

**CITY OF AMARILLO, TEXAS
CODE OF ORDINANCES**

CHAPTER 4-10 - ZONING



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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(FOR DISCUSSION ONLY)**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Planning in the City of Amarillo

The major purpose of the Zoning Ordinance is to implement the City's long-term planning policies. These are found in its comprehensive plan, the *Amarillo Comprehensive Plan 2010*. Chapter 2, Land Use & Community Character, the Future Land Use & Character Map (Map 2.1), and the Neighborhood Plans (adopted as amendments to the Comprehensive Plan) establish long-term policies for land use. Chapters 3 through 7 of the Comprehensive Plan contain additional planning-related policies that can be implemented or partially implemented through the Zoning Ordinance.

The Zoning Ordinance establishes development and land use metrics that implement the Comprehensive Plan, and zoning districts that align with the Future Land Use & Character Map. The Zoning Ordinance provides clear rules about what is expected of applicants in order to gain approval to develop land in the City.

How to Read This Document

The Zoning Ordinance is written in a way that allows readers to quickly find information that is of interest to their property or neighborhood. Purpose statements are included to assist readers in understanding the intent of a regulation. In addition, the numbering conventions are consistent with the rest of the Amarillo Municipal Code to maintain consistency.

How the Document is Organized

The Zoning Ordinance is divided into 11 Articles, some of which are further separated into Divisions. These are structured so that the most frequently used information appears first, with the definitions and technical information (such as submittal requirements) appearing later.

The first article, Introduction, contains some basic information on the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance. It sets the stage for the remainder of the document.

Article II, Zoning Districts, establishes the uses permitted in each district. It states which uses are allowed in limited situations, known as "specific use," and which uses are prohibited. Development standards for each zoning district are also included. These standards include metrics for residential density, height, setbacks, and lot coverage. A

Table showing the permitted and specific uses in all districts is presented in Article II, Division 8.

The Use Regulations (Article III) contain requirements for specific uses and development types that apply in all zoning districts. Examples include accessory uses, home occupations, and temporary structures and uses. These uses may or may not be permitted as of right or as a specific use, depending on how they are listed in the applicable zoning district. The standards are designed to address particular issues that are raised by the particular use—such as state or federal legal requirements, impact on surrounding neighborhoods, or development allowances or incentives.

The Development Standards (Article IV) consolidate the development metrics that apply to all development and land uses in the City’s zoning jurisdiction. This includes standards for site improvements such as access, parking, landscaping, and building height. It includes general standards for blocks and lots that determine how lots, blocks, and setbacks are measured. Similarly, the height standards establish standards and rules of interpretation that guide the zoning districts standards. This article also contains the City’s sign regulations.

The Procedures (Article V) tell the applicant how projects are entitled. This article provides information on the City’s administrative framework and procedural workflows. Division 1 provides general information about the application process, public hearings, and notification. Division 2 describes the procedures for zoning approval, including site plans, specific use permits, text amendments, and rezonings. Processes to appeal and request variances from the Zoning Board of Adjustment also are set out in Division 2.

Article VI, Nonconformities, addresses situations where a use or building has been legally established before new regulations that would otherwise not allow them. Under Texas law these uses are grandfathered, but may have standards that dictate whether and how they can expand or continue. This article also addresses the grandfathering of building permits that are in process when the Zoning Ordinance, or changes to the Zoning Ordinance, are adopted.

Article VII, Agencies, establishes, or references Amarillo Municipal Code or state statutes relating to, the agencies involved in administering the Zoning Ordinance. These include the Planning and Zoning Commission; Board of Review for Landmarks, Historic Districts, and Downtown Design; Planning and Development Services Department, and Zoning Board of Adjustment. The City Council is the City’s legislative body, and adopts amendments to this Chapter (including rezonings).

Article VIII, Enforcement, establishes procedures to enforce the Zoning Ordinance, including penalties for violations.

The Definitions & Rules of Interpretation (Article IX) provide the Zoning Ordinance's "glossary." It defines terms and phrases used in the Zoning Ordinance, the uses listed in the zoning districts, and acronyms. It also establishes rules of interpretation, including rules for determining the location of zoning district boundaries.

Article X, Legal Provisions, includes legal language such as the severability clause, how to apply standards that differ from each other, and the effective date.

Article XI, Submittal Requirements, provides a checklist of the information that applicants need to have a complete application that the City can process. It also establishes fees, or cross-references other sections of the Amarillo Municipal Code.

Purpose Statements

Many sections include a purpose statement. These statements are aids in explaining and interpreting this ordinance. They are not separate standards. They will not be used to deny or condition development, but they may be used to explain how the standards are applied. They may also include legislative findings, which provide facts that support ordinance requirements.

Determining the Regulations for a Specific Site

To determine the regulations of the Zoning Ordinance applicable to a specific site, the reader must first find the site on the Zoning Map. The map will show the zoning district that is applied to the site. The official Zoning Map is maintained online through the City's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) website:

<https://amarillo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=22e08572f127442f9e401f8838170464>

The reader should then look up all the relevant regulations, starting with the zoning districts and development standards. The zoning districts state whether a use is allowed by right, allowed with a specific use permit, or prohibited. The dimensional standards in each district include the setback, building height, and related standards that apply to the uses that are allowed.

In addition, readers should consult Article III, Use Regulations, to see if additional requirements apply to the use they are contemplating.

Determining Which Procedures Apply

Each section in Division 2 of the Procedures article includes a process workflow. This starts with a subsection entitled “Applicability.” This subsection describes the situations where a particular process is needed. If the subsection applies, the reader should then consult the following subsection, which describe how an application is initiated, how an application is processed, the criteria for review, and cross-references to other parts of the Zoning Ordinance. In addition, a subsection entitled “Scope of Approval” describes the rights granted to an applicant by the issuance of approval of the permit. Keep in mind that not all permits entitle an applicant to begin construction. In fact, most simply allow an applicant to proceed to the next step in the approval process.