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Item # 8A

City Council/Planning Commission Staff Report

To: Lemoore City Council & Planning Commission
From: Christopher Jordan, AICP, PMC
Date: December 29, 2010
Subject: Comprehensive Zoning Update – Planning Permits and Development
Project Processing

BACKGROUND:

In May 2010, the City initiated an effort to comprehensively update the City's Zoning Code and other related development standards and processes (e.g., subdivision standards, floodplain ordinance, density bonus provisions, Downtown design standards). The primary objective of this effort is to bring the City's regulations into conformance with the new General Plan, adopted by the City Council in 2008. Secondary objectives outlined by the City include updates to ensure compliance with relevant Federal and State laws, as well as updates to reflect changing conditions and best practices in zoning regulations.

Over the past six months, the City and its zoning consultants from PMC have held four public workshops to discuss the content and structure of the new Zoning Code and a proposed new Zoning Map for the City. With that input and direction from staff, PMC has started work on the Zoning Code Update. The intent of this workshop is to review the City's current planning permits and process and identify necessary changes and improvements to incorporate into the new Zoning Code. Input and direction from this workshop will further inform PMC's work. The project schedule assumes that a public draft of the Zoning Code will be available for review and feedback in spring 2011.

DISCUSSION:

Overview of City Planning

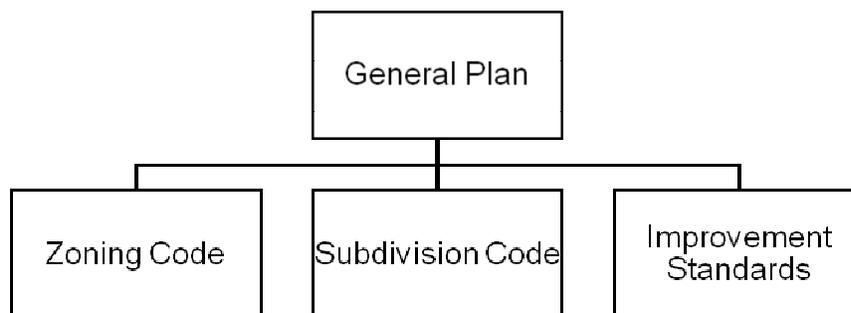
Planning provides a process for the City to decide what gets built where. The City uses planning to determine the type, intensity, and distribution of land uses within the community. Planning involves the designation and framework of new neighborhoods, districts, retail and employment centers; or it can look at the reuse of existing corridors, and shopping centers. The City defines its overall planning process through the creation and adoption of a General Plan, with details outlined further in other planning documents such as the Zoning Code.

The 2030 General Plan, which was completed in May of 2008, identifies long-range goals, policies and objectives for the physical development of the City over the next 20 years. The General Plan functions as the blueprint for physical development and services for the City. The policies and programs articulate how the City wants to develop and grow. All other development regulations in the City, such as the Zoning Code and Subdivision Ordinance take their direction from the General Plan. These successive plans, programs, and standards must be consistent with the General Plan at all times.

The Zoning Code is the primary regulatory document for land use and physical development, including specific, enforceable standards such as minimum lot size, maximum building height, minimum building setback, design, and a list of allowable uses. The Subdivision Ordinance regulates the layout of neighborhood streets, streetscape design, and various subdividing map processes. Zoning requirements are applied to each individual parcel through a series of districts or zones and corresponding use and development standards.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships between these various documents. As shown, the General Plan provides the overall policy guidance (policy framework) for all subsequent plans and programs (regulatory framework).

Figure 1
Relationships to the General Plan



There are a number of State and Federal regulations that relate to and influence/impact the City's land use controls. Some of the major laws and regulations include the following:

- California Government Code, which provides for:
 - Rules and regulations for land use regulations, such as general plans, zoning law;
 - Rules for processing development applications (the Permit Streamlining Act); and
 - Regulations for the subdivision of land (the Subdivision Map Act);
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which requires public agencies to review and analyze the potential impacts of agency actions, such as approval of development projects;
- California Housing Law, which provides special land use regulations for certain types of residential uses, such as care facilities, group homes, and child day care facilities;
- California Building Code, Fire Code, Plumbing Code, and Electrical Code, which provide minimum construction requirements for new development and remodels of existing development to ensure public safety;
- Federal Housing Law, which provides protections for disabled persons to ensure that they have access to housing within the community;

- Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires persons with disabilities with the right to reasonable access to publically accessible areas and buildings; and
- Telecommunications Act and related rules and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission, which provides regulations for telecommunications services, such as wireless telecommunication (cell phones).
- US Constitution, which provides rights for freedom of speech and due process.

City regulations, specifically including the Zoning Code, must be consistent with all of these laws and regulations. As previously stated, one of the objectives of the City's Zoning Code update project is to review the State and Federal statues and identify changes for consistency.

Summary of the City's General Plan

Some of the important concepts in the City of Lemoore's 2008 General Plan include the following goals:

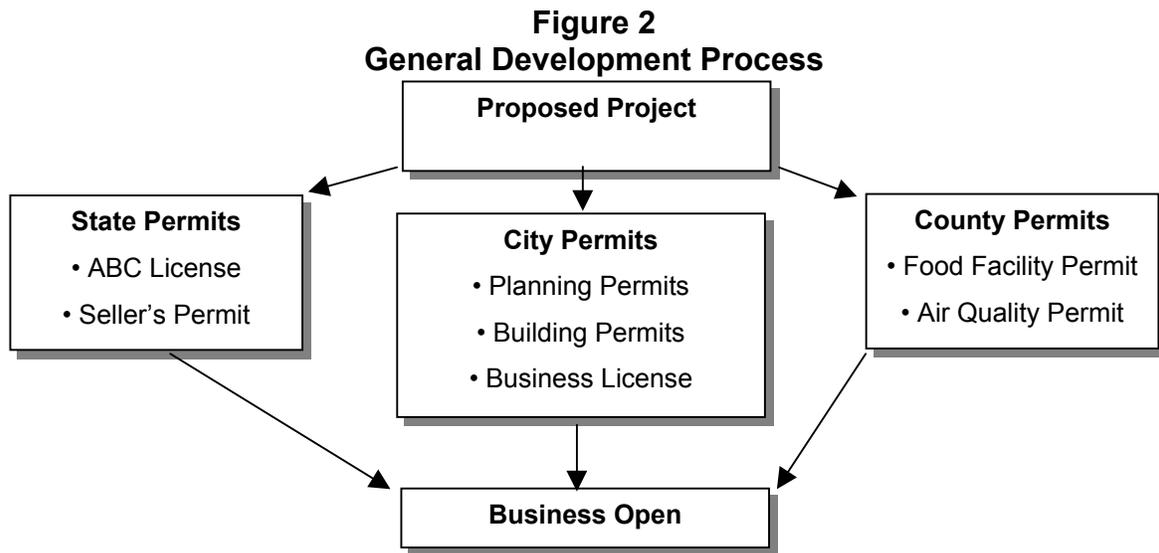
- Promote a sustainable, balanced land use pattern that satisfies existing needs and safeguards future needs of the City.
- Maintain a well-defined compact urban form, with a defined urban growth boundary and development intensities on land designated for urban uses.
- Ensure that new development provides for infrastructure, schools, parks, neighborhood shops, and community facilities in close proximity to residents.
- Foster viable, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood centers and strong, visually attractive regional shopping centers with a mix of tenants to serve both local and regional needs.
- Continue to nurture a vibrant, mixed-use Downtown that is the pride of the community.
- Foster high quality professional office and industrial areas and ensure developments are self sufficient, with appropriate infrastructure, community facilities, and open space for employees.
- Ensure that new shopping centers support Lemoore's small-town character and provide convenient pedestrian access to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Promote site sensitive design and pedestrian-oriented amenities in mixed-use centers.
- Ensure that new professional office and industrial development corresponds to its surroundings in building scale, form, and buffering of adjacent uses.
- Ensure that new professional office and industrial development provides pedestrian access to the surrounding neighborhoods and within the development itself.

As evidenced above, the policies and guiding standards listed in the General Plan establish high expectations for both new development and redevelopment within the City. In order to implement these goals (and the corresponding policies and implementing actions), the Zoning Code and other development regulations of the City need to be updated to better communicate the City's policy direction and expectations for quality development. In some cases, specific standards, such as setbacks, minimum parking requirements, or other numeric standards will provide the effective regulations. However, some of these goals and policies may be more effectively implemented through flexible standards. The Recommendations section of this report describes how this flexibility may work.

The Development Review Process

The development review process provides a mechanism for communities to evaluate proposed project consistency with adopted policies, plans, and regulations. The process varies depending upon the type of project and often involves review and input from other City departments and outside agencies with authority or interest in the particular project.

The development process is a multifaceted exercise that involves multiple reviews by numerous agencies. For instance, a new restaurant may require a business license from the City, an Alcohol Beverage License from the State, and a Food Facility Permit from the County. Among all of these permits, the City's Business License is often the easiest and fastest to obtain. Figure 2 illustrates the general development process.



The City of Lemoore reviews most new development and reuse of existing structures. Depending upon the type of project, use, and location, the City's Zoning Code may require the issuance of one or more Planning Permits or Entitlements. The City currently uses the following Permits and Entitlements to review development activity:

- Conditional Use Permit
- Variance
- Architectural Design Review
- Site Plan Review
- Rezone
- General Plan Amendment

See Attachment A for a summary of these Permits and Entitlements.

These permits are separate than those used to review new subdivisions, which are covered under the City's Subdivision Code (Chapter 8-7 of the Municipal Code) and include Tentative Subdivision Map, Tentative Parcel Map, Final Map, and Parcel Map.

The permits listed above are often referred to as “discretionary” permits and actions because they are issued at the discretion and judgment of the City. This differs from “ministerial” permits, such as building permits, which are automatically issued when the proposal complies with the City-adopted Building Code. “Discretionary” permits and actions are broken down into two categories – “quasi-judicial” and “legislative.” “Quasi-judicial” permits and actions are those such as Conditional Use Permits and Site Plan Review, where the City reviews the proposal and makes a judgment that the project complies with adopted standards in the same way a judge or jury would decide a court case. The City may issue conditions of approval in support of or as a basis for the approval. Violation of the conditions may be a basis for revocation of the permit. “Legislative” decisions are things such as Rezones and General Plan amendments where the City passes a law. Under State law, the City Council is the authority for all legislative decision and those decisions cannot be delegated. The City Council can however delegate authority for quasi-judicial permits.

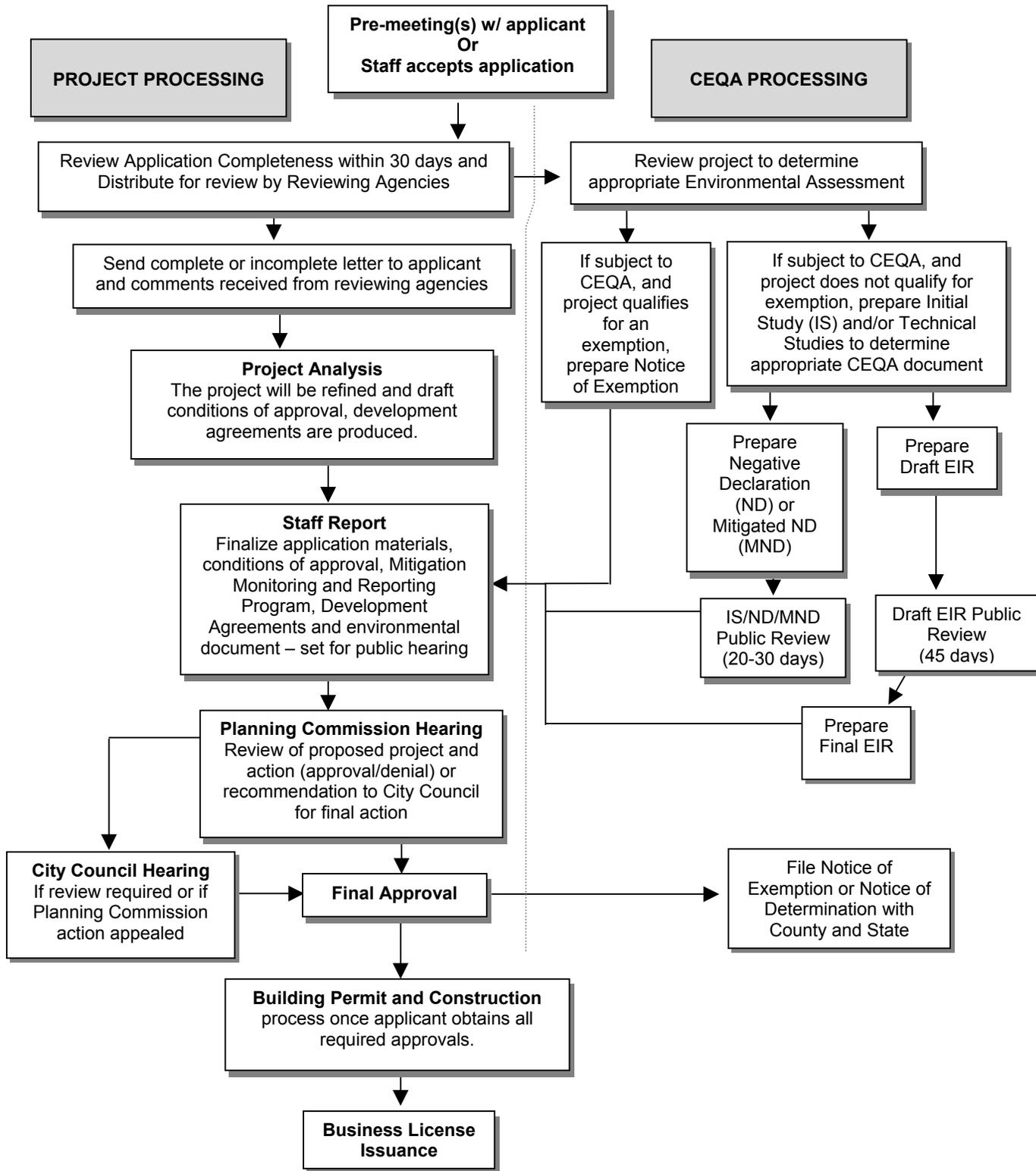
For example, under the City’s existing Zoning Code, a proposed shopping center is required to apply for and receive approval of a Site Plan Review permit, which is a quasi-judicial action decided by the Planning Commission. This plan is reviewed by staff for consistency with the General Plan, Zoning Code, Improvement Standards, and other regulations. Staff works with the applicant to address inconsistencies with adopted standards and, when the plan is finalized, takes the application forward to the Planning Commission for review and action/decision (approval, approval with conditions, or denial). Subsequent tenants (businesses) within the shopping center may require the issuance of additional permits (e.g., Conditional Use Permit) prior to occupancy. The Zoning Code identifies which uses within a particular Zoning District require a Conditional Use Permit. The Site Plan Review and Conditional Use Permit are all discretionary, quasi-judicial permits, because while the City reviews the proposals for consistency with the Zoning Code and General Plan, it also has the discretion to apply project-specific conditions.

These conditions are important because they can help ensure compatibility between adjoining uses and address specific environmental or operational conditions of the proposed development. They can also be used to require additional project components in support of General Plan goals and policies.

Requiring discretionary permits for development projects can also be helpful for both the City and developer. When setup correctly, Planning Permits and Entitlements can provide for various levels of flexibility often desired by both community and property owner. If the Zoning Code were implemented the same way the Building Code is, similar types of development projects would look and function the same across the City. There would be limited flexibility in the implementation of the code. If a discretionary permit is required, the City can (1) ensure that no two shopping centers look exactly the same, either in layout, architecture, landscaping, signage, or other factors, or (2) provide for deviations from development standards in exchange for enhanced building design, pedestrian spaces, or other features.

Figure 3 describes the general development review process.

**Figure 3
General Statewide Development Review Process**



Environmental Review

In parallel with the processing of development permits as described above, the City must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The primary purposes of CEQA are:

- Inform governmental decision makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effects of proposed activities;
- Identify the ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced;
- Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governmental agency finds the changes to be feasible; and
- Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

CEQA requires that public agencies review and analyze the potential impacts of their discretionary actions. This review can take a number of different paths, depending upon the type of development project, size, location, and other factors.

Simple projects, such as remodels and small expansions of existing shopping centers, can often be exempted from detailed environmental review. Larger projects often must go through an Initial Study for preliminary evaluation of a project in specific environmental impact areas. If the Initial Study does not identify any potential impacts, a Negative Declaration is prepared. If the Initial Study does identify potential impacts, but the impacts can be mitigated to a less than significant level, a Mitigated Negative Declaration may be prepared.

Where potential impacts cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level, or where certain project thresholds as defined under State law are reached, an Environmental Impact Report must be prepared. The following figures illustrate the CEQA review process.

Figure 3 illustrates how the CEQA process works together with the development review process.

While ministerial permits, such as building permits and businesses license, are considered exempt from CEQA, the ability to review a proposed development for consistency with the General Plan (and in some cases the Zoning Code), when no other Planning Permits or Entitlements are required, has been held in case law to be a discretionary action. CEQA is to be interpreted to "afford the fullest possible protection to the environment within the reasonable scope of the" law. The intent is not to completely exclude development projects from CEQA – rather it is to require CEQA at the earliest opportunity in order to enable public review. Therefore, if a CEQA review of a project has not been completed and a specific exemption under the State CEQA Guidelines cannot be made, the preparation of a CEQA document (Initial Study/Negative Declaration/Mitigated Negative Declaration or EIR) may be required.

Subsequent Permits

After approval of any discretionary permits, the property owner or his/her designee can apply for any necessary subsequent permits. The most frequent examples of subsequent permits that the City reviews and issues are Building Permits (e.g., initial construction, tenant improvements, sign permits) and Businesses Licenses.

Building Permits are reviewed by the Building Department for consistency with the City-adopted Building Codes. As part of this review, the Building Department may route applications to other departments or agencies for review and comment as needed. The City contracted plan checker, City Engineer, Planning Department, Police Department, Fire Department, and Kings County Health Department may be required to review a Building Permit application prior to issuance. These other departments will review the permit for consistency with any applicable standards or adopted/approved plans (including project conditions of approval). This review is called an Admin Review or Plan Check and is separate from the Site Plan Review that is a Planning Permit and Entitlement.

For instance, a Building Permit for new lights in a shopping center parking lot would be routed to Planning to ensure that the height of the light poles and the distribution of light complies with the Zoning Code standards and any relevant General Plan policies. The Police Department may review the plans to ensure that adequate lighting is provided for safety at building entrances or in areas where people may gather.

Businesses Licenses are generally reviewed in the same process. In this case, the Planning Department would review the permit to ensure that the proposed use is allowed by right in the underlying zoning district, or that a Conditional Use Permit had previously been issued. If a permit had not been issued or the use was not permitted, the Planning Department would follow up with the applicant.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff and the consultant team recommend that the City Council and Planning Commission consider the recommendations below and provide direction as appropriate.

Reassignment of Approval Duties

The City currently has multiple individuals or hearing bodies with approval authority for Planning Permits and Entitlements. These include the Planning Director, the Architectural Design Review Committee, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. Ultimately, only the City Council can pass laws (e.g., approve Zoning Code and Map Amendments, General Plan Amendments) or enter into agreements (e.g., Development Agreements). However, the City Council may delegate other discretionary planning functions to a Planning Commission or other hearing bodies or individuals as adopted by Ordinance. Because members of the City Council are elected officials, the City Council always has final authority for formal appeals of discretionary Planning Permits and Entitlements.

The consultant team recommends the City's approval authority be streamlined as follows:

- The Architectural Design Review Committee either be eliminated or changed to a recommending (rather than an approving) body;
- The Planning Commission have the authority to approve, conditionally approve, or deny applications for all quasi-judicial permits (e.g., Conditional Use Permits, Variances, Site Plan Review and Architectural Design Review); and
- The City Council be responsible for legislative action on all applications for Zoning Code and Map Amendments, General Plan Amendments, Development Agreements, and appeals of all other discretionary Planning Permits and Entitlements. The

requirement for the City Council to “ratify” Conditional Use Permit approvals by the Planning Commission would be removed.

These changes would streamline the time and costs associated with processing development applications by reducing the number noticed hearings and would establish certainty in authority for deciding various permits.

Concurrent Review for Multiple Entitlement Projects

The current Zoning Code requires that when multiple permits or entitlements are required for one project, the approving authorities are separated out by individual entitlement. What this means is that when a project requires both a Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Review, the two permits may be decided by two separate approving bodies. For instance, a new development project (new construction) in the Downtown with a bar or nightclub, with less than 10,000 square feet of building space, would require the following approvals:

Permit or Entitlement	Approving Authority (current)
Conditional Use Permit (for the bar)	Planning Commission (ratified by City Council)
Site Plan Review, Minor exempt from CEQA (for the new building)	Planning Director
Architectural Design Review (for the architecture of the exterior of the building)	Architectural Design Review Committee

The consultant team recommends that projects that require multiple permits or entitlements be considered together as a package and that the ultimate decision be made by the highest level approving authority. For the sample project described above, the Planning Director and Architectural Design Review Committee would review the project and provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission, who would make the ultimate decision on the entire project.

Updated Permits for Consistency with General Plan Policy, Case Law, and Best Practices

The City’s current process requires Site Plan Review for all new permitted or conditionally permitted uses in all non-residential zones and any “use” subject to environmental review under CEQA. Ultimately, this may require new uses in existing shopping centers to apply for a Site Plan Review permit prior to occupancy. Site Plan Review is provided to ensure that structures, parking areas, walks, landscaping and street improvements are properly related to their sites and to surrounding sites and structures. Generally, the Planning Commission is the approving authority for such projects; however, if the project can be found to be categorically exempt from CEQA, the Planning Director may decide the permit.

Additionally, the City requires Architectural Design Review for new development and changes to existing buildings in the Downtown. This permit focuses on the architecture of the building and does not get into any components such as parking design and landscaping. These permits are decided by the Architectural Review Committee.

The General Plan requires that the City conduct a more extensive design review of new construction projects than it does today. This includes reviewing the overall site plan, the configuration of parking, lighting, landscaping, pedestrian amenities such as pathways and seating, and building architecture. This results in a more comprehensive review of new development. For this reason, the consultant team is recommending that the Site Plan Review and Architectural Review Permits be merged together into a Site Plan and Architectural Review Permit.

As part of this update, the consultant team is also recommending that the applicability of this permit be modified. As a starting point for discussion, the consultant recommends the following:

- Major Site Plan and Architectural Review (requiring Planning Commission review and decision) for the following:
 - New non-residential or mixed-use developments of 10,000 gross square feet or more;
 - Additions of 10,000 square feet or more to existing commercial, office, and industrial buildings;
 - New multi-family residential developments (e.g., apartments, condos, townhomes);
 - Any new construction of buildings (e.g., new stores) any size in the Downtown;
 - The design and layout of new residential subdivisions; and
 - Master home plans for single-family residential subdivisions (e.g., PUDs)
- Minor Site Plan and Architectural Review (requiring Planning Director decision) for the following:
 - New non-residential or mixed-use developments of less than 10,000 gross square feet;
 - Additions of less than 10,000 square feet or more to existing commercial, office, and industrial buildings;
 - Custom single family homes in the Neighborhood Residential (RN) district and within PUDs; and
 - Changes to the façade of existing buildings (other than single family residential) anywhere in the City (including Downtown), such as color, building materials, and structural changes.
- Exempt from Site Plan and Architectural Review the following projects:
 - Single-family custom homes, except in the RN district and in PUDs; and
 - Additions to or exterior remodels of single-family residential homes within normal setbacks.

The consultant's recommendation changes the basis of the permit requirements on the size and character (e.g., non-residential, mixed-use, multi-family) of the proposed development, rather than on the use (e.g., barber shop, restaurant) inside the building. It also does not define the permit based upon the requirements of CEQA. This is important because CEQA law (both statute and case law) changes frequently. The City's permit requirements should be based upon a codified standard set by the City Council, rather than a moving target that changes at the will of the State Legislature or through judicial action. Additionally, the application of CEQA exemptions should be based upon the characteristics of the project, not as a way to streamline the permit review.

Provide “Flexi-certainty” in the Code

Developers and business owners often ask that development regulations be updated to (1) allow flexibility in the development standards and (2) increase certainty in the planning process. Planners have called this type of objective the desire for “flexi-certainty.” More flexibility gives developers greater latitude in designing their project with innovative design solutions. Certainty means they have a clear path to project approval and are able to break ground quickly on their project. The sooner they are open, the sooner they are making money. This concept is in keeping with the City’s clear directives for this project is to establish more flexibility in the Zoning Code and clarify the planning process.

To achieve this objective, the consultant team recommends the following changes to the Zoning Code:

- Reassign the approval duties as described above;
- Incorporate the concept of concurrent entitlement review described above;
- Incorporate the changes to the Site Plan Review and Architectural Design Review permits described above;
- As part of the new Site Plan and Architectural Design Review permit, give the Planning Commission and City Council the ability to grant deviations from development standards on a case-by-case basis when the deviation provides better consistency with the General Plan than strict adherence to the standard would;
- In cases of permits that are decided by the Planning Director, allow the Director to elevate the permit to the Planning Commission for review and approval without requiring a formal appeal if the project meets certain criteria (e.g., within a floodplain, may exceed traffic thresholds, major inconsistencies with General Plan and Zoning Code, etc.);
- Update the allowed use listings (what is permitted by right, permitted subject to a Conditional Use Permit, and what is not allowed) based upon General Plan policy direction and the variety of uses that are in the marketplace today. Since new uses may evolve over time and the process to update the Zoning Code takes time, incorporate a concept called “Similar Use Determination,” which allows the Planning Director to determine a use is similar to a listed use based upon performance criteria (e.g., similar traffic, similar function) with the ability to appeal the decision to the Planning Commission;
- Provide a formal process for the Planning Director to make a formal “Zoning Interpretation,” which is an interpretation of the text of the Zoning Code. The interpretation would only be made when an ambiguity is present in the code, such as when a standard may apply to a type of use or building. The Planning Commission would be the appeal authority for the interpretation; and
- Incorporate new development standards that implement the General Plan direction while not over burdening new development (e.g., performance zoning).

ATTACHMENTS:

A. Summary of Existing Planning Permits and Entitlements in Lemoore

Attachment A

Summary of Existing Planning Permits and Entitlements in Lemoore

- **Conditional Use Permit**

- A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) grants an applicant the ability to use his or her parcel in a manner that is not allowed by right. A CUP allows the City flexibility to determine if a proposed land use on a specific site will be compatible with the environment and the General Plan.
- Consideration of a CUP is a discretionary act. This allows the City to deny an application if it determines that the use will have a negative impact on the community. City staff and the Planning Commission will evaluate such items as building placements and size, characteristics of use, traffic generation, noise, hours of operation, adequacy of parking, circulation, landscaping, and overall compatibility of the use with adjoining properties, and other development impacts.
- The Zoning Code specifies what uses are permitted in any zone with a CUP. Prior to applying for a building permit or business license for any use that requires a use permit, the applicant must first apply for and receive approval for the use.
- The Planning Commission is the approving authority for CUPs.
- Conditions may be imposed as necessary to insure that the proposed use will be compatible with the surrounding properties and environment.
- Conditional Use Permits are specifically called for as a type of development permit under State law.

- **Variance**

- A Variance is an entitlement that allows the City the flexibility to determine if special exceptions to development standards are required so that a property may be enjoyed to the same extent of other properties in the same zoning district. Variances are only granted when special circumstances or hardships exist that deprive the property of privileges that other nearby properties in the same zoning district receive.
- A Variance is an entitlement created to benefit the property owner and is not required by the City at any certain stage in the development process; rather, a variance is available for a property owner if the property owner/applicant thinks that it is needed.
- Pursuit of a variance is initiated by a property owner when the property owner feels that physical characteristics of his or her parcel deprive full enjoyment of the potential of the lot that other nearby properties with the same zoning designation enjoy. Circumstances that may warrant pursuit of a Variance include unique lot shape or size, topography, surroundings, location, presence of natural features such as rivers and streams.
- Conditions may be imposed as necessary to insure that the proposed use will be compatible with the surrounding properties and environment.
- The Planning Commission is the approving authority for variances.
- Variances are specifically called for as a type of development permit under State law.

- As specified under State law (California Government Code Section 65906), a Variance may not be issued for a use; it may only be issued for the development of the property.
- **Architectural Design Review**
 - Architectural Design Review is used to implement the architectural design guidelines within the Lemoore downtown area. It provides a process for the City to review proposed development and ensure that new development will be compatible and complementary to the historic character of the Downtown.
 - The design, materials, textures, colors and such other elements of construction which affect the exterior appearance of structures are reviewed.
 - Architectural Design Review is a discretionary act that requires approval by the Architectural Design Review Committee.
- **Site Plan Review**
 - Site Plan Review provides a process for the City to review new development and reuse of existing buildings for consistency with the Zoning Code and to “guide the Building Official” in the issuance of building permits.
 - Site Plan Review is provided to ensure that structures, parking areas, walks, landscaping and street improvements are properly related to their sites and to surrounding sites and structures; to prevent excessive grading of the land and creation of drainage hazards; to prevent the indiscriminate clearing of property and the destruction of trees and shrubs of ornamental value; to avoid unsightly, inharmonious, monotonous and hazardous site development; and to encourage originality in site design and development in the manner which will enhance the physical appearance and attractiveness of the community.
 - Consideration of Site Plan Review is a discretionary act that requires approval by either the Planning Commission or Planning Director.
 - Conditions may be imposed as necessary to insure that the proposed use will be compatible with the surrounding properties and environment.
- **Rezone**
 - A Rezone allows for a change in an existing zoning classification for a parcel or parcels to a different zoning classification consistent with the General Plan. Proposed rezones are evaluated for consistency with the General Plan. If not consistent with the General Plan, the rezone will be denied or a General Plan Amendment may be required.
 - Consideration of a Rezone is a legislative act, but it must be consistent with the General Plan.
 - Approval is determined through a public hearing process with the Planning Commission and City Council.
 - Whenever an applicant submits an application to use his or her property in a manner that is not allowed under the existing zoning designation for the property, a Rezone may be needed prior to the issuance of any building permits.

- **General Plan Amendment**

- A General Plan Amendment allows for a change in the existing General Plan land use classification for a parcel or parcels. Where a Rezone is necessary to change a zoning designation of a property, the new zoning must be consistent with the General Plan. Therefore, a General Plan Amendment may also be necessary. Generally, the City will only consider General Plan Amendments as part of development applications that involve amendments to the Land Use Map and related discussions; text amendments that alter the specific policies of the General Plan are not encouraged at the project level.
- Consideration of a General Plan Amendment is a legislative act.
- Approval is determined through a public hearing process with the Planning Commission and City Council.
- Per State law, the City is limited to a maximum of four General Plan land use amendments per year. As such, if requests for General Plan amendments are frequently requested, the City may group City Council consideration and possible approval of the amendments into quarterly events, as allowed under the law.