City of La Cañada Flintridge

Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update

Planning Commission Meeting

November 14, 2019
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What is a Zoning Ordinance?

- A set of regulations that:
  - Governs the use of land as well as the type and intensity of development within the community
  - Defines and describes review processes and procedures, application requirements, review criteria, and approval authority associated with the regulatory control
- Derived from a jurisdiction’s general police power to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the community
- The most widely used tool to implement the land use and development policies in the jurisdiction’s General Plan
- Often referred to as the Zoning Code or Code
Why Update the City’s Zoning Code?

- La Cañada Flintridge adopted Los Angeles County’s zoning code in 1976, after incorporation
- City’s zoning code has never been comprehensively updated
- City adopted a comprehensive update of the General Plan in the autumn of 2014
- Update implements pertinent General Plan goals, objectives, and policies
Objectives

The comprehensive update is intended to:

- Codify City policies—both existing policies and General Plan goals, objectives, and policies
- Respond to issues and concerns that have been identified by the City Council, Planning Commission, Staff, and the public
- Evaluate and address certain land uses and development trends that are not currently regulated by the Zoning Code
- Incorporate contemporary planning practices and respond to changes in land uses and trends in development and building design
- Comply with state and federal planning-related laws
The comprehensive update is intended to:

- Make it easier for all users to understand and use the Zoning Code
- Provide internal consistency and eliminate internal conflicts
- Consolidate, clarify, and streamline permit and approval processes
- Improve consistency of procedures, interpretation, administration, and findings
- Make it graphically and visually appealing
Process to Date

- Project Initiation (Autumn 2015):
  - Several sessions held with Staff to identify issues, concerns, and objectives for the update
  - Several public workshops held to solicit early direction, including two workshops with a Code User’s Group and one with a Mayor’s Committee

- Policy Workshops (November 2016 – April 2017):
  - Planning Commission held four public workshops to discuss and provide direction regarding several key policy issues and review draft language proposed by Staff and provide opportunity for public input

- Drafts:
  - Three drafts were reviewed in detail with Staff

- Public Review:
  - Future schedule and public review opportunities (discussed later)

- Adoption of Updated Zoning Code:
  - Since the Zoning Code is a legislative document, the City Council is responsible for adopting any changes to it
  - The existing Zoning Code is proposed to be replaced in its entirety
Organization & Formatting

Organization:

- In the existing Zoning Code, each topic is a stand-alone chapter, with no discernable order or organization.
- In the updated Code, common topics, regulations, processes, etc., have been organized into one of eight new Parts:
  - Part 11.1: General Provisions
  - Part 11.2: Administration
  - Part 11.3: Zones, Allowable Land Uses, & Zone-Specific Standards
  - Part 11.4: Special Regulations
  - Part 11.5: General Regulations
  - Part 11.6: Land Use and Development Permits and Procedures
  - Part 11.7: Subdivisions (Pending)
  - Part 11.8: Definitions
- All existing and new chapters have been put into one of the Parts.
Summary of Significant Changes

**Organization & Formatting**

- **Formatting:**
  - Reformatted makes it easier to read—heading levels are indented and further differentiated by changes in font size, color, bold, and italics
  - Tables reduce text and make it easier to identify key information
  - Many new figures have been created to present certain information graphically (note that figures have the same regulatory authority as text)
  - Online version will use hypertext and hover text
  - City’s Code Publisher will retain new formatting
Summary of Significant Changes

ADMINISTRATION

- Decision-Making Authorities:
  - Duties and functions of decision-making authorities of City’s planning agency have been clarified and consolidated in a new chapter (Chapter 11.2.01)
  - Zoning Hearing Officer (ZHO) has been added:
    - A new decision-making level of authority between the Director and the Planning Commission
    - ZHO replaces “administrative review” in the existing Zoning Code
ADMINISTRATION

- Administrative Procedures:
  - Procedures for public meetings and hearings have been consolidated and standardized.
  - Procedures for call-ups and appeals have been consolidated, clarified, revised, and standardized as appropriate.
  - Authority and process for enforcing requirements of the Zoning Code and any violation of conditions of approval have been consolidated into one chapter and standardized as appropriate.
  - A new “Stop Work Order” action has been added and procedures for permit revocation or modification have been clarified.
ZONING

Organization of Zones and Categories:
- Zones have been organized into six overarching use categories: Residential Zones, Commercial Zones, Mixed Use Zone, Special Purpose Zones, and Specific Plans.
- Special and general regulations have been moved to separate chapters in Parts 11.4 and 11.5, respectively.
- Processes and general permits have been moved to Part 11.6.
- Special permits, which apply to certain uses, have been relocated to applicable chapters in Part 11.4 (Special Regulations).
Summary of Significant Changes

ZONING

- Residential (R) Zones:
  - Residential category retains the same residential zones and densities provided in the existing Zoning Code
  - Applicable policies in the Community Development Department (CDD) Policy Manual were codified; several were workshopped with the Planning Commission
  - Many existing development standards have been revised and new ones have been added to address issues and concerns, resolve inconsistencies, and provide clarification as to interpretation and administration
  - Certain sections were reorganized for clarity and to be more user-friendly
ZONING

- Commercial (C) Zones:
  - The existing Commercial Planned Development (CPD) Zone has been replaced by 3 new commercial zones, which implement the updated Land Use Element:
    - Commercial General (CG)
    - Commercial Office (CO)
    - Commercial Neighborhood (CN)
  - Zone-specific development standards were developed for the new commercial zones, based on policies in the Land Use Element
  - Design guidelines, which are applicable to all 3 zones, were developed to implement policies in the General Plan
ZONING

- **Mixed Use (MU) Zone:**
  - The MU Zone has been modified to correlate certain standards with the 3 commercial zones
    - Commercial General (CG)
    - Commercial Office (CO)
    - Commercial Neighborhood (CN)
  - Design guidelines were developed to implement policies in the General Plan
Summary of Significant Changes

ZONING

- **Special Purpose Zones:**
  - The existing Special Purpose Zones (Open Space Zone and Public and Semi-Public Zone) in the existing Zoning Code have been consolidated into one chapter, entitled Special Purpose Zones.
  - A new Parks and Recreation Zone was added to the new Special Purpose Zones chapter to implement the new Parks and Recreation land use category in the General Plan.
  - New development standards were created to implement General Plan policies.
Summary of Significant Changes

**ZONING**

- **Overlay Zones:**
  - Adds a category for overlay zones
  - Retains Emergency Shelter Overlay Zone

- **Specific Plans:**
  - Incorporates existing specific plans by reference

- **Zoning Map**
  - Will be updated to reflect changes to Zoning Code
LAND USES

- Formatting & Organization:
  - All land uses have been organized into one land use table (Table 11.3.02-1), except for temporary uses, which are in their own chapter
  - Type of approval required for each use is included in the table
  - Table includes a column that references standards/special requirements that may apply
  - Footnotes provide additional information as needed
Summary of Significant Changes

LAND USES

- General Changes:
  - Certain specific, stand-alone uses have been consolidated into a more encompassing land use
  - Other land uses have been redefined and expanded
  - New land uses have been added
  - Several land uses have been specifically prohibited
  - Outdated land uses have been deleted
  - All land uses have been defined
REGULATIONS

- Special Regulations:
  - Some land uses have their own special regulations, whether they are ministerially or conditionally permitted
  - They have been grouped into Part 11.4—Special Regulations
  - 18 existing, 18 new
  - Special regulations for existing special uses have been updated to some extent
Summary of Significant Changes

REGULATIONS

- Special Regulations—New

- Alcoholic beverage sales
- Animal sales & services
- Bed & breakfast inns
- Community gardens
- Day care facilities
- Donation collection bins
- Drive-in & drive-through facilities—prohibited
- Flags & flagpoles
- Kiosks
- Late night hours
- Outdoor dining
- Outdoor vending/service facilities
- Outdoor display and activities in nonresidential zones
- Recycling facilities
- Residential care facilities
- Senior citizen multifamily residential
- Service stations
- Short-term vacation rentals—prohibited (workshopped with the Planning Commission)
**Summary of Significant Changes**

**REGULATIONS**

- General Regulations:
  - They have been grouped into Part 11.5—General Regulations
  - 6 existing, 6 new
  - Most existing regulations have been updated to some extent, some significantly (e.g., parking facilities)
Summary of Significant Changes

REGULATIONS

- General Regulations—New:
  - Grading
  - Mechanical equipment
  - Outdoor lighting standards (workshopped with the Planning Commission)
  - Refuse and recycling storage areas
  - Story pole and site marking requirements
  - Trails
PERMITS AND PROCEDURES

- Issues:
  - Existing Code has a multitude of individual permits for special situations, often each with its own time frames, notification processes, appeal provisions, and other procedures, even though they are similar in nature
  - "Use" permits are being used for review of development projects
  - Findings needed to be revamped
  - Planning Commission and Staff have indicated it would be beneficial to have a level of review between Director and Planning Commission
PERMITS AND PROCEDURES

General Changes:

- General permits are now located in Part 11.6
- New chapter provides general processes and procedures that apply to most permits unless otherwise specified
- New tables list all permits, including decision-making and appeal authority, with reference to the chapter/section that applies
- Existing review processes have been updated, clarified, streamlined, consolidated where appropriate, and standardized to the extent practical
- New permits have been added to address certain issues
PERMITS AND PROCEDURES

- General Changes:
  - Five general types of permitted processes have been created to provide consistency: Processes A, B, C, D, and E
  - Each process indicates:
    - Decision-making authority responsible for the action
    - Type of action (ministerial or discretionary)
    - Whether notification is required
    - Whether a public hearing is required; and
    - The appeal process, if applicable
PERMITS AND PROCEDURES

Overview of Processes:

- **Process A:** Ministerial decisions made by the Director
- **Process B:** Discretionary decisions made by the Director
- **Process C:** Discretionary decisions made by the Zoning Hearing Officer
- **Process D:** Discretionary decisions made by the Planning and Design Commissions
- **Process E:** Legislative decisions made by the City Council (recommendation by the Planning Commission and others as applicable)
DEFINITIONS

- General Changes:
  - All land uses in the *Land Use Permit Table* have definitions
  - Land uses are differentiated from other terms with the phrase “*land use*” in parentheses behind the term
  - While land use definitions do not include standards, they are specific enough to provide direction regarding appropriate operations
  - All key terms used in the Zoning Code have definitions
  - Figures have been added to many existing and new definitions
Next Steps

OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

- Special or regular Planning Commission meetings?
  - If special meetings:
    - Once or twice per month?
    - 1st and/or 3rd Thursdays?
    - 2nd and/or 4th Tuesdays? (previous Planning Commission schedule)
    - Other?

- Format(s)? (Workshops, open house, etc.)

- Process to review:
  - Review part-by-part?
  - Pull out certain topics/chapters to review as stand-alone topics, such as single-family residential, Hillside development, parking, etc.?
  - Other?
Questions & Comments