

# *Guide to the American River Parkway Corridor Zoning*

\*Keep this guide for future reference if you live or own property in the Parkway Corridor Zone\*



Sacramento County Planning and  
Community Development

Thank you to Save The American River Association (SARA), *Guardians of the American River and Parkway since 1961*, for the funding of this informational guide.

Go to [www.sarariverwatch.org](http://www.sarariverwatch.org) to learn more.



### **About Properties along the American River Parkway:**

The American River Parkway is a unique and valuable asset in our region. To protect the Parkway's natural beauty, reduce visual intrusion and complement its natural resources, Sacramento County has created a zone along the Parkway where properties are subject to special "development standards." The American River Parkway Plan and the Parkway Combining (PC) Zone Ordinance are the regulatory documents that outline these standards for all properties adjacent to the Parkway.

You are receiving this guide because you live or own property in the Parkway Corridor zone within the unincorporated county. You must call the County Planning and Community Development Department (Planning) before beginning any improvement or modifications to your



property, business or home, even for projects that do not require a building permit. Call (916) 874-6141 to ensure that your plans comply with County requirements.

### **About the Parkway Corridor Combining Zone Ordinance (PC Ordinance):**

The PC Ordinance can be found in Zoning Code Section 235.30 on the Planning Department website, [www.planning.saccounty.net/](http://www.planning.saccounty.net/) and view "Zoning Code." The PC Zone regulates uses that may affect the stability of bluffs, or impact the scenic, recreational, fishery or wildlife values of the American River, which is why even projects that do not require a building permit may be subject to the standards. For example, new exterior painting and fences less than six feet high do not require a building permit, but still require compliance with the PC Ordinance. Other improvements that need to be reviewed include:

- Accessory structures
- Additions
- Bluff stabilization and erosion control
- Decks and patios
- Exterior remodeling
- Fences and walls
- Glazing (Glass)
- Grading
- New construction
- Oak Tree Removal and Pruning
- Painting
- Roofing
- Swimming pools and associated structures

There are also standards for design including:

- Colors. Earthtone colors are required for painting and re-roofing.
- Disruption to natural vegetation
- Erosion and flood control issues including irrigation and drainage
- Height
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Noise
- Setbacks from the bluff

### **Erosion Zones:**

Bluff areas adjacent to the American River require special protection due to the potential erosion of the bluff. There are five erosion zones along the Parkway, ranging from 40-70 feet from the edge of the bluff, each with its own setback



standard. You can find maps of erosion zones in Exhibits A through D in Zoning Code section 235-30 on the Planning website. Within the erosion zones, there are requirements for setbacks, fences, accessory structures, grading and landscaping.

### **Existing Structures:**

Since many structures and property improvements existed before the PC Zone was enacted, they are considered legal and 'non-conforming,' as long as proper permits were obtained prior to the PC Zone's enactment. Any new work, including expansion, re-roofing, grading, replacement and other property improvements will be required to meet PC Zone standards. After contacting the Planning Department, there will be a determination on what level of review the proposed improvements will require. Improvements such as interior remodeling would likely not require a new review.

### **The Review Process:**

Proposed projects are subject to three levels of review:

1. Minor improvements that comply with the PC Zone standards. The County can issue permits and/or authorization to proceed. For example, if you are re-roofing or painting with earthtone colors, no additional review is required.
2. New construction, expansion and major improvements that are outside of the Erosion Zone. Development plans must be submitted to the Planning Department and additional fees are required. The plans are reviewed by the Planning and Regional Parks Departments to ensure that new construction is adequately screened from the river and that color and landscaping requirements are met.

3. New construction within the Erosion Zone which requires a Conditional Use Permit and is subject to public hearings. This level of review may require a geotechnical study by a qualified engineer to evaluate the effects of the construction on the bluff.



**For more information, contact the Planning Department at (916) 874-6221 or the Regional Parks Department at (916) 874-6961.**

A complete list of all PC Zone requirements is available at:  
<http://www.planning.saccounty.net/zc/index.html>

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