

Zoning Code Guidance

For enabling Smart Growth

Many zoning codes in Los Angeles County have their origins in the 1950's or 1960's. During this era, most development was on vacant land where auto-oriented development was assumed to be the only option and density was largely discouraged. Recent trends in Los Angeles County, however, mean that many cities view infill development as the best, most sustainable option for future investment. Communities attempting to develop smarter are revisiting their zoning ordinances. In many cases, local codes that were quite adequate for suburban development make more efficient models of development practically impossible. Even updated zoning codes that promote smart growth concepts often have internal inconsistencies that make implementing "smart" development difficult.

These guidelines are designed to help local governments evaluate and revise zoning regulations to maximize the likelihood that the desired density, mixture of uses, and other development attributes can be implemented.

There are three main areas within most zoning ordinances where local jurisdictions could make changes that would produce internally consistent smart growth zoning codes:

I. Permitted Uses - Most zoning codes list uses that are permitted, either outright or by special permit. These guidelines include uses considered most compatible for mixed use projects and their definitions. They are based on definitions on the American Planning Association Land Based Classification System (LBCS), the preeminent source for land use definitions (For more information, visit APA's website at <http://www.planning.org/lbcs/>).

II. Development Standards – Many parts of the zoning code affect the "practical density" that development can actually achieve. Simply permitting a mixture of uses or increasing the height limit is ineffective in allowing infill unless the entire zoning code is designed to permit economically viable projects. Floor Area Ratio (FAR) can be the best measure of density for urban uses, but regulations such as required landscaping, parking requirements, setbacks, height limits, and even parking stall width can undermine the practical density. For general guidelines on how to coordinate standards that produce an effective F.A.R, please click [here](#). For more detailed guidelines on how to maximize practical density, please click [here](#).

III. Sample Design Standards - Many development codes require design standards, especially if the environment envisioned is the classic main street with a "street wall" of buildings with windows and doors facing the sidewalk. Some basic standards that guarantee a human scale street and a walkable sidewalk are attached. They are designed for ministerial administration, that is, in a non-discretionary process, such as by staff at permit review, rather than by an architectural review commission.

I. Recommended Permitted Uses and their Definitions

The following are definitions based on APA's Land Based Classification System. The number relates to APA's numbering scheme for land classification.

Cities may not choose to use all these uses, but for urban districts that are truly mixed use, such as a downtown or main street, these are a good place to start.

1120 Multiple Unit Dwelling

A single detached building structurally divided into two or more separate independent dwelling units for permanent occupancy, each dwelling unit having but one kitchen and housing only one or the following groups of persons living together as a single nonprofit housekeeping unit: Any number of persons immediately related by blood, marriage or adoption or four or fewer persons not necessarily related by blood, marriage or adoption

1300 Hotels and Motels

An establishment that provides temporary lodging in guest rooms or apartments and in which meals, entertainment, and various personal services may or may not be provided. Services provided may include maid service and laundering of linen, telephone and secretarial or desk service, and the use and upkeep of furniture. Conference facilities, not exceeding fifteen (15) percent of the gross floor area of the hotel, are permitted. Up to twenty percent of the residential units may be utilized for permanent occupancy.

1310 Bed and breakfast inn

An owner-occupied or manager-occupied residential structure providing rooms for temporary, overnight lodging, with or without meals, for paying guests;

1320 Rooming and boarding

The furnishing of lodging with or without meals for compensation to permanent guests and which makes no provision for cooking in any of the rooms occupied by paying guests.

1500 Live Work Residential

A combination of residential occupancy and commercial activity located within a dwelling unit. The commercial activity shall not exceed fifty percent of the gross floor area of the dwelling unit and shall not have more than two employees or regular assistants on premises at one time.

2100 Retail sales or service

A business established for the sale of goods or services to consumers, usually in small quantities (as opposed to wholesale) and does not include wholesale goods or services nor automobile sales or service.

Limitations: 1. May not exceed 10,000 square feet gross floor area; 2. May not exceed 30,000 square feet gross floor area; 3. Drive through facilities not permitted.

2110 Automobile/Motorcycle sales, rental or service establishment

Sales, leasing, rental, and related servicing of new and used automobiles, light trucks, vans and sport utility vehicles limited to a capacity of not more than one-and-one-half (1 1/2) tons, motorcycles, motor scooters, mopeds, all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, go-carts, utility trailers, and similar items; excluding, however, commercial wrecking, dismantling, or junkyard. All outdoor display areas shall comply with section 59-585(2) through (10) (use and maintenance of off-street parking areas), except for the limitation against sale. This definition includes all uses in the following SIC groups: 551 New and Used Car Dealers; 552 Used Car Dealers; 555 Boat Dealers; 557 Motorcycle Dealers.

2114 Automobile Repair Garage

An establishment engaged in performing major repairs to and the servicing of automobiles. Such work excludes commercial wrecking, dismantling, junkyard, tire and truck-tractor repair. Major repair may include engine overhaul or replacement, body work, upholstery work, glass replacement, transmission overhaul, brake repair with drum and disc grinding, replacement of electrical accessories such as starters and alternators, frame alignment, and rebuilding of wrecked automobiles.

2122 Hardware and home centers

The retail sale of a diverse range of hardware and related materials generally used in the maintenance, repair, or construction of buildings or other structures, including lawn and garden supplies; may include warehousing.

2155 Liquor store

Establishments engaged in the sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption.

2158 Body Art Establishment

A commercial establishment where the practice of physical body adornment is performed by artists utilizing, but not limited to, the following

techniques: body piercing, and tattooing, but does not include establishments performing only ear piercing.

2160 Bookstore

A retail establishment which, as its primary business, engages in the sale, rental, or other charge-for-use of books, magazines, newspapers, greeting cards, postcards, videotapes, computer software, and/or any other printed or electronically conveyed information or media, excluding any adult uses.

2163 Clinic or Office

A building used for the conduct of business-related activities, excluding the sale of merchandise or storing of merchandise on the premises. This includes health care services to patients or clients; but excludes in-patient or overnight care, animal hospitals, veterinarians, or other similar services.

2200 Banking and Financial Services

A facility engaged in deposit banking or extending credit in the form of loans. This definition includes all uses in the following SIC groups: 60 Depository Institutions; 61 Nondepository Institutions.

2225 Pawn Shop

Any business that loans money on deposit of personal property or deals in the purchase or possession of personal property on condition of selling the same back again to the pledger or depositor, or loans or advances money on personal property by taking chattel mortgage security thereon, and takes or receives such personal property.

2405 Laundry or dry cleaning

A commercial laundering establishment that cleans clothing, carpeting, drapes, and other cloth or synthetic fiber materials using a chemical process. Such establishments may also include self-service laundering facilities.

2420 Communications services

Establishments engaged in the provision of television and film production, broadcasting, and other information relay services accomplished through the use of electronic and telephone mechanisms; excluding, however, facilities covered by section (telecommunication facilities) and (major impact utility). Typical uses include: music studios, television studios, television and film production studios; radio and television broadcasting studios; telecommunication or cable services.

2500 Eating Place

A retail establishment primarily engaged in the sale of prepared food and/or drinks. A maximum of ten amusement devices may be located on the premises.

2600 Personal services

An establishment or place of business primarily engaged in the provision of frequent or recurrent needed services of a personal nature. Typical uses include, but are not limited to, beauty and barber shops, shoe repair shops, and tailor shops. Adult uses shall be excluded from this definition.

2700 Pet and animal sales or service

A retail sales establishment primarily involved in the sale of domestic animals, such as dogs, cats, fish, birds, and reptiles, excluding exotic animals and farm animals such as horses, goats, sheep and poultry.

2720 Veterinary Services

An establishment for the care, observation or treatment of animals

3410 Research, Development or Technological Service

An establishment that engages in research, or research and development. Examples include laboratories, research and development of computer software, information systems, communication systems, transportation, geographic information systems, multi-media and video technology. Development and construction of prototypes may be associated with this use.

3420 Publishing/Printing

An establishment where printed material is produced, reproduced and/or copied by either a printing press, photographic reproduction techniques, or other similar techniques. This use does not include copy shops.

3500 Wholesale trade establishment

An establishment or place of business primarily engaged in selling and/or distributing merchandise to retailer; to industrial, commercial, institutional, or professional business users, or to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers and buying merchandise for, or selling merchandise to, such individuals or companies

4050 Parking and/or commercial storage of vehicles in a structure

The assembling or standing of operable vehicles for periods of more than one day. Such use shall not include storage of damaged, dismantled or impounded vehicles.

4170 Postal services

A United States postal facility that has distribution boxes (cluster boxes) and collection services for the general public, mail carriers, and retail services. In addition, the facility may be used for the collection, sorting, processing, and distribution of bulk mail or packages to other postal facilities or to the general public.

5110 Theater, dance, or music establishment

A structure used for dramatic, operatic, motion pictures or other performance, for admission to which entrance money is received and no audience participation or meal service allowed. May include public dance hall or night club which shall be taken to mean any establishment where admission for the primary purpose of dancing can be had by the public generally with or without the payment of a fee, with or without the purchase, possession or presentation of a ticket or token, and any other dance operated by club membership, season ticket, invitation, or other system open or offered to the public generally.

5200 Museum

A public or private facility, including an aquarium, operated as a repository or a collection of natural, scientific, or literary curiosities or objects of interest, not including the regular sale or distribution of the objects collected. Activities may include the sale of crafts work and artwork, boutiques, and the holding of meetings and social events.

5300 Amusement, sports, or recreation establishment

A complex with indoor and/or outdoor entertainment, eating places and/or limited retail uses, open to the public upon payment of a fee or admission charge. Examples include bowling alleys, skating rinks, health clubs, racquetball or squash courts, swimming pools, video arcades, pool halls, etc.

5305 Public parks and open space, and associated buildings

The real property and improvements thereon owned, operated, or maintained by the City, university, or other public entity, which are designed or used for recreational purposes and are available to the general public. The recreational purposes includes, but is not limited to public swimming pools, golf courses, tennis courts, stadiums, and recreational centers.

6050 Library

A publicly operated facility housing a collection of books, magazines, audio and videotapes, or other material for use by the general public

6120 School, Elementary or Secondary

A building where persons regularly assemble for the purpose of instruction or education and includes playgrounds, stadium, and other structures or grounds used in conjunction therewith. The term is limited to (1) public and private schools having a curriculum generally equivalent to elementary or secondary schools, and/or (2) special educational facilities in which students who have physical or learning disabilities receive specialized education in lieu of attending regular classes in a kindergarten or grades one through twelve.

6130 Colleges and Universities

An educational institution which offers specialized instruction in any of several fields of study and/or in a number of professions or occupations and is authorized to confer various degrees such as the bachelor's degree. Such institutions may include any number of buildings on adjacent zone lots or on zone lots directly across streets or alleys from each other. They may include a variety of uses such as classroom buildings, administrative offices, sports facilities, residential dormitories, research facilities and other related uses operated by the governing board of the institution within the campus or on adjoining zone lots. Amusement devices may be maintained and operated as a part of this use provided such devices are located in the student center, lounge or residential dormitories and do not occupy an area more than ten (10) percent of the ground level floor area of the structure.

6140 Technical, trade, and other specialty schools

Education or training in business, commerce, language, or other similar activity or occupational pursuit, or in the use of specialized, technical, or technological equipment or office machines, and not otherwise defined as home occupation, college or university, or elementary or secondary school.

6410 Fire and rescue

A building used for fire and rescue equipment and personnel

6420 Police station

Police protection centers operated by a governmental agency, including administrative offices, storage of equipment, temporary detention facilities,

and the open or enclosed parking of patrol vehicles; excluding, however, correctional facilities.

6530 Hospital

An institution providing health services, primarily for inpatients, and medical or surgical care of the sick or injured, including as an integral part of the institution, such related facilities as laboratories, outpatient departments, training facilities, central service facilities and staff offices.

6562 Child care center

CPDA TO SIMPLIFY AND PULL OUT STATE REGULATIONS: Child care center shall mean a facility, by whatever name known, which is maintained for the whole or part of a day but for less than twenty-four-hour care of five (5) or more children from the ages of six (6) weeks through sixteen (16) years, and not related to the owner, operator or manager thereof, whether such facility is operated with or without compensation for such care, and with or without stated educational purposes. The term includes facilities commonly known as a "child care centers," "child nurseries," "nursery schools," "kindergartens," "preschools," "play groups," "school age programs," "centers for developmentally disabled children," "day treatment centers," "extended day programs," and "summer playground programs."

(b) Child care home, small shall mean a private residence in a single unit dwelling or dwelling unit in a multiple unit dwelling providing the care and education for periods of less than twenty-four (24) hours of not more than six (6) children, plus two (2) additional children under the age of seventeen (17) who attend before and/or after school hours. The maximum number of children shall include the caregiver's children under the age of seventeen (17) years who are receiving care in the home.

(c) Child care home, large shall mean a private residence in a single-unit dwelling or dwelling unit in a multiple-unit dwelling providing care and education for periods of less than twenty-four (24) hours of seven (7) to twelve (12) children subject to the licensing requirements of the state and the city. The maximum number of children shall include the caregiver's children under the age of seventeen (17) years who are receiving care in the home.

(i) A child care home, large shall only provide care for children from the age of two (2) years through sixteen (16) years unless the caregiver qualifies as an experienced caregiver or child care provider under regulations established by the state and the department.

(ii) If the caregiver qualifies as an experienced caregiver or child care provider under regulations established by the state and the department,

the child care home, large may care for children from birth through sixteen (16) years subject to the licensing requirements of the state and the city.

6600 Religious institutions

A building, together with its accessory buildings and uses, where persons regularly assemble for religious worship and which building, together with its accessory buildings and uses, is maintained and controlled by a religious body organized to sustain public worship. Shelters for the homeless may be operated within and by a religious institution. Such shelter may be operated for up to seventy-five (75) days in either consecutive or nonconsecutive order per calendar year with any number of residents, or it may be operated throughout the entire year with one (1) of the following: a maximum of either eight (8) residents or any number of persons bearing to each other a relationship as defined in section 59-2 (definitions), single-unit dwelling. If such limitation is exceeded, the shelter must comply only with the spacing and density requirements of section 59-80(2)c.4. (residential care uses; spacing, density, site and other requirements), and need not comply with any other requirements of section 59-80(2) (residential care uses). Accessory buildings and/or uses may include a parish house and a religious institution-related college provided such college is regulated by the accessory use regulations of the zone district in which it is located and is a facility of a religious institution and which may include religious training or study.

6710 Funeral homes and cremation services

Establishment engaged in undertaking services such as preparing the dead for burial, and arranging and managing funerals. This definition includes crematories and mortuaries.

6805 Conference Center

A facility which provides meeting halls, trade centers, merchandise marts, or convention centers for training and other gatherings for large numbers of people for similar functions; may be developed separately or in combination with another permitted use.

6830 Civic, social, and fraternal organizations

A building or land used for the activities of an association of persons for the promotion of some nonprofit common objective, such as literature, science, politics, and good fellowship, and not accessory to, or operated as, or in connection with a tavern, eating place, or other place open to the public, which meets periodically and is limited to members, with not more than one-third of the gross floor area of the club or lodge used for residential occupancy.

6840 Community Center

A building, together with lawful accessory buildings and uses, used for recreational and cultural activities and not operated for profit. Membership may be restricted to persons living in a specific geographical area but shall not be based upon race or creed. All fees assessed shall apply equally to all users.

II. Development Standards

The following table shows the relationships that height, landscaping, and parking requirements have on effective FAR. All of the standards need to be used in order to permit an effective FAR that actually achieves the practical density that cities may seek. For example, if the height is permitted, but landscaping requirements are too high, the effective FAR will not be allowed.

As density rises, the amount of off street parking that becomes practical to provide is reduced, and its configuration changes. Typically, surface parking lots are difficult to use for all parking over FAR's of .5, and underground parking becomes common in areas with FAR's of 3 or more. At high FAR's, little or no off street parking is provided in many cities.

Development Standard	FAR = 0.5	FAR = 1.0	FAR = 2.0	FAR = 3.0
Height (Stories)	2	3	4	6
Units per Acre	22	42	90	131
Parking per 1,000 sq feet (Commercial)	4	2.5	1.5	1
Parking per Dwelling Unit	2	1.5	1	1
Landscaping (Percent)	10%	5%	5%	0%
Tuck-Under or Underground Parking	None	Tuck Under, ½ of ground floor	2 floors structured adjacent	2 floors underground

Clearly other potential configurations are possible. Use the Mobility 21 ROI Calculator Spreadsheet to test other combinations of development standards.

III. Sample Design Standards

The following design standards can be used as a supplement to a typical zoning code to provide building location and transparency controls. They will ensure a basic design that creates a pedestrian friendly streetscape, and is practical at medium to high densities. Again, the used can start with these and insert, modify, or deleted as required. They are intended to be administered at the permit counter, and are intended to be objective and/or measurable.

Table A	Residential buildings
Building Placement	At least 75% of the front yard frontage shall have buildings within 10 feet of the minimum setback.
Maximum Block Size	A project greater than 3 acres must contain a public street system that creates contiguous blocks of three acres or less.
Entry Features	Buildings shall be directly accessed from the street and the sidewalk. A minimum of one ground floor pedestrian entrance must be oriented toward the street and include a porch or landing. The pedestrian entrance may be one half story above or below grade (stoop).
Garage Treatments	Garages may occupy no more than 25% of the total building frontage. This measurement does not apply to garages facing an alley or courtyard entrance. Any garage may not extend beyond the building front.
Parking Location	Unless fully below grade, parking areas shall not be located between buildings and the street. Side area parking must exceed the building setback by at least 10'. Enclosed garages within the building and freestanding garages shall not project in front of the primary facade. The ground floor of street-facing parking structures within minimum front-yard setback must be screened by inhabited space.
Building Materials	Siding: Brick, stone, painted fiber-reinforced cement board, stained cedar shingles, painted wood boards, metal (painted, anodized and natural), architectural CMU, or tile. Roofing: Built up roofing with parapets, asphalt shingles, wood shingles, or tile roofs.
Transparency	Buildings that are located within 30 feet of property line adjacent to a front yard shall have at least 25% of the ground story wall facing the street in window or door areas.

Architectural Features and Massing	Fronts and street sides of buildings visible from the public right of way shall include changes in relief such as columns, cornices, bases, fenestration, and fluted masonry, for at least 15% of the exterior wall area. The top floor of any building rising over four stories must contain a distinctive finish, consisting of a cornice, banding or other architectural termination.
---	--

Table B	Mixed Use and Non-Residential Buildings
Building Placement	Street Wall Requirement Buildings shall have their primary orientation toward the street rather than the parking area.
Maximum Block Size	Does Not Apply
Entry Features	The primary entrance must be readily apparent as a prominent architectural component and visible from the street. Buildings that are open to the public and are within 30 feet of the street shall have an entrance for pedestrians from the street to the building interior. This entrance shall be designed to be attractive and functional, be a distinctive and prominent element of the architectural design, and shall be open to the public during all business hours.
Garage and Parking Treatments	Unless fully below grade, parking areas shall not be located between buildings and the street. Side area parking lots must exceed the building setback by at least 10'. The ground floor of street-facing parking structures must be screened by inhabited space.
Building Materials	Siding: Brick, stone, painted wood boards, and architectural tile. Roofing: Built up roofing with parapets are required. Glazing: No reflective glass for residential uses is permitted. No glass which has a lower visible transmittance than 75% for the ground floor, and 50% for upper floor non-residential uses, is permitted.
Transparency	Any ground floor wall which is within 30 feet of the street adjacent to the front yard shall contain at least 65% of the ground floor wall area facing the street in display areas, windows, or doorways, and 25% of upper story walls facing the street. Windows must allow views into working areas or lobbies, pedestrian entrances or display areas. Walls facing side streets must contain at

	<p>least 40% of the wall space in windows, display areas, or doors. Blank walls within 30 feet of the street are prohibited. Up to 40% of the length of the building perimeter can be exempted from this standard if oriented toward loading or service area</p> <p>Buildings shall incorporate arcades, roofs, alcoves, porticoes and awnings that protect pedestrians from the rain, snow, and sun for 50% of the frontage along a street.</p>
Architectural Features and Massing	The top floor of any building rising over four stories shall contain a distinctive finish, consisting of a cornice or other architectural termination.
Trash and Mechanical Equipment	Trash storage areas, mechanical equipment, and similar areas are not permitted to be visible from the street, or and are not permitted between the building and the street.