



CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE
Community & Economic Development Department
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Economic Development Commission

FROM: Mark Brodeur, Director

RE: One Zoning Code Modification to Encourage More Housing

Introduction:

As you know, housing, particularly rental housing in Pacific Grove is in great demand. A report from the American Planning Association suggests that more people are renting now more than ever. Rental housing, in all of its forms can help fill the gap for families unable to afford to purchase a house in our community. We have several employees that drive several miles to come to work in Pacific Grove simply because our demand outstrips the available supply which in return artificially drives the rental prices higher and out of reach for most middle income earners.

Pacific Grove is nearly built out and upon first glance there doesn't appear to be any large vacant land holdings that could be converted to housing use.

Pacific Grove's best chance to increase housing is in the downtown. The downtown is the only zoning district in the community that permits mixed use which is the allowance of residential units above commercial use. The allowance of mixed use opens the door for upper floor housing units in existing (and new) buildings with underperforming upper floor offices.

One of the primary roadblocks to increasing the number of development proposals in the downtown is a current regulation that allows only 75% of the parcel to be covered with impervious surface (buildings/paving).

Our current General Plan is over twenty years old. However, even back in 1996 the authors saw how the restrictive downtown regulations were out-of-step with the reality of how our downtown was historically developed.

The Table found in 23.31.040 of the Zoning Code stipulates that the maximum building height in the downtown may be 40 (forty) feet if the site coverage does not exceed 75%. The issue with this development standard is that it does not reflect the existing historic building pattern of our downtown. In fact, the 75% site coverage reflects more of a suburban building character and our beloved downtown would look totally different today if built under current zoning. A review of the building patterns viewed in an aerial photo of the downtown reveals that most existing buildings that are over 40 feet high cover 100% of the parcel that they sit on. This existing 100% site coverage metric is important to maintain in order to reflect the urban nature of our downtown. The conclusion is that the current built-out nature of the downtown is satisfactory and does not require drastic site coverage requirements that are completely out of context with the existing development pattern.

Here are a few General Plan Policies that suggest we need to consider this change.

POLICY 22 Review and revise height and story limits to maintain compatibility of new and remodeled buildings with the existing character of Downtown.

POLICY 23 Encourage new residential uses in the Downtown, but limited to the upper stories of new and existing buildings. The City will consider providing a third-story floor area bonus for upper-story restaurant and /or residential use.

Program S Consider establishing separate building standards for Downtown parcels fronting on Lighthouse Avenue and for parcels fronting on side streets.

A modification to the Zoning Code should be focused on preserving the tightly knit character of the downtown while enhancing its efficiency, economic vitality and appearance.

The current site coverage requirement (in downtown) contained in the Zoning Code discourages new development of mixed use projects in the downtown because of the burden of having to provide a considerable percentage of the site in open space. This open space requirement, while sounding admirable is completely at odds with the historic building pattern in the downtown and should be revised to more accurately reflect the existing pattern of development.

Recommendation:

The recommendation is to remove the 75% lot coverage requirement for a 40 foot high building and replace it with 100%. Delete any reference to a 30 foot high building and the lot coverage of 90%. See below.

Table 23.31.040 Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts Development Standards (Continued)

	C-1/C-1-T	C-D	C-FH ¹	C-2	C-V	I
Building Form Requirements						
Building height (max.) ³	40' with max. site coverage of 75%; 30' with max. site coverage of 90%	40' with max. site coverage of 75%; 30' with max. site coverage of 90%	35'	40'	40' with max. site coverage of 75%; 30' with max. site coverage of 90%	40'
Site coverage (max.) ⁴	75 – 90%, depending on building height	100% 75 – 90%, depending on building height	75%	90%	75 – 90%, depending on building height	90%