

Grand Junction Zoning and Development Code

Module 1: Administrative Procedures | September 2022



This memo provides an overview of the Z&DC updates made in Module 1: Administration and Procedures. This memo is designed accompany distribution of the public review draft of Module 1.

1. Z&DC Update Project Summary

A. Project Goals

- Update the City's regulations to better reflect the goals and policies described in the 2020 One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan, especially those Key Principles related to Responsible and Managed Growth and Strong Neighborhoods and Housing Choices.
- Achieve a higher level of efficiency, consistency, and simplicity.
- Identify constraints and opportunities for affordable and attainable housing, consistent with those identified in the City's recently adopted Housing Strategies.

A portion of the funding for the Z&DC update project is being provided through an Innovative Housing Strategies Planning Grant from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). The grant is intended to help communities understand their housing needs and adopt policy and regulatory strategies aimed at promoting the development of affordable housing.

B. Understanding and Implementing Relevant City Plans and Policies

This project is guided primarily by the One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan (2020) and the Grand Junction Housing Strategy (2021).

C. Code Assessment and Annotated Outline

The updated Z&DC organization and key revisions are described in the [Code Assessment](#), available on the City's project website.

2. Development Code Committee Input

The role of the Development Code Committee in the draft review phase of the Z&DC update is to:

- a. Assist with the technical review of the draft Code;
- b. Provide local knowledge and specialized expertise on specific development topics; and
- c. Identify policy-level issues for the Project Team to discuss with elected and appointed officials.

The questions provided following the Summary of Changes section aim to help the DCC focus on key issues in each draft module. Members of the DCC are not expected to provide specific edits to the draft and, to help the group work as a whole, are also not encouraged to raise specific edits to the draft as part of DCC meetings.

If there are concepts or topics that DCC members would like to discuss at their meeting, in addition to the topics identified in the questions below, **please summarize them before the meeting** and email them to Felix Landry so they can be distributed to the rest of the DCC members prior to the meeting.

If members of the DCC wish to submit suggested edits, please do so separately from the DCC meeting. Feel free to submit suggested edits through the City website or to ZoningCodeUpdate@gjcity.org.

3. Summary of Changes in Module 1: Administration and Procedures

A. Contents

This module includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 21.01: General Provisions
- Chapter 21.02: Administration and Procedures
- Chapter 21.12: Nonconformities
- Chapter 21.14: Measurements and Definitions

B. General Code Reading Instructions

Z&DC content has been edited into more “plain” language, but regulatory drafting still has some legal quirks. If you are unsure of a phrase or term, check the definitions.

When the Z&DC refers to “Director” it also includes Community Development staff, the actual Director is not required to do all of the specific tasks identified in the Code.

The Z&DC is being drafted in four modules, each containing a number of chapters. Earlier chapters may be missing cross-references or information available in later chapters. The missing cross-references are marked as <<insert cite>> and will be filled-in as part of a later draft.

The summary tables have been populated with current, carried forward information that will be corrected following edits to the rest of Module 1.

Reviewers may encounter formatting issues in this draft. While the drafting goal is to minimize these issues, they will all be addressed as the draft is revised.

C. Summary of Updates

The following updates were made in each chapter. **Note: This module is subject to additional revisions based on ongoing review by the Community Development Department and City Attorney’s Office.*

1. All Chapters

- a. Added more detailed table of contents and page headers/footers to make information easier to find.
- b. Tables and flow charts added to summarize information where helpful as a quick reference.
- c. Content that is not relevant to the chapter has been moved to a different location where a Code user is more likely to find it.
- d. Cross-references have been added or updated unless the section being cross-referenced is in a later draft.

2. Chapter 21.01 General Provisions

- a. Created a process to retire the current Z&DC but maintain the regulations for future use as needed.

- b. Revised the purpose statements to better reflect One Grand Junction goals and policies.
- c. Clarified that the City does not enforce private agreements or private restrictions.
- d. Add transitional standards that address development applications in process when the updated Z&DC is adopted.

3. Chapter 21.02 Administration and Procedures

- a. Table 21.02-1: New summary of decision-making table added to provide quick information and improve Code navigation.
- b. Consolidated the commonly applicable procedures from two sets to one. The consolidated common procedures were updated to specify:
 - i. 21.02.030(d)(2)(ii): Instructions for fee payment for changes to complete applications
 - ii. 21.02.030(d)(4): Review criteria for a complete application
 - iii. 21.02.030(f): Instructions for addressing situations when an applicant wants to make a change to a complete application
 - iv. 21.02.030(j): Standards for permit and approval lapsing and extension have been specified.
- c. Updated the review and decision-making standards to be more objective and predictable. This included removing the General Approval Criteria for both administrative permits (current 21.02.070(a)(6)) and permits requiring a public hearing (current 21.02.080(d)) and replacing them with updated approval criteria in the specific application types.
- d. Reorganized specific procedures into four groups: Administrative Permits, Administrative Approvals, Major Development Applications, and Historic Preservation, and organized the procedures within each section alphabetically.
- e. Added summary tables of the steps required for each specific procedure.
- f. Revised the Administrative Adjustment procedure to allow staff to make specific adjustments to measurable standards for either proposed applications or to approved developments to account for changes identified through field work.
- g. Added complete procedures for Annexations and Boundary Adjustments.
- h. All of the current procedures have been carried forward, organized to follow the new format, and edited for clarity.
 - i. 21.02.060, Historic Preservation Procedures, have been carried forward without change.
 - j. 21.02.070, Development Fees, have been carried forward without change and relocated to the Administration and Procedures chapter. The Z&DC update project will not include changes to the current development fees.

4. Chapter 21.12 Nonconformities

The current nonconformity standards have been carried forward, edited for clarity, and slightly reorganized to group all of the abandonment provisions together.

5. Chapter 21.13 Violations and Enforcement

The current Violations and Enforcement provisions have been carried forward with minimal change.

6. Chapter 21.14 Measurements and Definitions

This module includes the first draft of the Measurement and Definitions chapter. The current definitions and measurement instructions have been carried forward and will be updated as needed with each module. Any definitions or measurements included in other sections of the Z&DC will be moved to this chapter during the drafting process. Definitions relevant to Module 1 have been highlighted in yellow for review.

4. DCC Questions for Discussion

A. Pre-Application Meetings

The updated draft changes Section 21.02.030(b)(2), Pre-Application Meetings, from “highly encouraged” to mandatory for three types of applications: major site plans, preliminary subdivision plans, and planned developments. The specific goal of this change is to have applicants for major development projects meet with the City prior to application submission to discuss application requirements and development review timing. The desired outcome is to ensure that the applicant is notified of issues that might become problems earlier in the process when they are easier to correct and to help set shared expectations about the review process. This recommendation is based on best practices in communities that are generally perceived by applicants as well-functioning.

1. Do you think that greater reliance on pre-application meetings can help resolve issues at the front-end of the review process?
2. Are these the correct application types to require or should this list include something else?

B. Neighborhood Meetings

The updated draft carries forward (with edits for clarity) the current neighborhood meetings requirements, now located in Section 21.02.030(b)(3), Neighborhood Meetings. The Z&DC requires neighborhood meetings for some subdivision applications and all applications that require a public hearing except the vacation of an easement or revocable permit. Generally, requiring a neighborhood meeting is a regulatory best practice because it creates an opportunity for discussion about the project and neighborhood input about concerns and preferences. In the Z&DC, though, neighborhood meetings are sometimes required even though the neighbor’s comments may have no impact on the design or approval project. Subdivisions, for example, must be approved if they comply with the Z&DC, even if the neighbors have concerns or would prefer design changes. Requiring a neighborhood meeting for informational purposes can provide accurate public information about a project, which is generally helpful. Having no ability to impact the project, however, can be frustrating for the neighbors and potentially lead to a conclusion that City is not being responsive, despite Z&DC approval requirements.

1. Is there a different format than a neighborhood meeting that might be helpful to share information about a new project when the approval process does not require neighborhood input?
2. If neighborhood meetings are determined to be the best way to share accurate project information, should some meetings be more clearly identified as “informational only” to alert participants of their limited role?

C. Administrative Adjustments

21.02.040(d), Administrative Adjustment, has been revised to allow targeted adjustments to specific standards in the Code, either in conjunction with a specific application or as part of an application amendment when issues are found during field work that require correction to the approved plans. The specific goal of this change is to allow the administrative adjustment process to be used more predictably to address small changes that will not impact the overall approval. The desired outcome is to give applicants a streamlined approach to adjust some measurable regulations without going through a variance or PD process. The recommendation is based on best practices experience in communities that find reliance on administrative approvals is effective for shortening the overall length of the development review process and communities that rely on administrative adjustments for redevelopment and infill projects.

1. Do you think this is a useful change to the current administrative adjustment process?
2. The draft limits any application to 6 adjustments, do you think this is appropriate?
3. Are there other adjustments that should be added to this process? If so, can you provide examples?

D. Rezoning Review Criteria

21.02.050(d)(3)(iii), Review Criteria, have been revised to allow rezonings that are consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan. The current review criteria require an applicant to show that there has been a change in conditions or circumstances in the surrounding area. This approach to rezoning is outdated and unnecessarily strict and can be particularly challenging in a growing community that anticipates redevelopment. The specific goal of this change is to make it easier for property owners to rezone in a manner that is consistent with the comprehensive plan. The desired outcome is longer-term change that aligns the zoning map with the One Grand Junction Future Land Use Plan, better reflecting the community's future vision of itself. This recommendation is based on best practices experience with modern planning. Modern comprehensive plans are based on both extensive local data and expansive community input and provide detailed information about preferred future land uses and development goals. The current rezoning review criteria, reflective of a rezoning approach from the 1960s, are designed to have the City make individual policy determinations with each rezoning, so the current zoning would be locked into place until an applicant could prove that change would be beneficial. Those policy considerations are now reflected in the comprehensive plan, so the rezoning process can be simplified.

1. What comments do you have about the revised rezoning criteria?
2. Do you have any concerns that are not addressed in the revised criteria?

E. Readability and Understanding

1. Did you find Module 1 readable and understandable?
2. Do you have suggestions for making the Z&DC more accessible to all Code users?