

4.1 MODEL MIXED-USE ZONING DISTRICT ORDINANCE

The following model zoning district provisions represent a commercial zoning classification that permits, rather than mandates, a vertical mix of commercial and residential uses within the same building. The district is intended to accommodate a physical pattern of development often found along village main streets and in neighborhood commercial areas of older cities.

Primary Smart Growth Principle Addressed: Mix land uses

Secondary Smart Growth Principle Addressed: Compact building design

CX1, Neighborhood Commercial, Mixed-Use District

101. Purpose

The purposes of the CX1, Neighborhood Commercial, Mixed-Use District are to:

- (1) Accommodate mixed-use buildings with neighborhood-serving retail, service, and other uses on the ground floor and residential units above the nonresidential space;
- (2) Encourage development that exhibits the physical design characteristics of pedestrian-oriented, storefront-style shopping streets; and
- (3) Promote the health and well-being of residents by encouraging physical activity, alternative transportation, and greater social interaction.

102. Definitions

As used in this ordinance, the following words and terms shall have the meanings specified herein:

“Floor Area Ratio” means the ratio of a building’s gross floor area to the area of the lot on which the building is located.

“Gross Floor Area” is the sum of the gross horizontal areas of all floors of a building measured from the exterior faces of the exterior walls or from the centerline of walls separating two buildings. Gross floor area does not include basements when at least one-half the floor-to-ceiling height is below grade, accessory parking (i.e., parking that is available on or off-site that is not part of the use’s minimum parking standard), attic space having a floor-to-ceiling height less than seven feet, exterior balconies, uncovered steps, or inner courts.

“Mixed-use Building” means a building that contains at least one floor devoted to allowed nonresidential uses and at least one devoted to allowed residential uses.

103. Allowed Uses

Uses are allowed in “CX1” zoning districts in accordance with the use table of this section.

USE GROUP	Zoning District
Use Category	CX1
Specific Use Type	
P= permitted by-right C = conditional use N = Not allowed	

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RESIDENTIAL	
Household Living	
Artist Live/Work Space located above the ground floor	P
Artist Live/Work Space, ground floor	C
Dwelling Units located above the ground floor	P
Detached House	C
Multiunit (3+ units) Residential	C
Single-Room Occupancy	C
Townhouse	C
Two-Flat	C
Group Living	
Assisted Living	C
Group Home	P
Nursing Home	C
Temporary Overnight Shelter	C
Transitional Residences	C
Transitional Shelters	C
PUBLIC AND CIVIC	
Colleges and Universities	P
Cultural Exhibits and Libraries	P
Day Care	P
Hospital	N
Lodge or Private Club	N
Parks and Recreation	P
Postal Service	P
Public Safety Services	P
Religious Assembly	P
School	C
Utilities and Services, Minor	P
Utilities and Services, Major	C
COMMERCIAL	
Adult Use	N
Animal Services	
Shelter/Boarding Kennel	N
Sales and Grooming	P
Veterinary	P
Artist Work or Sales Space	P
Drive-Through Facility [See comment]	C
Eating and Drinking Establishments	
Restaurant	P

USE GROUP	Zoning District
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Tavern	C
Entertainment and Spectator Sports	
Small (1–149 seats)	P
Medium (150–999 seats)	N
Large (1,000+ seats)	N
Financial Services	P
Food and Beverage Retail Sales	P
Gas Stations	N
Lodging	
Small (1–16 guest rooms)	P
Large (17+ guest rooms)	C
Medical Service	P
Office	P
Parking, Commercial (Nonaccessory)	C
Personal Service, including health clubs and gyms	P
Repair Service, Consumer, including bicycles	P
Residential Storage Warehouse	N
Retail Sales, General	P
Vehicle Sales, Service, and Repair	N
INDUSTRIAL	
Manufacturing, Production and Industrial Services	
Artisan (hand-tools only; e.g., jewelry or ceramics)	C
OTHER	
Wireless Communication Facilities	
Co-located	P
Freestanding (Towers)	C

Comment: *This use table should be refined to reflect local characteristics and planning objectives. The range of uses allowed should be kept as broad as possible in order to ensure that the district is economically viable. Note that this model allows, as a conditional use, drive-through facilities. Drive-through facilities may be appropriate in such areas in connection with banks and pharmacies. Whether to allow them is a policy choice, no different than other policy choices in selecting permitted uses. Also keep in mind that in buildings with residential units, commercial use issues will be largely self-policing because owner associations and builder/developers will ensure that commercial uses in mixed-use buildings will be compatible with upper-story residential uses.*

104. Commercial Establishment Size Limits

The gross floor area of commercial establishments in the CX1 district shall not exceed [15,000] square feet.

Comment: *Floor area limits are proposed in the model ordinance to help ensure that allowed commercial uses would be geared toward a neighborhood market area. Some local ordinances impose much more restrictive floor area limits in neighborhood-oriented districts. The limit proposed in this model ordinance would accommodate a modern drug store. If floor area limits are employed, the standards should not be so restrictive as to hamper the economic viability of the district.*

105. Indoor/Outdoor Operations

All permitted uses in the CX1 district must be conducted within completely enclosed buildings unless otherwise expressly authorized. This requirement does not apply to off-street parking or loading areas, automated teller machines, or outdoor seating areas.

106. Floor-to-Floor Heights and Floor Area of Ground-floor Space

(1) All commercial floor space provided on the ground floor of a mixed-use building must have a minimum floor-to-ceiling height of [11] feet.

(2) All commercial floor space provided on the ground floor of a mixed-use building must contain the following minimum floor area:

(a) At least [800] square feet or [25] percent of the lot area (whichever is greater) on lots with street frontage of less than [50] feet; or

(b) at least 20 percent of the lot area on lots with [50] feet of street frontage or more.

Comment: *In areas with strong residential real estate markets, ground-floor space is sometimes viewed as an afterthought, particularly when developed by those with a poor understanding of mixed-use development. These types of provisions can help ensure that ground-floor space will meet the needs of future retailers and not sit vacant for years after upper-floor residential units have been leased or sold.*

107. Lot Area per Unit (Density)

The minimum lot area per dwelling unit shall be [1,000] square feet for mixed-use buildings and [1,500] square feet for all other buildings.

Comment: *If mixed-use buildings are desired, such buildings should be rewarded with more flexible development standards. The model ordinance allows higher residential densities in mixed-use buildings than it does in single-use buildings.*

108. Floor Area Ratio

The maximum FAR shall be [2.0] for mixed-use buildings and [1.25] for all other buildings.

Comment: *To encourage mixed-use buildings, the model ordinance allows higher FARs for mixed-use projects.*

109. Setbacks

(1) The entire building façade must abut front and street side property lines or be located within [10] feet of such property lines.

Comment: *Rather than mandating a zero-foot “build-to” line for all properties in CX1 zoning districts, this model offers flexibility to accommodate shallow building setbacks that are sometimes necessary to accommodate features such as outdoor seating/display areas, stoops and sidewalk widening. Alternately, it is possible for the ordinance to establish a formula to determine setbacks based on the average setback of buildings in a block face. For an example of this, see Section 108 of the Model Town Center Ordinance (below).*

(2) The minimum rear setback is [0–30] percent of the lot depth.

Comment: *The appropriate minimum building setback will depend on lot and development patterns in the area. When alleys abut the rear of CX1 lots, no rear setback may be necessary, except perhaps for upper floors. On the other hand, when CX1-zoned lots will abut the rear property line of residential lots, buildings in the CX1 district should be set back from rear property lines in order to protect the privacy and open feeling expected within residential rear yards.*

(3) No interior side setbacks are required in the CX1 district, except when CX1-zoned property abuts R-zoned property, in which case the minimum side setback required in the CX1 district shall be the same as required for a residential use on the abutting R-zoned lot.

Comment: *Most pedestrian-oriented shopping streets are lined with buildings that span the entire width of the lot. The standard proposed here will help reinforce that pattern, while also ensuring that if a CX1 district abuts a residential zoning district, a “typical” residential side yard will be provided.*

110. Building Height

The maximum building height shall be [38–50] feet for mixed-use buildings and [35–47] feet for all other buildings.

Comment: *Some communities will want to regulate height by stories rather than feet above grade, since stories will allow for greater flexibility in building design. The standards proposed allow greater height for mixed-use buildings than for single-use buildings because mixed-use buildings are required to have taller floor-to-ceiling heights on the ground floor. The proposed standards will accommodate three- or four-story buildings.*

111. Off-Street Parking

(1) [Insert off-street parking standards]

(2) No off-street parking is required for nonresidential uses in CX1 districts unless such uses exceed [3,000] square feet of gross floor area, in which case off-street parking must be provided for the floor area in excess of [3,000] square feet.

Comment: *Paragraph (2) may be incorporated into paragraph (1). Exempting small retail businesses from compliance with off-street parking requirements will help promote pedestrian-oriented character and encourage use/reuse of storefront retail space. Communities should also*

examine off-street parking ratios with an eye toward reducing the amount of off-street parking required overall and encouraging shared and off-site parking arrangements.

(3) Off-street parking spaces must be located to the rear of the principal building or otherwise screened so as to not be visible from public right-of-way or residential zoning districts.

112. Transparency

(1) A minimum of [60–75] percent of the street-facing building façade between two feet and eight feet in height must be comprised of clear windows that allow views of indoor space or product display areas.

(2) The bottom of any window or product display window used to satisfy the transparency standard of paragraph (1) above may not be more than [3–4.5] feet above the adjacent sidewalk.

(3) Product display windows used to satisfy these requirements must have a minimum height of [4] feet and be internally lighted.

113. Doors and Entrances

(1) Buildings must have a primary entrance door facing a public sidewalk. Entrances at building corners may be used to satisfy this requirement.

(2) Building entrances may include doors to individual shops or businesses, lobby entrances, entrances to pedestrian-oriented plazas, or courtyard entrances to a cluster of shops or businesses.

Comment: *Requiring ground-floor windows and sidewalk-facing entrances help make for a more pleasing pedestrian environment.*

114. Vehicle and Driveway Access

No curb cuts are allowed for lots that abut alleys.

Comment: *Driveways that cross sidewalks disrupt pedestrian movements and pose safety threats. They should be the rare exception in neighborhood-oriented mixed-use districts.*

References

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