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1.1 Background

While there are many beautiful and well-functioning areas of Vallejo, there are also areas and trends of disinvestment that challenge Vallejo’s future as an appealing and complete city. The context for this analysis is framed specifically by disinvestment in many of Vallejo’s neighborhoods, corridors and its centers. According to preliminary analysis and input from stakeholder interviews, that disinvestment is influenced by many social and economic factors, including competition from nearby communities, changes in the regional economy, concentrations of poverty, and crime and perceptions of safety. However, Vallejo has experienced some statistical recovery from Great Recession era-lows, and it anticipates that property values will continue to increase.

Vallejo is working across many fronts to revitalize and improve, including concurrent efforts focusing on policies, regulations, and procedures. The Propel Vallejo Project includes the following efforts which are underway to help position Vallejo for community-wide revitalization:

- Guiding Principles for Vallejo
- General Plan Update
- Citywide Zoning Code Update
- Specific Plan for Sonoma Boulevard

The city is working on these efforts simultaneously in order to begin substantial implementation without delay. From early conversations and community input, Vallejo stakeholders have communicated that they expect results instead of more studies, and that they desire reinvestment that will help Vallejo become a more appealing and stable community.
1.2 Purpose of the Code Diagnosis

The purpose of the following analysis is to summarize and evaluate the Vallejo Zoning Code (Title 16) in order to guide future rewrites. This analysis includes the following:

- How the code functions and is organized;
- How the code is used by the average person;
- How the code does or does not implement current policy direction for Vallejo; and
- How the code does or does not accommodate walkable urban development.

The analysis is presented in four sections. Section 2 provides an overview of Title 16’s existing structure, its relationship to the General Plan and area Specific Plans, and its relationship to current California and federal laws. Section 3 provides an overview and analysis of Vallejo’s 26 existing zoning districts, focusing on their intended physical character, requirements, and recommendations for improvement. Section 4 provides an overview and analysis of other components of the code, including basic provisions, general regulations, planned development applications, and administration and procedures. Finally, Section 5 provides an overview of the key issues gleaned from Sections 2-4 and recommendations for overcoming them. The recommendations are intended to provide insight into potential solutions and, in some instances, provide an example of a solution. They will be developed further over the next several months as more is learned about Vallejo’s needs and priorities.

The Code Diagnosis is an integral part of Vallejo’s concurrent revitalization initiatives. Title 16 will be used to implement the land use vision for the City articulated through the General Plan, and will provide regulations and standards for properties within the Sonoma Boulevard Specific Plan area and in many cases other Specific Plan areas citywide. It will be important to ensure that the Zoning Code is properly positioned to stimulate reinvestment and promote the kind of development Vallejans want to see in the future.

Key Terms

The following are key terms used in this Diagnosis:

Walkable Urban and Auto-Oriented Suburban
The term “walkable urban” is used to refer to areas that are pedestrian oriented in nature such as historic neighborhoods and the downtown. The process will determine where Form-based zoning will be applied but typically, it is applied to areas that are identified as ‘walkable urban’. The term “auto-oriented suburban” is used to refer to areas that are more auto-dependent in nature and configuration. This classification builds upon the pedestrian, mixed, and auto-oriented classifications used in the existing zoning code for existing commercial areas. These areas will most likely continue with the conventional zoning and some improvements to those standards. For more information on this subject, please refer to *The Option of Urbanism: Investing in a New American Dream* by Christopher Leinberger (Island Press, 2008).

Use-Based
This refers to the type of zoning code such as Vallejo’s that is organized and based on the primary factor of land use.

FBC
This refers to ‘Form-Based Codes’. For more information on the basics of FBC’s, please refer to Appendix 3.

Transect, Transect Zone(s)
These terms refer to the placemaking system that is used in place of ‘use-based’ zones. For more information please refer to Appendix 3.

Missing Middle
The range of housing choices often not allowed, that appeal to millennials (Gen Y) and baby boomers. For more information please refer to Section 5.3.

House-Scale
This term refers to buildings that are the size of houses. Depending upon their context, they may be occupied by one to several families and with home occupations (house, duplex, triplex, quadplex, villa/mansion apartment, bungalow court, courtyard building up to 3 stories).

Block-Scale
This term refers to buildings that individually are as large as a block or collectively are arranged along the sidewalk to form a continuous facade as long as a block.
Policy and Regulatory Framework 2
This chapter provides an overview of the City's Zoning Code, consistency with the General Plan, relationship with other City documents, and compliance with State and federal law.

2.1 History and Current Structure of Title 16

The last comprehensive update of the City's Zoning Code (Title 16) dates to 1980. Since then, the code has been amended numerous times. While these amendments have addressed important issues for the city, ongoing amendments can lead to inconsistencies in language, intent, and development standards.

The city utilizes the Municipal Code Corporation (MuniCode) to organize the City's entire Code of Ordinances. Title 16 is organized by title, parts, chapters, and sections. The Code's chapters and sections are organized into five parts as follows:

- Part I: Basic Provisions
- Part II: Basic Zoning Districts
- Part III: Special Zoning Districts
- Part IV: General Regulations
- Part V: Procedures

The numbering system is a straightforward, expandable system with an established web platform and built-in cross references to other sections of the Zoning Code; however the web-based platform doesn't support the robust use of graphics, which is discussed further in section 5.6.
Considerations for the General Plan Update

Zoning codes are required by State law (California Government Code §65454) to be consistent with the General Plan. The current General Plan dates from 1999 and will also be updated as part of the Propel Vallejo Project, and thus has been evaluated only to inform the analysis in this Code Diagnosis. The General Plan Update and the Zoning Code Update have been structured in the Propel Vallejo Project to establish their future consistency. The current General Plan Land Use map is included in Appendix 1.

It is anticipated that the update of the Zoning Code will allow certain portions of the City where “walkable urbanism” exists or is desired to utilize form-based zoning. Other portions where “auto-oriented suburbanism” exists or is desired may continue to be covered by use-based or conventional zoning. Accordingly, the General Plan land use vision can create a distinction between areas that are within the walkable urban, transect zones and those that may be regulated by more auto-oriented suburban policies and regulations.

This is very different from the way the existing General Plan applies land use designations in a broad and homogenous way. The majority of the Sonoma Boulevard corridor, for example, is designated as “General Commercial - Retail” land use, even though this area encompasses both pedestrian-oriented areas and suburban, auto-oriented areas. The downtown areas is designated Downtown Mixed Use.
2.3 Existing Master Plans, Specific Plans and Analysis

The table below lists the various specific plans, master plans, and other plans and guidelines relevant to the Zoning Code update. A map of planning areas subject to specific and master plans appears in Appendix 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Adopted Plans</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Vallejo Specific Plan and Landscape Guidelines*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiddenbrooke Specific Plan and Landscape Guidelines*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mare Island Specific Plan and Landscape Guidelines*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northgate Specific Plan*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solano 360 Specific Plan*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Slough Specific Plan</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallejo Waterfront Planned Development Master Plan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoma Boulevard Corridor Design Plan</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Neighborhood Plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverly Hills Neighborhood Plan (Part One &amp; Part Two)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Standards for Northeast Quadrant Gateway</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent’s Hill Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallejo Heights Neighborhood Development Plan (Part One &amp; Part Two)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Vallejo Industrial Park Policy Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Also serves as a Planned Development Master Plan

Differentiating Between Specific Plans and Master Plans

There are currently six adopted specific plans in the City of Vallejo. Five of these plans also serve as master plans under the Planned Development (PD) procedure in Chapter 16.116 of the Zoning Code. Three specific/master plans are referenced directly in the Zoning Code (in Chapter 16.116), but it is unclear as to why they are codified and others are not.

Because specific plans are used to implement a PD, an additional step (i.e. unit plan) is required for all development proposals within the specific plan area. A unit plan is a plan “describing the specific design and uses for all or part of a project as proposed in a Master Plan” and is intended to give the Planning Division more detail. This complex and ambiguous process can be unnecessarily burdensome for both staff and the applicant. PDs are discussed further in Sections 3.4 and 4.3.
Specific Plans and Design Guidelines

The following table summarizes the adopted specific/master plans in the city. Five of Vallejo's specific/master plans are accompanied by design guidelines, some of which are referenced in the Code. The nature and specificity in the presentation of policy versus development standards varies from plan to plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Land Uses</th>
<th>Development Standards</th>
<th>Relationship to Zoning Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mare Island Specific Plan</td>
<td>Main goals are job creation / historic preservation; Implementation for 1994 Reuse Plan. Island divided into 13 different districts (“Reuse Areas”). City has DA with Lennar LLC for Reuse Areas 1B-10A.</td>
<td>Industrial (light, heavy, warehouse), Mixed Use (office, light industrial, commercial, warehouse, live-work, residential), Retail, Civic, Recreation, Residential. Exempts federal transfer properties.</td>
<td>Includes Urban Design Guidelines with architecture, landscape, site furnishings, and signage. Also references adopted Mare Island Historic District Design Guidelines</td>
<td>Created under MUPD (developed) and wetland zoned Resource Conservation (wetland). Requires unit plans for development within plan area pursuant to V, 16.104.040 and Planned Development Permit Procedures for unit developments VI. 16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Vallejo Specific Plan/Master Plan and Design Guidelines</td>
<td>Implement a vision for Downtown, encourage reinvestment and/or certain desired land uses through incentive programs, promote sustainability and infill development, allow flexibility in current zoning standards, and introduce more housing and mixed-use. Divides downtown into 5 sections: Georgia Street Corridor, Central Downtown, Civic Center, Outer Downtown, and Southwest Downtown.</td>
<td>Varying types of residential and commercial with special provisions for specific land uses or conditions. Includes residential in all but Civic Center area.</td>
<td>Includes development intensity, FARs, building heights, retail frontage streets, build-to lines, building setbacks, parking standards, street trees and landscaping. Also has design guidelines.</td>
<td>Created under MUPD. Interim land uses adopted as ordinance to amend SP in 2011 - valid for 5 years. Relies on Land Use classifications and definitions in existing Code for most uses but some new are introduced. Includes special regulations and major and minor use permits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Summary of Adopted Specific Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Land Uses</th>
<th>Development Standards</th>
<th>Relationship to Zoning Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vallejo Waterfront Planned Development Master Plan and Design Guidelines</td>
<td>To provide planning/design criteria for master developer and as part Vallejo Station Project and Waterfront project which included a DDA, GP amendment, rezoning and guidelines to assist design. Divided into southern, central, and northern districts. Draws on 2000 WRT plan for Public Spaces.</td>
<td>Civic, Residential. Commercial, Office, R&amp;D/ Light Industrial, Developed Recreation-Public, Developed Recreation-Private, Open Space.</td>
<td>Includes “standards” that are presented in conjunction with policies and further elaborated in the Design Guidelines. Design Guidelines (site and building design) for entire waterfront district, as well as specific guidelines for each district divided into public realm and private realm.</td>
<td>Created under MUPD. CUPs required for alcohol related uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northgate Specific Plan/Master Plan</td>
<td>To create an employment center, variety of housing, multimodal transportation, and preserve sulphur spring mountains.</td>
<td>Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Commercial, Commercial Center, Mixed-Use, Neighborhood Shopping and Services, Public Facilities, Open Space</td>
<td>Included as Appendix “A” establishes architectural and landscape guidelines for the design of the area. Appendix “B” is the Vallejo Automall Design and Development Guidelines. Minimum lot size of 4,500 SF and max lot size of 10,000 SF.</td>
<td>Created under MUPD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiddenbrooke Specific Plan/Master Plan</td>
<td>Set plans, standards and procedures for development of Hiddenbrooke, a 1,339 acre site into recreation oriented residential community.</td>
<td>Residential, Commercial, Recreational, Open Space.</td>
<td>Landscape guidelines, general standards, and specific standards for the various land uses in the plan.</td>
<td>Created under MUPD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solano 360 Specific Plan and EIR</td>
<td>Develop a flexible, long-term framework for redevelopment of the Solano County Fairgrounds. Joint effort by the County of Solano &amp; City of Vallejo, and the Solano County Fair Association.</td>
<td>Fair, Entertainment-Mixed Use, and Entertainment Commercial.</td>
<td>Only includes guidelines for the overall Plan Area, Fairgrounds, Other Public Purpose Areas, and Private Purpose Areas.</td>
<td>Created under MUPD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Slough Specific Plan</td>
<td>To protect habitat and deal with impacts of State Route 37. Concerns City of Vallejo and Solano County Jurisdiction divided into 4 zoning districts.</td>
<td>Civic, Commercial, Industrial, Residential.</td>
<td>Site, architecture, landscaping: max building heights. References to other sections in the code.</td>
<td>Zoning designations include Marsh Protection (County), Resource Conservation (City), and 2 MUPD (City)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 Compliance with State and Federal Law

The zoning code update is an opportunity to modernize portions of the code that are not in compliance with evolving California state and U.S. federal laws. The following table identifies State and Federal regulations impacting the Zoning Code:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulations Applying to Some or All Zones</th>
<th>Name and Description</th>
<th>Chapter/Section Impacted</th>
<th>Impact on Zoning Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SB1818 (Amends Government Code §65915)</td>
<td>Density Bonuses and Other Incentives for lower income housing development</td>
<td>Part II Basic Zoning Districts: Residential and other Zones; Chapter 16.106: Planned Development Residential Districts</td>
<td>Currently only provided in Residential Planned Development District. The Zoning Code Update must update density bonus program to ensure range of density bonuses, incentive options, and flexibe parking requirements are included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Code §65850.6</td>
<td>Collocation Facility Regulations address large cell towers, small and large satellite dishes and antennas for wireless telecommunication facilities</td>
<td>Chapter 16.75: Site Development Standards</td>
<td>Currently addressed in Section16.75.100 standards for evaluating a telecommunications facility. The Zoning Code Update must ensure compliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB 1881 Government Code §65597</td>
<td>Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Local agencies, not later than January 1, 2010, are required to adopt the updated DWR Model Ordinance or, a local landscape ordinance that is at least as effective in conserving water as the updated model ordinance.</td>
<td>Chapter(s) 16.71: Water Efficient Landscaping</td>
<td>Zoning Code includes water efficient landscaping regulations. The Zoning Code Update must ensure conformance with or better than the DWR model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 U.S.C. § 2000c</td>
<td>Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) Prohibits land use regulations from imposing “substantial burden” on churches or other religious institution's ability to serve the needs of their members.</td>
<td>Chapters 16.20, 16.30, &amp; 16.32: on various zoning districts.</td>
<td>The Zoning Code Update must ensure regulations are not overly restrictive to the right to assembly and religious practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of State and Federal Regulations on Title 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Chapter/Section Impacted</th>
<th>Impact on Zoning Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ch. 633 of Statues 2007 - SB 2 (Revisions to Article 10.6)</td>
<td>Emergency Shelter (Housing Elements)</td>
<td>Requires the housing element of a general plan to identify zoning districts where emergency shelters are allowed as a permitted use without a conditional use permit. This bill also extends Anti-NIMBY protections to transitional housing, and supportive housing by defining transitional and supportive housing as residential uses subject to the same restrictions that apply to other housing.</td>
<td>Part II Basic Zoning Districts: Residential and other Zones</td>
<td>The Zoning Code Update must identify zoning districts where emergency shelters are permitted by right, and allow transitional and supportive housing within residential uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Safety Code §1597.46 -1597.465</td>
<td>Family Day Care Homes Zoning.</td>
<td>Applies to large family day care homes (Amended 2006) - and - large family day care homes; children (Amended 2003). Requires large family day care homes to be allowed through a nondiscretionary permit on lots zoned for a single-family dwelling. Large family day care homes may provide care for more than 12 children and ≤ 14 children if specific conditions are met.</td>
<td>Chapter 16.57: Limitations on Permitted Uses; Chapter 16.58: Accessory &amp; Temporary Use Regulations</td>
<td>Currently considered an accessory use and is permitted in all zoning districts. The Zoning Code must be revised to allow up to 14 under state prescribed conditions and ensure day care homes remain allowed via a non-discretionary permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Safety Code §1566.3</td>
<td>California Community Care Facilities Act</td>
<td>Requires community care facilities of 6 or fewer clients to be considered a residential use of property. Requires jurisdictions to provide siting requirements for community care facilities of 7 or more clients.</td>
<td>Parts II &amp; III: Basic &amp; Special Zoning Districts</td>
<td>Zoning Code Update must ensure facilities with 6 or fewer clients maintain classification as a residential use, and those greater than 7 are subject to the requisite siting requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3

Analysis of Zoning Districts
### Summary of Existing Basic Zoning Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>Intent of Zoning District</th>
<th>Permitted Land Use Range</th>
<th>Key Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Low Density Residential                 | To create and establish regulations for a low density residential district, in which permanent single-family residences are the principal use | • Residential uses (family)  
• Civic uses (essential) | • Unpredictable results  
• Unable to protect or encourage compatible development to existing neighborhoods |
| Medium Density Residential              | To create and establish regulations for a medium-density residential district, in which single-family, two-family or multifamily residences, or combinations of these uses are the principal uses | • Residential uses (family, live/work, second family)  
• Civic uses (essential, eating establishment, group care, telecommunication) | • Unpredictable results  
• High parking requirement  
• Limiting landscape setbacks on small lots, discouraging infill  
• Minimum lot area/du limits unit count |
| High Density Residential                | To create and establish regulations for a high density residential district in which multiple-family residential and high density housing are the principal uses | • Residential uses (family, live/work)  
• Civic uses (essential, eating establishment, group care)  
• Commercial uses (telecommunication) | • Unpredictable results  
• High parking requirement  
• Limiting landscape setbacks on small lots, discouraging infill  
• Minimum lot area/du limits unit count |
| Limited Office                         | To create and establish regulations for a limited office district to provide areas for low density office activities with modest space and parking requirements | • Commercial uses (administrative and professional services, business support services, real estate service) | • Unpredictable results  
• High parking requirement is only limiting factor determining built outcome  
• Minimal requirements when adjacent to residential is unpredictable |
| Neighborhood Shopping and Service       | To create and establish regulations for a neighborhood shopping and service district, in which limited retail commercial goods and services are provided to meet the day-to-day needs of local residents. | • Commercial uses (general retail sales, laundry facilities, real estate services, telecommunication) | • Unpredictable results  
• Used to regulate drastically different contexts and types of place |
| Linear Commercial                       | To create and establish regulations for a linear commercial district, in which well-designed, community-level commercial areas are developed along major thoroughfares. | • Commercial uses  
• Civic uses (essential) | • Unpredictable results  
• Used to regulate drastically different contexts and types of place |
| Pedestrian Shopping and Service         | To create and establish regulations for a pedestrian shopping and service district, in which a wide range of retail goods and services are permitted. | • Commercial uses  
• Civic uses | • Unpredictable results  
• Used to regulate drastically different contexts and types of place  
• No daylight plane to respond to adjacent historic neighborhoods |

*This diagram identifies the maximum building envelope size and location allowed by the zoning districts.*
Overview

Title 16 includes fifteen base zones with requirements that generate certain environments, buildings and land use activity. The remaining eleven include seven that are actually procedures aimed at protecting a particular environment, natural resource or other important community feature and four that are PD districts which generate no particular environments, buildings or land use activity.

The fifteen zoning districts used to generate environments include the following:

- Four districts for residential areas: Rural, Low Density, Medium Density, and High Density.
- Two districts for commercial, industrial and industrially-compatible areas: Intensive Use and Intensive Use-Limited.

A map of existing zoning in Vallejo along with diagrams highlighting specific zone district categories can be found in Appendix 1.

Intended Physical Character

Generally, none of the basic zoning districts convey enough information about the intended physical character to be protected or to be generated. This lack of clarity tends to put a high level of pressure on the review process and a high level of importance on often abstract numerical factors aimed at controlling development such as floor area ratio and density. Vallejo’s code only uses density. These are both important factors but should be the result of desired outcomes rather than a numerical point of beginning that may leave out desired outcomes.

In our experience, effective standards result from understanding which characteristics are important and what compromises each characteristic. This information is missing from the intent statements in each zoning district.

Requirements

Residential Districts

The four zoning districts aimed at residential areas address the needs of Vallejo’s different areas through numerical standards that do not necessarily reflect the physical realities of those areas. In addition, the standards aim to protect and enhance neighborhoods yet do not contain the necessary information. For example, beyond the land uses and density restrictions, it is unclear what the actual differences really are from one zone to another; similarly appearing buildings are possible across these zones that intend for distinct intensities of residential development. In addition, these standards inadvertently prohibit several building types that are often physically compatible with such neighborhoods. But because of arbitrary numerical density limits, such building types are not considerable. For more information on these missing building types, see Section 5.3.

Office and Professional Office Districts

Two zoning districts are aimed primarily at a land use that is seen as a buffer rather than an integral component of something larger than the project site. In an effort to make usable sites, the requirements have a bias toward large amounts of land while making smaller sites appear less important or appealing for office activity. As written, the requirements tend to generate office development that results in more people needing to drive for services once there. For example, employees could benefit from services and retail either in the same building or down the block within short walking distance. While the requirements do not prevent such combinations, they do not clearly articulate this as a benefit or possible integral component of the zoning district.
Medical District

Although the Medical District might be expected in the “Office” category of zoning districts, it has its own category. However, similar to the Office Zoning District, the Medical District tends to encourage development at large sites to the detriment of infill sites.

This zoning district tends toward large sites away from Downtown which is understandable from the perspective of vacant and unconstrained land but not necessary. Downtown for example, could serve as one of several locations in Vallejo that could accommodate medical facilities or services while bringing employees and visitors to the area. This possibility is not clearly enabled or articulated in the current standards.

Public and Quasi-Public Facilities Districts

The zoning district is aimed at everything from playgrounds to sewer facilities, theme parks and airports. Because of this wide range, the requirements are not clear enough about intended locations and instead tend toward the large types of sites. This is realistic for certain facilities but not helpful for other facilities that could occur within a typical block and be compatible with adjacent neighborhoods and buildings.

Intensive Use Districts

There are two zoning districts aimed generally at service, commercial, manufacturing, storage, and distribution activity. The key differences are that the ‘Intensive Use’ district allows buildings up to 75 feet in height (30 feet taller than the ‘Limited’ district) and allows more intense or ‘heavy’ versions of the land uses in the ‘Limited’ district. The requirements try to address compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods and buildings through setback and height limitations. This is helpful but could be better by coordinating certain activities with the long-term intended physical character of adjacent areas. In addition, the location of these zoning districts needs to be evaluated in terms of compatibility with the vision for revitalizing the Sonoma Blvd corridor.

Commercial Districts

The five zoning districts aimed at Vallejo’s areas for commerce are aimed at distinct environments yet the requirements do not fully convey how this will occur or how to tell the difference. While the districts do allow discrete sets of land uses, the standards promote very similar environments. The result is that commercial development is largely similar everywhere except in Downtown, where clear standards about the intended physical character (Pedestrian Shopping/Service with the Downtown Specific Plan) exist. This situation generally means that commercial development outside of Downtown has not been as compatible with its surroundings as it could be with the exception of new, large development. The Sonoma Boulevard Corridor Design Plan, for example, describes a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment along most of Sonoma Boulevard while the zoning designations continue to largely encourage auto-oriented development patterns.

Recommendations

Section 3.2 presents a detailed analysis and discussion of eight of the basic zoning districts, including certain issues and obstacles that are present in each. Generally, the basic zoning districts should be adjusted to ensure that the community’s desires for physical form and land use are more closely aligned. The details of each zoning district will be reviewed and discussed during the Administrative Draft phase of the Zoning Code Update process. A more detailed discussion of recommendations for Vallejo’s basic zone districts can be found in Section 5.
3.2 Illustrated Analysis of Key Base Zoning Districts

Three of the residential zoning districts, one of the office districts, three of the commercial districts, and one industrial district have been graphically analyzed on the following pages in order to summarize their intent and existing standards, the allowable zoning envelope and typical form that results from their application, along with the limiting factors and issues that arise. A more detailed discussion of all of the zoning districts is included in Appendix 2: Detailed Analysis of Title 16 (Parts I, II, and III). These observations are intended to expose the strengths and weaknesses of the current zoning. Generally, the following observations stand out as worthy of further discussion.

- The zoning districts assume that most visitors will arrive by personal vehicle, reflecting the lack of public transit, and do not present an integral approach to support other modes of transportation.
- The residential zoning districts intend to generate neighborhoods but lack the information or regulations with which to do so.
- The residential zoning districts inadvertently prohibit otherwise appealing and compatible housing choices through arbitrary numerical density maximums (e.g. ‘8.7 and 17.4’ units per acre).
- The residential zoning districts allow much more volume and building area than one would expect in Vallejo’s neighborhoods. This is because of the requirements focusing on setbacks, height, and density. Meanwhile, the building size goes unaddressed (See diagrams on the following pages for residential zoning districts).
- The non-residential zoning districts attempt to address physical compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods through height and setbacks. This is important but not all of the information necessary to achieve compatibility. Other important issues that need to be addressed are building width and length within certain proximity of neighborhoods.
- The ability to mix certain uses exists in the Zoning Code but it is not clear and appears to rely on additional review processes.
- The zoning districts address the general intent to support certain types of environments but their content and regulations focus on the individual site without much information for how those sites combine on a block, or into the intended environment and physical character.

The above observations affect both Walkable Urban and Auto Oriented Suburban development. The Zoning Code Update process will provide opportunities for determining if the existing zoning will remain, be modified, or be replaced by Form-Based Zones.
Low Density Residential

The intent of this district is “...to create and establish regulations for a low-density residential district, in which permanent single-family residences are the principal use.”

**Issues Resulting from Current Regulations**

- There are no form standards, making the results of the current requirements highly unpredictable.
- The lack of parking location requirements result in highly unpredictable location(s) of parking, often resulting in tighter backyards.
- Although the dwelling unit shown in the Large Lot Example is not conventional, it is allowed by current regulations, and shows the inability of the current requirements to protect or enhance the pattern of house-scale buildings in current low density residential neighborhoods.

### Low Density Residential District Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Density Residential District Regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Lot Coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot area/ dwelling unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daylight Plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Setback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Setbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Setback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

Parking can be located anywhere if screened.
Daylight plane does not apply to street corner edge of building.

Few openings along ground floor essentially separate this building from the streetscape in a negative way.

There is a lack of compatibility in architectural form between existing and new investment.

In order to maximize the lot, units are frequently raised over tuck-under parking, damaging the streetscape and ’curb appeal’. 
Low Density Residential

Small Lot Example (50' wide Lot)

Two individual lots shown.

Example of build-out based on the current code; showing the maximum 50% lot coverage.

Large Lot Example (100' wide Lot)

Example of build-out based on the current code; showing 30% lot coverage (left) and 17% lot coverage (right).

Build-Out Assumptions:

- Building Envelope: Building can be located anywhere within this shape.
- Because there is a discrepancy in the differing setbacks (the landscape setback is deeper than the building setback), it was assumed that the building can occupy any space outside of the building setback; however, if the building does not occupy the remaining landscape setback, this space must be landscaped.
- Parking cannot occupy the building or landscape setback.
- In this zoning district, the daylight plane results in a sloped setback, as compared to a stepped setback in the other zoning districts.
Medium Density Residential

The intent of this district is “... to create and establish regulations for a medium density residential district, in which single-family, two-family or multifamily residences, or combinations of these uses are the principal uses.”

Issues Resulting from Current Regulations

- The lack of regulations for parking location and high parking requirements results in the lot dominated by parking. This is especially important when reinvestment occurs in established neighborhoods with walkable streetscapes.
- Landscape setbacks prove extremely limiting on a 50’ corner lot, leaving only 25’ of buildable area to fit units and parking.
- The implications of the minimum lot area per dwelling unit regulation coupled with the parking requirement make development on a small corner lot difficult. The site can park two units, but leaves a maximum width of 16 feet to build. Furthermore the limited width makes a second story unrealistic, in our experience.

Medium Density Residential District Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulation</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot Area</td>
<td>5000 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot dimensions</td>
<td>50’ min. width</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60’ min. width for corner lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80’ min. depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Lot Coverage</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot area/ dwelling unit</td>
<td>2,500 sf/du</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Height</td>
<td>35 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daylight Plane</td>
<td>2 ft/story over 2 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback</td>
<td>15 ft min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Setback</td>
<td>5 ft min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional 2 ft setback/story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 ft min. if adjacent to Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Density Residential district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Setbacks</td>
<td>5 ft min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 ft min. when a corner lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Setback</td>
<td>10 ft min. on side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 ft min. on corner lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Count</td>
<td>2 tree / 50 ft of frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count</td>
<td>1.5 sp/1 bdrm; 2 sp/2+ bdrm min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

Parking can be located anywhere if screened; Number can be reduced by Planning Manager if ‘transit is available’.

Daylight plane does not apply to street corner edge of building.

Minimum of 2 units. 3 units or more are required to have on-site open space.
Medium Density Residential

Small Lot Example (50' Wide Lot)

Two individual lots shown.

Large Lot Example (100' Wide Lot)

**Limiting Factors**
- Min. Lot Area / Dwelling Unit
- Landscape Setbacks

**Example of build-out based on the current code; showing 27% lot coverage (left) and 26% lot coverage (right).**

**Build-Out Assumptions:**
- Building Envelope: Building can be located anywhere within this shape.
- Because there is a discrepancy in the differing setbacks (the landscape setback is deeper than the building setback), it was assumed that the building can occupy any space outside of the building setback; however, if the building does not occupy the remaining landscape setback, this space must be landscaped.
- Parking cannot occupy the building or landscape setback.
- The building setback is stepped back per additional story, as compared to the sloped setback in the Low Density Residential district.
High Density Residential

The intent of this district is “…to create and establish regulations for a high-density residential district in which multiple-family residential and high-density housing are the principal uses.”

Issues Resulting from Current Regulations

- The examples result from abstract density requirements combined with parking requirements that assume most people will drive everywhere.
- The lack of location requirements for parking and the high requirement for on-site parking results in compliant buildings being out of scale with existing houses and streetscapes that positively contribute to an area. For example, on a small lot, a 4+ unit building will only fit on-site if the whole first floor is a tuck-under garage. This is especially detrimental in existing walkable urban neighborhoods with positive streetscapes.

In the highlighted block, an infill building has massing that is out of character with its context, and parking in front disrupts the existing streetscape.

The current requirements assume most people drive a car, encouraging housing forms for auto-oriented suburban contexts in all neighborhoods.

Current requirements cannot tell the difference between appealing streetscapes and well-intended but ineffective streetscapes such as this.

High Density Residential District Regulations

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot Area</td>
<td>5000 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot dimensions</td>
<td>50’ min. width</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60’ min. width for corner lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80’ min. depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Lot Coverage</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot area/ dwelling unit</td>
<td>1,600 sf/du</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Height</td>
<td>75 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daylight Plane</td>
<td>2 ft/story over 2 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback</td>
<td>15 ft min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Setback</td>
<td>5 ft min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional 2 ft setback/story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 ft min. if adjacent to Low Density Residential district</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Setbacks</td>
<td>5 ft min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 ft min. when a corner lot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Setback</td>
<td>10 ft min. on side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 ft min. on side for corner lot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Count</td>
<td>2 tree / 50 ft of frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count</td>
<td>1.5 sp/1 bdrm; 2 sp/2+ bdrm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Parking can be located anywhere if screened.
Daylight plane does not apply to street corner edge of building.
Lot must be 20% landscaped; On-site open space required.
Minimum of four units.
High Density Residential

Small Lot Example (50' wide Lot)

Two individual lots shown.

Example of build-out based on the current code; showing 45% lot coverage (left) and 31% lot coverage (right).

Large Lot Example (100' wide Lot)

Example of build-out based on the current code; showing 17% lot coverage.

Building-Out Assumptions:

- **Building Envelope:** Building can be located anywhere within this shape.
- **Because there is a discrepancy in the differing setbacks (the landscape setback is deeper than the building setback), it was assumed that the building can occupy any space outside of the building setback; however, if the building does not occupy the remaining landscape setback, this space must be landscaped.**
- **Parking cannot occupy the building or landscape setback.**
- **The building setback is stepped back per additional story, as compared to the sloped setback in the Low Density Residential district.**
Limited Office

The intent of this district is “... to create and establish regulations for a limited office district to provide areas for low-density office activities with modest space and parking requirements.”

Issues Resulting from Current Regulations

- Built results are highly unpredictable because parking is the only limiting requirement preventing build-out of the full possible envelope.
- The streetscape is often diluted by the needs of automobiles because there is nothing regulating the location of parking.
- When parking is at the front of the lot, the building is pushed back closer to the neighboring residential. Although the building is required to match the maximum height of the residential buildings, there are no requirements about how long or wide the office building can be when this close to small-footprint houses.

Limited Office District Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited Office District Regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Lot Coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daylight Plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Setback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Setbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Setback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

- Parking can be located anywhere if screened.
- Daylight plane does not apply to street corner edge of building.
- Lot must be 5% landscaped.
Limiting Office

Small Lot Example (50’ Lot)  Large Lot Example (130’ Lot)

Example of build-out, based on the numeric standards of current code

Build-Out Assumptions:

• Building Envelope: Building can be located anywhere within this shape.
• Because there is a discrepancy in the differing setbacks (the landscape setback is deeper than the building setback), it was assumed that the building can occupy any space outside of the building setback; however, if the building does not occupy the remaining landscape setback, this space must be landscaped.
• Parking cannot occupy the building or landscape setback.
• The building setback is stepped back per additional story, as compared to the sloped setback in the Low Density Residential district.
Comparing Commercial Zones

The intent of these three zoning districts gives the expectation that the resulting buildings would reflect their distinct physical environments. However, when looking at the actual outcomes, the regulations in each zoning district are generating similar types of results. Except for differences in some allowed land uses and in the 30 foot height difference between Neighborhood Shopping and the other two zoning districts, the regulations are very similar.

For example, the Linear Commercial and Pedestrian Shopping and Service Districts allow the same building size and setbacks except that the Linear Commercial must not exceed 35 feet height when adjacent to Low Density Residential. This height restriction is well intended but incomplete as it says nothing about the width of Linear Commercial buildings adjacent to Low Density Residential. Further, this height restriction is copied in the Neighborhood Shopping and Service District and presents the same problem. Additionally, the wide variety of what can occur in each zone also presents issues of not really knowing what the form can be from one property to the next.

While the names and descriptions of each zoning district lead one to expect distinct environments, there is not enough information in the regulations to generate those differences.
Linear Commercial District Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Allowable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot Area</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot dimensions</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Lot Coverage</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Height</td>
<td>75 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daylight Plane</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Setback</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Setbacks</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Setback</td>
<td>2 ft min. on front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 ft min. on side if corner lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Count</td>
<td>2 tree min / 50 ft of frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count*</td>
<td>1 space / 250 sf of first floor min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 space / 350 sf of add’l floors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Parking depends on use; 1 sp./350 sf first floor with 1 sp./450 sf on additional floors may apply. Parking can be located anywhere if screened.

Building can be located anywhere within the building envelope.

Pedestrian Shopping and Service District Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Allowable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot Area</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot dimensions</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Lot Coverage</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Height</td>
<td>75 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daylight Plane</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Setback</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Setbacks</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Setback</td>
<td>2 ft min. on front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 ft min. on side if corner lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Count</td>
<td>2 tree min / 50 ft of frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count*</td>
<td>1 space / 250 sf of first floor min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 space / 350 sf of add’l floors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Parking depends on use; 1 sp./350 sf first floor with 1 sp./450 sf on additional floors may apply. Parking can be located anywhere if screened.

Building can be located anywhere within the building envelope.

Some lots in the Pedestrian Shopping and Service zone are subject to the regulations of the Downtown Specific Plan.
Comparing Other Non-Residential Zones

As with the previous commercial zoning districts, there is a gap between the description and intent of each district and the range of possible outcomes allowed by the standards. A primary reason for this is the fact that the standards are essentially similar in most categories with slight differences in the required parking ratios. The standards do not support or implement a particular range of physical outcomes and instead, prioritize numerical compliance without regard to how something does or does not fit on a site.

As an example, when comparing the Intensive Use District and the Pedestrian Shopping and Service District, the descriptions sound like very different types of environments with a focus on certain land uses. However, the actual results range from buildings near the sidewalk with pedestrian-oriented streetscapes to buildings setback from the sidewalk with parking lots between the entry and the streetscape. Aside from interpretation or individual effort on the part of staff or the community, there is little in the standards to inform the reader that these are two distinct environments.

This is important to address because over time, the lack of information will result in buildings and parking layouts that do not support a positive and established pattern of appealing streetscapes. In addition, this is important to address from the perspective of staff needing to administer several zoning districts that do not provide them or applicants with enough information to appropriately prepare and review development applications.
Comparing Other Non-Residential Zones

### Intensive Use

**Building Envelope**

- **Allowable building envelope**
- **Lot Setback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intensive Use District Regulations</th>
<th>Pedestrian Shopping and Service District Regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot Area</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot dimensions</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Lot Coverage</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Height</td>
<td>75 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daylight Plane</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Setback</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Setbacks</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Setback</td>
<td>4 ft min. on front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Count</td>
<td>1 tree min. / 50 ft of frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count*</td>
<td>1 space / 350 sf of first floor min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count*</td>
<td>1 space / 450 sf of add’l floors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Parking depends on use; Other parking regulations may include: 1 sp./600 sf for storage; 1 sp./400 sf for automotive uses or 4 spaces per service bay. Parking can be located anywhere.
- Building can be located anywhere within the building envelope.
- Some Intensive Use lots are subject to the regulations of the Downtown Specific Plan.

### Pedestrian Shopping and Service

**Building Envelope**

- **Allowable building envelope**
- **Lot Setback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intensive Use District Regulations</th>
<th>Pedestrian Shopping and Service District Regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot Area</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot dimensions</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Lot Coverage</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Height</td>
<td>75 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daylight Plane</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Setback</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Setbacks</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Setback</td>
<td>2 ft min. on front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Count</td>
<td>2 tree min. / 50 ft of frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count*</td>
<td>1 space / 250 sf of first floor min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Count*</td>
<td>1 space / 350 sf of add’l floors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Parking depends on use; 1 sp./350 sf first floor with 1 sp./450 sf on additional floors may apply. Parking can be located anywhere if screened.
- Building can be located anywhere within the building envelope.
- Some Pedestrian Shopping and Service lots are subject to the regulations of the Downtown Specific Plan.
3.3 Special Zoning Districts

**Intended Physical Character**

The Special Districts are similar to the Basic Zoning Districts in that they do not convey enough information about the intended physical character that is to be protected or generated. Unlike the Basic Zoning Districts the Special Districts are almost entirely about process and have little to no information about the environment they are supporting. Each Special District addresses a reasonable need for certain questions to be part of the review process but does not contain other important information to generate or support a particular physical character.

**Requirements**

These districts identify a process where certain findings must be made in order to approve projects.

**Recommendations**

With the exception of the Architectural Heritage and Historic Preservation district, we recommend that the Basic Zoning Districts be modified or replaced to better address the unique physical issues of certain areas in Vallejo and the other issues that the Special Districts address, allowing for most or all of the Special Districts to be discontinued.

---

**Vallejo's 7 Special Zoning Districts**

- Residential View
- Architectural Heritage and Historic Preservation
- Special Land Use
- Geotechnical
- Flood Hazard
- Fire Hazard
- Hillside Development
3.4 Planned Development Districts

Intended Physical Character

As with the Basic and Special Zoning Districts, the Planned Development Districts also do not convey enough information about the intended physical character. This is because the PD districts are for the purpose of exempting an applicant/site from the regular zoning requirements in exchange for ‘…creative and experimental methods…’ When communities have zoning districts that are either unresponsive to creativity or are burdensome in their requirements, it is understandable why these PD districts can be appealing. The PD district allows the regulations to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. However appealing this can be, it is also a long-term detriment to reinvestment because of the lack of predictability that such wide flexibility can generate. When each project using the PD district can essentially result in whatever is negotiated, speculation about the potential outcomes tends to rise rather than decrease.

Requirements

Generally, the application and site plan propose the standards for the project with density bonus available for projects that include a senior component, open space or recreation.

Recommendations

Although the PD process can result in positive outcomes, the lack of predictability is not helpful to the general community-wide purpose of providing stability for attracting reinvestment. We recommend that the updated zoning standards address the needs for creativity and flexibility that the PD districts try to address. In addition, we recommend that the PD districts be discontinued for new projects and that development approved under the PD district be recognized and allowed to continue.

For further discussion of Planned Development Districts and their application, see Section 4.3.

Vallejo’s 4 Planned Development Zoning Districts

- Planned Development Residential
- Planned Development Commercial
- Planned Development Industrial
- Planned Development Mixed Use
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Other Code Elements
The following information analyzes Parts I and IV of Title 16 to identify how these requirements implement the General Plan and deliver the community’s expectations. This chapter discusses aspects of the zoning code other than the zoning districts that determine how the code is interpreted by decision makers, staff and the public, and the procedures governing its application. This chapter also discusses General Regulations that apply across all districts, and how they may be improved to better govern implementation of the code into the built environment.

### 4.1 Basic Provisions

The Basic Provisions (Part I of the code) set forth the basic rules governing the interpretation, applicability and means with which the Zoning Code is to be implemented and includes the following sections: General Provisions, Definitions, Use Classifications, and Districts and the Zoning Map.

#### Definitions and Use Classifications

Generally, the language of the Zoning Code contains large amounts of jargon, and includes some unnecessary or vague and outmoded definitions and use classifications, while at other times lacking information where it may be warranted. Further, definitions are divided between use classifications and other code definitions, making Part I difficult to navigate. In order to deal with this, City staff uses an uncodified Zoning Appendix that staff has generated over the years. This appendix gives staff a reference on how specific uses are classified. Having this reference ensures consistent application among staff. Over time, new uses can appear where the classification is uncertain. Knowing the correct classification is important, because it can determine what parking standards to apply. The updated Zoning Code needs to address this issue and eliminate the need for staff to reference external documents for information that belongs in the Zoning Code.

#### Districts and the Zoning Map

The intent of this chapter, Districts and Zoning Map (16.08), is to list the different basic and special zones, present how they are defined, and determine how their boundaries are to be interpreted on the zoning map, including the means for clarification when uncertainty exists. As the Zoning Code is updated to include both transect zones and conventional zoning districts, the zoning map will need to identify the distinction, as well as the methods for their interpretation.

#### Recommendations

As the Zoning Code is overhauled, certain categories of uses and use-types should be reorganized and certain definitions may be removed as they become unnecessary. Furthermore, the updated Zoning Code should present transect zones and conventional zoning districts distinctly and in such a way that the applicants can readily identify and understand which regulations apply to their project.
4.2 General Regulations

The General Regulations (Part IV of the code) is a mixture of regulations general to all zones as well as those specific to uses. This makes navigation of the Zoning Code cumbersome. The Zoning Code should clearly separate regulations specific to uses, such as home occupations, from those applicable across all zones, such as parking requirements, signage, and landscaping standards.

This part of the code also includes regulations that overlap with related or similar regulations found elsewhere. For example, within the General Regulations, there are three chapters related to landscaping, two of which concern water efficiency and conservation (16.70, 17.71 and 16.74).

Recommendation

As the Zoning Code is rewritten, a better structure could be achieved by organizing regulations as follows:

1. Standards specific to a given zone;
2. Regulations applicable City-wide; and
3. Standards specific to the use in question.

Generally, certain development and other standards should be combined and presented more comprehensively in fewer locations. Unnecessary overlap in the presentation of development standards should be eliminated whenever possible.
4.3 Application of Planned Development Districts

Types of Planned Development Districts
Title 16 defines four Planned Development Districts (PDs), based on “principal” uses:

- **PDR**: Residential (permanent). In addition to residential uses, civic, and agricultural uses are also allowed upon issuance of a Planned Development Permit. Density bonuses are allowed in Residential Planned Development Districts;

- **PDC**: Commercial (neighborhood-level, community-level, or regional level). In addition to a variety of commercial uses, Commercial Planned Development Districts allow civic, industrial, limited industrial, and agricultural uses. Tobacco retailers are also allowed, however are subject to a Conditional Use Permit;

- **PDI**: Industrial (light, general, or heavy industrial activities). Civic, wholesale storage and distribution and agricultural uses are also allowed with a Planned Development Permit; and

- **MUPD**: Mixed Use (residential, commercial and/or industrial uses developed as an integral unit). Allowed uses are determined as per Planned Development procedures (Section 16.116) and are essentially reliant upon the Specific and Master Planning process.

The implied determination of principal uses in PDs is based upon the General Plan; however there is a lack of information in exactly what mix and proportion of land uses will fall under any given category.

Application of Planned Development Districts
Planned Developments require Master Plan and Unit Plan (e.g. site development permit) approval, unless the project area is determined small enough by the planning manager to warrant a Unit Plan only, i.e. it will be developed all at once rather than in phases. As discussed in Chapter 2 above, the requirement for a Master Plan is waived if a Specific Plan for the PD exists, because the Specific Plan services as the Master Plan in most cases.

Numerous PDs have been established throughout Vallejo. PDs vary in size and placement and range from very large Mixed Use Planned Developments (MUPDs) near the periphery to smaller commercial, residential and mixed use PDs near or adjacent to the waterfront or major roadways. While PDs may be necessary to negotiate for good development otherwise limited by inadequate base-zoning districts, sound new base zoning designations and effective procedures can incentivize development with greater certainty and by-right development entitlements, while providing greater sensitivity to surrounding development. A Form-Based Code typically resolves issues that PDs are meant to address, making PDs generally unnecessary in areas where a Form-Based Code is implemented.

Recommendation

Existing PDs in the city should be eliminated particularly where information on PDs is unavailable or where they can otherwise be folded into new zoning districts. In other cases, PD’s will need to be carried forward in the Zoning Code Update. Moving forward, the use of PDs for new construction should be eliminated in the Form-Based zones and minimized in the conventional zones.
A predictable and streamlined entitlement process is central to attracting quality development in Vallejo. Development regulations are most effective when there is a clear and transparent process, in which the Zoning code’s requirements are presented in a straightforward and consistent manner.

**Review Authority Roles and Responsibilities**

The current language that defines roles and responsibilities of review authorities - planning services director, planning manager, design review board, the planning commission, and city council - is presented inconsistently throughout the Procedures chapter [16.81]. Further, it is difficult to discern the level of discretion for each type of permit or approval. In some cases, review authorities are identified with names that do not match titles of city staff (e.g. Development Services Director vs. Community and Economic Development Director).

References to Design Guidelines and the roles of the Beautification & Design Review Board (Board) on certain developments are also interspersed and ambiguous in the Zoning Code. The Board is specifically granted review authority over Unit Plans within the Downtown Vallejo Specific Plan and the Waterfront District Master Plan in the Procedures Chapter of the Zoning Code. However, no other individual plans are mentioned by name. Title 2 of the Municipal Code, Chapter 2.38 describes the Board’s role and responsibilities. However, this is not cross referenced in Title 16.

**Recommendation**

The Zoning Code should provide a clear understanding of the review authorities responsible for each type of permit. In addition, the Zoning Code should employ tables, matrices and/or approval diagrams to provide a comprehensive view of the decision-making process for all permits. Requirements for permits should be clearly organized and standardized, where possible.
The table below depicts the presumed roles of review authorities for the various permit types in the Zoning Code.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of Review Authorities by Permit Type</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Section</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>IV.16.80</td>
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<td>V.16.38</td>
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<td>IV.16.78</td>
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**Notes:**

1. Zoning Code describes authority to both Planning Manager and Economic Development Director. Effectively, the Economic Development Director delegates authority to the Planning Manager. Planning Division responsible for noticing of all projects for which noticing is required.

2. Design Review Board approves major exceptions with the Downtown Specific Plan. Development services director (planning manager) may approve minor exceptions to the measurable standards prescribed in 16.80.


4. May be initiated by Planning Commission, Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission, City Council, or property owner. Planning Division to provide supporting evidence.

5. Planning Manager / Economic Development Director may refer project to Beautification Advisory Commission (separate from DRB).

6. Design review board may affirm, reverse, or modify the administrative decision of the Planning Manager which was appealed.

7. Planning Division defines plan area and gives direction. PC designates areas as specific plan.

8. Beautification & Design Review Board specifically granted review authority over unit plans within the Downtown Vallejo Specific Plan and the Waterfront District SP. No other plans mentioned by name. See Muni Code Title 2.39 for description of authority.

9. For projects proposed in the Architectural Heritage and Historic Preservation Special Zoning Districts, or that impact a designated City Landmark, Historic Contributing Structure, or Structure of Merit per 16.38.260. See also Chapter 16.78.
Permit Applicability

The table below briefly describes the permits and procedures listed in Part V (Procedures).

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<th>Permit Applicability and Associated Findings</th>
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<td>V. 16.104</td>
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<td>VI. 16.116</td>
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Recommendation

Procedures and administration should be clearly organized and provide a road map for navigating the entitlement process. For example, the major components of procedures could be laid out as follows:

- Application Processing Procedures
- Permit Requirements
- Permit implementation, time limits, and extensions
- Permit modifications and revocations
- Public Hearings
- Appeals
- Nonconforming Provisions
- Enforcement

In addition, the procedures section should not contain any development standards.

CEQA Procedures & Noticing

Noticing requirements for CEQA are embedded within the various sections of Chapter 16.81 – Procedures. Overall, CEQA requirements are repetitive and can be more effectively and efficiently presented in the Code.

Recommendation

CEQA procedures should be consolidated in a separate chapter/section that identifies all requirements of CEQA.
Chapter 5

Key Findings and Recommendations
Top Six Things to Fix and How

After analyzing Title 16 from a variety of perspectives and based on our experience, the following six topics rise as priorities to address for Vallejo’s Zoning Code to be responsive to Vallejo’s needs.

1. Ineffective Base Zoning Districts
Current requirements prioritize land use over physical form. Match standards to the intended physical character and range of uses.

2. Overuse of PD Zoning and Specific Plans
This has resulted in complex and unusable regulatory structure. Stop using the PDs for new projects; address needs through better base zoning districts.

3. Outdated Parking Regulations
This has encouraged autocentric environments and discouraged redevelopment. Stop assuming everyone will drive, and support other modes of transportation.

4. Narrowly Defined Land Uses and Outdated Regulations
Current requirements are cumbersome and ineffective with layers of permits, narrowly defined land uses, & outdated regulations, including the areas of landscaping and signage. Simplify to support intended physical character.

5. Document Format and Structure
Improve usability and clarity through a new structure, with no repetition, and less jargon. Revise the zoning map to more clearly express the community’s intent.

6. Procedures and Administration
Make the expected things easier to do by delegating review authority to the administrative level as much as possible.
5.1 Ineffective Base Zoning Districts

Vallejo’s base districts do not provide adequate information and detail to protect existing places of value, nor do they encourage new places of character that align with expressed desires of the community. The zoning districts do not regulate an appropriate or compatible form, largely because they are use-based, and do not provide tools that help to distinguish between different physical contexts or the components that make those places.

The base districts have not been effective in regulating Vallejo’s core, pre-WWII neighborhoods including the existing, fine-grained residential fabric and the small-scaled commercial districts such as those along Sonoma and Tennessee. Past efforts to amend this regulatory system, including applications of the PD districts and layers of Specific and Master Plans, have resulted in a cumbersome and confusing set of regulations that does not clearly communicate the intent. Specific sub-issues are described below.

Density and F.A.R. as Measurement Tools

Density

The residential zoning districts use density as a key regulation for controlling building size and intensity. As with FAR, residential density regulations are numerical standards focused on the number of dwellings that may be allowed on a site. Interestingly, the regulations should be dealing with the density of individual buildings. But because the regulations are not structured in that manner, they address density in a way that doesn’t relate to the realities of individual buildings. In response to these standards, projects arrange buildings on a site in ways that technically comply with maximum density but are not always physically appealing or compatible with their neighbors, or both.

These density restrictions are unhelpful to the very neighborhood fabric they intend to protect because they inadvertently prohibit buildings that would otherwise comply except for the arbitrary numerical restrictions.

For example, in the Low Density Residential zoning district, the maximum density is 8.7 units per acre. This is a very specific number without reference to how it was generated or why that specific number generates what the community expects. Further, the zoning regulations only address height and setbacks while being silent on many other important topics that truly affect physical compatibility. Yet, compatible buildings exist in these areas, but would not be allowed because they exceed the numerical maximum density of 8.7 units per acre. Similarly, the Medium Density Residential zoning district identifies a maximum density of 17.4 units per acre. There are many wonderful building types that fit into neighborhood contexts while offering human-scaled and physically compatible buildings with a variety of housing choices other than stacked apartments and single-family houses. We have identified these compatible building types as ‘The Missing Middle’.

Recommendation

Through these unnecessarily specific and arbitrary density requirements, Vallejo’s zoning is prohibiting choices and affecting costs for no real purpose. We recommend a discussion on understanding the Missing Middle and how it already exists in Vallejo and help to sensitively and simply offer a wider variety of housing choices. A more detailed discussion follows below.
FAR or Floor Area Ratio

The non-residential zoning districts use do not use F.A.R. to regulate or control buildings but do use building setbacks and height in a similar way. Non-residential zoning districts apply building height and setback standards to generate a ‘building envelope’ with the expectation that the resulting envelope will help to achieve positive results. This can help to achieve positive results but not on its own. Much like F.A.R., building envelopes that do not correspond to the types of buildings that are expected are generally numerical standards that focus on the quantity of building area on a site. This is distinct from building envelopes that are generated by identifying the types and sizes of building that are compatible with the pattern of an area. Building height and setbacks are important factors but only two of several important factors dealing with building size. These two factors and F.A.R. can only deal with quantity without anything important about building height, width or length. In our experience, most codes are silent on the critically important topics of how wide or long buildings are allowed in different contexts across a community. What works in one area of your community is not appropriate in all areas of your community.

Recommendation

For walkable urban areas, we recommend to not use FAR as a regulation. The critical issues can be addressed through a properly prepared Form-Based Code. For auto-oriented suburban areas, we recommend to not use FAR and apply basic building size regulations. If FAR needs to be used, we recommend that it be used as a resultant of the desired form and not a determinant.

A One-size-fits-all Approach to Single-Family and Multifamily Development

Many of Vallejo’s established neighborhoods consist of a variety of housing choices or ‘building types’. Yet these choices are not clearly expressed as expectations in the residential zoning districts. This is especially concerning for single-family development and for multifamily development because of the disconnect between the rich variety of built examples in Vallejo and the very regulations that apply to those properties.

Single Family

In Vallejo there are numerous examples of how single-family houses can vary according to their physical context while offering variety for their tenants/owners. In the process, such variety provides visual interest and real choice for people wanting an option to the single family house. However, the subject of single-family houses is addressed only through density and overall height requirements that lack the information to generate the positive examples throughout Vallejo. The long-term trend of these regulations is that unless the building is an historic resource, they don’t encourage any new development to be based on the existing, appealing physical character that people find so positive about Vallejo. This trend results in more generic buildings that are prioritized for efficiency of making it through the approval process rather than as careful insertions into Vallejo’s strong and appealing physical character.

What is the Missing Middle?

In post World War II America, changes came in both the development community and the financial lending systems. These changes lent themselves to models of development that were narrowly focused, and targeted individual markets such as single-family homes on large lots, large apartment complexes, commercial strip centers, and indoor malls. Each was developed and placed in isolation in contrast to the older patterns of neighborhoods where single-family, multifamily, and commercial were more integrated and mixed. The art of both mixing these kinds of development and building smaller middle-density types was lost.

Vallejo’s neighborhoods have a great history of these “Missing Middle” building types that were built before World War II. These building types included townhouses, duplexes, small, four-unit apartment buildings, and mixed-use main street buildings. These Missing Middle building types provide a range of housing choices and provide a residential intensity that help support neighborhood main streets. These housing types also provide the housing that the two largest population groups—the millennials (generation Y) and the baby boomers—want in walkable urban places.
Low Density Residential District
This zoning district only allows single-family houses, leaving out many other affordable housing options that are similar scale.

Medium Density Residential District
This zoning district allows for single-family houses and duplexes, but leaves out most historic “Missing Middle” housing typologies that are prevalent throughout the City of Vallejo. Housing types such as fourplexes, cottage courts, townhouses, and courtyard apartments could be great options for promoting medium density housing and walkable communities.

High Density Residential District
This zoning district allows for single-family houses, duplexes, fourplexes, and could allow for cottage courts, but leaves out other compatible higher density housing types.

Key
- Allowed
- Recommended based on preliminary analysis and observations
Multifamily

The same situation applies to Vallejo’s multi-family buildings. Vallejo contains numerous positive examples of multi-family buildings that blend in with single family houses and offer a wide variety of housing choices in what otherwise appears as a single-family neighborhood. Increasingly, people want multifamily options to the stacked apartment. As with the single-family regulations, the multifamily regulations also address buildings primarily from the perspective of quantity without addressing other important factors such as building width, length, and the amount and location of parking. So, while compliant with the applicable requirements, many of Vallejo’s recent multi family buildings actually interrupt the positive existing physical character and walkable nature of Vallejo’s established neighborhoods.

Recommendation

We recommend evaluating Vallejo’s neighborhoods to determine first what types of neighborhoods comprise the community. Second, we recommend evaluating what types of buildings make those neighborhoods and how different building types are used on a block to generate a scale of houses that happen to contain multiple families. Through this evaluation, we expect to also find the types of buildings and patterns that provide the positive physical character or that present operational issues. All of this information is helpful in understanding how to adjust Vallejo’s zoning standards for positive and sustainable reinvestment in its neighborhoods and other areas that will receive housing.

Uniform Application of Generic Commercial Zones without Regard to Place

While the existing commercial zoning districts have a declared purpose, zoning districts such as the Pedestrian Shopping, Linear Shopping and Neighborhood Commercial often appear to overlap and lack significant distinction from one another. This raises the question of whether or not each zoning district is aware of the environment it is applied to or is expected to generate. At this preliminary level of analysis, it appears that the intent to have such zoning districts is good but the actual standards do not carry out or deliver the types of environments that actually serve such different places as a Downtown, Main Streets, and Neighborhood Centers.

Recommendation

We recommend evaluating all zoning districts to determine if they are implementing the General Plan’s expectation for the environments. Further, we recommend evaluating the locations where these zoning districts are applied to identify how these zoning districts do or do not serve those adjacent areas and the customers within those areas. Future zoning designations should be calibrated to promote these distinctions.

Neighborhood Main Streets, for example, are increasingly an amenity that give identity and appeal to their surrounding areas. They can be an invaluable asset to the adjacent neighborhoods and help to define a neighborhood while reducing automobile trips. Several of these exist in Vallejo and should be promoted or applied to maintain walkable services. Through the scale and type of development, the existing commercial base districts are not fully supportive of preserving and encouraging neighborhood main streets.

Future zoning should require commercial uses at primary nodes and allow more flexibility in uses outside of these nodes within the same physical form and type of building.
5.2 Overuse of PD Zoning and Specific Plans

**Overuse of PD Zoning**

Based on the complex and cumbersome base zoning districts, it is understandable why the PD has been used so much in Vallejo. However, over time administration of the PDs proves challenging because the standards for each PD need to be maintained and followed as new development or remodels are proposed in the area covered by the PD.

With form-based zoning for walkable urban areas, and base zoning improved for auto-oriented suburban areas, Planned Development District zoning and procedures will not necessarily be required for new applications.Clarification and reliance on other procedures may also obviate the need, increase by-right development, and streamline the process overall.

**Retiring and Consolidating Specific Plans**

The City should assess the value of policies and development standards contained in Specific Plans, and determine whether and to what extent they should be incorporated into base zoning in the updated zoning code. The new code may supersede those Specific Plans entirely, or refer to them for policy guidance while keeping the permitting process streamlined. This would reduce the number of cross references to other documents, and simplifying the approval process overall. Several of the City’s specific plans may be identified as obsolete. For example, the White Slough and Northgate Specific Plans have been identified by City staff as potential candidates for consolidation into the General Plan and citywide Zoning Code. The White Slough Plan is nearly 20 years old and includes land under the jurisdiction of Solano County. Meanwhile the Northgate Specific Plan was adopted in 1988 and has since been amended five times. The Zoning Code Update process will provide three opportunities to address this issue: First, during the selection of the approach for updating the Zoning Code, the Code Approach Memo will among other things, identify the options for existing PD’s and Specific Plans. Subsequently, the annotated Code Outline will identify the sections and plans being removed, replaced, rewritten or left as is. Second, during the preparation of the Administrative Draft Code, the individual plans will be reviewed in more detail to identify which, if any, text and diagrams are carried forward into the Updated Zoning Code.

**Recommendation**

With improved base zoning regulations, the updated Zoning Code should reduce the reliance on and need for Planned Developments (see Section 4.3). For parts of the city covered under a Form-Based Code, PDs will no longer be necessary.

The updated Zoning Code should introduce needed flexibility, while streamlining the permitting process for a broader range of projects.

The Zoning Code update should also clarify and create differentiation in the intent and application of Specific Plans. Specific Plans, which require a more involved community outreach process and city council approval, should be used to tackle large areas and broader land use decisions. Specific Plans should not be used to plan an area that can otherwise be implemented through the Updated Zoning Code, including updated procedures.
5.3 Outdated Parking Regulations

A Parking-Dominated Landscape

The current zoning standards result in a pattern of well-intended buildings often surrounded by parking lots; specifically, rows of parked cars or empty asphalt. This is in contrast to the option of carefully locating the required parking on-street and along the sides or rear of buildings to present an appealing streetscape along an entire block.

Individually, the domination of parking is an issue often addressed through screening and landscaping. But over the course of a block and several blocks in a row, this pattern results in a landscape dominated by vehicles and the techniques to screen their presence. While it varies from business to business on how many of their customers arrive by foot or bicycle, these environments and the regulations that generate them assume that some will still arrive by vehicle. However, the current standards do not make this distinction. The current standards assume that all visitors will arrive by vehicle and as a result, the parking requirements are organized accordingly. Therefore, for a property to comply with the required parking often means that the parking is prioritized over other factors such as building area, streetscape appeal, pedestrian comfort and connectivity from one parcel to another.

Recommendation

We recommend addressing parking based on the needs of each different type of area and physical context in Vallejo. For example, Downtown is a mixed-use environment where one trip can result in the visitor(s) reaching numerous destinations before moving their car again. Along corridors, a similar scenario could occur for visitors arriving by vehicle and for those walking from adjacent neighborhoods. In environments such as the suburban shopping center where the primary mode of arrival is the vehicle, walking would be encouraged but parking would be more prevalent because of the auto-oriented nature of such a place. Generally, each of Vallejo’s environments has different purposes and parking needs. The current standards do not fully acknowledge and address these differences.
5.4 Narrowly Defined Land Use Classifications

Each zoning district contains several to numerous land uses that are too narrowly defined to be effective. In our experience, the more precise that the individual land use becomes, the more interpretation is required. This is typically due to the need to either differentiate from or align with the overly precise term. We have found it effective to generalize land use terms and then support those terms with examples in the definitions section of the Zoning Code. This keeps the land use tables from becoming large and unhelpful, and it gives examples for reference without locking something in or out because of the term. Also, each zoning district contains several outdated regulations that only serve to undermine the credibility of the regulations and the Zoning Code as a whole. This ranges from language in the code to actual standards.

**Definitions**

Certain definitions may also be outmoded or unwarranted given current development trends, advances in technology, or changes in regulations. Some definitions may also not be achieving the city’s desired outcomes. For example, the definition of “Junk” may not adequately support the intent to eliminate clutter and improve the aesthetic quality of properties viewed from the street.

Currently, land use classifications and definitions are presented in separate chapters. Although, there seems to be overlap between the two chapters (e.g. liquor store, live-work, hospital, hotel, market, etc.). As the General Plan and Zoning Code are updated, new definitions may be introduced that obviate the need for some existing definitions, or at least simplify and clarify the intent of regulation on a given use.

**Non Compliant Regulations**

As presented in Section 2.4, certain regulations are absent or are not clearly compliant with federal and state regulations. These include regulations concerning density bonuses, equitable application of limitations to religious assembly, emergency shelter, and family day care homes. The Zoning Code update will ensure that the city regulations are updated to comply with state and federal laws.

**Recommendations**

Land use classifications should be presented in more general terms, while coordinating with definitions that clearly correlate with and support them. Land use classifications, definitions, and other outdated regulations should be reviewed and edited in light of the current General Plan update and Sonoma Boulevard Specific Plan and Form-Based Code.
5.5 Document Format & Structure

Poor Clarity in Code Format and Structure

Currently, Title 16 is organized in such a way that in order to know which uses are allowed in a given zoning district, staff must rely on “cheat sheets,” as the Zoning Code lacks effective use tables, and cross referencing within the Zoning Code is lacking or inconsistent. Also, subsections within the Zoning Code could be presented in a more consistent manner, both in how the text is presented and located within sections. Overall, a general simplification of the language and use of graphics will coincide with a clearer Code format and structure.

Organizing Principle

The organizing principle or ‘framework’ of Title 16 is land use. Despite all of the policy direction of the past 10 years, the Zoning Code is still ‘use-based’. Therefore the Zoning Code update will need to introduce a place-based organizing principle such as the urban-to-rural transect or a similar tool to support form-based zones. Form-based zones will be used in the part of the updated Zoning Code that addresses the walkable urban areas of Vallejo while leaving the non-form-based zones to address the auto-oriented suburban areas of Vallejo.

Zoning Text Amendments and Variances

Once the Code Update is adopted, we recommend an assurance to stakeholders that text amendments and variances will not compromise the intent of the FBC. A key reason for doing so is because of the involvement and effort that will have gone into crafting the details of the Zoning Code. This effort will result in people being more in tune with what the Zoning Code does and why it does so than they have been in the past. If the community later perceives that the effort is going to be taken lightly or changed fairly easily, the trust and accuracy of the Zoning Code can be quickly undermined leading to poor results and outlook toward the community. This can be further supported by carefully stating the Zoning Code’s objectives and principles in an early section of the Zoning Code.

Incomplete Zoning Map

The current zoning map is incomplete and inaccurate. Currently the zoning map must show 21 zoning districts, including individual Planned Development Districts which generally make the map cluttered and difficult to use. Also, the GIS interface on the web is not user friendly and needs to be updated alongside the map.

Two Sides of the Street

Ideally like buildings and activities should face like buildings and activities as much as possible on a street. Therefore, as general categories are reviewed in the General Plan Update and zone boundaries created during visioning processes, the zone selection, specific boundaries, and transition between zones should be carefully considered.

Transformation of Auto-Oriented Suburban Areas

The Zoning Code should allow for auto-oriented suburban areas (e.g., auto-oriented commercial zoning districts) to transform into pedestrian-oriented places per certain requirements and processes. Over time, these areas may want the option.

Transition from Main Streets into Neighborhoods

Within neighborhoods, these are the most important and complex areas as one environment changes to another. We recommend evaluating these types of areas to identify the appropriate range of possibilities and compatible buildings and activities. This will inform how the zones are mapped or adjusted.

Right-of-Ways

Currently most of Vallejo’s public rights-of-way (ROW) are mapped within zoning districts. This makes it difficult to read and reinforce the important element of the street and block network as well as the frontage along the front and side street edges of individual blocks. We recommend removing the zone designation from the public ROW to reinforce the importance of the public realm in defining the character of these places/neighborhoods. Second, we recommend identifying each ROW, including alleys, with a thoroughfare type and corresponding standards to fully account for these important pieces of the community, and to better coordinate the public realm with the properties along its edges.
Lack of In-Line Graphics

Presently, Title 16 does not use graphics. Graphics can clarify development standards without the use of cumbersome, descriptive text that is open to wide interpretation. While text will still accompany graphics, having both placed on the same page creates ease in referencing and understanding intent.

Code Organization Causes Staff to be Unsure about Final Information

Each section should contain consistent organization across chapters and within sections. The updated Zoning Code can employ consistent organization of subsections for all types of permits making it easier to find and understand applicable procedures and requirements.

Limitations of Current Technology

MuniCode

One of the biggest technical obstacles in place for Form-Based Code application is the location of Title 16 within MuniCode. Because of MuniCode’s inability to successfully deal with graphics, no Form-Based Code (FBC) has successfully been integrated into a MuniCode document. The solution would be for the City to simply leave a reference to the Zoning Code document within the Municipal Code and MuniCode document and pull the document out of the Municipal Code, letting it reside outside the document. This will also give much more flexibility to the formatting options of the final updated Zoning Code. We recommend consulting with the city clerk to identify the options and which works best for Vallejo.

Recommendation

New Organizing Principle

The structure of the current code is organized around the idea of separated land uses. We recommend adopting a form-based approach to Vallejo’s zoning code, which will prove to be a more useful tool at placemaking in future development. By using physical form as the organizing principle, this still allows the auto-oriented suburban areas to operate under improved conventional zoning but lets the City, over time and as desired by the community, to enable auto-oriented areas to transition to walkable urban areas. Furthermore, the process of the code update should incorporate the community, to garner support and understanding of the principles in the zoning code.

Improved Graphics and Format

Clarity and usability could be greatly increased with the use of graphics to explain development regulations. Thought should also be given to the document format as a whole, in both physical and electronic form, for the ease of both city staff and community members. With the use of more graphics, Vallejo should look to find a different means of making their code electronically accessible, as MuniCode does not support graphics.
5.6 Procedures & Administration

The procedures and administration of permits in Title 16 could be improved significantly by changes in the organization and structure of this Part. In addition, presenting information in tables or matrices will provide a clear direction for project applicants, as well as identifying the subsequent decision-making authority and approval procedure.

Most existing sections itemize the plans, drawings and information required for submittal to the planning division. Some of this information may not need to be codified and could be listed on permit application forms. The Zoning Code update should ensure requirements are presented clearly for each permit, and checklists provided to allow for greater flexibility in amending what is required to complete an application, while streamlining the process overall.

**Recommendations**

**Clearly Identify Roles and Responsibilities**

The existing approval process information is not typically in a logical location. The role and responsibility of each review authority should be clearly and consistently laid out by employing a simple decision matrix/table in the beginning of the Chapter, and by including language related to roles and responsibilities for each type of permit procedure. Recommendations, final decisions, and appeals may be shown comprehensively in one place, and accompanying language can be presented consistently.

**Streamline the Review Process**

Streamlining the review process was discussed as one of the necessary incentives to encourage the desired form of development. This may mean that the review boards, planning commission, and city council will need to be comfortable giving up some review authority for projects.

**Educate on the Use of the Form-Based Code**

Although the city has good knowledge about FBC’s, there will be a need to fully train and educate staff and the community on how to use a FBC, and how to respond to requests for transitioning ‘auto-oriented suburban’ areas to walkable urban areas. This issue can be addressed when the FBC is drafted. In addition, the city should reach out to primary potential users as the code is being created. This will educate them on the new terminology and aspects of the FBC to ensure they are familiar with the code elements once they are drafted.
Napa County

Source: City of Vallejo
Zoning - Civic Areas

Key

- City Limits
- Key Destinations
- Railroad
- Highways
- Local Roads
- Outside City

Mare Island
- Resource Conservation
- Public Facilities
- Medical
- Active Dredge
- Inactive Dredge
- Develop, Recreation
- Recreation/Open Space
- Wetland/Open Space

City Blocks
- Building Footprint
- Local Roads
- Highways
- Railroad
- Key Destinations
- Natural Open Space
- Future Park Sites
- Adult School
- Middle School
- Private School
- Inundation Area
- Water
- 30 MPH Road
- 45 MPH Road
- 65 MPH Road
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Key Destinations
- Special Use Areas
- Neighborhood Parks
- Hospitals
- Inactive Dredge
- Active Dredge
- City Limits
- Key Destinations
- Highways
- Local Roads
- Outside City

Nodes
- Local Roads
- Special Districts
- Walkable Urban
- Residential
- Commercial
- Primary Streets
- Key Destinations
- 1/4-Mile Radius
- Adjusted 5-Minute Walk
- (Typ. 5-Minute Walk)
- 5-15% Slope
- 10-15% Slope
- 5-10% Slope
- 0-5% Slope
- City Blocks
- Building Footprint
- Local Roads
- Highways
- Railroad
- Key Destinations
- Natural Open Space
- Future Park Sites
- Adult School
- Middle School
- Private School
- Inundation Area
- Water
- 30 MPH Road
- 45 MPH Road
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- Hospitals
- Inactive Dredge
- Active Dredge
- City Limits
- Key Destinations
- Highways
- Local Roads
- Outside City

Zoning - Business and Industrial Areas
Policy-Level Plans Across Vallejo

Key

1. Mare Island Specific Plan
2. Downtown Vallejo Specific Plan
3. Waterfront Planned Development Master Plan
4. White Slough Specific Plan
5. Hiddenbrooke Specific Plan
6. Northgate Specific Plan
7. Solano 360 Specific Plan
8. Sonoma Boulevard Specific Plan

City of Benicia
Solano County
Napa County

NAPA/SONOMA MARSHES
SAN PABLO BAY
CARQUINEZ STRAIT
Lake Chabot
White Slough
Lake Dalwigk
Lake Herman

Mare Island
City of Benicia
Solano County
Napa County

NAPA/SONOMA MARSHES
SAN PABLO BAY
CARQUINEZ STRAIT
Lake Chabot
White Slough
Lake Dalwigk
Lake Herman

Map of Vallejo showing policy-level plans across various specific plans.
Detailed Analysis of Title 16
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>Why is it an Obstacle?</th>
<th>Recommendation on how to fix the obstacle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 16.02.030 Basic Purpose of Zoning Code | Purposes of Zoning Districts: The majority of these statements attempt to but do not create Walkable Urban places or reinforce the character of existing neighborhoods. | Since the Zoning Code essentially defaults to auto-oriented suburban development, except for the Downtown, it is important to establish that there will be designated areas for auto-oriented urbanism and other areas for drivable suburban development and that they are regulated differently. | • Make purposes specific to intent of Walkable Urbanism and reinforce the transect, New Urbanism, smart growth, etc.  
• Remove purposes that may be contrary to intent  
• Connect these purposes to the General Plan policy direction and purposes |
|                        | Zoning Designation System: Low, Medium, High Residential Designator: Square footage of lot required per unit. | Regulating density in this way produces unpredictable physical form and is potentially limiting to desired character/urban form. | • Use compatible building types tied to lot sizes to create predictable built results that reinforce the specific community character of a neighborhood |
|                        | Organizing Principle (framework) of the code is land use. | The Euclidean zoning system was created to separate uses. Therefore it is very difficult to use this system to create mixed-use environments under these use-based regulations. | • Establish form-based zones to reinforce walkable urban areas  
• Use the transect as the organizing principle  
• Replace the term multifamily with a more “marketable” term such as ‘missing middle housing’ |
<p>| 16.04.560 Structure Height | Measuring to top of roof discourages tall floors, which are more typical of historic buildings and is often a driving factor behind poorly designed buildings with inappropriate roof forms in relation to their context. | It creates unpredictable built results and encourages flat-roofed and or low-sloping roof forms that may not be appropriate for building upon community character, and often results in floors appearing forced into the building while being compliant. This is more concerning given some zoning districts only state overall height and no info about stories. | • Regulate heights primarily by maximum number of floors, based on existing or intended physical character. If more regulation is needed, using existing or intended physical character, measure height to the eave rather than the mid point of the slope for more predictable built results. |
| 16.75.040 Setback Averaging | ‘1- and 2-family dwelling unit projects’, have potentially overly restrictive setbacks depending upon existing context. | Depending on the existing urban form, it may make sense for a building to be allowed to have the least restrictive setback to reinforce a certain form or intended place. | • Check that the average setback for corner lots is not overly restrictive |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.04 Definitions</td>
<td>Current definitions do not anticipate or include any FBC terms.</td>
<td>Current definitions are only supportive of a use-based code.</td>
<td>• Include and define new terminology needed to support the FBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.06 Use Classifications</td>
<td>Current information does not recognize or enable many innovations in “land-use types.”</td>
<td>Prevents or makes it difficult to implement possible land use types that could benefit areas</td>
<td>• Evaluate all classifications with organization of Walkable Urban land use types and Auto-Oriented Suburban land use types</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 16.12, 16.14, 16.16, 16.17 Residential Districts (Rural, Low Density, Medium Density, High Density) | The residential districts technically describe their intent but do not convey the intended character or its major components. | The lack of clarity tends to raise residential density to a level of importance that is not helpful to making or maintaining appealing residential neighborhoods. | • Break down these residential districts further by intended form, character of place, and building types. For example, form-based zones/transect:  
  - T2 Neighborhood  
  - T3 Neighborhood  
  - T4 Neighborhood  
  - T5 Neighborhood  
• Identify the range of compatible Building Types based on existing and intended context:  
  - e.g., Rowhouse-detached, Mansion Apartment, Duplex, Fourplex, Sixplex, Courtyard Building, etc.  
• Coordinate development outputs/outcomes with each building type for clarity and usefulness |
|                   | Residential density requirements:                                         | Leaves out possibility for compatible building types to be in certain zoning districts simply because of numerical limits.       |                                                                                                         |
|                   | Rural: 1 per 2.5 acres (0.4 per acre)                                     | Only one of several important factors and unpredictable as to form and character.                                                   |                                                                                                         |
|                   | Low: 8.7 per acre                                                         | Confusing and limiting to realities of walkable urban areas.                                                                      |                                                                                                         |
|                   | Medium: 17 per acre                                                       |                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                         |
|                   | High: 27 per acre                                                         |                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                         |
| Land-Use Regulations | Generally, beyond the overall aim to support residential areas, it is not clear what the regulations are specifically to achieve to support each zoning district. Second, the land use regulations require a substantial amount of referencing to a different section of the code. Also, the regulations do not necessarily distinguish between non-residential that would be compatible within houses or within a neighborhood and that which would need to be in a center. | When questions arise about land use activity, the zone description and land use regulations do not provide sufficient clarity and tend to result in more processing. It is unnecessarily cumbersome to use these regulations when trying to compare two or more land uses because of the high amount of referencing to entirely different sections of the Zoning Code. | • Continue to reinforce the tiered permitting process (P, L, Major UP, Minor UP)  
• In walkable urban areas, correspond building size to determine level of permitting required |
<table>
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</table>
| 16.57 Limitations on Permitted Uses | There is a lack of connection between the objectives to be achieved by such limitations and the requirements. | This tends to raise more questions than necessary and, over time, can dilute the credibility of the code. | • Consider moving these to another section of the Zoning Code that includes a table of allowed uses by zone to improve clarity and usability  
• Verify these numbers through micro scale documentation of typical conditions within a neighborhood  
• Lot widths should be tied to building types in form-based regulations  
• Evaluate obstacles of minimum lot widths for walkable urban areas |
| Section 010 of each Zoning District – Title and Purpose for each Zoning District | Lack of information about intended character and possibility to have neighborhood services.  
There exist more characteristics and distinctions between the development in various zoning districts than the zoning districts identify or recognize. | Over time, this tends to diminish the importance of existing physical characteristics and allow auto-oriented suburban development and characteristics in areas that are already Walkable Urban. This tends to make the change in pattern visually dominant and challenges the appeal of such areas. | • Differentiate (create separate zones) auto-oriented suburban multi-family and Walkable Urban multifamily  
• Remove the term “density” from zone names  
• Translate all residential zoning districts (in walkable urban contexts) to transect zones based on intended form and appropriate building types |
<p>| | Using numerical limits that are not coordinated with a known set of compatible or desired outcomes. | Regulating intended built form with numeric parameters (e.g., 2,000 sf of lot size required per unit) that are impossible to directly translate into intended form or result | • Use building types tied to specific lot sizes to replace the 2,000 sf currently required for each unit to create more predictable built results |
| Sections 020, 030, 040 and 050 of each Zoning District – Land Use Regulations | High amount of qualifying information within list of allowed uses that requires reader to reference Section 16.57 | The additional requirements are not physically near the list of allowed uses which results in lots of referencing especially when the reader may want to compare several land use choices. | • Improve the connection between the land uses and the additional requirements |</p>
<table>
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</table>
| **16.18, 16.19 Office Districts (Limited Office, Professional Offices)** | Specific Purpose of the Office districts | Not an obstacle but tone of statement is to use the Limited Office district as a “buffer.” Professional Office district depends on “large acreages in outlying locations with good access.” | These areas typically provide an important transition from neighborhood main streets into the residential neighborhoods and if only seen as ‘buffers’ instead of connections or amenities can cause conflicts in form and uses that compromise the quality and character of the neighborhood. Implies that Downtown is not a possible location for Professional Office. | Evaluate these areas carefully for the FBC:  
- Determine if a residential form or commercial shopfront form is more appropriate and regulate that form  
  - Ex. If a residential form is more appropriate for the transition, regulate the residential form, but allow uses to be flexible within this form  
- Allow the uses to be flexible: Regulate uses such that it allows these areas to transform into uses that support the main street area, whether it is medium-density residential building types, commercial, or retail. Let the market determine what the best use is for these areas.  
- Use low parking requirements so that large parking lots do not dominate the new or renovated buildings |
| Development Regulations | No requirements stated except for Building Height (within a certain distance, building may not exceed height of adjacent single-family residential). | - Wide open and unpredictable even when adjacent to single-family residential  
- No mention of important factors such as building width or length | Identify compatible building types for Vallejo’s variety of contexts where office buildings can be near housing and apply standards with flexibility in mind for each different type of physical context |
| **16.20 – 16.26 Commercial Districts (Neighborhood Shopping and Service, Linear Commercial, Pedestrian Shopping and Service, Waterfront and Service)** | Neighborhood Shopping/Service | Not an obstacle but needs supportive development standards to be truly neighborhood serving. | Intended to be compatible with adjacent neighborhoods but lacks information to predictably do so | Differentiate between areas intended for Walkable Urban development and areas for Auto-Oriented Suburban development  
Ensure that regulations require pedestrian connections between these two types of development |
| | Linear Commercial | Aims for shopping centers along corridors. | Encourages driving and undermines walkable services to adjacent neighborhoods | Regulate walkable urban commercial districts with form-based zones  
Ensure that regulations require pedestrian connections to adjacent development |
<p>| | Pedestrian Shopping/Service | The only commercial district aimed at pedestrians. | Implies that pedestrian commercial not needed elsewhere | |
| | Waterfront Shopping/Service | Aside from ‘waterfront’ motif and 35 ft max height, not clear about difference from Pedestrian Shopping/Service’ district. | Another district to implement with little effect; real intent not clear and not being implemented |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</table>
| Neighborhood Shopping/Service; Linear Commercial; Pedestrian Shopping/Service; Waterfront Shopping/Service | Access to centers from adjacent neighborhoods: The long-term viability of walkable neighborhood centers depends largely on having concentrated, continuous groupings of ground floor retail, commercial, and service uses at designated nodes, but at the same time not requiring ground floor commercial uses above and beyond what the market can support. | When the pattern of ground floor commercial uses is interrupted, the viability of the commercial area can be compromised depending upon the size and nature of the interruption. | • Study these neighborhood main street areas carefully in FBC focus areas  
• Designate areas within these zoning districts to require ground floor commercial uses and shopfront forms and allow residential or other uses in the interim if short-term commercial uses are not viable  
• Create a flex or open zoning district at the peripheries or transition areas to allow commercial or residential uses in a compatible form to support the transformation of the main street areas |
| Use Regulations | Generally, it is not clear what the regulations are to achieve to support each zoning district. Second, the land use regulations require a substantial amount of referencing to a different section of the Zoning Code. Also, the regulations do not necessarily distinguish between non-residential that would be compatible within houses or within a neighborhood and that which would need to be in a center. | When questions arise about land use activity, the zone description and land use regulations do not provide sufficient clarity and tend to result in more processing. It is unnecessarily cumbersome to use these regulations when trying to compare two or more land uses because of the high amount of referencing to entirely different sections of the Zoning Code. | • Simplify use tables  
• Simplify the regulation of retail uses by size, hours of operation  
• Permit and incentivize a wide variety of uses of a small size and correspond building size with form-based zones and intended physical character |
| Development Regulations | The development regulations address the bare minimum for such an established community and physical patterns. | This type or level of regulations relies on more process to answer basic questions that could be addressed in standards. These standards tend to result in the need for more interpretations and clarifications. | • Study the outcomes of existing regulations to ensure compatibility with adjacent (side and rear) smaller buildings without increasing the setback  
• Coordinate the development regulations with the range of intended physical character for the various types of areas that exist or are desired in Vallejo |
| 16.28 Freeway Shopping and Service District | Consistent with its title, this district is aimed at customers arriving by personal vehicle. | Does not offer or allow the option of incremental mixed-use or Walkable Urban development | • Acknowledge these areas in 93 Auto-Oriented Suburban areas  
• Allow FBC into these areas incrementally at the choice of the owners |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location Obstacle</th>
<th>Why is it an Obstacle?</th>
<th>Recommendation on how to fix the obstacle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.30 Public and Quasi-Public Facilities</td>
<td>Covers too wide of a range: from playgrounds to sewer facilities, theme parks, cemeteries, and airports.</td>
<td>Not clear about where these can be located because the majority of these use-types are large and complicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.32 Medical District</td>
<td>Not necessarily an obstacle but too open on development outcomes which causes issues with adjacent neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Could influence site-choice out of town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.33, 16.34 Intensive Use Districts. (Intensive Use-Limited, Intensive Use)</td>
<td>Not necessarily an obstacle but too open on development outcomes which causes issues with adjacent neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Could influence site-choice out of town Setback and building height limitations do not necessarily result in compatibility with adjacent single-family houses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.36 Residential View District</td>
<td>Not a district that generates certain outcomes. It is only a process for reviewing six findings focused on views from these areas.</td>
<td>Unnecessary to have another district to implement these findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.38 Architectural Heritage and Historic Preservation District</td>
<td>Not a district that generates certain outcomes. It is an important process for addressing historic resources and sites.</td>
<td>Unnecessary to have another district to implement these requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.40 Special Land Use District</td>
<td>Appears to only be needed as an interim zoning district during annexation.</td>
<td>The term and presence of this district are confusing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.48, .50, .52, .54 Geotechnical, Flood Hazard, Fire Hazard, Hillside Development Districts</td>
<td>Not a district that generates certain outcomes. It is an important process for addressing technical and safety related issues. The Hillside Development Guidelines District applies to slopes greater than 10%.</td>
<td>Unnecessary to have another district to implement these requirements. How was this slope limit determined? Are there issues at lesser grades that are going unaddressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Obstacle</td>
<td>Why is it an Obstacle?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.106, 108, 110, 112 PD Districts (PD Residential, PD Commercial, PD Industrial, PD Mixed-Use)</td>
<td>Exempts projects from regular zoning requirements in exchange for “…creative and experimental methods of land development…or the innovative application of existing techniques relating to resource conservation.”</td>
<td>Unpredictable results, invites questionable methods that may not be compatible with Vallejo’s patterns or needs. Provides density bonus based on features for seniors, open space or recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.62 Off-Street Parking and Loading Requirements</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Does not support Walkable Urban development “…to alleviate and to prevent traffic congestion…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computation Rules</td>
<td>Requires the sum of all parking required by each use on the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduced Parking When Allowed.</td>
<td>Allows up to 50% reduction for senior projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Off-street Loading Spaces</td>
<td>Requires loading spaces for buildings 5,000 sq ft or larger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Property on which Parking Is Required.</td>
<td>Requires parking that is to be provided off-site be done through legal means.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint use of Parking Areas</td>
<td>Requires the planning commission’s approval.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table of Off-Street Parking Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>Why is it an Obstacle?</th>
<th>Recommendation on how to fix the obstacle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Table of Off-Street Parking Requirements | Not easy to use; key is interesting but requires too much referencing. | Not supportive of or coordinated with needs of Walkable Urban development and can be the difference between adaptive reuse or vacant building. | • For certain areas or types of environments, consider not having off-street parking requirements at all (let the market determine parking requirement) or lowering to one space per unit in Walkable Urban neighborhoods or sites proximate to transit.  
• Where parking requirements are kept:  
  - Count on-street parking adjacent to lot toward requirement.  
  - Consider maximum parking requirements within a certain distance of transit stops or station  
  - Consider requirements by bedroom and by proximity to transit corridor.  
    » Studio units or unit less than 700 sf: .5 spaces (rounded down for 1 unit).  
    » 1 bedroom or greater: 1 space/unit.  
  - Consider requirements by size of shop space and set limit where no parking is required (e.g., 2,000 sq ft)  
  - Simplify requirements so that all retail and commercial uses in a Walkable Urban environment have the same requirements (in response to that environment) |
| Requirements | Little to no acknowledgement of physical context. | Requirements for restaurants are generally aimed at Auto-Oriented Suburban types of environments. | |
| Requirements | Focus is on land use. | Requirements for restaurants are generally aimed at Auto-Oriented Suburban types of environments. | |

### 16.64 Signs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sign Area</th>
<th>Calculations are quantity-oriented without regard to physical context.</th>
<th>The calculations are aimed at Auto-Oriented Suburban development and inadvertently allow more than may be compatible in neighborhoods (on houses for example) and do not directly address Walkable Urban development.</th>
<th>• For Walkable Urban areas, correspond sign types to frontages and intended physical context for clarity and flexibility.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combination of Signs</td>
<td>Standards approach signage as a negative instead of an identity-oriented opportunity for the city.</td>
<td>Discourages creativity</td>
<td>• Identify the range of compatible sign types with their locations on a building according to the intended physical context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulations in general</td>
<td>Roof signs are allowed no taller than 30 inches and cannot extend above the ridge.</td>
<td>Many great downtowns have and support large signs as identity as well as for the business. This requirement stifles this possibility.</td>
<td>• Revise the Roof sign type to be larger, with standards for quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulations for Downtown (Pedestrian Shopping and Service District) and Linear Commercial District (Sonoma Blvd, other corridors)</td>
<td>The pole sign type and monument types are allowed.</td>
<td>The requirements encourage Auto-Oriented Suburban patterns and discourage urban buildings at the frontage.</td>
<td>• In Walkable Urban areas, allow existing pole signs and monument signs to continue but no new pole or monument signs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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What is a Form-Based Code?
Form-Based Codes foster predictable built results and a high-quality, public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. These codes are adopted into city or county law as regulations, not mere guidelines. Form-Based Codes are an alternative to conventional zoning.

The most important aspect of this definition in terms of differentiating FBCs from Euclidean zoning, is that the intended physical form or desired place replaces use as the organizing principle, or framework, for the overall code. So instead of a zone being labeled “single-family residential,” it might be called “traditional neighborhood,” and instead of a zone being called “commercial,” it might be called “neighborhood main street.” The terms “neighborhood” and “main street” tie back into the intended physical form or place, both of which may include a mix of uses and different building types that create a vibrant walkable urbanism. The Rural-to-Urban Transect, which categorizes a spectrum of urban places.

What is the Rural-to-Urban Transect?

The Rural-to-Urban Transect is a means for considering and organizing the human habitat in a continuum of intensity that ranges from the most rural condition to the most urban. It provides a standardized method for differentiating between the intentions for urban form in various areas, using gradual transitions rather than harsh distinctions. The zones are primarily classified by the physical intensity of the built form, the relationship between nature and the built environment, and the complexity of uses within the zone.

While the origin of the Transect as a concept is in the biological and environmental analysis fields, it was first described and adapted for the purposes of Form-Based Coding by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ). The DPZ model Transect provides six zones: Natural (T1), Rural (T2), Sub-urban (T3), General Urban (T4), Urban Center (T5), and Urban Core (T6), together with a Special District (SD) designation for areas with specialized purposes (e.g., heavy industrial, transportation, entertainment, or university districts, among other possibilities). Each Transect zone, or T-zone, has been designated a number. The higher numbers designate progressively more urban zones; the lower, more rural.

Further information on the Rural-to-Urban Transect is available at www.transect.org.

A Community Approach to Character-Based Zoning

Why Form-Based Codes Are Needed

The current use-based zoning system is outdated, creating Polaroid camera-era models of development in a digital camera-era that demands vibrant urban places.

Form-Based Codes are providing the necessary paradigm shift in zoning by utilizing characteristics of urban places as the platform for development regulations, and creating regulations that are effective in the creation, revitalization, and preservation of vibrant, walkable urban places. As Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk states in Form-Based Codes, “[A]s Global Society swings into action to reduce carbon emissions, the data ever more clearly points to the need to reduce dependence on vehicular mobility and to remake the built environment as transit- and pedestrian-friendly places of dense economic and social interaction. Only the Form-Based Code can ensure such an urbanism.” Even developers are supporting this push for zoning reform; at the 2009 New Partners for Smart Growth Conference in Albuquerque, NM, developer Rob Dixon presented his “Top 20 Ways to Make a Green, Smart City” and “Replace your Euclidean Zoning with Form-Based Codes” was number two on his list.

As the market demand for walkable urbanism grows and demographics shift, Form-Based Codes, when created according to these best-practice standards, have proven to be an effective tool for breaking down the barriers to developing and revitalizing urban places and ensuring high-quality, predictable built results.

What is a Form-Based Code

Form-Based Codes are a zoning tool that utilize a unique characteristic of a community’s walkable urban development patterns, or the DNA of a place, as the framework for the code to ensure compatible, predictable, high-quality built results.

The Form-Based Code Institute defines Form-Based Codes (FBCs) as follows:
of urban to rural contexts in six transect zones (from the most urban T6 to the most rural T1) is a prominent organizing principle within Form-Based Code practice. The second important aspect of this definition is that FBCs replace zoning and are not merely design guidelines.

Form-Based Code Components

Just like any proven recipe that has a set list of ingredients that must be carefully followed to achieve the high-quality end result, there is a list of Form-Based Code components (ingredients) that must be used to create an effective FBC. The components are: the regulating plan (which replaces the zoning map); building form standards; building type standards; public space standards (which consist of thoroughfare standards and civic space standards); frontage type standards; subdivision standards; and, a clearly thought out administration component.

Just like when a recipe says, “add salt to taste,” or gives some optional ingredients that can be added based on the chef’s desire, there is also a list of supplementary components that are not mandatory for an effective code, but that can give further clarity to the intended type of place. The more of these components you include in your code, the more predictable the implementation will be. This list includes Architectural Standards, Landscape Standards, Sustainability Standards (such as, stormwater, alternative energy, greywater, etc.), and Green Building Standards.

The Transect as the Organizing Principle

Rural-to-Urban Transect

In a Form-Based Code, the organizing principle or framework of the FBC is intended physical form or type of place rather than use. In this FBC, the Rural-to-Urban Transect will provide the framework from which the form-based zones will be organized. The transect simply establishes a hierarchy of places within a community from the most urban (downtown) to the most rural or natural.
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