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PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
DEVELOPMENT CODE UPDATE PUBLIC WORKSHOP

MEETING DATE:	November 18, 2026
TO:	Planning Commission
FROM:	Ashley Potočnik, Deputy Director CDSA
RE:	Public Workshop, 2026 Yuba County Development Code and Zoning Map Update

REQUEST: Conduct a Public Workshop and provide input on proposed amendments to the Yuba County Development Code and Zoning Map.

RECOMMENDATION: Review the proposed amendments to the Yuba County Development Code and Zoning Map and provide input to staff on the proposed amendments.

BACKGROUND: In June of 2011 the Yuba County Board of Supervisors (the Board) adopted the Yuba County 2030 General Plan and EIR. Zoning and land use ordinances are used to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan. On July 21, 2015 the Board adopted the Yuba County Development Code (DC) and Zoning Map. This was a wholesale update (last major update was 1983) to the zoning code and map to better reflect the goals of the County's General Plan.

At the time of the 2015 DC adoption, the Board asked that staff pay close attention during the first years of the DC and Zoning Map implementation to determine if any needed amendments were necessary. In the spring of 2016 staff brought back a number of minor amendments, clarifications, and zoning map changes to the Planning Commission for recommendations that the Board ultimately adopted. Given the success of the 2016 DC update, it was determined that reviewing the DC annually would be a thoughtful endeavor for all parties involved in the implementation of the DC and it would ensure that the DC was a more active and living document rather than a document bound by the time and date of its initial adoption.

Proposed Development Code Updates

This Development Code Update Public Workshop is to provide input to staff on the proposed changes in the code for the 2026 Development Code Update. Following this workshop, staff will modify the Development Code in redline for review and consideration at the December Planning Commission meeting. It is intended to take this item to the Board of Supervisors, subject to the Planning Commission's recommendation, in February 2027. No recommendation is needed to the Board at this meeting, but staff is looking for input on the proposed amendments.

The proposed amendments are as follows:

- **Document Formatting:** Staff updated the document's formatting so it is easier to use and maintain, without changing any code language. The tables of contents and the Lists of Figures and Tables now update automatically and link directly to each section, figure, and table. Page numbering and heading styles are now consistent throughout the document, and several tables were reformatted and unwanted page breaks removed. These changes make the code easier for the community to navigate and reduce staff time on future updates.
- **Typographical and Cross-Reference Corrections:** Staff corrected minor typographical errors and internal cross-references throughout the document. These corrections do not change the intent or requirements of the code.
- **Residential Estate (RE) Outside the Valley Growth Boundary (VGB):** Staff recommends removing the "No Further Subdivision" provision (11.06.030). This would allow RE parcels outside the VGB to be subdivided, as RE parcels inside the VGB already can. New parcels would still need to meet the 1-acre minimum lot size and the County's sewage disposal and water supply requirements. Staff also recommends lowering the upper limit of the sewage disposal and water supply requirement from 2.5 acres to 2 acres. Parcels between 1 and 2 acres would need to provide either public sewer or public water service and would have the larger setbacks that apply when a well or septic system is used.
- **Community Centers:** Staff recommends adding Community Center as a new use, separate from Community Assembly. Community centers currently fall under Community Assembly, which requires a Minor Use Permit in the Public Facilities (PF) zone. Under the proposed change, community centers offering regularly scheduled programs such as recreation, classes, and senior or youth services would be allowed by right in PF and several commercial districts, and with a use permit in residential districts and the Employment Center district. Use regulations for Community Assembly, which covers event-oriented uses such as banquet halls and meeting halls, would remain unchanged.
- **Townhomes in High Density Residential (RH):** Staff requests Planning Commission input on adding Single-Family, Attached (townhomes) as a permitted use in the RH zone. Townhomes are allowed in the RM and RS zones, but they are not a permitted use in RH, even though RH allows multifamily development at higher densities. Under the proposed change, townhome projects that meet the RH density and development standards would be allowed by right.
- **Multiple Duplexes:** Staff recommends clarifying that projects with two or more duplexes, whether on a single lot or on adjoining lots developed as one project, are subject to the Residential Multi-Family Development standards (11.07.040(B). Cross-references would be added to the land use tables and the Duplex definition so these projects are reviewed consistently.
- **Commercial and Mixed-Use Setbacks Adjacent to Residential Uses:** Staff recommends correcting a conflict between the code text and its development regulations table. The text requires 15-foot interior side and 20-foot rear setbacks where commercial uses border a residential district, while the table requires 5 and 10 feet. The proposed change updates the text to match the table (11.08.030(B)(1)(b).
- **Fence Placement Where No Sidewalk Exists:** Staff recommends clarifying where front yard fences may be placed on properties without a sidewalk. The code currently allows a four-foot fence with an open top at the back of the sidewalk but doesn't address properties without one. The proposed change allows these fences at the property line instead, subject to the same height and transparency standards (11.19.040(B)(1).

- **Landscape Materials:** Staff recommends treating decorative gravel and landscaping rock as landscape materials rather than hard surfaces. The code lists them as allowed landscape features but also counts them toward the limit on hard surfaces, such as concrete and brick. The proposed change removes that conflict and gives property owners more flexibility to use low-water landscaping (11.24.060(B)(2).
- **Off Premises Subdivision Signs:** The current code allows up to two off-premises subdivision signs per intersection, with no limit on the type of intersection or the spacing between signs. Signs can therefore be placed at minor intersections, and a single subdivision can repeat them along one corridor. Staff recommends allowing these signs only at the intersection of two arterial roads. Staff is also asking for Planning Commission direction on whether to add other limits, such as minimum spacing between signs, a maximum number of signs per subdivision, or limits by zone district. Signs at other locations could still be approved through an area plan or Planned Sign Permit Program (11.27.080(F).
- **Planned Sign Permit Program:** Staff recommends removing multi-tenant projects from the list of projects that require a Planned Sign Permit Program. The section that governs these programs does not include multi-tenant projects, so the two sections currently conflict. Multi-tenant projects whose signs meet the code standards would no longer need the additional review (11.27.050(C).
- **Billboard Requirements:** The code currently requires an applicant for a new digital billboard to remove one existing non-conforming or static billboard, or two if the new billboard is within three miles of an existing one. This requirement may be hard to meet for applicants who don't own existing billboards. Staff is asking for Planning Commission direction on whether the removal requirement should be kept, changed or removed, and whether the spacing standard should be revised (11.27.130).
- **Electronic Menu Boards:** Staff recommends allowing electronic menu and order board signs for businesses with drive-thru facilities. The code currently limits electronic signs to a few specific uses, such as fuel prices and hotel room rates. These signs would still need to meet existing menu board limits on number, size, and height, and be oriented toward drive-thru customers rather than the street (11.27.080(E).
- **Accessory Dwelling Units:** Staff recommends updating this in accordance with new State law (AB 956 and SB 1117) which take effect January 1, 2027. AB 956 requires the County to allow up to two detached ADUs on single-family lots and limits HOA restrictions on ADUs. SB 1117 limits ADU impact fees to the floor area above 750 square feet. The proposed amendments to Section 11.32.030 bring the County's code into compliance.
- **Model Home Complexes:** Staff recommends changing the permit for model home complexes from a Type 2 to a Type 1 Temporary Use Permit. Model home complexes can include up to six model homes, a contractor's office, and a sales office, and they often operate for long periods next to occupied homes (Table 11.32.320).
- **Tentative Map Expiration:** Staff recommends extending the initial life of an approved tentative map from 36 months to 48 months to comply with Senate Bill 1169, which takes effect January 1, 2027. The overall time limit with discretionary extensions would increase from five to six years to reflect the longer initial period. The longer timelines would apply to any tentative map that has not expired as of December 31, 2026 (11.40.050).
- **Parkland Exemptions:** Staff recommends removing the parkland exemption for subdivisions of fewer than five parcels that are not used for residential purposes. The exemption requires staff to track these small parcels for four years and collect parkland fees if a home is later built on one of them. That tracking isn't practical, and the parkland

requirements already apply only to residential subdivisions. Removing the exemption simplifies administration (11.45.060(B).

- **Application Fee Refunds:** Staff recommends allowing refunds of application fees, which are currently non-refundable. The CDSA Director could refund fees paid in error in full. For applications that are withdrawn or expire before project review is complete, the Director could refund the application fee, minus staff time processing the application. Refund requests would need to be made in writing by the original payer within 180 days. This approach is modeled on the County's existing building permit refund process and gives applicants a fair option when a project doesn't move forward (11.53.020).
- **Planning Permit Effectuation:** Staff recommends that a planning permit for construction be considered effectuated when the building or foundation permit is finaled, rather than when it is issued. Currently, a project can secure its planning approval simply by pulling a building permit, even if construction never moves forward. The change ties the planning permit to completed work, which keeps stalled projects from holding approvals indefinitely (11.53.110(B)(1).
- **Use Permit Expiration:** Staff recommends giving Use Permits a set 24-month period to be effectuated before they expire. The code currently refers only to the general procedures under which permits without a specified time limit expire after one year. Extensions and modifications would still follow the existing procedures (11.57.080(B).

Proposed Zoning Map Changes

In addition to minor amendments, modifications, and corrections to the Development Code text, several changes are proposed to the Official Zoning Map to align zoning with current land uses. These changes include correcting zoning inconsistencies in the VGB and addressing properties with improper zoning. The recommended amendments are outlined in Attachment 1.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY: The proposed amendments are consistent with the goals and policies of the 2030 General Plan. The ADU amendments implement Housing Element Program H-3.1.3, Promote Alternative Housing Types, and state housing law. Each recommended rezoning (Attachment 1) is consistent with the parcel's General Plan land use designation.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The proposed Development Code and Zoning Map amendments implement the 2030 General Plan, for which a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified on June 7, 2011 (SCH No. 2010062054). Staff has determined that the amendments are within the scope of the Program EIR and that no further environmental review is required under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15168(c). The zoning map amendments are consistent with the development density established by the General Plan and qualify for streamlined review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 and Public Resources Code Section 21083.3. No project-specific significant effects peculiar to the parcels have been identified. Amendments to the accessory dwelling unit regulations are statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code Section 21080.17, and the formatting, typographical, and procedural amendments are exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that they will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Report Prepared By:

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. Recommended Zoning Map Updates