

Recode Knoxville
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated: July 2, 2019

1. What is Recode?

- Recode Knoxville is a comprehensive update of the City of Knoxville's outdated zoning code. The zoning code regulates what structures and land can be used for, where a structure may locate on a lot, and how big that structure can be. It also regulates other elements of site development, such as accessory structures, parking and landscape. Zoning regulations are divided into zoning districts, so that use, bulk, yard and development regulations are tailored to the character of the particular zoning district.
- Recode only affects property within the City of Knoxville.

2. Why is Recode necessary?

- Many of the current requirements and standards of Knoxville's zoning ordinance are antiquated and in need of extensive changes. The original ordinance was written over 50 years ago, at which time there was an emphasis on suburban development. The result has been a sprawled, less efficient pattern that left some parts of Knoxville behind.
- While the ordinance as a whole needs to be modernized, amendments such as the South Waterfront and Cumberland Avenue Form Based Codes have been successful in helping to spur redevelopment in those areas. This has fueled demand for increased flexibility in future standards citywide.
- With Recode, more property owners will more easily be able to create the type of mixed-use developments seen in other cities that make them desirable places to work and live.

3. Has Recode been a transparent public process?

- Public input and engagement has been a crucial part of the Recode process.
- There have been more than 90 public workshops, two hearings before the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission, seven City Council workshops (in 2018 on May 16, July 26, Sept. 20 and Nov. 6; and in 2019 on Feb. 7, Feb. 20 and April 4), and two special-called meetings of Council (May 14 and May 30, 2019).
- As a result of public input from a Stakeholder Committee, community groups, neighborhoods and others, Recode has gone through five drafts. Draft 5 is now before City Council in the form of a proposed ordinance for review and amendments.

- Every property owner in the City of Knoxville was notified of the Recode process through a special February 2019 mailing and provided an opportunity to check on the status of his or her property.

4. What will be improved after Recode is enacted?

- Recode will enable mixed-use developments along our major corridors. For example, it will allow the owners of property in traditional shopping areas, such as Bearden and Western Plaza Shopping Center, to create developments with residential, dining, and shopping. This is difficult under the current zoning ordinance.
- Recode will expand the opportunity for housing in the City while protecting the character of our existing neighborhoods.
- Recode will encourage a more walkable, sustainable community that uses resources efficiently as we continue to grow.
- Recode will provide more clarity, certainty and transparency in the development process, including drawings and sketches as examples of allowable development.
- Recode will allow an Accessory Dwelling Unit to be built on property with a single-family house that is owner-occupied. However, there are provisions such as lot size and parking requirements that place limits on ADUs.

5. What properties will be affected by passage of Recode? How will Recode affect me?

- While each current zone will be *renamed* to provide a more rational nomenclature, the vast majority of properties will be unaffected, with the same allowed uses as under the present code. These properties are not being rezoned.
- A small number of properties have been suggested for rezoning, either to protect the character of existing neighborhoods or to bring zoning in line with the current use of the property. For example, an industrial parcel in the middle of a neighborhood may no longer be appropriate. Likewise, some parcels are zoned industrial but transitioned long ago to residential use.
- In any case, no owner in the city will be forced to change the use of his or her property. All current uses will be “grandfathered,” or allowed to continue, unless the use is abandoned and the property is not actively marketed for 24 months.
- In many neighborhoods, Recode will increase existing protections. For example, in West Hills, to better reflect current conditions, the proposed new residential zone will increase the minimum lot size from the current 7,500 square feet to a new minimum of 10,000 square feet. And in Oakwood Lincoln Park, the proposed zoning would limit new

development or redevelopment to single-family homes and small-scale multi-family such as duplexes and four-plexes, keeping in character with the existing development pattern.

- In other cases, Recode provides developers more options, not fewer. For example, the area near the intersection of Central Street and Fifth Avenue is proposed to be zoned Downtown Edge (DK-E). This will allow for development with no off-street parking requirements to reflect the current conditions of existing property and the lack of space for parking onsite.
- To learn how Recode will impact your property specifically, you can compare the current zoning with proposed new zoning (Draft 4) on the map at this link: www.recodeknoxville.com/library/lookup-your-zoning.

6. Does Recode raise my property taxes?

- Recode has nothing to do with property taxes.

The current draft ordinance can be accessed at www.recodeknoxville.com.