



CONNECTMENLO

menlo park land use & mobility update

PROPOSED M-2 AREA ZONING

The *ConnectMenlo* project includes zoning regulations and design standards for the M-2 Area. Zoning and design rules help realize the vision expressed in General Plan goals, policies, and programs, including by facilitating high-quality, sustainable development with beneficial space for public use. This memo explains how zoning fits into the *General Plan Update* and describes its purpose and use.

PROCESS: HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The General Plan Update is a multi-step process. The process began with the creation of the Guiding Principles, which were developed in a collaborative public process and are intended to guide growth and preserve the City's unique features over the next 20 years. Next, the maximum potential development map was drafted, guided by input from the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), members of the public, Planning Commission and City Council. The map showed the types and locations of future land uses and associated building heights, as well as potential infrastructure improvements with the intent of creating a live/work/play environment. The potential total square footage, number of housing units, hotel units, and jobs that could result from the proposed land use changes will be used to analyze potential environmental and fiscal impacts. During the Summer and Fall of 2015, staff and the consultant team were focused on drafting and fine-tuning the General Plan Land Use and Circulation goals, policies and programs. Similar to previous steps in the process, the ConnectMenlo team conducted a number of meetings and community events to engage with the GPAC and community to focus on these items. The proposed General Plan land use designations and goals, policies and programs seek to both preserve the qualities of the city and to accommodate change that can benefit the community through increased revenue that supports services and direct provision of amenities that enhance the quality of life in Menlo Park.

The proposed General Plan Land Use Element contains a number of programs that will be concurrently implemented with the General Plan Update. One of the key items is the development of the Zoning Ordinance Update to create the associated M-2 Area zoning districts for consistency with the proposed General Plan land use designations. Each General Plan land use designation is closely aligned with one or more zoning districts. In general, the General Plan land use designations have remained unchanged, with the exception of the addition of several new categories, including Office, Life Sciences, and Mixed Use Residential, which are all within the M-2 Area. Corresponding zoning districts for Office, Life Science and Mixed Use Residential have been drafted and will be the focus of the upcoming discussions.

WHAT IS ZONING?

Zoning governs land use. It is a way to manage the physical development of land and specify the areas in which different land uses may be located. The City of Menlo Park zoning regulations are located in the Zoning Ordinance (Title 16 of the Municipal Code), which includes development regulations to control features such as floor area ratio (FAR), building heights, lot coverage, and parking requirements, and in some districts, design standards.

WHY USE ZONING?

Most US cities use zoning regulations to shape the built environment, and the *ConnectMenlo* process has included numerous discussions on how future development should look and interface with the public realm. Zoning regulations and design standards control the appearance of development, including aspects like block length, lot size, building mass and scale, public and private open space, sidewalks and paseos, building projections and facades, roof planes, and upper-story setbacks. Often a particular area is zoned as a district so that all development in that area follows the same rules. A primary purpose of the proposed zoning and design rules for the M-2 Area is to promote complementary uses and appearance.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

The community vision for the M-2 Area developed through the *ConnectMenlo* process has led to creation of three proposed new zoning districts, as depicted on the Draft M-2 Area Potential Zoning and Street Classifications Map and summarized on the attached Draft M-2 Area Zoning Comparison Table: Office (O), Life Sciences (LS), and Residential-Mixed Use (R-MU). These three districts are intended to encourage the live/work/play environment that this planning process has determined is desirable along Willow Road and in the Jefferson Drive area. The Draft M-2 Area Zoning Comparison Table describes the size, density, and height associated with each zoning district. A smaller portion of the M-2 Area will continue to be governed by existing zoning.

Each of the proposed new districts allow increased potential development on sites that are at least 3 acres, subject to the provision of community amenities desired and described by the community (see the Community Amenities for the Office (O), Life Science (LS) and Residential Mixed Use (R-MU) Zoning Districts document). The new O and LS districts could allow taller buildings and increased building square footage than currently allowed. The O District allows three potential locations for hotel development, as specified in the Preliminary Draft Zoning Map. The R-MU district allows a mix of residential and commercial uses, with a minimum of 20 dwelling units/acre (du/ac) and up to 100 du/ac on sites, subject to providing community amenities. Any residential development seeking a density bonus will be required to provide 15 percent of the total units as affordable to low, very low, and extremely low-income households, in addition to providing community amenities. New design standards, transportation demand management requirements, and green building/sustainable building requirements apply to these zones.

WHAT IS STAYING THE SAME?

Parts of the M-2 Area already had and will continue to have the following zoning districts: Light Industrial (M-2); Commercial Business Park (M-3); Neighborhood Commercial (C-2-B and C-2-S), and High Density Residential – Affordable Housing Overlay (R-4-S – AHO), in which development has already occurred. The language defining these districts is generally staying the same. However, Neighborhood Commercial (C-2-B) is proposed to allow residential on second floors along Willow Road.

NEXT STEPS

The proposed draft zoning district regulations will continue to be refined through the process. Refinements may be in the form of revisions to other sections (e.g. definitions) in the Zoning Ordinance for consistency and clarity, changes to the format to place topics in an appropriate location either within the Zoning Ordinance and/or other sections of the Municipal Code or documents, as well as modifications to reflect feedback from the public, GPAC, and Planning Commission.

On Thursday, January 14, 2016, the City will be conducting a focus group to discuss the proposed zoning regulations. The input received during the meeting will be shared with the GPAC at its upcoming meeting on January 28, 2016. Guidance from the GPAC will help inform a study session with the Planning Commission in the coming months.

WHAT IS ATTACHED FOR REVIEW?

- Draft Office (O) Zoning District Regulations
- Draft Life Sciences (LS) Zoning District Regulations
- Draft Residential Mixed-Use (R-MU) Zoning District Regulations
- Draft Community Amenities for the Office (O), Life Sciences (LS) and Residential Mixed Use (R-MU) Zoning Districts Document
- Draft M-2 Area Potential Zoning and Street Classifications Map
- Draft M-2 Area Zoning Comparison Table