

Zoning



INFORMATION

What is Zoning?

Zoning is based on the philosophy that certain land uses are incompatible and should be separated. Without zoning, a car repair shop, steel factory, or high rise apartment could be built anywhere, even in an area that is occupied primarily by single family homes. Additionally, zoning balances development so that public services and facilities, such as sewers, transit, schools, and streets are used efficiently.

A zoning "district" is an area of a city or county which is set aside by law for a particular purpose. Zoning shapes the look of Rancho Cucamonga because it controls what can be built and where. The uses that are allowed for each property in Rancho Cucamonga are specified in the Development Code and shown on a Development Districts Map. To make different types of land uses compatible, some areas (i.e., residential) are protected from more intense uses (i.e., industry).

How Does It Work?

The Development Code describes, among other requirements, for each district or "zone:"

- The land uses allowed.
- The minimum lot area required.

- The maximum percentage of ground that a building may cover on a lot.
- The minimum number of feet (called a "setback") that must be provided between buildings and front, side, and rear property lines.
- The maximum height of any building.

What are the Zones?

The City of Rancho Cucamonga Development Code establishes three major land use categories. Within each land use category, there is a progression from lowest to highest density or intensity of uses. Residential uses range from single-family residences (lower density) to multiple residences in multi-story buildings, such as apartments and condominiums (higher density). Typical examples of land uses within each category include:

Residential

Single-family homes, duplexes, apartments, condominiums, and mobile homes are examples of the range of residential uses allowed within different residential zones. Other uses include, schools, churches, parks, stables, and libraries.

Commercial/Office

Grocery stores, drug stores, automobile service stations, retail stores, restaurants, banks, and offices are typically found in commercial or office zones. Other uses which are permitted include, hospitals and medical offices, health clubs, automotive sales and repair, beauty salons, home improvement centers, hotels, and motels, mini-storage, and landscape nurseries.

Industrial

Manufacturing and machine shops, laboratories, warehouse and distribution centers, and research and development facilities are found in the industrial zones of the City. Other uses would include: public storage, heavy manufacturing (i.e., forges) recycling operations, building contractor yards, heavy equipment sales and rentals, trade or business schools, and business support services.

Large areas of Rancho Cucamonga are developed under Specific Plans or Planned Communities. Whereas zoning regulations must be applied broadly throughout the City, the Specific Plan or Community Plan is designed to deal with particular features or character of a given area. The zoning regulations for the Etiwanda area can be found in the Etiwanda Specific Plan. Likewise, the regulations for Terra Vista and Victoria are each contained in their respective Community Plans.

What is a CUP?

Each zone has certain uses which are permitted without questions (i.e., "permitted by right"). There are also other uses, called "conditional uses," which may be allowed, after notice and public hearing, if it is determined that the use is compatible with existing uses in the area. Those uses which are conditionally permitted require Planning Commission review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP).

The CUP is a discretionary permit that may be granted for a specific use on a specific property. The impacts of the proposed use on neighborhood character, noise, traffic, and parking are carefully considered. Through the CUP process, the Planning Commission would impose conditions to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

What About My Property?

To find out the zoning for your property, or any property in the City, call the Planning Department at (909) 477-2750, or visit their offices. The planners there can explain how your property and others in your neighborhood are zoned and the uses which are allowed. Maps which show these zones may be purchased in the Planning Department offices located at 10500 Civic Center Drive (on Haven Avenue, one block south of Foothill Boulevard).

Many different factors influence whether or not work which you are planning on your property, such as a room addition, will meet the Code's requirements. When calling or visiting the Planning Department, have the following information handy: your property's tax

Assessor's parcel number (found on your tax bill), street address, a plot plan (showing property lines and the dimensions of all existing buildings) and building elevations or pictures. With those specifics before them, the planners will be able to answer your questions more completely.

Can I read the Development Code?

A copy of the Development Code is available at the Cucamonga Branch Library or may be purchased at the Planning Department. However, because it is a highly technical document that is amended periodically, it is recommended that you contact the Planning Department for specific information. The planners are there to assist you in acquiring the information you need.

Are There Exceptions?

In order to enable the City to respond to unique properties and the constantly changing demands on the uses of land, provisions are available which allow for consideration of special circumstances. These provisions are contained in the Development Code and are briefly described here.

Rezoning

Rezoning (i.e., "Development District Amendments") are changes in the district designation for a property, such as from commercial to office. These changes required recommendations by the Planning Commission and final approval by the City Council. A request to change the zoning designation is evaluated for consistency with the

City's General Plan, compatibility with surrounding area, whether the change is logical, whether the change extends an established zone, and whether the change responds to a general public need. The process requires public hearings and environmental review. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) may be required depending on the magnitude of the proposed change.

Variations

A Variance is the means by which citizens may be granted flexibility from the strict application of the Development Code because of undue hardship arising from unique property conditions, such as topography or shape of the lot. The power to grant variations does not extend to land use regulations. The Variance process is intended to remedy situations in which uniformity would unduly burden one property owner more than others in the area. For example, if a lot has a steep hills, the required setbacks may be modified to allow construction of a home. The Planning Commission conducts a public hearing to consider public input on the Variance request before making a final decision.

Minor Exceptions

A Minor Exception may also be granted by the Planning Department staff for certain site development regulations, but on a much smaller scale than a Variance. For example, a fence height might be increased by a maximum of two feet to maintain a level of privacy because of unusual grading. Other examples of regulations which may be modified through the Minor Exception process include, setbacks and height restrictions.

How Can I Learn About Zoning Changes?

The City laws require that residents be informed of proposed land use changes and development proposals and gives them the right to be heard. The public is encouraged to testify at public hearings. Everyone who owns property within 660 feet of property proposed for rezoning is mailed a notice of the proposed action and listing the date and time of the hearing. The same notice is also published in the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin. Public hearings are held in the Council Chamber located at the Civic Center, 10500 Civic Center Drive.

In addition, to assure that there is ample opportunity for public comment as early in the process as possible, large 4-foot by 8-foot signs are posted on the site prior to City review of the request. These large "NOTICE OF FILING" signs contain the project file number, developer's name, and a brief description of the proposal. Developers are also encouraged to hold neighborhood meetings to explain their proposal and obtain community input.

The Planning Department maintains an official calendar of all public hearings. Copies of staff reports on the proposal are available a few days before the hearing. Residents are encouraged to call the Planning Department for further information on any proposal at (909) 477-2750.