

About Zone Changes (Rezoning)

*This explains 1) what a "zone change" is,
2) how zone changes fit into our efforts to shape our surroundings, and
3) how you can participate in the decision-making process.*

What is a Zone Change?

Zoning divides land in a community into different areas or "zones." Zoning regulates what uses can go in what zone. For example, housing goes in areas zoned for residential uses. If someone wants to do something different, they can ask that the zoning regulations be changed. This is a *zone change* or *rezoning* request.

About Zoning

A goal of zoning is for neighboring land uses to be compatible with one another. Residential uses, for example, generally are not compatible with industrial uses.

Zoning rules can also set building and other standards. Examples include standards for building height, setbacks, parking areas, signage styles, and landscaping. Zoning rules may also say how much of a kind of use can occur (for example, 18 residential units per acre).

Sometimes certain kinds of uses in a zone are allowed, but only with restrictions and government review. The "conditional use permit" process is an example.

To Learn More

- *California Planning Guide: An Introduction to Planning in California* (Office of Planning and Research, December 2005), available at [www.opr.ca.gov/planning/PDFs/California Planning Guide 2005.pdf](http://www.opr.ca.gov/planning/PDFs/California_Planning_Guide_2005.pdf)
- *The Planning Commissioner's Handbook*, League of California Cities, 2005, chapter 4 (www.ca-ilg.org/pch4)
- California Government Code Section 65800 and following (accessible from www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw)
- Solano Press (www.solano.com) has a number of helpful planning publications available for purchase

Examples of Zone Types

- Industrial (sometimes divided into "heavy" and "light" industrial)
- Commercial,
- Residential
- Open space
- Recreational
- Agricultural

Sometimes zones can have subsets. For example, in residential zones, it may be possible to locate more housing units in an "R3" (or "residential 3") zone than an "R1" (or "residential 1") zone.