



Introduction to the Zoning Code Update

January 15, 2026



Contact Information

- » **StriveSanMateo.org**
- » **zoningupdate@cityofsanmateo.org**

Presentation Overview

- » **Icebreaker Activity**
- » **Presentation, Part 1**
 - Project Overview
 - Questions and Answers
- » **Presentation, Part 2**
 - Single Family Residential Districts
 - Commercial District Uses
 - Building Height
 - Questions and Answers
- » **Small Group Discussion**
- » **Reports Back**
- » **Next Steps**
- » **Optional Questions and Answers Session**
- » **Adjourn**



Our Goals Today

- » **Receive feedback on the key issues the Zoning Code Update should address**
- » **Answer questions and get your feedback about the key issues we should address**
- » **Provide an inclusive and informed dialogue about the Zoning Code Update**
- » **Develop a shared understanding of the regulations and policy guiding the Zoning Code Update**
- » **Understand this is the first step, and one source of input, for a process that has just started**

Tell Us About Yourself

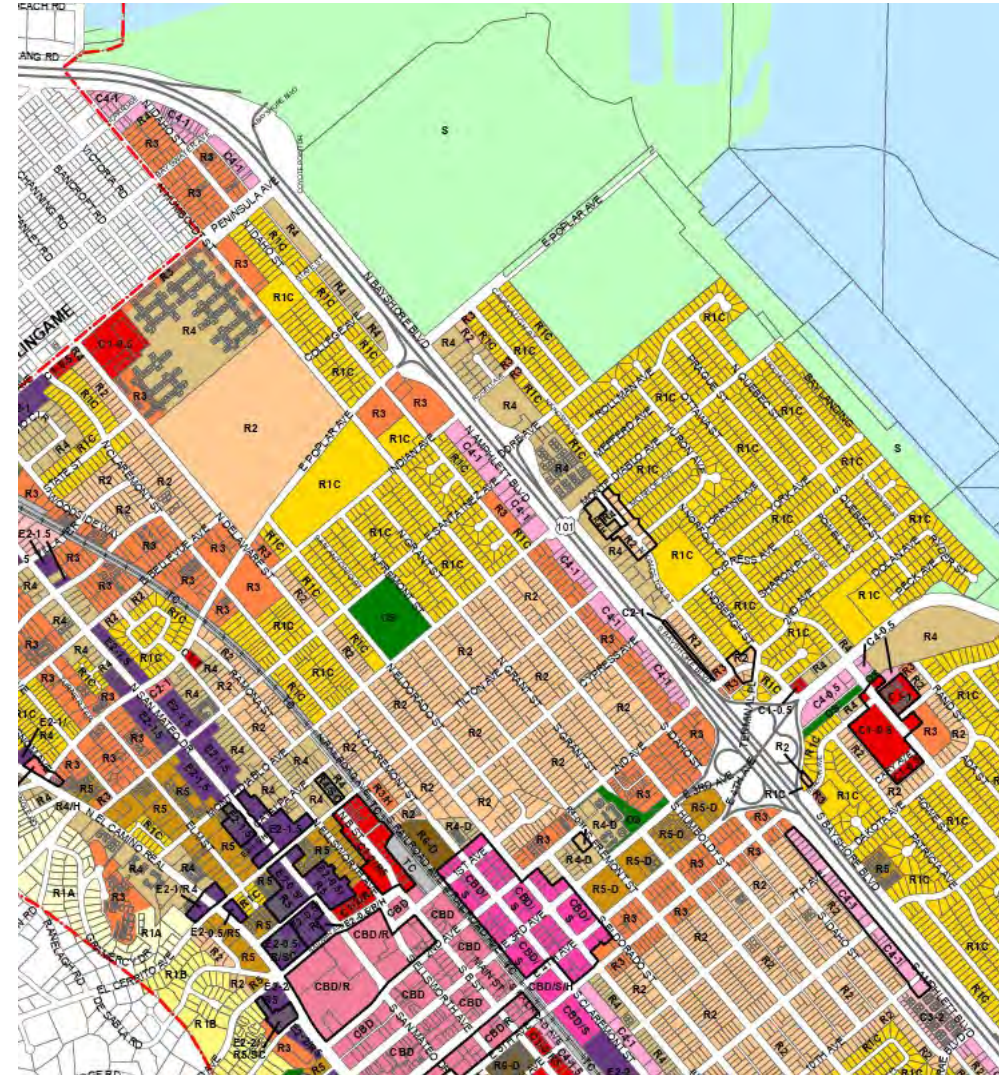
- » **What describes your connection to the City of San Mateo?**
- » **How familiar are you with the City's current Zoning Code?**

Part 1

Project Overview

What is a Zoning Code?

- » **Determines allowed uses and activities**
- » **Regulates what can be built**
 - Carries out the General Plan land use designations and adds specific details
- » **Guides the form and character of development**
 - Building size
 - How height is measured
 - Design standards



General Plan Connection to Zoning Code Update

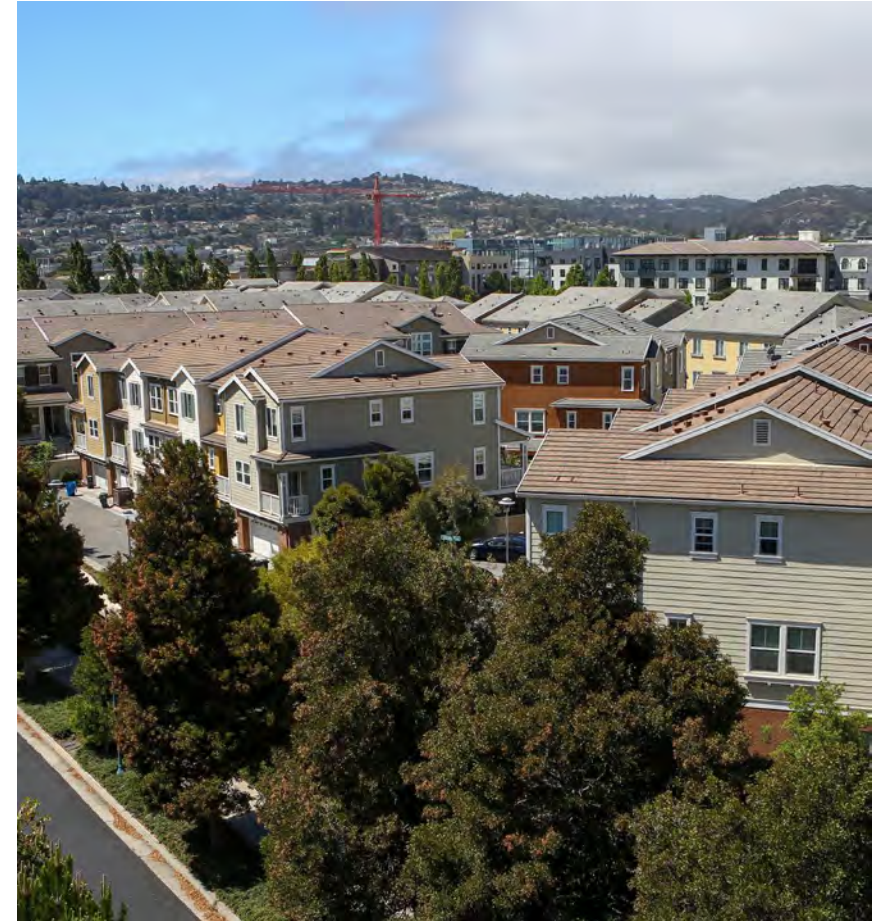
» General Plan guides decisions about:

- Allowed height
- Density
- Allowed uses
- Parking and curbside management
- Community benefits
- Open space
- Public noticing
- Historic preservation
- Community design



State Laws that Establish Zoning Parameters

- » **Housing Element Law:** requires jurisdictions to plan for existing and projected housing needs across all income levels
- » **Permit Streamlining Act:** establishes timelines and procedures for processing development permit applications
- » **Subdivision Map Act:** regulates and establishes requirements for the subdivision of land
- » **SB 330:** Limits downzoning and reduces procedural barriers for housing development
- » **State Density Bonus Law:** allows increased density and development incentives in exchange for providing affordable housing
- » **SB 79** (effective July 1, 2026): allows higher-density residential development near major transit stops.



State Laws that Establish Zoning Parameters

» Single-Family Residential Districts:

- **Accessory Dwelling Unit law** (multiple years): Allows ADUs and JADUs where residential is allowed
- **SB 9** (2021): Two-unit Developments and Urban Lot Splits
- **SB 1123** (2024): Allows the construction of up to 10 homes on qualifying Single Family Residential parcels
- **AB 2097** (2022): Removes minimum parking requirements for developments near transit



Difference Between Zoning and Other Parts of Municipal Code

» **Zoning Code (Title 27 of the Municipal Code):**

- Focuses on land use and development regulation

» **Related Municipal Code Titles Outside the Project Scope:**

- Vehicles and Traffic Code (Title 11)
- Parks and Recreation Code (Title 13)
- Streets and Sidewalks Code (Title 17)
- Parking Facilities (Title 19)
- Building and Construction Code (Title 23)
 - Fire Code (Chapter 23.28)
- Subdivisions Code (Title 26)



Where Are We Now and What's Next?



Opportunities for Public Input

- » **Planning Commission and City Council Study Sessions and Meetings (12 total)**
- » **Virtual Workshops (2)**
- » **In-person Workshops (2)**
- » **Online Surveys**
- » **Email us or submit comments online:**
 - zoningupdate@cityofsanmateo.org
 - <https://strivesanmateo.org/participate-online/>



Zoning Code Update Webpage

» StriveSanMateo.org/Zoning-Code-Update/



Contact Information

Community Development Department

- ✉ zoningupdate@cityofsanmateo.org
- ☎ T: (650) 522-7203

Mailing List Sign-up

To receive updates on the Zoning Code Update, [please sign up for our mailing list](#).

Building on General Plan 2040, San Mateo is undertaking a comprehensive update to the City's Zoning Code (Title 27). The update will align the Zoning Code with the City's long-term vision in the 2040 General Plan, creating a clearer, more intuitive framework, and will support balanced and equitable housing production, economic development, transportation access, and sustainability. It will also include an updated zoning map to ensure consistency and usability for the public, project applicants, and City staff.

» [What is the San Mateo Zoning Code?](#)

» [Why is San Mateo Updating its Zoning Code?](#)

» [Project Objectives](#)

» [Get Involved](#)



Project Phases



Outreach and Meeting
Information



Questions and Answers on:

» Zoning Code process and content

Part 1

Part 2

Single Family Residential Regulations,
Commercial District Uses, and
Building Height Regulations

Key Issues

» Single Family Residential (SFR)

R1 Districts:

- Housing Types and Community Uses
- Design Standards
- Landscaping and Paving
- Garage and Off-Street Parking Areas

» Commercial District Uses

» Building Heights



Potential Updates to SFR District Regulations

» Design Standards

- Clarify and expand allowed encroachment types (e.g., decks, chimneys)
- Architectural elements and design features currently covered by residential design guidelines
- Guidelines will be converted to objective design standards in future



Potential Updates to SFR District Regulations

» Housing Types and Community Uses

- Modernize use names to reflect General Plan goals and current housing types and uses
- Update and add use-specific standards to improve clarity and regulations



Potential Updates to SFR District Regulations

» Landscaping and Paving

- Add additional landscaping standards and regulations
- Set minimum and maximum standards for impervious surface areas to provide:
 - Flexibility for placement
 - Functional access to entrances and garages



Potential Updates to SFR District Regulations

- » **Garage and Off-Street Parking Areas**
 - Evaluate if garage setbacks should remain or be modified
 - Consider reducing the number of required covered parking spaces
 - Evaluate options for additional off-street parking spaces on paved areas



Potential Updates to Commercial District Use Regulations

- » Modernize and update the lists of permitted and special uses
- » Introduce use type categories (e.g., Auto-oriented Uses, Food and Dining Uses)
- » Update or add new development and operational regulations for types of specific uses (e.g., Service Stations)
- » Update allowed uses to add revenue-generating use types and align with the City's Economic Development Work Plan



Potential Updates to Building Height Regulations

- » Clarify definition of “building height”
- » Add rules for determining building height
- » Add building height regulations for all districts in the zoning code
- » Update maximum allowed building heights to align with the General Plan’s permitted number of stories
- » Align and calibrate the number of stories from the General Plan with allowed height measured in feet



Questions and Answers on:

- » Single Family Residential Districts
- » Commercial Uses
- » Building Height Regulations

Part 2

Small Group Discussion

Small Group Discussion Agenda

» **Small groups will have a facilitator and notetaker.**

Online Survey

Agenda	Minutes
Group Introductions (Name and Affiliation)	5
Discussion Overview	2
Topics: Single Family Residential Regulations Commercial District Uses Building Height Regulations	26
Recap/Identify Spokesperson	2
TOTAL	35

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Survey QR Code

Next Steps

Online Survey

What's Next?

- » **January 2026 - Stakeholder Meetings**
- » **February 23, 2026 - City Council Study Session**
- » **Spring and Summer 2026**
 - Additional Planning Commission and City Council Study Sessions
 - Stakeholder Meetings/Property Owner Engagement
- » **Fall 2026 – Publish Draft Zoning Code**
 - Community Outreach on Draft Zoning Code
- » **StriveSanMateo.org**

Thank you!

Please feel free to stay for
Q&A

GENERAL PLAN



Elements

Land Use Circulation
Housing Urban Design
Conservation / Open Space / Parks & Rec
Safety Noise

Values



Diversity



Balance



Inclusivity



Prosperity



Resiliency

The General Plan guides future growth and development. It includes eight elements as well as a Vision Statement and values that express the community's vision for the future.

SPECIFIC PLANS

Geographic Area



Intensity



Design Guidelines



A Specific Plan is a customized plan that describes policies and regulations for specific geographic areas of the city.

To learn more about the General Plan Update, visit www.StriveSanMateo.org.

ZONING CODE

Building Type



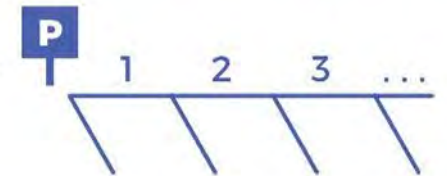
Building Form



Use Type



Parking Requirements



The Zoning Code is the primary tool for implementing the General Plan and the Specific Plans. It regulates development citywide and establishes specific rules.

Why Update the Zoning Code?

- » **Implement 2040 General Plan**
- » **Reflect changes in California law**
- » **Streamline development processes to align with community preferences**
- » **Create a more user-friendly code**

