

Zoning Basics



What is Zoning?

Zoning is the specific rules for what may be built on a property. Zoning regulates the type of use (business, residence, other), height, size, bulk, density (units or space per acre), and other aspects of what may be constructed on a piece of land.

Rules covered by zoning often include:

- **Allowed Use:** type of business, type of residence, type of other use.
- **Development Standards:** size of buildings, height of buildings, placement of buildings, required distance of buildings from property lines, and various other standards.
- **Parking Requirements:** how much parking must be provided for every type and size of development
- **Design Standards or Guidelines:** how must buildings look; what materials may be used; what design elements must or must not be included.

Zoning on a Map

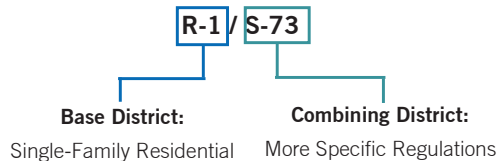
A Zoning Map shows areas of contiguous zoning designation: areas where the rules for what may be built are the same.

Reading Zoning Symbols

Zoning districts often appear in text as abbreviated symbols, for example, **Single-Family Residential District** will appear as **R-1**.

It is common to see a **base district**, such as **R-1** combined with one or more **combining districts**, which applies additional regulations.

For example: the symbol **R-1/S-73**, can be broken down as:



The **Base District** gives information about the basic uses permitted on the property—in the case of **R-1**, Single-family dwelling is the common permitted use. The base district also may include some development standards.

A **Combining District** gives additional information, typically related to development standards (height, size, bulk, density). In the case of **S-73**, here are a few examples of development standards:

Development Standards	S-73
Minimum Lot Area	5000 sq. ft.
Minimum Yards Required (Setbacks):	
Front Yard	20 ft.
Side Yards	5 ft.
Rear Yard	20 ft.
Maximum Height:	
Stories	2
Height	28 ft.

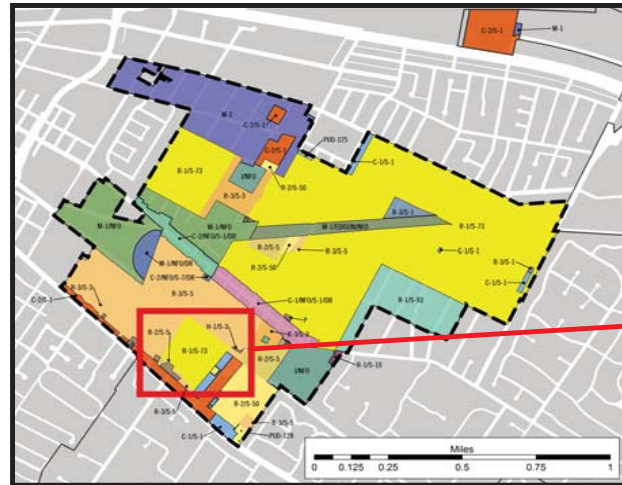


Fig. 1. A Zoning map of the North Fair Oaks Community. The **R-1/S-73** district is called-out here as an example for further consideration through the subsequent figures.

Fig. 2. An **R-1/S-73** district is depicted here. All parcels within this district are zoned the same, according to Zoning Ordinance specifications for both the base and combining districts.

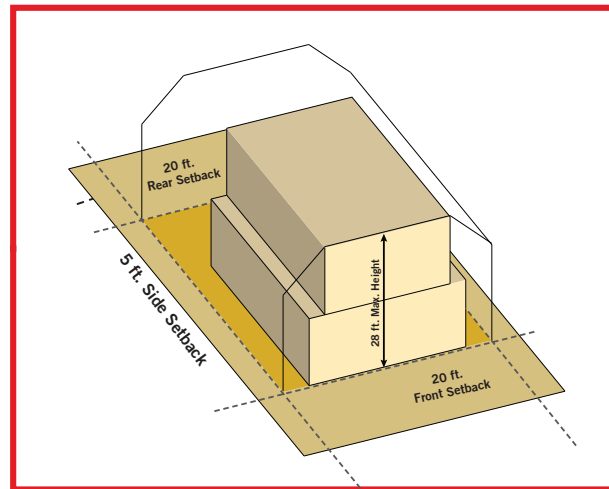
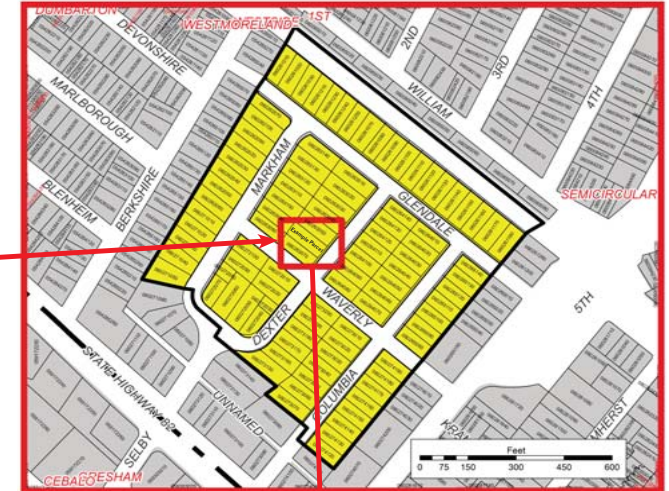


Fig. 4. Development Standards for **S-73** Districts have been applied. Setbacks as well as maximum height are the key parameters to determining this volume.

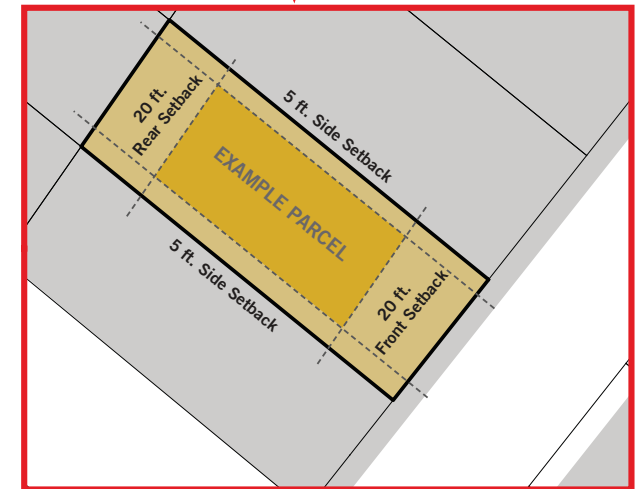


Fig. 3. Parcel level detail, depicting “Minimum Yards Required” also called **Setbacks**. The potential building area is the space within the dashed Setback lines.

For more information about zoning, and to view San Mateo County’s **Zoning Regulations**, please visit:

<http://planning.smcgov.org/zoning-other-regulations>