

Planning Commission Work Session – Active Depth, Setbacks, and Build-to (Non-Conformity) Discussion July 28, 2026

The Planning Commission held a work session to review and discuss zoning code provisions related to “active depth” requirements and the treatment of non-conforming structures as they related to setbacks and build-to requirements. Staff and Commission members provided updates from the recent subcommittee meeting and outlined areas for potential code refinement.

Staff opened the session with an overview of the subcommittee’s findings and invited Commissioners to share observations, experiences, and suggestions based on recent development review cases and ongoing code implementation.

Participants raised several themes, including:

- **Active Depth Requirements:**
 - Clarification of “active space” definition, with consensus to remove “halls” from excluded areas.
 - Discussion about requiring active depth only for the first two stories of a buildings along the Primary Street frontage, rather than the full façade.
 - Openness to exempting residential units (but not parking) from active depth requirements.
 - Consideration of adjusting the depth requirement (e.g., from 30 feet to 15 feet) and its impact on building design and pedestrian experience.
- **Non-Conforming Structures, Setbacks, and Build-To:**
 - Broad support for allowing new primary buildings behind existing non-conforming structures and permitting side additions of any size.
 - Discussion about incremental development, flexibility for established neighborhoods, and maintaining historic character.
 - Review of code intent to bring structures closer to the street, with concerns about front yard additions and neighborhood preservation.
 - Civic areas and public restrooms discussed as potential exemptions.

Overall, the session provided staff and the Commission with insight into areas where code language may be refined for clarity, flexibility, and improved user understanding. More detailed minutes will be published in the future, and additional opportunities for community engagement will occur as the code refinement process continues.