



"We are a welcoming, active and business-friendly rural foothill community built on California's rich gold rush history."

Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: October 21, 2026

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PROJECT INFORMATION SUMMARY

Case File: Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) 26-07 – Allow Government Facilities in the Commercial Zone

Request: Conduct a public hearing and consider a recommendation to the City Council to adopt the proposed notice of exemption (NOE) and text amendments to Title 10, Chapter 5, Section 15(B) of the City of Placerville Municipal Code to allow government facilities as a permitted use within the Commercial (C) zoning district.

Summary Recommendation:

Recommend that the City Council adopt ZOA 26-07, the proposed amendments to Title 10 of the Placerville Municipal Code, and the associated Notice of Exemption (Common Sense Exemption).

PURPOSE

The proposed amendment modernizes the City's land-use framework by expanding siting opportunities for essential public services within established commercial corridors.

The scope of this amendment is specifically isolated to updating Title 10, Chapter 5, Section 15(B) (C Commercial Zone – Permitted Uses). By establishing government facilities as a permitted use, the amendment ensures that vital civic, administrative, and public-facing services can efficiently locate near transit, retail, and main thoroughfares without navigating a discretionary Conditional Use Permit (CUP) pathway.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Currently, Title 10 of the Placerville Municipal Code does not explicitly classify "government facilities" as an inherently permitted use across its standard commercial footprint. This operational gap requires municipal operations and public buildings to seek individualized, case-by-case reviews under generic "catch-all" zoning rules.

As modern public services evolve, their daily operational profiles—such as administrative suites, customer service desks, and professional office layouts—increasingly mirror private commercial spaces.

Modern government facilities share near-identical physical, traffic, and structural impacts with standard private businesses. Integrating these uses into the C (Commercial) Zone permitted use catalog improves resident convenience by pairing public agency access directly with private retail, financial, and restaurant amenities, thereby bolstering the commercial corridor's vitality.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The proposed text amendment to Title 10, Chapter 5, Section 15(B) is consistent with the goals, policies, and land use designations of the City of Placerville General Plan. California law requires that zoning ordinances remain consistent with the adopted general plan, and ZOA 26-07 directly supports this mandate through alignment with the following elements:

- **Land Use Element:** The Commercial (C) zoning district implements the General Plan's commercial land use designations. Allowing government facilities within this footprint optimizes land use patterns. It permits essential administrative functions to integrate seamlessly into existing commercial corridors, avoiding the isolated segregation of civic services.
- **Public Facilities & Services Element:** The General Plan establishes that public and civic infrastructure must remain highly accessible to the community. Transitioning government facilities to a permitted use in the Commercial zone directly furthers this directive. It establishes civic offices, service desks, and public agencies near established transit lines, major arterial roadways, and everyday commercial centers.
- **Economic Development Element:** By eliminating the discretionary Conditional Use Permit (CUP) requirement for public facilities, the amendment streamlines administrative processes. It prevents prolonged vacancies in commercial plazas and professional office buildings. This allows government entities to rapidly occupy existing retail or office footprints, contributing to active daytime foot traffic that supports adjacent commercial merchants.

Because the amendment introduces no changes to underlying density, structural height limits, or setback standards, it maintains complete compatibility with surrounding properties while directly fulfilling the General Plan's vision for a balanced, accessible community.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Development Services Department recommends the City Council find that adoption of ZOA 26-07 is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption). The text update introduces an administrative modification to land-use permissions within an established commercial zone; it does not authorize specific physical development projects or change underlying land-use density baselines.

It has no potential to cause a reasonably foreseeable or significant physical change to the environment. A Notice of Exemption is included as Attachment A.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Notice of the Planning Commission public hearing was published in accordance with State law and local noticing requirements (see Attachment D). The legal advertisement describes the proposed amendment as an update to Title 10, Chapter 5, Section 15(B) of the Placerville Municipal Code to allow government facilities, including administrative offices, public-facing service centers, and related civic infrastructure, as a permitted use within the Commercial (C) zoning district, with no other substantive changes. Any public comments received prior to the hearing will be provided to the Planning Commission and forwarded to the City Council as part of the administrative record.

DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY

The Planning Commission's authority to hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Council on proposed amendments to Title 10, Chapter 5 of the Placerville Municipal Code (regarding permitted uses in Commercial zones) comes from the following sources:

- **City of Placerville Practices and Descriptions:** The official City website and related documents describe the Planning Commission as responsible for reviewing land use proposals and making recommendations to the City Council on amendments to the Zoning Ordinance (Title 10 of the Municipal Code), rezoning requests, General Plan amendments, and other planning matters. This includes preparing and reviewing ordinance amendments for consistency with the General Plan and State law.
- **Standard California Local Government Structure:** Under California law (Government Code Sections 65100 et seq. and 65800 et seq.), local planning commissions serve in an advisory capacity to the legislative body (City Council). They typically conduct public hearings on zoning ordinance amendments and forward recommendations to the Council, which holds final adoption authority. This process aligns with Placerville's practices, as evidenced by historical examples where the Commission has reviewed and recommended zoning text amendments to the Council.

CEQA

Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption): The amendment consists solely of administrative and ministerial updates to section citations in an existing ordinance framework. It does not authorize physical development, change land-use designations, or alter zoning maps. Consequently, it has no potential to cause a significant physical change or impact to the environment.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

Hold a public meeting; and,

The Planning Commission may take one of the following actions based on the analysis provided:

1. Forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council
2. Forward a recommendation of approval with modifications to the City Council
3. Forward a recommendation of denial to the City Council

If adopted, the Zoning Code amendments to Title 10, Chapter 5 of the Placerville Municipal Code become effective 30 days post-adoption by City Council per Government Code §36937. This aligns with state mandates and there are no General Plan conflicts.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. CEQA Notice of Exemption Draft
- B. Planning Commission Resolution No. 26-10 Draft
- C. Draft Ordinance Amending Title 10, Chapter 5, Section 15(B) (Redline)
- D. Proof of Publication

INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

City of Placerville General Plan

City of Placerville Zoning Ordinance

Contents of City of Placerville Planning Department Project File for Zoning Ordinance
Amendment (ZOA) 26-07