

1. Provide a range of commercial zones within urban designations with appropriate location criteria and development standards for a broad variety of retail sales, service establishments, and offices to promote and provide for the economic development of the County.
 2. Help strengthen and broaden the County's economic base and provide employment opportunities for County residents by providing for a wide range of commercial development.
 3. Ensure compatibility of commercial zones with adjacent land uses.
 4. Promote high quality standards of development and site utilization for commercial developments.
- B. The purpose of the individual commercial zones and the manner in which they are applied are as follows:
1. **C-P Commercial-Professional Office Zone.** The purpose of the C-P Commercial-Professional Office Zone is to provide areas for development and operation of professional and administrative offices and personal services. Typical uses in this zone include medical/dental offices, insurance/travel agencies, government offices, and banks and savings and loans offices. This zone is intended for smaller scale developments that are compatible with residential uses. The most appropriate locations for the C-P Zone is at the edges of residential neighborhoods, serving as a buffer between residential and higher intensity land uses or along collector or arterial roads. This zone implements the Neighborhood Commercial (NC), General Commercial (GC) land use designation in the General Plan
 2. **C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone.** The purpose of the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone is to provide areas for small-scale, day-to-day convenience shopping and services for residents of nearby neighborhoods. These uses should facilitate easy pedestrian and bicycle access and be planned and designed to be compatible with the surrounding residential areas. The most appropriate locations for the C-1 Zone is at the edges of residential neighborhoods or where collector and/or arterial roads intersect. This zone implements the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and General Commercial (GC) land use designations in the General Plan.
 3. **C-2 General Commercial Zone.** The purpose of the C-2 General Commercial Zone is to provide areas for a wide variety of retail stores, entertainment establishments, offices, and service businesses that serve unincorporated urban communities or regional markets. This zone is typically located in the central business districts or along major transportation routes (i.e., arterial and major collector roads). This zone implements the General Commercial (GC) land use designation in the General Plan.
 4. **C-3 Heavy Commercial Zone.** The purpose of the C-3 Heavy Commercial Zone is to provide areas for intensive wholesale businesses and service commercial uses which may require large outdoor storage or activity areas. Uses in this zone include transportation of materials by heavy trucks which can require large loading and docking areas incompatible with neighborhood or community-scale retail uses. This zone is also appropriate for vehicle-oriented uses outside central business districts and along major thoroughfares and highways. Typical uses in this zone include: vehicle, recreational vehicle, farm equipment and mobile home sales, building supplies, heavy equipment repair and warehousing, auto and truck stops, gas stations, and nurseries. This zone implements the General Commercial (GC) land use designation in the General Plan.
 5. **H-I-C Highway Interchange Center Zone.** The purpose of the H-I-C Highway Interchange Center Zone is to provide areas for travel-serving commercial uses located adjacent to highway interchanges. Typical uses in this zone include restaurants, banks, hotels and motels, service stations, and truck stops. This zone implements the General Commercial (GC) land use designation in the General Plan.
 6. **MU Mixed-Use.** The purpose of the MU Mixed-Use Zone is to provide for areas of high-density residential development with commercial and office uses either on the same parcel or block or within a pedestrian- or transit-oriented urban environment. Typical uses in this zone include multi-family residential and general commercial uses that provide a variety of goods and services for tenants and residents, and offices. This zone implements the Mixed-Use land use designation in the General Plan.

(Ord. No. 1976, 2019)

18.14.020 – Commercial Land Uses and Permit Requirements

- A. **Table 2-5 Commercial Zone Allowed Uses and Permit Requirements.** Table 2-5 indicates the uses allowed within each commercial zone and any permits required to establish the use, in compliance with [ARTICLE 6](#) (Permit Processing Procedures) and [ARTICLE 7](#) (Zoning Code Administration).
- B. **Additional Regulations.** Where the last column in the Table 2-5 includes a chapter or section number, the regulations in the referenced chapter or section shall apply to the use. Provisions in other sections of this Zoning Code may also apply.
- C. **Zoning Clearance required.** Each land use specified in the following land use table as allowed with a “P” as a use permitted-by-right that involves/contains construction activities (e.g., additions, alterations, construction, reconstruction, or remodeling) shall require the issuance of a Zoning Clearance in compliance with [Chapter 18.128](#) (Zoning Clearance).
- D. **Definitions.** See [ARTICLE 8](#) (Definitions) for land use definitions and explanations.
- E. **Uses not Listed.** Commercial uses not listed below may be reviewed by the Director to determine if they are similar to those listed and appropriate in a particular zone and, if so, the type of permit required, in compliance with Section [18.04.040](#) (Uses Not Classified).

Table 2-5 Commercial Zone Allowed Uses and Permit Requirements	Commercial Zones Permit Requirements						
	P	Allowed by Right					
A	Administrative Permit (Chapter 18.114)						
CUP	Conditional Use Permit (Chapter 18.116)						
TUP	Temporary Use Permits (Chapter 18.124)						
-	Not allowed						
Land Use (see Article 8 for land use definitions)	CP	C-1	C-2	C-3	H-I-C	MU	Additional Regulations
Educational, Institutional, Public Assembly, and Recreational							
Arcades	-	-	P	P	A	-	
Bowling Alleys	-	-	A	A	A	-	
Business Colleges or Vocational Schools	A	-	A	A	-	A	
County and Public Facilities	-	-	A	-	-	A	
Gymnasiums (5000 sq. ft. or less sq. ft.)	P	P	P	P	P	-	18.14.040 (B)
Gymnasiums (5,001 sq. ft. to 30,000 sq. ft.)	A	P	P	P	P		
Gymnasiums (greater than 30,000 sq. ft.)	A	-	A	A	A	-	
Libraries	P	P	P	A	-	A	
Miniature Golf Courses	-	-	P	A	A	-	
Museums	P	-	A	-	-	A	
Parks and Playgrounds	-	-	P	-	A	A	
Places of Assembly (200-person capacity or less in the main assembly area)	P	-	-	-	-	-	18.60.210 18.14.040 (B)
Places of Assembly (more than 200- person capacity in the main assembly area)	A	A	A	-	-	A	18.60.210 18.14.040 (B)
Pool Halls	-	-	P, A	-	-	-	18.14.040 (B)
Private Clubs (200-person capacity or less in the main assembly area)	-	P	P	P	-	-	

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		Administrative Permit (Chapter 18.114) Conditional Use Permit (Chapter 18.116) Temporary Use Permits (Chapter 18.124)					
Land Use (see Article 8 for land use definitions)	Not allowed						Additional Regulations
	CP	C-1	C-2	C-3	H-I-C	MU	
Private Clubs (more than 200-person capacity in the main assembly area)	-	-	A	A	-	-	
Recreational Vehicle Parks (RV)	-	-	CUP	CUP	A	-	
Skating Rinks	-	-	A	A	-	-	
Theaters, Auditoriums	-	-	A	A	-	-	
Residential							
Employee Housing, Residential (six or less residents)	A	A	A	A	A	A	18.60.090
Community Care Facilities (six or less residents)	A	A	A	A	A	A	
Community Care Facilities (greater than seven residents)	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	
Home Occupations	P	P	P	P	P	P	18.60.070
Multi-family Housing	-	-	-	-	-	P	
Mobile Home Parks			CUP	CUP	A		18.60.110
Short Term Rentals	A	A	A	A	A	A	18.60.270 18.14.040 (A)
Single-Family Dwelling	A	A	A	A	A	A	18.14.040 (A)
Single-Room Occupancy Units (SRO)	-	-	-	-	-	P	18.60.120
Supportive Housing	-	-	-	-	-	P	
Transitional Housing	-	-	-	-	-	P	
Retail							
Alcohol Beverage Sales Businesses	-	A	A	A	-	A	18.60.030
Auction Establishments	-	-	A	A	-	-	
Boat Sales and Services	-	-	P	A	-	-	
Farm Equipment Machinery (used)	-	-	CUP	A	-	-	
Farm Equipment Machinery (new)	-	-	P	P	-	-	
Farm Produce Markets	-	P	P	P	P	-	18.60.220
Produce Stands	-	-	-	-	A	-	18.60.220
Laundromats and Dry Cleaners	-	P	P	A	-	A	
Mobile Home Sales	-	-	A	A	-	-	
Plant Nurseries	-	-	A	A	-	-	
Recreational Vehicle Sales/Service	-	-	P	A	-	-	18.60.330 18.60.340
Mobile Recycling Facilities	-	A	A	A	A	-	18.14.040 (A) 18.60.170
Retail Sales (30,000 sq. ft. or less)	-	P	P	P	P		18.14.040 (B)
Retail Sales (30,001 sq. ft. 50,000 sq. ft.)	-	A	A	A	A		18.14.040 (B)

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-	Not allowed						
Land Use (see Article 8 for land use definitions)	CP	C-1	C-2	C-3	H-I-C	MU	Additional Regulations
Retail Sales (greater than 50,000 sq. ft.)	-	-	CUP	CUP	CUP		18.14.040 (B)
Shopping Centers (30,000 sq. ft. or less)	-	P	P	P	-	-	
Shopping Centers (30,001 sq. ft. 50,000 sq. ft.)	-	A	A	P	-	-	
Shopping Centers (greater than 50,000 sq. ft.)	-	-	CUP	CUP	-	-	
Temporary Uses	-	TUP	TUP	TUP	TUP	-	18.60.290 Chapter 18.124
Service							
Accessory Offices	-	P	P	P	P	A	
Art Galleries	P	P	P	P	-	A	
Art Studios	P	P	P	P	-	A	
Banks and Financial Services	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Bars and Night Clubs	-	-	CUP	A	A	A	
Childcare, Day Care Centers	A	A	A	A	-	A	
Family Childcare Facilities, Small	A	A	A	A	-	P	18.60.150
Family Childcare Facilities, Large	A	A	A	A	-	A	18.60.150
Flea Markets	-	-	CUP	CUP	-	-	
Frozen Food Lockers	-	-	P	P	-	-	
Heavy Equipment Repair Shops	-	-	A	A	-	-	
Hospitals (60 beds or less)	-	-	A	A	-	-	
Hospitals (more than 60 beds)	-	-	CUP	CUP	-	-	
Hotels and Motels (80 rooms or less)	-	-	A	A	A	-	18.14.040 (A)
Hotels and Motels (more than 80 rooms)	-	-	CUP	CUP	CUP	-	18.14.040 (A)
Kennels and Animal Boarding	-	-	P	P	-	-	
Mechanical Car Washes	-	-	P	P	-	-	
Semi-Mobile Food Vendors	A	A	A	A	A	A	18.60.260
Mortuaries, Funeral Homes	-	-	P	-	-	-	
Offices (Administrative, Business, Medical, and Professional 5,000 sq. ft. or less)	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Offices (Administrative, Business, Medical, and Professional greater than 5,000 sq. ft.)	A	A	A	-	-	A	
Personal Services, General	-	P	P	-	P	A	
Personal Services, Restricted	-	A	A	-	A	A	18.14.040 (A)
Photographic Studios	P	-	P	-	-	A	
Restaurants	A	P	P	P	P	A	18.14.040 (B)
Small Appliance Repair Shops	-	P	P	-	-	A	

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TUP	Temporary Use Permits (Chapter 18.124)						
-	Not allowed						
Land Use (see Article 8 for land use definitions)	CP	C-1	C-2	C-3	H-I-C	MU	Additional Regulations
Vehicle/Motorcycle Sales Facilities (general/new)	-	-	P	A	-	-	18.60.340
Vehicle/Motorcycle Sales Facilities (general/used)	-	-	CUP	A	-	-	18.60.340
Vehicle/Motorcycle Sales Facilities (wholesale)	-	-	A	A	-	-	18.60.340
Vehicle Parts Sales (new)	-	P	P	-	P	-	
Vehicle Repair Facilities	-	-	CUP	A	A	-	18.60.330
Vehicle Service Stations	-	P, A	P, A	P	P	-	18.14.040 (A) 18.60.250
Storage and Manufacturing							
Clothing Manufacturing	-	-	-	A	-	-	
Contractors Storage Yard	-	-	A	P	-	-	
Furniture Manufacturing	-	-	-	A	-	-	
Long-term Vehicle Parking	-	-	A	-	P, A	-	18.14.040 (B)
Metal Fabrication and Sales	-	-	-	-	A	-	
Outdoor Storage	-	-	-	A	-	-	
Printing/Publishing Plants	-	-	-	P	P	-	
Truck/Vehicle Storage	-	-	CUP	P	P	-	
Warehousing	-	-	-	CUP	CUP	-	
Wholesale and Distribution	-	-	-	CUP	CUP	-	
Transportation and Communication							
Vehicle Rental Facilities	-	-	P	P	P	-	
Bus and Truck Terminals	-	-	CUP	A	A	-	
Heliports	-	-	CUP	CUP	CUP	-	
Radio and Television Studios	P	-	P	P	P	-	
Vehicle Storage on maximum two acres	-	-	A	-	-	-	
Wireless Telecommunication Towers (100 feet or less in height)	A	A	A	A	A	A	Chapter 18.68
Wireless Telecommunication Towers (greater than 100 feet in height)	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	Chapter 18.68

(Ord. No. 1976, 2019; Ord. No. 1990, 2020)

18.14.030 – Commercial Zone Development Standards

A. **Table 2-6 Commercial Zone Development Standards.** The intent of the commercial zone development standards table is to clearly and precisely establish the basic site and structure regulations that apply to all developments in each

of the commercial zones. The table also indicates where additional site and structure requirements, including, but not limited to, off-street parking, landscaping, signing, fences and obstructions, and performance standards, apply to commercial zones.

- B. **Exceptions.** The setbacks listed below may be increased for those uses requiring an Administrative or Conditional Use Permit when it is determined by the Director or Commission, as applicable, that the additional setbacks are necessary to make the use compatible with surrounding properties and uses.
- C. **Density.** Maximum density standards shall be consistent with the General Plan or applicable community plan.
- D. **Zoning Map.** The boundaries, designations, and locations of the zones established by this Zoning Code shall be shown upon the map(s) entitled "Zoning Map for Merced County" and referred to in this Zoning Code as the Zoning Map. Any additional maps (e.g., setback map) adopted shall also be a part of this Zoning Code by reference. This Zoning Code, together with the Zoning Map, is hereby adopted in compliance with current State planning, zoning, and development laws. Changes in the boundaries of any identified zones shall be made by ordinance in compliance with Chapter 18.142 (Amendments).

Table 2-6 Commercial Zone Development Standards							
Development Feature (minimum unless otherwise indicated)	C-P	C-1	C-2	C-3	H-I-C	MU	Additional Regulations
Parcel Area (minimum square feet) area required for each NEWLY CREATED parcel.							
Minimum Parcel Size	6,000	None	None	10,000	None	None	
Setbacks (minimum) Property lines are measured in feet, with those adjacent to the street measured from the face of the curb, or right-of-way where no curb exists.							
Front	10	10	6	15	15	5	18.14.040 (A)
Side (Interior)	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.14.040 (A)
Side (Street Side)	10	10	6	10	10	10	
Rear	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.14.040 (A)
Parcel Depth and Coverage (maximum) — Area measured in feet							
Minimum Parcel Depth	60	50	50	100	50	60	
Maximum Structure Coverage (percent)	50	60	60	50	50	100	
Height and Structure Coverage (maximum) — measured in feet							
Height	35	35	75	75	60	50	
Additional Regulations							
Fences, Walls, and Hedges	Chapter 18.34						
Landscaping	Chapter 18.36						
Off-Street Parking Regulations and Design Standards	Chapter 18.38						
Performance Standards	Chapter 18.40						
Sign Regulations	Chapter 18.44						
Solid Waste and Recycling Materials Storage	Chapter 18.46						

(Ord. No. 1976, 2019)

18.14.040 – Other Applicable Commercial Zone Regulations

A. General Regulations.

1. Setbacks.

- a. **Interior Side Yard.** If adjacent to a residential zone, the minimum setback shall be 10 feet and a six-foot-high masonry wall shall be constructed along the common property line.
- b. **Rear Yard.** If adjacent to a residential zone, the minimum setback shall be 10 feet and a six-foot-high masonry wall shall be constructed along the common property line.
- c. **Setbacks for Dwelling Units.** All setbacks for dwelling units shall be the same as in the R-1 Zone, see Chapter (18.12.030) (Residential Zone Development Standards).

2. **Hotels and Motels.** Hotels and motels are prohibited from renting any sleeping room by the hour or for any period of fewer than 10 consecutive hours or rent any sleeping room more than once within any consecutive 10-hour period measured from the start of one rental to the start of the next.

3. **Mobile Recycling Facilities.** Mobile recycling facilities shall not include processing facilities.

4. **Personal Services, Restricted Uses.** Sales establishments selling tobacco, paraphernalia, and vaping products and supplies shall not be located within a 1,000-foot radius of sensitive uses (i.e., schools, parks, youth facilities). The distance between a tobacco, paraphernalia, and vaping products and supplies sales establishment shall be made in a straight line, without regard to intervening structures or objects, from property line to property line of the parcel on which the structure, or portion of the structure, in which the sensitive use is located.

5. **Pet Stores.** A pet store operator shall not sell a live dog, cat, or rabbit in a pet store unless the dog, cat, or rabbit was obtained from a public animal control agency or shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals shelter, humane society shelter, or rescue group that is in a cooperative agreement with at least one private or public shelter pursuant to Assembly Bill 485 (AB485).

6. **Single-Family Dwelling.** One single-family dwelling or caretaker unit per parcel may be allowed with the issuance of an Administrative Permit.

7. **Vehicle Service Stations.** Service stations may not exceed 5,000 square feet of gross floor area. All repair shall be conducted within an enclosed structure. An Administrative Permit is required if the minimart includes the sales of alcoholic beverages.

8. **Short Term Rentals.** A short term rental may be allowed on a lot in a Commercial Zone with the approval of an Administrative Permit, if the lot is currently developed with an existing single-family dwelling. Short term rentals do not include County approved hotels, motels, hostels, and time shares.

B. Specific Commercial Regulations.

1. **C-P Commercial-Professional Office Zone.** A Zoning Clearance is required for restaurants, excluding bars, not exceeding a 100-person seating capacity.

2. C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone.

a. **Educational, Institutional, Public Assembly, and Recreational Uses.** Gymnasiums shall not exceed 200-person capacity in the main structure area.

b. Retail Uses.

1. **Clothing Stores.** Clothing stores shall not exceed a 100-person capacity in the main structure area.

2. **Drug Stores.** An Administrative Permit is required for alcoholic beverage sales.

3. **Pharmacies.** Pharmacies may not exceed 30,000 square feet of gross floor area.

3. **C-2 General Commercial Zone.** Pool halls may not exceed 30,000 square feet of gross floor area. An Administrative Permit is required if the gross floor area exceeds 30,000 square feet.