

ZONING ORDINANCE COMMUNICATIONS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY OF CHELSEA ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

The City of Chelsea began the process of updating its Zoning Ordinance in late Spring 2020. In the months that followed, the City’s consultant team, McKenna, prepared a technical review of the ordinance, conducted a public workshop, and presented a draft ordinance outline and proposed zoning district recommendations to the joint bodies. This work has now culminated in the issuance of a draft Zoning Ordinance to all members of the City Council and Planning Commission. The goals of this Zoning Ordinance update are to:

- Implement the land use recommendations of the City of Chelsea Master Plan (2019)
- Update outdated language and procedures
- Streamline and improve the user-friendliness of the ordinance

The City Council and Planning Commission will meet virtually on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 7:00 PM to discuss the proposed Zoning Ordinance draft. All members of the public interested in hearing more about the Zoning Ordinance are welcome. Visit the City’s website for information about how to join the virtual Joint Meeting. **Please note the ordinance is still in a preliminary draft form. Significant changes may be made before a final draft is published for public hearing.**

In the following months, McKenna will work closely with City Staff to prepare a final draft of the ordinance for public hearing. Details about the public hearing will be posted on the City’s website in the coming months.

Missed a meeting? Recordings of all Zoning Ordinance Joint Meetings can be found on the [City of Chelsea website](#).

Additional Questions? Please contact Julia Upfal, Community Development Director at: 734-475-1771 x210 or jupfal@city-chelsea.org.

FAQS

1. **Why is the City updating its Zoning Ordinance?** The City of Chelsea Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2010. While an ordinance may be amended from time to time to address specific, smaller issues, a comprehensive update can be useful when there have been significant changes in land use laws, City development processes, and technology for accessing the Ordinance. This update will address all of those types of “housekeeping” issues, as well as bring the Ordinance up-to-date with new zoning best practices and the City’s recently adopted Master Plan. The Master Plan, which was adopted in 2019, identified a number of publicly-supported land use policies that must be codified in the Zoning Ordinance to become law, such as the consolidation of Zoning District, creation of form-based development standards, and expansion of permitted housing types.

2. **Has there been any public engagement during this process?** Yes! The City hosted a drop-in workshop at the Chelsea Farmers Market on August 1, 2020. The same activities were posted online after the workshop as well to increase access to the event. We received feedback from approximately 200 Chelsea residents and business owners through this process. That feedback has been directly incorporated into the draft Zoning Ordinance. The City’s Master Plan, which establishes the vision and intent for this Ordinance, was also developed through community outreach and feedback.
3. **When can the public provide comments on this Ordinance?** A public hearing at the Planning Commission is required to receive community feedback on the proposed ordinance. No date has been set for a public hearing, but it is expected to be scheduled in late February or March. Updates will be posted on the City’s website and notices will be published in the Chelsea Guardian.
4. **How can I give my feedback on the ordinance?** Once a public hearing on the ordinance is set, a copy of the Draft Ordinance will be available for public review and comment. You may either submit your comments in writing prior to the meeting or offer your feedback during the public comment portion of the hearing. The public hearing notice will contain information about how to submit your comments.

KEY ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

What changes are being proposed through this Zoning Ordinance Update? While we have heard from many members of the public that housing is a priority for this update, developing a Zoning Ordinance is a complex process that must address various land use, legal, and procedural issues. Though the City is still in the process of developing specific ordinance changes, McKenna has identified the following “big picture” recommendations to be addressed through this process:

- Allow for modest housing types in more places, especially areas close to downtown, transit, and other public amenities.
- Consolidate the City’s zoning districts into those proposed in the 2019 Chelsea Master Plan, refining those districts as needed to align with the other land use goals of the plan. Critically, this includes the creation of several new mixed-use districts.
- Create form-based development standards for key areas in the City, particularly downtown and areas along M-52. Form-based standards focus on the design of buildings and public spaces to ensure that new development fits with the existing character of the City.
- Create flexible development options, such as Planned Unit and Cluster Development, to encourage sustainable development patterns and high-quality design for special projects.
- Modernize the City’s parking requirements to require fewer parking spots and provide alternative strategies for providing parking within the City.
- Bring the City’s sign standards into conformance with current State laws.
- Update and incorporate the City’s landscaping standards into the Zoning Ordinance (this is currently a separate document).
- Streamline and simplify all sections of the ordinance to be more user-friendly.