

# ZONING CODE UPDATE

## Why Do We Need to Update the Zoning Code? (part 1)

### We Need Modern Rules to Meet Today's Needs

→ Palm Springs hasn't had a full zoning overhaul in more than forty years. In that time, our city has changed, our people have changed, and the world around us has changed. What hasn't changed? A zoning code that is outdated, complicated, and, too often, a barrier. Today, those **old rules make it harder and more expensive to build the housing, workplaces, and gathering spaces** that support our residents, our businesses, and the visitors who sustain our economy.

We deserve a zoning code that reflects today's Palm Springs: modern, inclusive, and ready for the future.

### We Need to Maintain Our Regional Advantage

→ Unlike many neighboring cities, Palm Springs doesn't have endless tracts of open land. Most of our big undeveloped parcels are privately held, too costly to develop, or permanently protected as part of the mountains and desert we all treasure. That's part of what makes Palm Springs so special—but it also means **growth here is more complicated and expensive**.

And when building is expensive, housing becomes expensive. Jobs become harder to attract. Families and young workers go elsewhere. If we want to maintain Palm Springs' **competitive edge**—not just as a world-class destination, but as **a place where everyday people can thrive**—we need rules that let us build smarter, not just bigger. Smarter zoning that promotes **higher density in strategic locations** is how we make the most of the land we have, **while protecting the landscapes we love**.

### We Need Housing That Keeps Our Community Whole

→ Palm Springs is a city known for its diversity, creativity, and welcoming spirit. But today, too many of the **people who power this community**, including restaurant servers, nurses, teachers, hotel staff, artists, and entrepreneurs, **cannot afford to live here**. Many drive long distances from other towns, and some spend hours on the road each day.

By updating our zoning code to **allow more housing in the right places**, we make it possible for those who work here to live here. That means:

- **A stronger local economy**, with paychecks spent at our own businesses.
- **A more reliable workforce for employers**.
- **Less traffic and cleaner air**, because fewer people have to commute from outside the city.
- **More neighbors walking, shopping, and gathering in our neighborhoods**, creating the kind of vibrant community that draws people here in the first place.

Smarter zoning means Palm Springs can be a place where everyone belongs,, not just the few who can afford it now.

## QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OPINIONS?

Learn more at [www.engagepalmsprings.com/zoneps](http://www.engagepalmsprings.com/zoneps).

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# ZONING CODE UPDATE

## Why Do We Need to Update the Zoning Code? (part 2)

### We Need to Meet State Requirements

→ The State of California requires Palm Springs to **add 2,600 new housing units by 2029. So far, only 848 units have been built.** We are falling behind. **Neighboring cities** with cheaper land are meeting their mandates and **attracting our workforce, and the dollars they spend, away from Palm Springs.**

If we do nothing, we don't just lose out on housing. **We risk losing State funding** that supports essentials like roads, sewers, affordable housing, our library, the swim center, and the navigation center.

Updating our zoning code is how we keep that support flowing, and how we show Sacramento, and ourselves, that Palm Springs is serious about its future.

### Bottom line

This isn't just about rules and requirements. It's about people. Updating our zoning code means **nurses can live near the hospitals where they work, artists can afford to stay in the city that inspires them, and families can see a future for themselves right here in Palm Springs.** It means less traffic, cleaner air, stronger businesses, and a healthier, more resilient community.

**In short: smarter, higher-density zoning isn't about changing who we are. It's about making sure Palm Springs stays the community we love—for everyone.**

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## KEY TOPICS BEING EXPLORED



### HEIGHT

#### WHY DOES PALM SPRINGS NEEDS MORE HEIGHT AT ALL?



##### → VACANT LAND

Available vacant land is shrinking across the city.



##### → GENERAL PLAN

The recent Housing Element states Palm Springs must provide 2,557 new housing units by 2029.



##### → FISCAL SECURITY

Uncertain tourism dollars makes expanding the city's tax base essential for services and infrastructure.



##### → STATE LAW

While definitions may change, the overall direction is clear: provide more housing, and the Zoning Code should reflect this.

#### HOW TO ADD HEIGHT IN A SMART WAY?



##### → FOCUS ALONG CORRIDORS

Concentrate taller buildings along well-served, commercial corridors instead of spreading taller buildings throughout the city.



##### → BOOST RETAIL AND TRANSIT TOO

Adding height along commercial corridors helps shops thrive and strengthens the transit network.



##### → MITIGATE VISUAL IMPACTS

Use additional design standards to help mitigate the impact of taller buildings and allow for smoother transitions.



### HOUSING

Palm Springs needs more housing, especially more lower cost housing. More flexible standards for building form, size and placement are being considered.

#### WHY RELAX HOUSING RULES?



→ Can help **unlock more land for development**, that previously couldn't meet zoning requirements.



→ Relaxing lot sizes, setbacks, and height requirements **can make it easier to build smaller**, more affordable housing alongside luxury units.



→ Reducing required parking, **boosts affordability**.



### PARKING

A reduction in parking requirements along commercial corridors is being considered, not just for affordable housing but for residential uses more broadly.

#### WHY REQUIRE LESS PARKING?



→ **Parking takes up a lot of land** - Land in Palm Springs is expensive and could be better spent on housing people instead of cars.



→ **Building parking is expensive** - surface parking can cost between \$5K-\$10K/space, structured parking \$27K-\$40K/space, and underground parking \$30K-\$50K/space!



→ Parking can create **dull sidewalks and blank facades**. Reducing parking helps create more engaging sidewalks and active public spaces.

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# ZONING CODE UPDATE

## FAQ (PART 1)

### What is the Zone Palm Springs project about?

→ The ZONE Palm Springs project is the first comprehensive update to the City's Zoning Code since 1988. These rules govern how land can be developed and used and this project aims to modernize the Zoning Code to better reflect current community needs and future growth. The new Zoning Code will be designed to be more flexible, user-friendly, and to better align with new State Laws and the city's recent General Plan 2040 and Housing Element update.

### What does the Zoning Code regulate?

→ The Zoning Code regulates things like: land use; lot size; building design--such as building height, setbacks, and size; site design--such as walls and fences, parking, and signs; and other elements that shape development in Palm Springs.

### Where does the Zoning Code apply?

→ The Zoning Code applies to all land within the city limits that isn't regulated by a Specific Plan, including allotted and fee Tribal land. The city's Zoning Code is not enforceable on Tribal Trust land.

### What are the main goals of the project?

→ The primary goals are to:

- **Modernize the Zoning Code** to be user friendly, support compatible land use and development, and align with the city's long-term vision and goals.
- **Diversify Housing** by encouraging different housing options and increasing supply citywide.
- **Promote Climate Resiliency** in reducing urban heat, improving water management, and creating a more walkable environment.
- **Fostering Design Integrity** with objective residential design standards and clear commercial design guidelines while maintaining historic preservation.
- **Elevating Inclusivity** by reducing barriers to equity, improving accessibility for peoples of all abilities, and fostering inclusive engagement.

### What has been done to date?

→ The project has involved several in-person and virtual community meetings to gather public input. This has included bilingual sessions in English and Spanish, as well as ASL interpretation at key events. Meetings so far include a project kickoff (June/July 2024), a Zoning Code Audit presentation (October 2024), and a series of in-person and virtual meetings in Spring 2025 to discuss draft zoning districts and the proposed zoning map.

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# ZONING CODE UPDATE

## FAQ (PART 2)

### What is being proposed in the draft zoning districts and zoning map?

→ The draft zoning districts and zoning map are early-stage documents that are intended to spark conversation and community input. The city's consultants have just begun drafting the development rules for the new Zoning Code that will be presented for input at community meetings later this year. Those draft development rules will offer greater detail about where and how future development might occur.

The proposed full draft of the Zoning Code will be unveiled in the Spring of 2026 with opportunities to provide feedback at community meetings and formal public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council before final adoption.

Below are some key highlights of the draft zoning districts and zoning map:

- **Streamlining Single-Family Zoning** – Reducing 5 existing districts to 2
- **Creating More Housing Options** – for single family and multi-family housing
- **Aligning with the General Plan** – Increasing maximum height in R-3 from 2 to 3 stories
- **Supporting Small Hotels** – Establishing dedicated zoning for them along with compatible uses
- **Concentrating Growth along Corridors** – Allowing up to 5 stories along commercial corridors like Tahquitz Canyon & South Palm Canyon
- **Vibrant Downtown** – Increasing maximum heights to 7 stories (similar to the existing Rowan hotel) to accommodate future development needs

The draft zoning districts and zoning map are available online at [www.engagepalmsprings.com/zoneps](http://www.engagepalmsprings.com/zoneps) along with a recorded webinar. Residents can review and comment at their convenience!. Public comments on these materials are currently scheduled to remain open through **September 21, 2025**.

### What are the next steps for the project?

Looking ahead, there will be additional opportunities to participate: an in-person community meeting to review the draft code and guidelines, 2-3 virtual public meetings on focused topics, ongoing opportunities to comment online or by email, and formal public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council with adoption beginning Spring 2026. We are committed to making the process inclusive and accessible, and public input will continue to play an important role in shaping the future zoning code.

### How can I connect and stay informed?

You can stay updated and involved in the project by signing up for updates using the "Stay Informed" widget on the Zone Palm Springs project page [www.engagepalmsprings.com/zoneps](http://www.engagepalmsprings.com/zoneps) and by contacting the Planning Department by email at [ZonePS@palmspringsCA.gov](mailto:ZonePS@palmspringsCA.gov).

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