



CITY OF
EL SEGUNDO

2026 Zoning Code Clean-up

EA 1398



Purpose

1. Continuously improve the Zoning Code
2. Clarify unclear provisions
3. Simplify standards
4. Streamline use of the Code

Areas of changes

- Definitions
- General Provisions
- Residential Zones
- Commercial Zones
- Overlay Districts
- Off-Street Parking Requirements

- Rooftop decks*

Definitions

- Accessory Building or Structure
 - Clarifying pools are accessory structures for setback purposes
- Accessory Dwelling Unit, Junior
 - Clarifying JADU size is measured in “Livable Space”
- Animal Boarding
 - Clarifying Animal Boarding definition
- Fitness Center:
 - Clarifying the amenities and uses that may be included in fitness centers

Definitions

- Floor Area
 - Deleting the floor area definition; relying instead on gross and net
- Gross Floor Area
 - Clarifying the measurement of gross floor area and matching more closely the California Building Code definition
- Home Occupation
 - Adding restrictions on home-based car-sharing businesses
- Livable Space
 - Clarifying how JADU size is measured (in compliance with State Law)

Definitions

- Mixed-Use Project
 - Including a definition to clarify application of development standards
- General Office
 - Clarifying that “educational services” offices do not include schools
- Recreational Facilities
 - Clarifying that recreational facilities can include Studios for Art, Performing Art, and Fitness
- Studios for Art, Performing Art, and Fitness
 - Establishing a definition; typically small scale instruction/training in open spaces, with limited types and/or number of equipment.

General Provisions

- Exceptions to Building Height
 - Minor correction to a code reference
- Temporary Buildings
 - Permitting the use of shipping/cargo containers in the R1 and R2 zones as temporary construction buildings

Residential Zones

- Clarifying front setback encroachments (R1, R2, & R3)
- Clarifying minimum unit size is measured in gross floor area (R1)
- Adding minimum front yard landscaping requirements (R2)
 - Minimum percentage area
 - One 24-inch box tree
 - Matching R1 zone

ADUs and JADUs

- Using “interior livable space” to measure the minimum unit sizes
- Establishing a 15-day deadline to deem applications complete
- Establishing applicant right to appeal City determinations and decisions
- Clarifying the minimum rental term (more than 30 days)
- Clarifying the development impact fee calculation for ADUs
- Clarifying the owner occupancy requirement for JADUs
- Clarifying the separate entrance requirement for JADUs

Urban Lot Splits and Two-Unit Developments

- Clarifying the front setback requirement and permitted encroachments for the new lots
- Clarifying the unit size is measured in gross floor area
- Adding minimum front yard landscaping requirements:
 - Minimum percentage area
 - One 24-inch box tree
- Clarifying that the required parking space for each unit may be fully enclosed, covered, or uncovered
- Clarifying the vehicular access requirement for lots along alleys

Commercial and Industrial Zones

- Commercial Permitted Uses Table
 - Adding restrictions on “Office worker-oriented services”
 - Adding “Studios for Art, Performing Art, and Fitness” in the C2, C3, & C4 Zones
- Industrial Permitted Uses Table
 - Correcting a code reference related to emergency shelter uses

Mixed-Use and Housing Overlays

- Clarifying that the maximum commercial density (FAR) for mixed-use projects is the FAR of the underlying zone.
- Clarifying that the maximum Building Frontage limit is 140 feet
- Clarifying that the Massing Modulation requirement is measured in gross floor area

Off street parking requirements

- Additions to dwelling units. Clarifying that additions of 1,000 s.f (gross floor area) trigger compliance with minimum parking requirements
- Parking Required. Establishing a parking requirement of 1 space for each 300 square feet for Studios for Art, Performing Art, and Fitness
- Requiring mixed-use projects to comply with nonresidential standards:
 - Parking Space Location
 - Parking Space Dimensions
 - Compact Spaces
 - Tandem Spaces
 - Driveway and Curb Cuts
 - Parking Structure Standards
 - Special Residential Provisions
 - Vehicle Lifts

Questions on draft ordinance

Rooftop Deck Discussion

Issue: The Municipal Code is unclear whether rooftop decks are permitted on residential buildings and under what restrictions.

Questions:

- Zones where rooftop decks are permitted
- Narrow (25-foot) lots vs. wide lots?
- Primary vs. accessory structures?
- Height: At grade, above the 1st floor, and/or the 2nd floor?
- Setbacks: Same as overall structure or additional setbacks?

Rooftop Deck Discussion

- Existing Code Provisions

Definition of a Deck:

“An outdoor platform that can be used as a walking surface and outdoor gathering/activity area, typically extending outward from a house, structure, or other building.”

Rooftop Deck Discussion

- Existing Code Provisions

Building Height Definition:

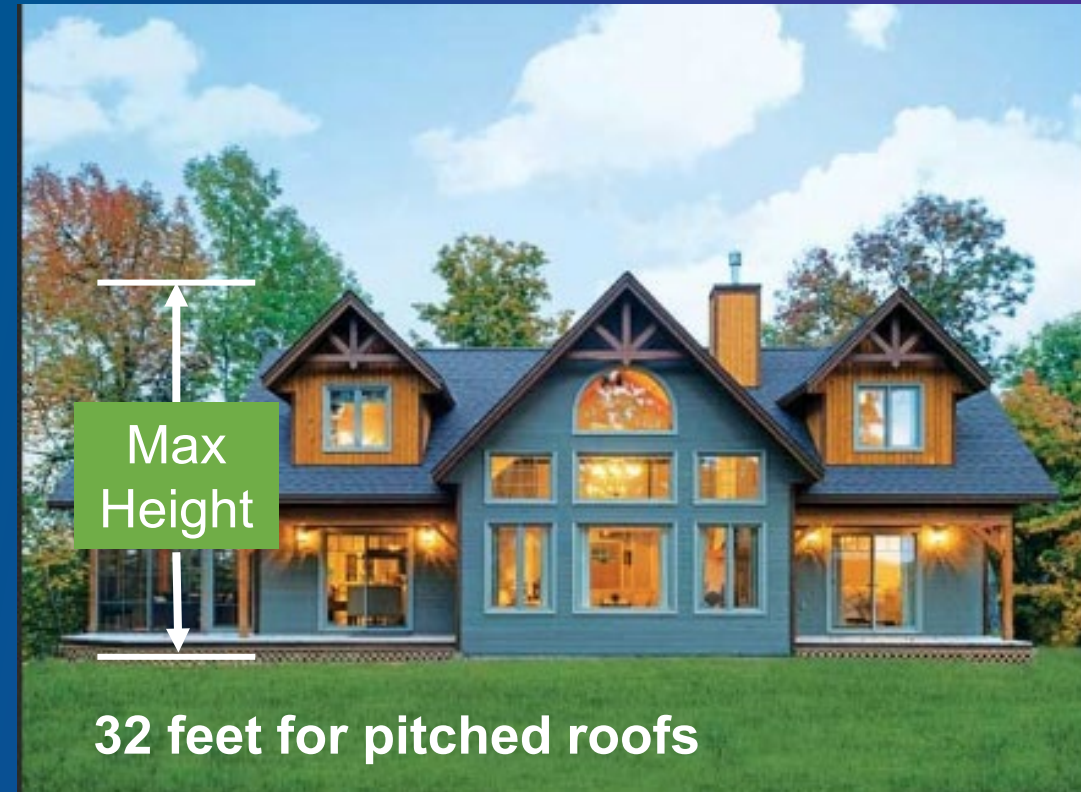
“Is the vertical distance measured from the grade plane to the highest point of the roof or parapet. See features listed in section 15-2-3 of this title for exceptions to building height.”

Rooftop Deck Discussion

- Existing Code Provisions

Definition of Building Height:

“Is the vertical distance measured from the grade plane to the highest point of the roof or parapet.”



Rooftop Deck Discussion

- Existing Code Provisions

ESMC 15-1-6: Definition of Building Height or Structure Height:

“Is the vertical distance measured from the grade plane to the highest point of the roof or parapet.”



Max
Height

26 feet
for flat
roofs

Rooftop Deck Discussion

- Existing Code Provisions

Exceptions to Building Height:

“Penthouses or roof structures for the housing of elevators, stairways, solar panels and related equipment, or mechanical and similar equipment required to operate and maintain a building, fire escapes, open-work guardrails, skylights, clock towers, church steeples and other similar architectural elements, flagpoles, chimneys, smokestacks, radio antennas, and other similar structures may be erected above the height limits prescribed in this title. Light standards or other light fixtures may be mounted on the roof of a parking structure and must be designed to control glare. Non-permanent accessories, such as furniture, barbeques, or umbrellas placed on a roof deck may be erected up to a maximum eight feet (8') above the height limits prescribed in this title. No such penthouse, structure or accessory is allowed for the purpose of providing additional floor space. Any such structures in Residential Zones shall be for noncommercial purposes only.

An increase in the maximum allowable building height, up to five feet (5'), may be granted by the Director, subject to the approval of an adjustment pursuant to chapter 24 of this title.

Rooftop Deck Discussion

- Existing Code Provisions

Exceptions to Building Height:

“Non-permanent accessories, such as furniture, barbeques, or umbrellas placed on a **roof deck** may be erected up to a maximum eight feet (8') above the height limits prescribed in this title.”

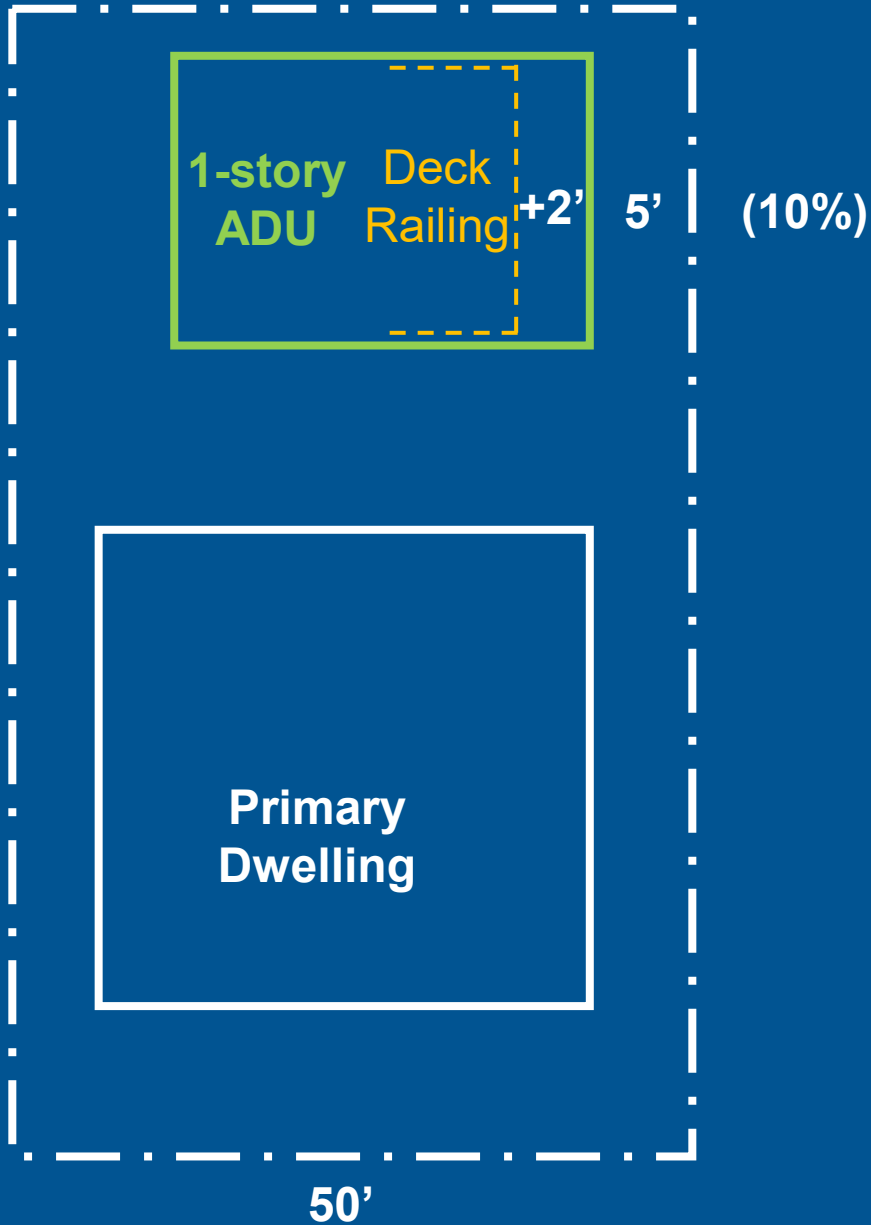


Rooftop Deck Discussion

- Existing Code Provisions

R-1 zone; Wide Lots; Setbacks for detached accessory structures

“Rooftop decks with required railings are permitted on single-story accessory structures and on top of the single-story portions of two-story accessory structures. Rooftop decks are not permitted on top of two-story accessory structures. Rooftop decks must maintain a minimum side yard setback of 10 percent of the width of the lot, plus an additional setback of two feet but can never be less than five feet, as measured from the property line to the required railing of the rooftop deck.”



Rooftop Deck Discussion

- Existing Code Provisions

R-1 zone; Wide Lots; Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

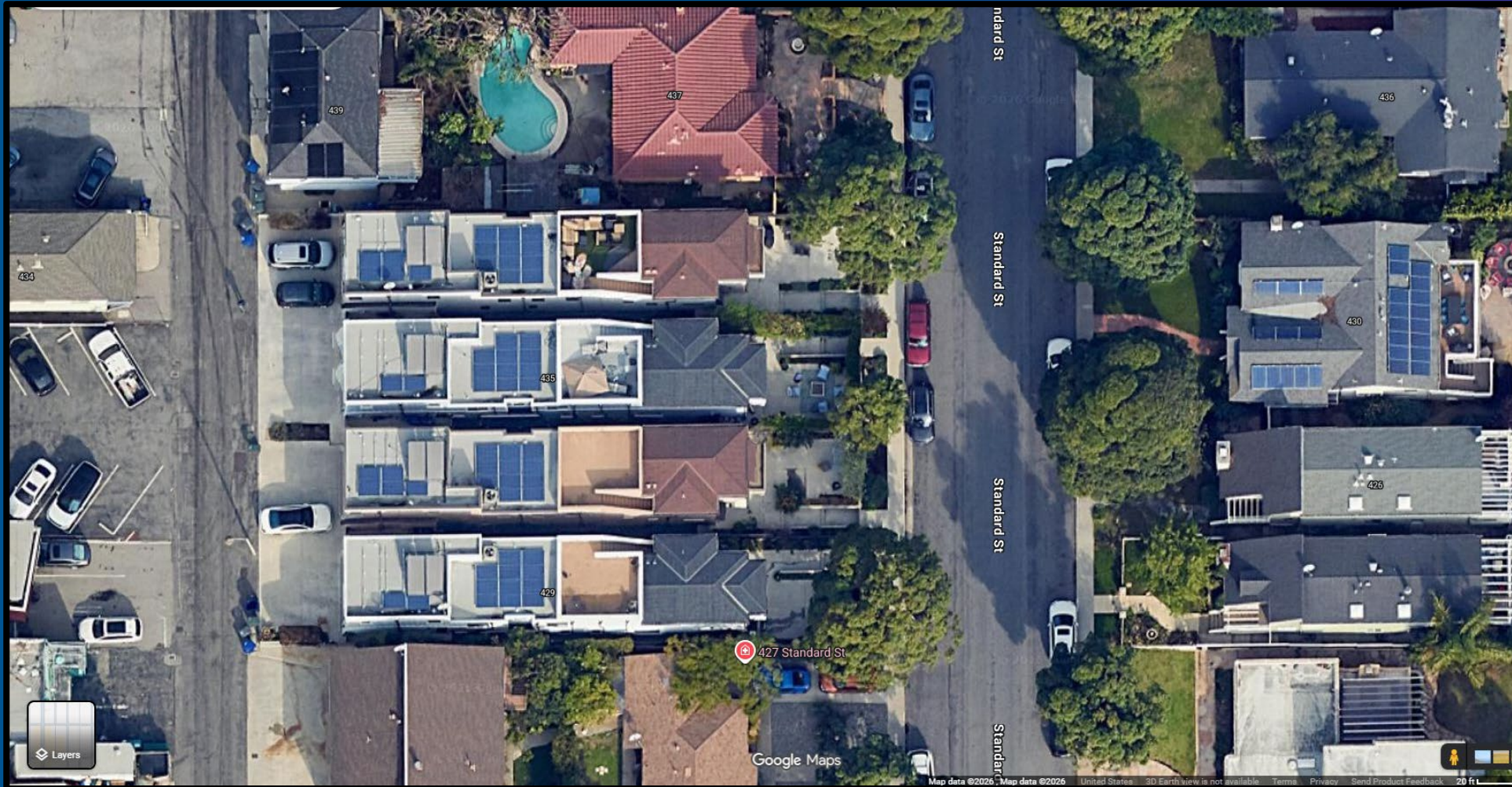
Several references to first and second floor decks that are included in the FAR calculations

Interpretation of ESMC Provisions

Based on the code provisions cited above, a strict interpretation of the code would conclude that rooftop decks are permitted in the following circumstances:

- Zones. Only in the R-1 zone
- Lot Width. Only on lots wider than 25 feet
- Primary vs. accessory structures. Only on detached accessory structures
- Height. Only above single-story accessory structures or the single-story portion of accessory structures

Examples of Permitted Rooftop Decks



427-435 Standard Street (R-2 Zone)



231 Virginia Street /406-412 W. Grand Av (R-3 Zone)



231 Virginia St. / 406-412 W. Grand Av. (R-3)



135-147 Virginia St. / 151-153 W. Franklin Av.



135-147 Virginia St. / 151-153 W. Franklin Av.



Options for Rooftop Decks

1. A strict interpretation

Allow rooftop decks only in the limited circumstances described above

2. Current practice

a. Allow in R-1, R-2, and R-3

b. Allow on 25-foot and wider lots

c. Allow on accessory structures and primary structures

1. Staff recommendation

Formalize current practice in the Municipal Code with modifications

Zone Text Amendment Options

1. **Adopt a definition for rooftop decks**
2. Add rooftop decks to the permitted uses
3. Consider restrictions or standards for rooftop decks

Definitions

Existing ESMC Deck Definition:

“An outdoor platform that can be used as a walking surface and outdoor gathering/activity area, typically extending outward from a house, structure, or other building.”

Potential Rooftop Deck Definition:

“An outdoor space situated on the roof of a building, often designed for recreational use and can include features like seating areas and outdoor kitchens. It differs from a standard rooftop, which primarily serves as a protective surface, while a rooftop deck is intended for living space and enjoyment.”

“A flat portion of a roof used as a walk or terrace.”

Zone Text Amendment Options

1. Adopt a definition for rooftop decks
2. **Add rooftop decks to the permitted uses**
3. Consider restrictions or standards for rooftop decks

Zone Text Amendment Options

Table No. 1 – Permitted uses in residential zones

Uses	Zones		
	R-1	R-2	R-3
* * *			
Miscellaneous uses			
Animals and pets per ESMC Chapter 6-2	P	P	P
Beekeeping per ESMC Chapter 6-2	A		
Detached accessory buildings and structures, including private garages	A	A	A
Play structures	A	A	A
Public parking areas abutting lots zoned commercial or industrial			CUP
Public parks, playgrounds, and recreational areas, except ballparks, bleachers, swimming pools or similar facilities for competitive sports or for use/hiring of public amusement devices	P	P	P
Roof-mounted and small-scale ground-mounted solar energy systems	A	A	A
Roof-top decks⁴	A	A	A
Any use customarily incidental to a permitted use	A	A	A
Other similar uses approved by the Director, per ESMC Chapter 15-22	A, P, AUP, CUP	A, P, AUP, CUP	A, P, AUP, CUP

Notes:

1. P = Permitted use, A = Accessory use, AUP = Use subject to an administrative use permit (Per ESMC Chapters 15-22 and 15-23), CUP = Use subject to a conditional use permit (per ESMC Chapters 24 and 28), N = prohibited
2. A short-term rental unit is not a permitted use in the absence of a valid short-term rental permit per ESMC Chapter 4-16
3. Subject to the provisions of ESMC Chapter 15-13C (Micro-units)
4. Roof-top decks are permitted on top of primary structures and on top of the first story or single-story portions of two-story accessory structures. Roof-top decks are not permitted on top of two-story accessory structures. Roof-top decks are subject to the development standards of individual residential zones in ESMC Chapter 15-4 and the General Provisions, including exceptions to height, in ESMC Chapter 15-2.



Zone Text Amendment Options

1. Adopt a definition for rooftop decks
2. Add rooftop decks to the permitted uses
3. **Consider restrictions or standards for rooftop decks**

- a. Zones
- b. Lot widths
- c. Primary vs. accessory structures
- d. Height. Above first vs. 2nd floor
- e. Additional setbacks

Recommendation

- a. R-1, R-2, and R-3
- b. 25-foot and wider lots
- c. Primary and accessory structures
- d. First and 2nd except R-1 wide lots
- e. Yes, for detached accessory

Recommendation

1. Open and conduct a public hearing
2. Adopt Resolution No. 2975
3. Alternatively, discuss and take other action

The End

