



ZONING TOPIC – Rethinking Appropriate Development Standards with the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) Update

Thinking about Zoning Ordinance Reform

Zoning, initially designed to regulate land use and density for public health, has evolved in some ways to be an impediment for growing communities to adapt to new circumstances. Land use regulations and zoning laws have been linked to higher housing prices, reduced construction activity, and a decrease in the elasticity of housing supply.

By examining our existing zoning code in relation to the policy direction provided by the 2040 General Plan, we can identify strategies that adjust our historic zoning approaches and development standards to provide increased flexibility in development practices.

The City of Shasta Lake’s 2024-2025 Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update (CZO) presents a unique opportunity for the community to craft a zoning ordinance that recognizes the changes that have occurred since the city was incorporated in the early 1990s, while also laying the foundation for the Shasta Lake of the future – a future with many more residents, a more diverse economy, and increased housing opportunities.

Bundling Zoning Reforms

Bundling zoning reforms such as increased density and building heights, reduced building setbacks and parking requirements, elimination of minimum lot coverage requirements, and reduction of lot size requirements can prove effective in encouraging new approaches to development. These reforms can be part of the CZO and can create more options for those at the local level to

determine what is best for the area's marketplace while also fostering improved land use efficiency.

For example, by reducing minimum lot size requirements, smaller homes could be built at reduced cost, making it potentially easier to find housing that fits a family's unique needs and financial means. These reforms could also encourage developers to serve a broader range of market preferences because of the increased flexibility provided by these types of zoning reforms.

Zoning Reform that Meets Shasta Lake's Needs

Implementing zoning reform can present challenges, especially in more rural areas and towns such as Shasta Lake. Minimum lot sizes or residential density and commercial intensity limitations may also serve health and safety needs by recognizing the constraints presented by local conditions. This is particularly relevant in areas with limited infrastructure (like sewer hookups) or which lack adequate levels of public services like fire protection.

Reforming zoning requirements necessitates a thoughtful balance between promoting new community development and recognizing our community's existing circumstances. The ultimate success of the CZO update depends on our ability to tailor the new zoning regulations to suit our area's needs and characteristics – now and into the future.

Recognizing these opportunities and the inherent challenges, it is important to remember that zoning ordinances, unlike the laws of physics, are open to change and amendment over time. Zoning reform is not a one-size-fits-all effort but rather a context-dependent process—one that can be tailored to address the needs of Shasta Lake.