RECORDING REQUESTED
WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:
County of Sacramento
Planning and Environmental Review
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ENDORSED
SACRAMENTO COUNTY
NOV 19 2026
FLORENCE EVANS, CLERK/RECORDER
BY _____ DEPUTY

SPACE ABOVE RESERVED FOR RECORDER'S USE

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Project Title:
Housing and Infill Zoning Code Amendments

Control Number:
PLNP2025-00202

Project Location:
Various

APN:
Various

Description of Project:
The Housing and Infill Zoning Code Amendments outlines changes to the Sacramento County Zoning Code (Zoning Code)in the topics of use allowances, development/design standards, and administration to encourage and support infill and residential development and implement the Housing Element, as directed by Housing Element Program A6 and B7.

The proposed amendments streamline the approval process for qualifying residential development by expanding opportunities for ministerial (by-right) approval in zoning districts where residential uses are consistent with the County's General Plan and zoning regulations. The amendments eliminate specified discretionary permit requirements for qualifying multifamily and neighborhood-scale residential development and establish a more predictable entitlement process intended to facilitate implementation of Housing Element Programs A6 and B7.

The proposed amendments also modernize the County's residential development standards by updating objective requirements related to site planning, building placement, setbacks, building height, parking, open space, landscaping, adaptive reuse, and other development regulations. These revisions are intended to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to housing production, improve development feasibility, and encourage infill and adaptive reuse within existing urbanized communities while maintaining compatibility with surrounding development and consistency with the Sacramento County General Plan.

In addition, the proposed amendments replaces the County's existing countywide multifamily residential design standards with a comprehensive set of objective design standards applicable to multifamily development. The new standards establish objective requirements for site planning,

pedestrian and bicycle circulation, architectural design, building articulation, landscaping, open space, and neighborhood compatibility to promote high-quality residential development, provide greater certainty during project review, and support consistent implementation of State housing laws governing objective development standards.

A. Multifamily Housing Amendments

The proposed amendments would amend the Zoning Code and Countywide Design Guidelines and Standards applicable to multifamily residential development (three or more dwelling units on a lot) to facilitate housing production while maintaining objective development and design standards. The amendments include:

- **Use Allowances.** Modify use regulations to allow qualifying multifamily residential development by right in the Business Professional (BP) and RD-10 zoning districts, eliminating the requirement for a Minor Use Permit or Conditional Use Permit in those zoning districts where multifamily residential uses are otherwise consistent with the General Plan and zoning designation.
- **Development Standards.** Update objective development standards applicable to multifamily residential development, including revisions to setbacks, height, open space, parking, landscaping, and related site development requirements. The amendments are intended to reduce unnecessary development constraints while maintaining standards that ensure compatibility with surrounding development and neighborhood character. Adaptive reuse projects would receive targeted accommodations recognizing the physical constraints associated with conversion of existing buildings.
- **Objective Design Standards.** Replace the existing Multifamily Design Standards countywide with a new chapter establishing comprehensive objective design standards addressing site planning, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, common gathering spaces, landscaping, lighting, architectural design, building articulation, materials, and private open space. The standards are intended to promote high-quality residential development, predictable project review, and consistency with General Plan policies while satisfying the requirements for objective design standards under State housing law.

B. Neighborhood-Scale Multiunit Housing Amendments

The proposed amendments would amend the Zoning Code to facilitate neighborhood-scale housing by expanding opportunities for duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in residential zoning districts. The amendments would:

- allow duplexes by right in the BP zone;
- allow triplexes and fourplexes by right in the RD-7 zoning district, subject to objective lot, development, and design standards;
- establish objective standards governing lot size, setbacks, building height, parking, landscaping, fencing, and design to ensure compatibility with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

C. Commercial Corridor Combining Zone

The proposed amendments would establish a new Commercial Corridor combining zone applicable to designated commercial corridors within the unincorporated County. The combining zone is intended to encourage mixed-use redevelopment, housing production, adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings, and reinvestment along established commercial corridors while maintaining compatible urban design.

The Commercial Corridor combining zone would:

- permit additional residential and mixed-use opportunities on selected commercial corridors;
- prohibit or limit certain automobile-oriented, storage, and industrial land uses that are inconsistent with corridor revitalization objectives;
- establish objective development and design standards addressing floor area ratios (FARs), building placement, setbacks, parking, landscaping, pedestrian circulation, open space, adaptive reuse, and building design; and
- support redevelopment consistent with the County's General Plan and Housing Element policies for commercial corridor revitalization. Eight commercial corridors are proposed for application of the overlay, including Florin Road West, Auburn Boulevard North, Stockton Boulevard South, Fair Oaks Boulevard (East and West), Watt Avenue Central, Folsom Boulevard, and Kiefer Boulevard.

Project Location:
The proposed amendments applies to properties located within the unincorporated area of Sacramento County where the amended provisions of the Zoning Code and Countywide Design Guidelines and Standards are applicable.

The Commercial Corridor combining zone would apply to properties located along eight designated commercial corridors within the unincorporated County, including:

- Auburn Boulevard North
- Fair Oaks Boulevard East
- Fair Oaks Boulevard West
- Florin Road West
- Folsom Boulevard
- Kiefer Boulevard
- Stockton Boulevard South
- Watt Avenue Central

The Commercial Corridor combining zone would not be placed on properties within these corridors with an existing combining zone, such as a Special Planning Area (SPA) or Neighborhood Preservation Area (NPA) designations to avoid conflicts with standards in those combining zones. These areas are located within existing urbanized communities designated for urban development under the Sacramento County General Plan and are served by existing public infrastructure. The proposed amendments does not expand the County's Urban Services Boundary or apply to agricultural, open space, or rural lands.

Name of public agency approving project:
Sacramento County - ceqa@saccounty.gov

Person or agency carrying out project:
County of Sacramento
Department of Community Development, Planning and Environmental Review
827 Seventh Street, Room 225
Sacramento, CA 95814
CEQA@saccounty.gov 916-874-6141

Exempt Status:
CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the Common Sense Exemption

Reasons why project is exempt:
CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the Common Sense Exemption. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment.

CEQA Exemption Findings and Analysis
All properties affected by the proposed amendments currently allow for development consistent with existing development standards and policies. The proposed amendments would not change allowable developments in a way that would increase any environmental impacts; future development would occur consistent with zoning and General Plan land use designations. The amendments reduce barriers to infill housing development and ensure development are consistent with the Land Use Element of the Sacramento County 2030 General Plan, which includes policies that are designed to promote reinvestment and infill development. The proposed Zoning Code amendments do not affect any regulations designed to reduce environmental impacts of development projects. Further, the amendments are all intended to facilitate implementation of Housing Element Programs A6 and B7 by encouraging the development of infill housing production.

Below is a summary of the proposed resolutions and further support for application of the CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) exemption.

MULTIFAMILY USE ALLOWANCES
The proposed amendments streamline the approval process for qualifying residential development by expanding opportunities for ministerial (by-right) approval in zoning districts where residential uses are consistent with the County's General Plan and zoning regulations. The amendments eliminate specified discretionary permit requirements for qualifying multifamily and neighborhood-scale residential development and establish a more predictable entitlement process. These properties currently allow for development, there would be no change to the allowance of types of development, just the removal of the discretionary requirement. The Zoning Code amendments do not propose any physical change, and do not propose or approve any development project, and future development projects would continue to be subject to applicable regulations designed to reduce and avoid environmental effects.

MULTIFAMILY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS
The proposed amendments also modernize the County's multifamily development standards by updating objective requirements related to site planning, building placement, setbacks, building height, parking, open space, landscaping, adaptive reuse, and other development regulations. These revisions are intended to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to housing production, improve development feasibility, and encourage infill and adaptive reuse within existing urbanized communities while maintaining compatibility with surrounding development and consistency with the Sacramento County General Plan. While these amendments would allow for minor changes to the allowable building envelope for future development related to setbacks and height in some districts, the changes are focused in zones to encourage multifamily housing and support Housing Element Program A6 by encouraging the production of infill housing. No physical projects are proposed with these amendments; future development projects would continue to be subject to applicable regulations designed to reduce and avoid environmental effects.

MULTIFAMILY DESIGN STANDARDS

The proposed amendments would replace the County's existing countywide multifamily residential design standards with a comprehensive set of objective design standards applicable to multifamily and neighborhood-scale residential development. The new standards establish objective requirements for site planning, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, architectural design, building articulation, landscaping,

open space, and neighborhood compatibility to promote high-quality residential development, provide greater certainty during project review, and support consistent implementation of State housing laws governing objective development standards.

These amendments would also introduce the allowance for multifamily (up to four units) within the RD-7 zoning district. Currently the RD-7 zoning district only allows up to two units with a Conditional Use Permit granted by the Zoning Administrator. The proposed amendments would allow for up to four units to be permitted by-right. The change would also allow for BP zoning districts to allow duplexes to be permitted by right. While the allowances of four units in the RD-7 zone would allow for a slightly higher density in this zone by a maximum increase of two housing units per parcel, this increase would be consistent with the General Plan and would support the implementation of Housing Element Program A6. The development potential would allow for multifamily housing to occur within the areas identified by the county as suitable for infill development. The proposed amendments do not include any actual physical projects. The proposed Zoning Code amendments do not affect any regulations designed to reduce environmental impacts of development projects. Future development projects would continue to be subject to applicable regulations designed to reduce and avoid environmental effects.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR OVERLAY AMENDMENTS

The proposed amendments would establish a new Commercial Corridor Overlay, combining districts applicable to designated commercial corridors within the unincorporated County. The overlay is intended to encourage mixed-use redevelopment, housing production, adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings, and reinvestment along established commercial corridors while maintaining compatible urban design. The overlay is applied to areas of the county already planned and zoned for development. The Zoning Code amendments do not propose any physical change, and do not propose or approve any development project, and future development projects would continue to be subject to applicable regulations designed to reduce and avoid environmental effects.

Background – Senate Bill 131 Public Resources Code Section 21080.085
The application of the Common Sense Exemption is further supported by the Legislature's adoption of the Housing Element Rezoning Statutory Exemption under Public Resources Code Section 21080.085, which reflects a policy determination that housing projects consistent with qualifying housing element rezoning programs do not result in significant environmental effects requiring further CEQA review. Senate Bill 131 (Chapter 24, Statutes of 2025) added Public Resources Code Section 21080.085, which provides a statutory CEQA exemption for rezoning actions that implement the schedule of actions contained in an approved Housing Element pursuant to Government Code Section 65583(c). The exemption became effective June 30, 2025. The creation of this statutory exemption demonstrates a policy decision that projects of this nature, involving implementation of a schedule of actions within an approved Housing Element, do not result in significant environmental impacts.

On March 8th, 2022, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors adopted the 2021-2029 Sacramento County Housing Element (Housing Element). On May 9, 2022, Sacramento County received certification of the 2021-2029 Housing Element from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The Housing Element was subsequently updated by the Board of Supervisors on February 24th, 2026. The Housing Element identified various goals, objectives, policies and programs, including those intended to encourage infill housing development.

In accordance with Housing Element Program A6, the County identified opportunities for infill residential development within several zoning districts, including the RD-7, RD-10, SC, LC and BP zoning districts.

The project implements Programs A6 by removing barriers and inconsistencies within the Zoning Code, Development Standards, and Design Guidelines and by creating incentives that encourage multifamily residential development. The ordinance directly implements Program B7 by allowing for multifamily housing as of right within the BP Zoning Districts.

The proposed Housing and Infill Zoning Code Amendments scope are consistent with the purpose and intended application of the Public Resources Code Section 21080.085 statutory exemption. The resolution implements Housing Element Programs A6 and B7 by removing or reducing regulatory and procedural barriers that may constrain development of housing already contemplated by the County's adopted Housing Element. Specifically, the resolution would expand opportunities for qualifying multifamily and neighborhood-scale residential development to proceed by right, eliminate certain Minor Use Permit and Conditional Use Permit requirements, and revise objective development standards related to setbacks, building height, parking, open space, landscaping, and other development requirements. The resolution would also establish updated objective design standards intended to provide greater clarity and predictability regarding the standards applicable to qualifying residential development.

Public Resources Code Section 21080.085 statutory exemption contains exclusion criteria related to "natural and protected lands," as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21067.5.Criteria applicable to Sacramento County include certain hazardous waste/Cortese List sites, FEMA regulatory floodways, conservation easements, wetlands and areas within 300 feet of wetlands, lands identified for conservation in adopted habitat or natural resource conservation plans, and certain wildfire hazard areas. Public Resources Code Section 21080.085 does not apply to rezonings that would allow construction within "natural and protected lands," subject to certain criteria as outlined in Public Resources Code Section 21067.5.

The County evaluated parcels within the RD-7, RD-10, BP, LC and SC Zoning Districts (Table 1) for consistency with the eligibility requirements of Public Resources Code Section 21080.085 using available local data to review properties in the applicable zoning districts and the potential that the proposed amendments could result in construction to occur within natural and protected lands described above. Of those parcels, approximately 26,579 parcels (approximately 99 percent) meet the criteria for the Public Resources Code Section 21080.085 statutory exemption; however, that leaves approximately 0.9% percent of these parcels not eligible for the statutory exemption. Parcels identified as intersecting with natural and protected lands were identified as on areas within 300 feet of wetlands, hazardous waste/Cortese listed sites, or FEMA regulatory floodways. While strict application of the exemption criteria may not be appropriate on some parcels, it is important to note that existing regulations and objective standards remain applicable in areas of natural and protected lands, as described in more detail under the Common Sense Exemption application section below.

Table 1 RD-7, RD-10, BP, LC and SC Zoning Districts Natural and Protected Lands

Zoning Designation	Total Parcels	21080.085 Eligible	21080.085 Not Eligible
RD-7	13,440	13,274	162
RD-10	10,229	10,184	45
SC	678	670	8
LC	1421	1,397	24
BP	1,054	1,054	4
Totals	**26,822**	**26,579**	**243**

Therefore, while the Public Resources Code Section 21080.085 statutory exemption would apply to nearly all the parcels subject to the resolution, and while existing regulations would avoid impacts even

if development were proposed on portions of parcels identified by the legislation as "natural and protected lands," the exemption would not fully apply to all parcels with zoning updates. Thus, rather than applying the Public Resources Code Section 21080.085 statutory exemption, Sacramento County has determined that the project would be exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the Common Sense Exemption.

Common Sense Exemption Application
The State's adoption of Public Resources Code Section 21080.085 Statutory Exemption reflects a policy determination that actions of this nature, that are intended to implement an approved housing element and facilitate infill housing development, generally do not result in significant environmental impacts. Aside from the minority of parcels within the identified natural and protected lands, the County's proposed amendments are otherwise consistent with and meet the intent of Public Resources Code (CEQA Statute) Section 21080.085 by implementing a schedule of actions contained in an approved housing element. Further, proposed amendments do not approve any specific development project or allow any development on properties where development was not previously allowed – rather the amendments are limited to entitlement requirements for residential use, developments standards, and design standards – all intended to encourage infill residential development and implement the Housing Element. Any future development would remain subject to applicable local, state, and federal permitting requirements.

As described above, the proposed changes that occur on parcels that intersect with natural and protected lands were parcels that meet the following definition of natural and protected lands – wetlands areas within 300 feet of wetlands, hazardous waste sites, and FEMA regulatory floodways. Sacramento County permits construction on lands that contain such "natural and protected lands" and has an established regulatory framework along with State and Federal requirements in place to avoid potential impacts. These regulations remain applicable to any future development facilitated by the proposed amendments and include the following:

FEMA Floodways:
Future development would be subject to Chapter 16.44 of the Sacramento County Code for land grading and erosion control, as well as the Statewide Construction General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Sacramento County Floodplain Management Ordinance requires an analysis of how grading impacts the surrounding area, including identification and preservation of floodplain storage. Section 906-09 of the Floodplain Management Ordinance regulates floodways. Specifically, 906-09 (C) states *'any development within floodways that will cause increases the base flood elevation shall only be permitted if the County has applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for modification of the flood insurance rate maps and has received conditional approval of such modifications, and all other applicable provisions of this ordinance are satisfied.'*

Wetlands:
Future development would be required to adhere to local, State, and Federal regulations for protection of wetlands. Future projects would also be subject to the requirements from the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife for protection of wetlands and riparian areas.

Hazardous Materials
The Sacramento County Environmental Management Department (EMD) reviews proposed projects such as a subdivision, tentative parcel map, or conditional use permits to determine if the proposed project will meet county and state requirements for items such as on-site sewage disposal, wells, solid waste, hazardous materials storage, potentially contaminated sites and other environmental health

issues. EMD's review may result in conditions for development being placed on the project in order to protect the public's health and environment.

Sacramento County Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) is under EMD and streamlines and provides consistent regulatory activities, including inspections, permitting, and enforcement, for specific environmental and emergency response areas related to environmental hazards. This division has been designated as the Sacramento region's CalEPA and these programs are administered throughout the County of Sacramento and its incorporated cities.

For removal of underground storage tanks, The California Health and Safety Code (H&SC), the California Code of Regulations (CCR) and the Sacramento County Code (SCC) require that an underground storage tank (UST) owner or operator must obtain a permit to remove a UST. The Environmental Management Department (EMD) is the agency that issues UST removal permits in Sacramento County. All soil and water sampling meets EMD requirements including quality control, sampling plot map, chain of custody and third party sampling analysis by a state certified testing lab.

Some properties that may be developed pursuant to the proposed Resolution are identified on lists maintained pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List). Future development of these properties would continue to be subject to all applicable state hazardous materials requirements and the oversight of the appropriate regulatory agency, including the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) or the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB), as applicable. For properties undergoing active investigation or remediation, development may not proceed until the applicable regulatory agency determines the site is suitable for the proposed land use or approves the necessary remedial actions. For properties that have received regulatory closure, future development must continue to comply with any applicable land use covenants, engineering controls, institutional controls, deed restrictions, operation and maintenance requirements, or other conditions established as part of the site's closure.

Conclusion

Future development in accordance with the proposed amendments would continue to be consistent with zoning and General Plan land use designations. The proposed amendments do not approve any specific development project, and any future development would remain subject to applicable local, state, and federal regulations, including requirements related to wetlands, floodways, grading, stormwater management, biological resources and hazardous materials remediation. The implementation of the proposed amendments do not result in any physical change to the environment. Accordingly, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that adoption of the amendments may have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, the proposed amendments are exempt under 15061(b)(3), the Common Sense Exemption.

Copy to:
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Julie Newton 8/27/26

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ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR OF
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