



Statement of Vision

Lafayette's panoramic view of the Rocky Mountains inspires our view into the future. We value our heritage, our unique neighborhoods, a vibrant economy and active lifestyles. We envision a future that mixes small-town livability with balanced growth and superior city services.

NOTICE OF PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP

This meeting will be conducted in person and by electronic and telephonic means pursuant to the Declaration of Local Disaster Emergency issued by the Mayor of the City of Lafayette on March 17, 2020 and City of Lafayette Resolution No. 2020-23 extending the Declaration until terminated by City Council.

SEE BELOW THE AGENDA FOR MEETING ACCESS

DECEMBER 8, 2021

AGENDA

**6:00 PM PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP
Council Chambers
1290 S. Public Road
Lafayette, Colorado 80026**

- I. OPENING OF WORKSHOP
- II. 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW - 2022 WORKPLAN PRESENTATION
- III. LAND USE CODE GOALS AND TOPICS
- IV. ADJOURN

OPTIONS FOR ACCESSING THE MEETING

- Attend the meeting in person. City Hall Council Chambers, 1290 S. Public Road.
- Tune to Comcast Channel 8 or HD Channel 881.
- [View the meeting on your computer at https://www.lafayetteco.gov/627/Streaming-Video](https://www.lafayetteco.gov/627/Streaming-Video)
- Listen to the meeting by calling 1-877-853-5247 (toll free). Once connected, you will be asked for the meeting number. The meeting number is **832 4397 4552**. Then press # after entering the number.



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MEMO

MEETING DATE: December 8, 2021
AGENDA TITLE: Land Use Code Goals and Topics
PREPARED BY: Jeff Brasel, Planning and Building Director
Phil Kleisler, Principal Planner

Executive Summary

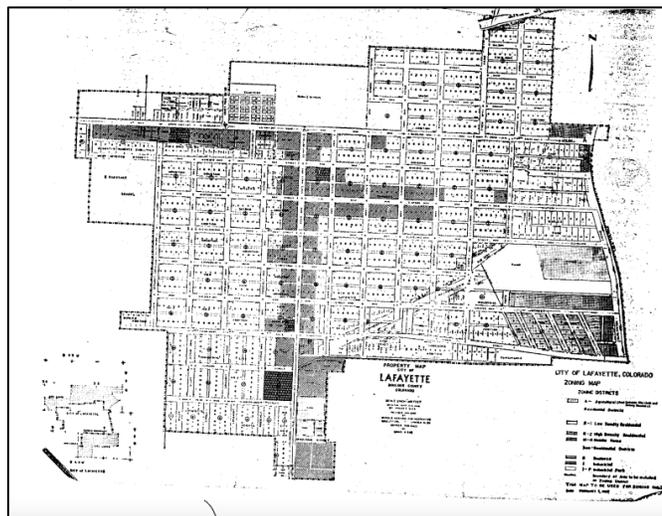
The purpose of this agenda item is to receive input from the Planning Commission about goals and potential topics for the upcoming zoning code rewrite project. With the adoption of the Legacy Lafayette Comprehensive Plan complete, staff is developing a scope of work for a rewrite of the Lafayette Zoning Code. This project will be the first (and one of the most impactful) implementation items for the new comprehensive plan. Input received during this meeting will be shared with council during its January work session and inform the anticipated scope of work for the project.

Background Information

The City of Lafayette created a Planning Commission and adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1967. The initial zoning regulations included many of the same regulations enforced today, like districts (Figure 1), definitions, permitted uses, Planned Unit Developments, building setback and height requirements, a sign code, and review processes. The Lafayette Zoning Code ([Chapter 26 Development and Zoning](#)) has been periodically amended to address community goals and specific concerns.

Codes generally have a predictable shelf-life. They can evolve into overly complex regulations with inconsistent vocabularies and internal conflicts, leading to frustrations among applicants, staff, and decision-makers. This lack of accessibility, coupled with a refreshed community vision in the Legacy Lafayette Comprehensive Plan (“comprehensive plan”), has resulted in the city’s code being ripe for an overhaul.

Figure 1: Lafayette’s original zoning districts established through Ordinance 416 (1967).



It is generally a best practice to reexamine a city's zoning regulations following the adoption of a comprehensive plan. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended that the council approve (with conditions) the 2021 comprehensive plan. Council approved the comprehensive plan on First Reading on Nov. 16 and is scheduled to consider adoption of the plan at Second Reading on Dec. 7.

Questions for the Planning Commission

The city has budgeted funds in 2022 for consultant services to overhaul the Lafayette Zoning Code. The Planning Commission will play a key role in guiding the process and ultimate deliverable: a new Lafayette Zoning Code. Staff is requesting input on high-level goals for the project ahead of drafting a scope of work and engagement plan for the project. Staff will provide a brief introductory presentation during this agenda item, then pose the following two questions to the Planning Commission for input.

Question 1: When thinking about a successful code rewrite process, what comes to mind?

As with other planning projects, the process is often just as important as the final deliverable. With this in mind, staff will be developing an engagement and communications plan to complement the efforts of the consultant team ultimately selected for the project. This input will inform the scope of work and engagement plan for the project.

Question 2: What are key topics that should be addressed through this project?

Staff views this effort not as a retooling of our existing code, but as a complete overhaul. The city should have a general sense of the overall direction of the new code (e.g., the type of code) and substantial items needing to be addressed (e.g., clear and objective criteria). This is an opportunity for members of the Planning Commission to share thoughts about key topics that should be addressed as part of this project.

As a starting point, city staff has begun internal discussions to identify key topics, including:

1. Implement the newly adopted comprehensive plan.

- a. Implement the policies and strategies of the comprehensive plan.
- b. Align zoning districts with the newly adopted comprehensive plan land use map. The comprehensive plan includes 12 land use designations, including several new uses: Neighborhood Mixed Use, Adaptable Commercial, Eclectiflex, and Mobile Home. This project will identify what existing and new zoning districts are necessary to implement the new land use map.
- c. Implement city plans, including (but not limited to) the Economic Development and Housing Strategic Plan (2022), Wildlife Plan (2022), and the Sustainability Plan.
- d. Incorporate urban design standards based on guidance within Chapter 6 of the comprehensive plan.
- e. Explore developing an incentive program to implement city goals (e.g., affordable housing, adaptive reuse of buildings, sustainable development practices) in exchange for increases in building height, parking, and other standards beyond what is otherwise permitted through the underlying zoning.

2. Create a clear, objective, and accessible code.

- a. Restructure the Lafayette Zoning Code by removing it from the Municipal Code to a standalone location. This is often referred to as a Unified Development Code.
- b. Organize the code to be more logical and user-friendly (e.g., the generous use of graphics, clearer tables).
- c. Develop a clear and objective set of criteria that can be consistently applied, for example:
 - i. The Planned Unit Development criteria include 40 standards, many of which are aspirational statements (e.g., use of “encourage” vs. “provide”).
 - ii. Many uses in [Table 26-A Permitted Uses](#) are not defined, leaving room for inconsistent interpretation.
- d. Revamp the Sign Code, outdoor lighting standards, and nuisance/zoning citation process.
- e. Significantly reduce the number of new Planned Unit Developments and explore ways to incentivize landowners to convert existing PUD approvals to traditional zone districts.

3. Create a more streamlined and predictable development review process.

- a. When considering a more predictable, outcome-focused process - reexamine the thresholds for when an application is subject to staff, Planning Commission, and council review.
- b. Create more streamlined administrative processes and applicant tasks.

Next Steps

City Council is having a similar discussion about this project at its January 24 work session. City staff will draft a Request for Proposals (RFP) based on the input from the Planning Commission, council, and others. The RFP is expected to be released in February or March, with a consultant team beginning work with the city in the spring of 2022.

The project will likely begin with an initial analysis of the existing code, often referred to as a “code diagnostic”. The code diagnostic begins by reviewing the existing code and interviewing city staff and others. The final report is presented to the community and decision-makers (i.e., Planning Commission, City Council). These reports include a candid assessment of strengths and weaknesses, key issues needing to be addressed, and a possible structure and table of contents for the new code. In short, the diagnostic report helps bridge the gap between the high-level policies of the comprehensive plan to specific regulations.

The actual work of code drafting begins once the diagnostic report is complete. Code drafting is an iterative process that includes drafting a section, “testing” it through development scenarios, and getting input from the community and decision-makers. The full, draft code is released once all sections have undergone that (or some similar) process. As context, Table 1 includes a sample code rewrite process.

Table 1: Sample Code Rewrite Process

Phase 1: Project Initiation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with city staff, Planning Commission, and City Council to discuss high-level goals.• Draft a Request for Proposals• Select a consultant team• Develop a community engagement and communications plan
Phase II: Issue Identification
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultant team onboarding• Data and background analysis• Interviews• Diagnostic report• <i>Community engagement window</i>• Planning Commission/City Council Work Session• Direction to proceed with code rewrite
Phase III: Code Rewrite
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Engagement Window</i>• Topic #1: Code drafting, scenario testing, report results• Topic #2: Code drafting, scenario testing, report results• Topic #3: Code drafting, scenario testing, report results• 60% Draft Released• <i>Engagement Window</i>• 90% Draft Released• <i>Engagement Window</i>• Planning Commission/City Council Work Session• 100% Draft Released
Phase IV: Code Adoption
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning Commission Public Hearing (recommendation)• City Council Public Hearing (decision)

Supplemental Materials

- City of Golden Code Diagnostic ([link](#))
- City of Glenwood Springs Code Diagnostic ([link](#))
- City of Atlanta Code Diagnostic ([link](#))

**Staff Presentations for December 8, 2021
Planning Commission Workshop**

[Link to 2021 Year in Review – 2022 Workplan Presentation](#)

[Link to Land Use Code Goals and Topics Presentation](#)