



STRIVE SAN MATEO GENERAL PLAN 2040 FAQs

1. Where can I find the new land use designation for my property?

You can find parcel-specific information by viewing the [Interactive Land Use Map](#) on www.StriveSanMateo.org, on the [General Plan 2040 page](#). You can search for an address, and the map will provide the land use, height limit, floor area ratio, maximum density range, and zoning district. You can also find this information by searching the [City of San Mateo Property Information Report](#).

2. What is the difference between the General Plan land use designation and zoning district for a parcel?

The land use designations identify the locations in the city where a broad range of uses may occur, and the overall parameters for density and intensity of parcels. The Zoning Ordinance builds on the General Plan to provide specifically defined permitted land uses, along with specific development standards for parcels in each district. Since land use designations are broader than zoning districts, each land use designation may correspond to several zoning districts, encompassing a range of uses, densities, and intensities. Zoning districts are more focused and identify more specific allowed uses, densities, intensities and site standards such as setbacks.

3. What is Measure Y, and how does it affect the heights, densities, and floor area ratios (FARs) of the General Plan?

Measure Y is a ballot measure that was passed by voters in November 2020 to extend the height, density and intensity limits within the City of San Mateo originally adopted under earlier ballot measures (Measure H in 1991 and Measure P in 2004). It has a sunset date of 2030. Overall, Measure Y sets height limits around the City at up to 55 feet (five stories), density limits at up to 50 dwelling units per acre, and nonresidential intensities (floor area ratio or FAR) at up to a 3.0 FAR. In some areas of the City, it also allows for projects up to 75 dwelling units per acre and 75 feet height with the provision of specific community benefits. Specific height, density and intensity limits set by Measure Y correlate to the City's existing Zoning Map.

Under General Plan 2040, some land use designations include building heights, densities, and intensities that exceed the limits set by Measure Y. However, the increased limits are not currently in effect as voter approval is required to amend Measure Y. Following adoption of General Plan 2040 in March, the City Council voted on July 15, 2024, to place a ballot measure to amend Measure Y on the November 2024 ballot. If voters approve the ballot measure, the General Plan's Land Use Map would fully take effect allowing for the higher height, density, and intensity limits. If the ballot measure is not approved, any

inconsistency between the Measure and General Plan 2040 shall default to the provisions specified in Measure Y.

You can find the parcel-specific heights and intensities currently in effect by viewing the [Property Information Report](#) map on the Community Development Department's website, on the [Planning Division's page](#). Currently densities are found in the [Zoning Code](#), under the specific zoning district.

4. The densities provided in the General Plan and the Zoning Code are inconsistent. Which density should be applied to my parcel?

Generally, the densities provided in the Zoning Code apply while Measure Y remains in effect. General Plan Policy LU 1.9 requires any inconsistency between Measure Y and other provisions of the General Plan's Land Use Element to default to the provisions specified in Measure Y, as long as the measure is in effect. At this time, all densities in the city are governed by Measure Y, which are reflected in the current Zoning Code.

5. My new General Plan land use designation allows residential uses, but the existing Zoning Code states that a Special Use Permit (SUP) is required because my parcel is zoned for commercial uses. Does the General Plan or Zoning Code apply?

Residential uses, as permitted under the General Plan, would be allowed on the parcel. The City may require the proposed housing development project to comply with the objective standards and criteria contained elsewhere in the zoning code that are consistent with the general plan designation. For example, if a site has a General Plan land use designation of Residential Medium I, but the site is zoned C1 – Neighborhood Commercial, then the City can require the project to comply with objective development standards in zoning districts that are consistent with the Residential Medium I designation, such as the R3 – Multiple Family Dwellings (Medium Density) zoning district. Alternatively, an application can include a request for a rezoning to a different zoning district that is aligned with the General Plan land use designation.

These types of development applications would be processed in accordance with the City's Planning Application Guide and applicable sections of the Zoning Code. The proposed developments would also be subject the limits set by Measure Y, as long as the measure is in effect.

6. What is the timeline for Zoning Code updates for General Plan consistency?

A comprehensive update to the Zoning Code is planned to begin in early 2025 and anticipated to be completed in two years over multiple phases.

7. How will Planning Applications be processed during the Zoning Code update?

The City will process development applications based on the type of project and in accordance with state law, when applicable. Projects are evaluated using the City's Planning Application Guide, objective standards and policies in the General Plan, and applicable sections of the Zoning Code. Applicable Zoning Code sections are those that do not conflict with the General Plan or are not addressed by it (e.g., open space size, setbacks, parking ratios).

Please see Question 10 for processing applications with inconsistent General Plan land use designations and Zoning Code requirements.

8. Can I develop my property with a density that is less than the density range for the land use designation?

Yes, the density listed in the General Plan are the ranges of maximum allowable density, which will be further refined during the process to update the Zoning Code. Since the ranges are maximums, densities lower than the ranges will be permitted, unless specifically precluded by a City adopted code or policy. Please also note that all densities must be consistent with Measure Y limits until it is amended by the voters or sunsets in 2030.

9. Can I build a 100% housing or commercial project on parcels with a Mixed-Use land use designation?

Yes, the Mixed-Use land use designations allow for a range of uses, including developments that are 100% percent residential, commercial, or office, as well as developments with a combination of uses.

10. Can I apply for a rezoning application ahead of the City's comprehensive Zoning Code update? What is the timeline and cost associated?

Yes. If you would like to change the zoning of your property to match the General Plan land use designation before the comprehensive update to the Zoning Code has been completed, you can apply for Zoning Reclassification Planning Application (PA) as a stand-alone request or as part of a development proposal. Please note that submittal of a request as this is a legislative action that is considered by the Planning Commission and City Council.

If you would like to apply for a zoning reclassification that doesn't align with the current land use designation, you would have to apply for a zoning reclassification and a General Plan Land Use Map amendment. Please note that no General Plan Land Use Map amendments are being accepted or processed by the City until after the November 2024 election.