

**City of Colusa  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**

**MEETING DATE:** September 24, 2008

**AGENDA ITEMS:** Direction to staff to begin review of City Zoning Code

**PREPARED BY:** John Linhart, Planner

**APPLICANT:** N/A

**OWNER:** N/A

**SITE DATA:** N/A

**BACKGROUND:**

As a part of the General Plan update of 2007, the city needs to update the City Zoning ordinance to bring it into conformity with the General Plan Land Use map and Land Use policies. Appendix A (the Zoning Code) was last modified in 2002. The City’s zoning code should be updated periodically, as needed due to changes in the nature of housing and commercial markets. At the very least, each time a city amends its General Plan or Housing Element, the code must be updated to reflect those changes to the overriding policy documents.

State law requires the Zoning Codes (and Municipal Code) to be in compliance with the General Plan. Typically, the entire zoning code is not updated very often due to the level of work involved and the cost of a comprehensive revision. In Colusa’s case the 2007 General Plan update contains significantly different policies than the previous GP in areas relating to land uses, and the times have changed significantly since the original was written. It is both important and legally required that the City begin the process to bring the two documents into conformity.

**REQUESTED ACTION:**

Review the current Land Use Element of the GP and the current Zoning Code (Appendix A) and begin the discussion with Staff concerning the amendment or revision of the zoning code for the City of Colusa.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

This is not a project under CEQA at this time. When the amendment or revision of the zoning code is ready for adoption, it will then become a project under CEQA and that project will be reviewed for any environmental impacts.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

N/A

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Provide direction for staff to begin the amendment or revision of the current Appendix A (zoning code).

**ANALYSIS:**

The current zoning code is in need of revision. It is old and not responsive to the demands of development in the current market. In order to maintain compliance with the updated Land Use element of the General Plan, it is required that the City review and update the Code to bring it into compliance with the GP. Since an update or revision is required, this

would be the logical time to review and revise the code in order to bring it up to date with current practices in the field.

The City's current zoning code does not provide much flexibility in lot design and configuration. A new code should be clear but flexible in order to promote both land use and lot and subdivision design that meets the goals established in the GP.

For example; the GP calls for residential densities that fall within a range of 3-8 units per acre. The minimum lot size for R-1 zones in Colusa is 8,000 square feet. When the average allowance for streets and sidewalks are removed from a typical parcel, a subdivision with 8,000 square foot lots will have a net density of only around 3 units per acre. In order to reach the mid-point of the GP range specified, lots need to be allowed that are smaller than those that are specified in our zoning code.

There are other factors that contribute to overall density besides lot size. These can include street design standards, whether or not alleys are included or required, parkland or open space requirements, etc. Whatever revisions/changes that PC approves to the zoning code will clarify for the public what development can take place on property within the City of Colusa in the various zones of both residential and commercial and industrial property.

After Planning Commission have provided direction to Staff, there will begin a public input process where planning Commission and the general public will be involved the crafting of the final zoning code that will be presented to first Planning Commission for approval and then City Council for final approval and adoption.

The purpose of this meeting will be to begin the update process and establish some basic guidelines and direction to Staff so that whatever form the code update takes, it will reflect the community's desires and maintain the character of the community.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Review the attached Land Use Element of the 2007 General Plan and the Colusa Zoning Code so that the Commission can begin the discussion with Staff regarding the revision to the zoning code to bring it into compliance with the GP.

**FINDINGS:**

N/A

**Exhibits:**

1. Land Use Element of the 2007 Colusa General Plan
2. City of Colusa Appendix A (zoning Code)
3. Sample maps showing various lot sizes and the resulting housing density