential.

I do, however, feel the County Fair Mall site should be designated as a special area of some type to encourage Missing Middle Housing. I note that it is designated Mixed Use under the new zoning map and I think that's a good thing, but I think the city should work on some incentive program that favors housing over commercial.

Regarding setbacks: I think given the changing nature of families, which are smaller, the requirement that a front-yard and side-yard setbacks are excessive. It appears that in general you want each home to have 20 feet of front-yard space, probably for trees, etc. But I think that's too much for a single-family home in a low-density residential area. I don't see too many people using their front yards these days, other than for gardens and California landscaping, which minimizes the use of trees and instead focuses on pollinators and minimizes the use of grass.

I do like the Downtown designations of DX-1, DX-2, DX-3 and DX-4. I think they are very well thought out and work well.

Comprehensive Code Features

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 or rabbits? Shouldn’t they be included as well? Perhaps something like, “beekeeping, raising chickens and other small-scale, backyard activities for fun, personal use and modest revenue.” How detailed do we want to be? All this being said, I am reading Page 156 and am curious why the limitations on backyard poultry, rabbits, etc. I get the “crowing” part, but am still confused why bees are better than small animals.

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.”

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”? Designating a specific site seems to imply that there is no further room for a competitive facility.

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. 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? Or is the zoning for that area already part of this revised document?

General Site Standards

Page 1:

C. No 3: Why “over 30 inches” in height?

Page 2:

D. No. 2: One definition of “appurtenant” is accessory, but you’ve already used accessory in the sentence. Suggest word “adjacent” or put Appurtenant in the definitions section.

No. 5: “setback” in this usage is two words “set back”.

No. 5a. “setback’ in this usage is correct.

No. 10a. “Why not say no accessory structures will be constructed in the front half of the lot, as referenced in No. 4.

Page 7

No. 2. B.i.: “set back” should be two words in this usage.

Page 8

No. 7. a. Incomplete sentence: “Rear and interior side”

Page 10

J. a. “setback” is two words in this usage “set back”

Page 11

J. b. What does “minimum maintenance” mean?

Page 17

G. 1.d “barbecue” is the preferred spelling of “barbeque,” which could mean an event rather than a “device.”

Page 18

H. 2. Do the “water efficient plants,” indeed, does water use in the Zoning document comply with the new state standards that call for a 12% reduction of water use in Woodland by 2035, from 232 gallons per day (used in 2020)? I presume so, but perhaps there should be a statement to this effect?

Page 19.

No. 8: I think there is a word missing in the final line. “preserve existing trees to the extent possible.” Perhaps you need to add the word “fullest extent possible.”

Page 22.

No. 16. Trees. I’m not arguing against trees, but it seems to me the protocols you are setting up are not consistent with “California landscaping,” which could be more low-lying, low-water-use shrubs and pollinating plants other than trees. Perhaps a statement to the effect, that property owners who want to landscape without trees, should (or will) make a contribution for tree planting at a public facility as you have elsewhere in this section? It also seems you’re adding to the overall cost of a home when you are requiring “tree minimums.”

Page 27.

No. 3. “Pedestrian Scale Lighting. Pedestrian-scaled lighting, less than 15-feet in height, shall be used to illuminate areas used for pedestrian circulation. Bollards may be used as well.”

To my knowledge Bollards don’t emit light. I don’t have objection to their use, but I’m wondering why they are showing up under the “lighting” section.”

Page 37.

D. “Inoperable Vehicles. In addition to the standards of Woodland Municipal Code Section 9.04.030, Acts Constituting a Nuisance, the following standards apply to inoperable vehicles. 1. Residential Districts. Inoperable vehicles in residential districts shall not be visible from the public right-of-way. Inoperable vehicles may only be stored on non-permeable surfaces in residential garages, or rear or side yards. Inoperable vehicles shall be limited to one per lot.

Can a few words be added after “residential garages” to the effect of “or permanent, enclosed structure”? My point being that not all residences need have garages in the future.

Page 167.

Community Gardens. I think this is a wonderful idea. But you have a problem in that you don’t specify where community gardens can occur. And based on your

residential zoning standards you don't allow for adequate space to provide for a community garden. Low-density residential, as well as medium- and higher-density residential sites are all precluded because you provide for setbacks and other property geared toward housing and landscaping. Unless you designate space in a new development for a community garden, I don't see how you'll have any incentive to have a garden constructed. I don't know if this is possible, but perhaps a section of a community park can be given over to a community garden. I'm specifically thinking of the new southeast area, where there are some great parks, but they all seem very large.

Page 176.

I have no issue with any of this, but have you checked with legal counsel to determine if this is constitutionally permissible?

Page 184.

Hookah Lounges. I think this shows innovative thinking on the city's park. One recommendation, however, is to add "cigar lounge" as part of the language since there is an established audience for "cigar smoking" within Yolo County.

Page 184.

Regarding live/work units, simply make sure you're consistent with "live/work" vs. "live-work."

Page 191.

Regarding "mobile vendors." No problems with the limitations but there's no provision for the use of "mobile vendors" during "special events." I'm specifically thinking of the Woodland Farmer's Market, as well as the First Sunday of the month closure of First Street between Bush and Main Street, both of which feature more than one mobile vendor. I don't see any provision to allow those; other than the "special event" permit. So, perhaps this is enough.

Comments Re the Comprehensive Zoning Code 10.17.23 Kaufman via email

Dear Staff for the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update,

We left on vacation on October 2, 2023 and had not received any notification of the workshops pertaining to the Zoning Ordinance Update even though one was scheduled for October 5. We did find a notice in our mail when we returned on October 14. The notice is a nondescript flyer with a small note in it referring to proposed changes to the General Plan and zoning of our property. None of the neighbors we spoke to realized what it was and assumed it was junk mail.

After reading the flyer, I tried to purchase a copy of the document at the City on October 16. After waiting awhile, a staff member finally came out with a copy I could review at the counter. You ever try to review a document of that size and importance while standing at the counter? As the flyer states that the Code can be reviewed at the Library or the Community & Senior Center, I decided to go to the library to be able to sit down and review the document, but they referred me to the website.

I then tried reviewing the document online, but it was very tedious and difficult, given that we only have a laptop. I had expected that there would at least be links to click from one section to another, which is the most useful thing about an electronic version, but there were none. Also, for some reason your program or my computer wouldn't let me increase the map sizes so they were difficult to read.

I then went to the Community & Senior Center to review their copy. They also did not have a copy but graciously printed one out. So, I sat down at a table to review it but realized there was no way to determine where changes had been made. It was a stand alone document with no context as to what the changes were or their purpose.

I then reviewed your website about community outreach. It nicely listed the meetings held but there was no information about how the project has been advertised or how those most affected have been notified. Just holding a meeting or workshop is not public outreach.

I request that there either be a redacted version of the current ordinance to show the changes or a comprehensive list made available that directly informs the public of each change that has been proposed. I have been involved in several comprehensive zoning ordinance updates and such formats were always provided. If you have it, please direct me to it as it would be extremely helpful.

Also, please provide the rationale and data behind the addition of the R-LM District. As a former planner, I understand the importance of increasing allowable density, especially to meet your Housing Element requirements, but you should justify the increase in the areas proposed given the little vacant land available, the number of historic homes in the area, and the disruption to the existing fabric of the community. Further, increased density is usually along transportation routes but the proposed plan doesn't seem to follow that logic and excludes and reduces density in an area that is close to the bus route.

[Type here]

Further, there should be an environmental analysis that addresses the impact on the disabled. The newer townhouse developments going up are almost all inaccessible to persons in a wheelchair. We specifically bought our home because it is accessible for our daughter. Additionally, the neighborhood has many older residents that have been able to continue to reside in their homes because the homes can be adapted to their needs. Townhomes are extremely difficult to impossible to adapt.

Sincerely,
Nancy Kaufman



Comments from Bruce Barton provided on October 18, 2023 via email.

Cindy,

Sorry, but we will be unable to attend the meeting tonight.

We have the following comments on the Comprehensive Zoning code update. There are also 3 questions below.

On the document at this link:

https://cityofwoodland.org/DocumentCenter/View/9832/LWC_Woodland_Div-III_Citywide_081623?bidId=

Pg 186 - 17.84.230 Live/Work (New) B.2, B.3 and G.

Existing wording in B.2 and B.3 "... allowing the commercial section to be independently leased out for limited use." seems to contradict exiting wording in G "No portion of a live/work unit may be separately rented or sold as a commercial space for a person or persons not living on the premises ...". You are probably going to lease the commercial part to someone who doesn't live in the residential part, otherwise why would you enter into a lease. The wording in G is ok for selling, but not for renting. The owner should be able to rent the commercial space to someone who is not a resident of the residential space.

Pg 210 - 17.84.360 Telecommunication Facilities A.1.d.

Existing wording makes reference to "urban reserve areas or undesignated planning areas" but these areas are not identified on the "Identified Areas of Change on the Draft Comprehensive Zoning Map". I would argue that if these areas are outside the City Limits, they should not appear in the zoning code wording. If they are in the City Limits, they should appear on the map.

----Can I please get an answer to these 2 questions: Where are these areas? Are they within the Urban Limit Line but outside the City Limits?

Pg 210 - 17.84.360 Telecommunication Facilities A.2.a.i.

Existing wording "No more than one satellite dish exceeding 36 inches in diameter per parcel." is not suitable for duplexes. At least 2 dishes should be allowed. I have seen many residences with multiple satellite services, so one could argue that each unit may require 2 dishes. It seems to me that 4 satellite dishes per parcel would be a better upper limit. Maybe the wording should mention duplexes explicitly.

<https://cityofwoodland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=403ebccb59134b2fa2c7cfdc77e29cdf>

What happens to the "Business Park" designation in the General Plan Land Use - 2035 map (see the above link)?

Thank you for adding our comments to the public comments record AND for answering our questions.

Regards,

bb (Bruce Barton)