



## City of Laguna Beach

Community Development  
Department

## INFORMATIONAL GUIDE FOR

# ZONE CHANGE/ ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

### Purpose

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The City of Laguna Beach Zoning Ordinance divides all property into various zoning districts for designating allowed land uses and development standards. California state law requires these zoning districts to be consistent with the land use designations of the City's General Plan. As such, amendments to the General Plan also require subsequent rezoning to provide consistency. In addition, any other provision set forth in the Zoning Ordinance may be amended by the following process outlined below.

### Process

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**Step 1 – Applicant Consideration of Project:** Early in the consideration of a potential zone change or ordinance amendment, the applicant should determine the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance designations for the area under consideration. It is important that the proposed change be consistent with the City's General Plan, otherwise the change cannot be approved without a General Plan Amendment. In addition, the applicant is advised to review and discuss the proposed change with surrounding residents and property owners prior to a formal application.

**Step 2 – Pre-Application Conference:** Prior to submitting a formal application, the applicant is advised to make an appointment with a member of the Planning and Zoning staff to discuss the feasibility of the request. This will allow staff to review the request for consistency with the General Plan and assess any environmental concerns, engineering requirements or specific traffic, site and design criteria. This early review and input should save the applicant possible delay and expensive plan revisions later in the process.

**Step 3 – Filing of Application:** The applicant should submit an application explaining the request, pay the filing fee, and submit any other required information to the Planning Division of the Community Development Department. A staff planner will be assigned to review the material to make sure all the required information is provided. The applicant will be notified within 30 days after filing as to whether the application is complete or what additional information is required.

**Step 4 – Environmental Review:** All zone change requests are required to have an environmental assessment to determine whether it is necessary to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). If an EIR is required, the applicant should request a meeting with a staff planner to determine the procedure for EIR preparation.

**Step 5 – Staff Review for Planning Commission:** Following the receipt of a formal application, the planning staff will review the proposed zone change or amendment in terms of consistency with the City’s General Plan and the compatibility of the proposed land uses with surrounding land uses. A written staff report will be prepared for the Planning Commission which will include a description of the project and staff recommendations. A copy of this report will be available to the applicant prior to the Planning Commission hearing. Copies are also available to the public, prior to the Public Hearing.

**Step 6 – Planning Commission Review:** The Planning Commission is required to hold at least one public hearing on zone change and zoning ordinance amendment applications. At least ten days prior to the meeting, **owners** of property within 300 feet of the subject site, and **tenants and residents** within 100 feet of the subject site, will be notified by mail of the forthcoming hearing, and a notice of the public hearing will be posted at City Hall and in the local newspaper.

At the public hearing, staff will present an oral report and recommendation. This presentation will be followed by testimony from the applicant and then by any interested persons who may wish to comment on the application. A decision will be made by the Planning Commission after evaluating the public testimony, the staff report, and the environmental information. The Planning Commission shall recommend approval, or disapproval of the requested action. The recommendation of the Planning Commission will then be forwarded to the City Council.

**Step 7 – City Council Review:** After the Planning Commission makes a recommendation, a public hearing will be scheduled for the City Council. The same legal notification provided for Planning Commission consideration is also provided for the City Council hearing. At the hearing, the Council will consider the public testimony, staff report, environmental information, and the Planning Commission recommendation. Following the public testimony, the City Council may: (1) refer the matter back to the Planning Commission for further evaluation; (2) continue the hearing to a specific time and place; or, (3) close the public hearing a make their final decision then, or at a later date. The decision of the City Council is final.

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