

Jackson County, Iowa Zoning Ordinance Update

Zoning Commission Public Hearing
October 20, 2025

CASE: ZC25-04 Text Amendment -- Proposed Update of Jackson County Zoning Ordinance

- **Applicant:** Jackson County, Iowa Zoning Department
- **Proposal:** update of the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance
 - make it compatible with the County's vision, goals, and objectives,
 - make it compatible with Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Code,
 - based on research and input from County staff, Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustment, Jackson County residents, and other interested parties.
- **Public Hearing** will include a presentation, public input, Commission discussion, and possible action to recommend approval of the proposed update to the Board of Supervisors.
- The full text of the proposal is available at the Jackson County Zoning Department and on the Jackson County, Iowa website at <https://jacksoncounty.iowa.gov/zoning/>

Zoning Ordinance: Purpose and Application

- Establishes orderly land use patterns and protects agriculture.
- Divides unincorporated area into zoning districts.
- Defines how property in districts can be used.
- Assigns compatible uses to the same district and separates incompatible uses.
- Regulates building height and size, setback from lot lines, parking and signs.
- Exempts farmland, farm houses, and farm buildings unless located in floodplain of river or creek.
- Consists of 2 parts: Text and Official Zoning Map

Why update?

Current Ordinance

- Loosely organized
- Difficult to understand
- Inconsistencies & gaps
- Tables are confusing
- No illustrations
- Does not accommodate older subdivisions
- Some conflicts with Iowa Code

Goals for Update

- User-friendly, better organized format
- Address concerns with uses and regulations
- Add tables, illustrations, and definitions
- Add regulations for older subdivisions
- Reference Iowa Code

Affirm County Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Land Use Policy: Goals

- Enhance quality of life for residents.
- Utilize and conserve land, natural and cultural resources.
- Provide a desirable level of facilities and services.
- Encourage compact development near cities and major roadways.

Comprehensive Plan: Land Use Goals

- Keep Land Use Policy current with best practices.
- Help cities coordinate for their best development.
- Preserve and protect viable land for agriculture.
- Preserve and protect parks, open spaces, natural and cultural resources.

New Table of Contents and Chapter 1. General Provisions

New Table of Contents

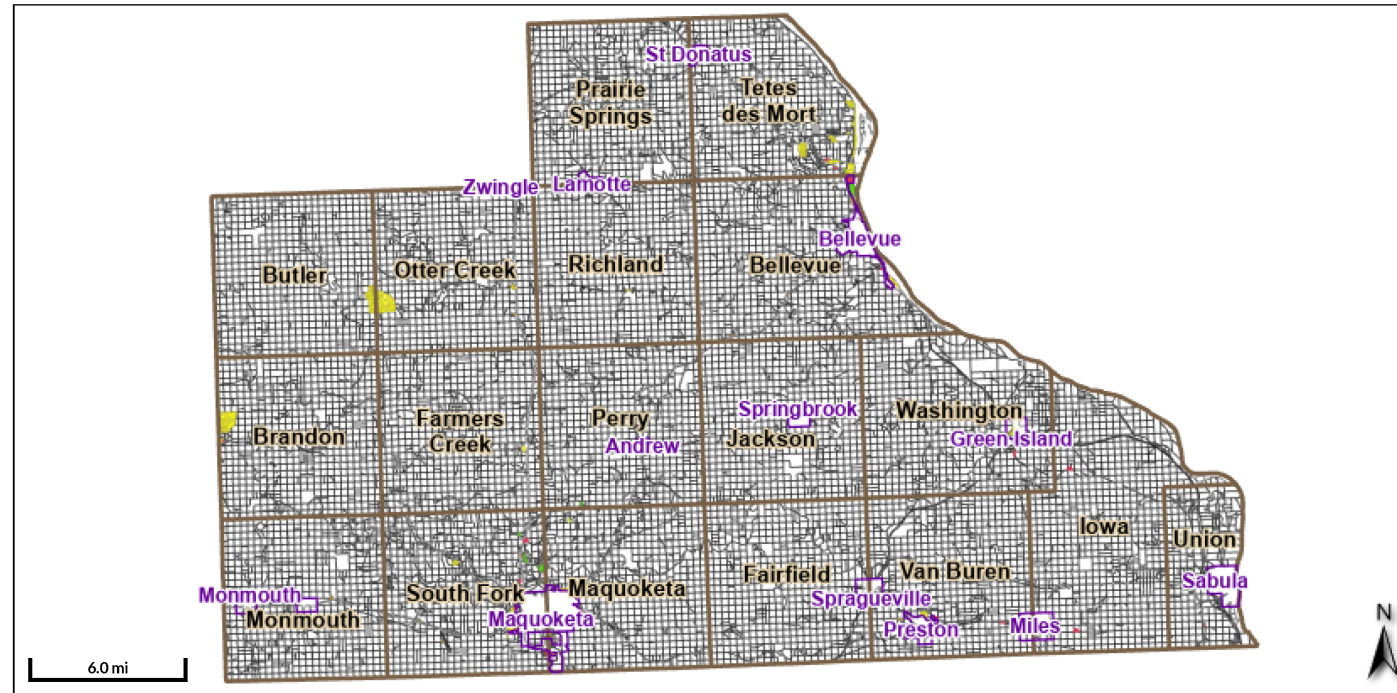
1. General Provisions
2. Zoning District Regulations
3. Administration and Enforcement
4. Board of Adjustment
5. Zoning Commission
6. Definitions

Chapter 1. General Provisions

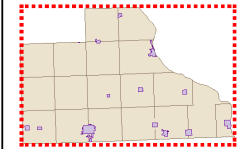
- *UPDATED*: Provides context relative to Iowa Code and Official Zoning Map.
- *NEW*: Explains overall purpose and format.
- *NEW*: References to Jackson County and Iowa Codes keeps the Ordinance current with future code amendments.

Chapter 1. General Provisions

Official Zoning Map



Overview



Legend

- County Zoning
- A-1
 - C-1
 - M-1
 - M-2
 - R-1
- Corporate Limits
- Political Townships

NOTICE: This map is compiled for assessment and tax information purposes from official county records. All information shown is for the forgoing purpose and does not represent a survey of land. THIS MAP IS FOR VIEWING PURPOSES NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT.

Date created: 10/9/2025

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Developed by  SCHNEIDER
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Chapter 2. Zoning District Regulations

Section 2.1 Schedule of District Regulations

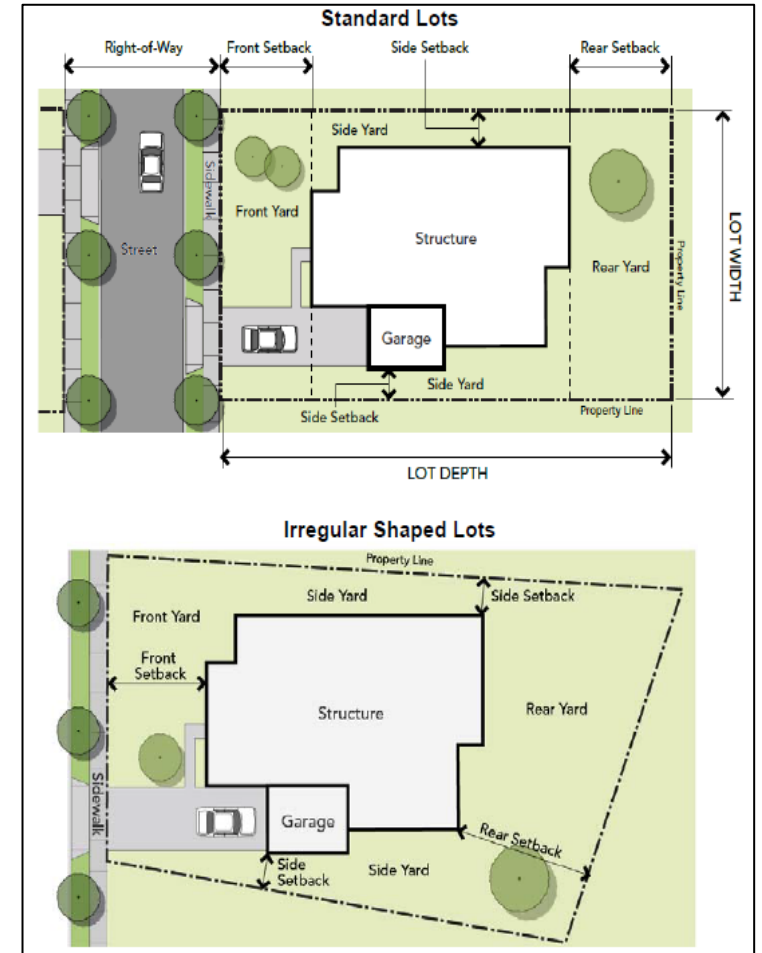
- *NEW*: Provides step-by-step review process for zoning inquiries, for consistent review and interpretation.
- *NEW*: Explains scope and context of development regulations.
- *NEW*: Offers explanatory text, tables, and illustrations.

Table B.1. Schedule of Types of Land Uses and Structures			
Symbol	Type	Examples of Uses	Examples of Structures
F	Farm Exempt	Agriculture, Nursery	Barn, Greenhouse
P	Principal	Residential, Education	Single-family dwelling, School building
A	Accessory	Garden, Parking	Fence, Porch, Garage, Parking lot, Sign
C	Conditional	Bulk storage, Mining	Storage tanks, Processing equipment
T	Temporary	Construction site	Construction trailer
N	Not Allowed	Industry in R-1 district	Concrete plant in R-1 district

Chapter 2. Zoning District Regulations

Section 2.1 Schedule of District Regulations

- *NEW*: General use categories for flexibility.
- *NEW*: Conditional Use Permits replace Special Exceptions.
- *NEW*: Matrices of uses and structures organized by zoning district and parking regulations.
- ***NEW***: Updated development and parking regulations in one place.
- ***UPDATED***: Retain area and width requirements for flag lots.
- ***UPDATED***: Consistency with Iowa Code.



Diagrams of Measuring Setbacks on Standard and Irregular Lots (Source: Arcadia, CA 2025)

Chapter 2. Zoning District Regulations

Zoning Districts

- Section 2.2 A-1 Agricultural
- Section 2.3 R-1 Residential
- Section 2.4 C-1 Highway Commercial
- Section 2.5 M-1 Limited Industrial
- Section 2.6 M-1 General Industrial
- Section 2.7 PUD Planned Unit Development

New Template for Districts A-1 to M-2

- A. Statement of Intent.
- B. Principal Uses & Structures.
- C. Accessory Uses & Structures.
- D. Conditional Uses & Structures.
- E. Temporary Uses & Structures.
- F. Development Regulations.
- G. Allowed Signs.
- H. Required Off-Street Parking.

Chapter 2. Zoning District Regulations

New General Land Use Categories

- Agricultural Sales, Service, Supply
- Batch Plant (asphalt & concrete)**
- Financial Institution
- General Office
- General Retail
- General Services
- Personal Service
- Place of Assembly
- Indoor Commercial Recreation
- Outdoor Commercial Recreation
- Public Recreation
- Solid Waste Facility
- Vehicle Sales, Service, Repair

New Specific Uses & Structures

- Adult and Child Day Care uses*
- Agricultural Experiences
- Bed & Breakfast Home and Inn
- Car Wash
- Data Processing Center
- Event Venue
- Family Home
- Grain Elevator
- Logging
- Solar Energy Systems: consumer scale*
- Wind Energy Conversion Systems: commercial

* Support Comprehensive Plan goals

Chapter 2. Zoning District Regulations

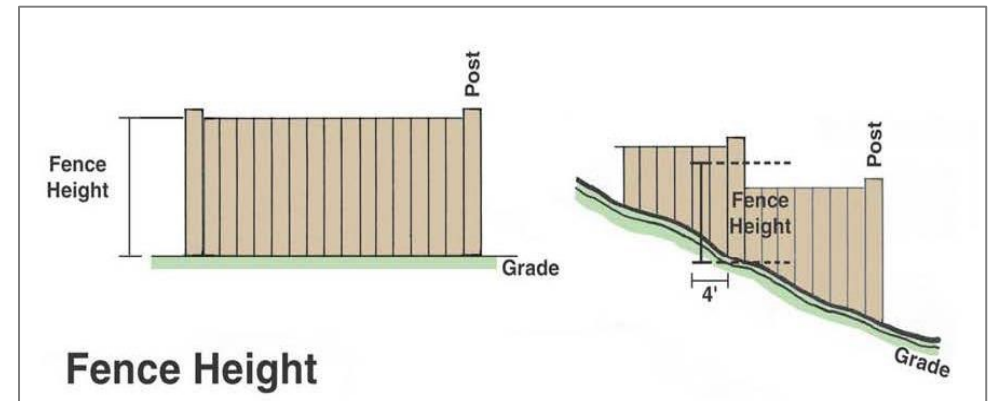
Major Updates to All Zoning Districts

- Reference to Land Use Policy, County and Iowa Codes.
- Tables refer to additional regulations in ordinance.
- Conditional Uses & Structures replace Special Exceptions.
- Temporary Uses & Structures allowed with staff approval.
- Development regulations revised:
 - Refer to Iowa Code for private sewage disposal & private wells.
 - Minimum 30-foot setback along public roadway may be required by County Engineer for future road improvements.
- Regulations for parking, signs, and conditional uses consolidated in other sections.
- A-1 Agricultural and R-1 Residential Districts also have alternative regulations for older subdivisions.

Chapter 2. Zoning District Regulations

Section 2.8 Supplemental Regulations

- *UPDATED* Visibility at Intersections: refers to County's Entrance Policy.
- ***NEW* Burial Site Protection: screening process for County policy, refers applicants to Office of the State Archeologist as needed.**
- *NEW* Accessory Dwelling Units: to comply with Iowa Code.
- *UPDATED* Home-Based Business: to comply with Iowa Code.
- *NEW* Fences: guidance with no-fee permit, illustrations, waivers.



Measurement of Fence Height (Source: City of Sandusky, MI accessed 2023)

Chapter 2. Zoning District Regulations

What Iowa Laws and Jackson County Policy Already Cover

- **Iowa Code Ch. 263B** → illegal to disturb ancient burials (>150 yrs).
- **Iowa Code Section 566.33** → counties responsible for protection of unrecorded burial sites.
- **Iowa Code Section 716.5** → criminal penalties for disturbing burial sites.
- **Iowa Code Section 523I.316** → criminal penalties for failure to report discovery of human remains.
- **County Resolution #184-12-07-99** → identify and protect ancient burials with screening process.
→ compliance with state law is a condition of any County approval.

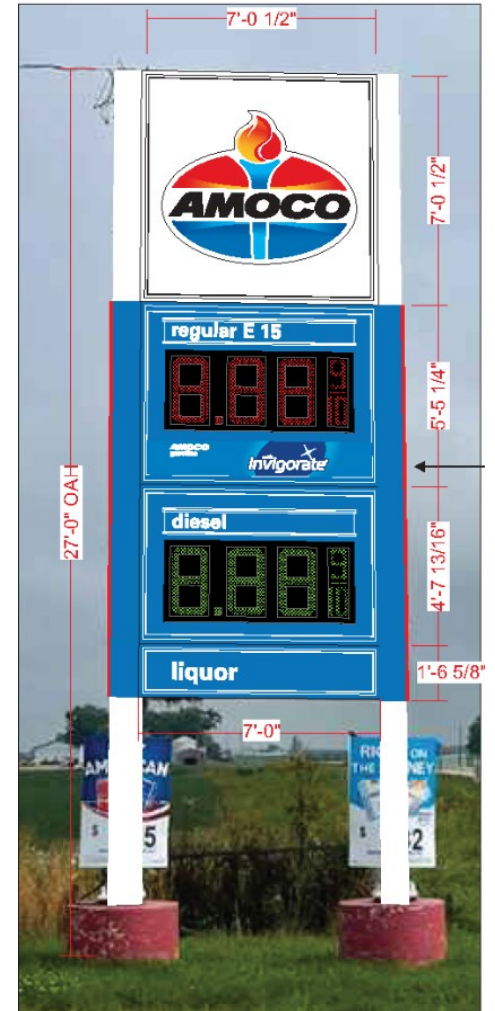
Screening Procedure for Burial Site Protection

- All floodplain development permits, rezonings, subdivisions, and conditional use permits, shall include review of the official Mound Potential Map as part of the pre-application checklist. Zoning permits located within or adjacent to recorded burial site areas shall be reviewed in consultation with the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) prior to permit approval.
- Where mound potential is indicated, the Zoning Administrator shall:
 - Notify the applicant of their obligations under Iowa law;
 - Refer the applicant to the OSA for consultation and guidance;
 - Notify pertinent County staff;
 - Notify County Historic Preservation Commission; and
 - Document such notice in case file.

Chapter 2. Zoning District Regulations

Section 2.9. Application of District Regulations

- *UPDATED* Sign Regulations: more definitions, illustrations, and tables.
 - *NEW*: Increased sign area: from 100 to 200 square feet in commercial and industrial districts.
- *UPDATED* Conditional Uses and Structures: Specific provisions organized into tables for clarity and consistency.
- *UPDATED* Special Requirements: combined from lists in districts.



Sign Area and Height calculations
(Photo credit: CR Signs & Lighting, Inc.)

Chapter 2. Zoning District Regulations

Section 2.10 Nonconformities

- *UPDATED* regulations for “grandfathered” lots, uses and structures organized for easier interpretation.
- *NEW*: Refers to adoption date of first Jackson County Zoning Ordinance on May 6, 1976.
- *UPDATED*: More explanatory and consistent regulations.
- *UPDATED* provisions for repairs, alterations, reconstruction, discontinuance, and conversion.
- *NEW* section for nonconforming signs.

Chapter 3. Administration and Enforcement

- *UPDATED* process for preapplication conference, and review, approval and referral of zoning applications.
 - Provides for interagency coordination and compliance with county, state, and federal regulations.
 - Avoids unexpected delays and higher costs for applicants.
- *NEW* Administrative Waiver:
 - Zoning Administrator can modify setback requirements.
 - Must meet criteria and have written agreement of neighbors.
 - Reduces case load for Board of Adjustment.
 - Fosters property improvements.
- *NEW* Temporary Use Permits:
 - Zoning Administrator can approve specific temporary uses.
 - Reduces case load for Board of Adjustment.
 - Shortens review and approval process.

Chapter 4. Board of Adjustment

Powers and Duties

- Reviews Appeals from parties that disagree with Zoning Administrator's interpretation of the Ordinance.
- Reviews Special Exceptions for uses and structures as allowed by the Ordinance.
- Reviews Variances to alleviate cases of hardship due to literal enforcement of the Ordinance.

Major Updates

- *NEW*: Special Exceptions renamed to Conditional Use Permits to reflect they are allowed only after meeting required conditions.
- *NEW*: Dimensional Variances added to comply with Iowa Code.
- *NEW*: Extension of Conditional Use Permit provides 2 pathways, both with neighbors notified:
 - 1) Public hearing for new, controversial, unchanged projects.
 - 2) Administrative extension for low-risk, mid-construction projects.

Chapter 5. Zoning Commission

Powers and Duties

- Reviews Zoning Ordinance Adoption and Text Amendments.
- Reviews Zoning Ordinance Map Amendments (Rezoning).
- Reviews Comprehensive Plan Adoption and Amendments.
- Contracts for Services for local planning assistance.

Major Updates

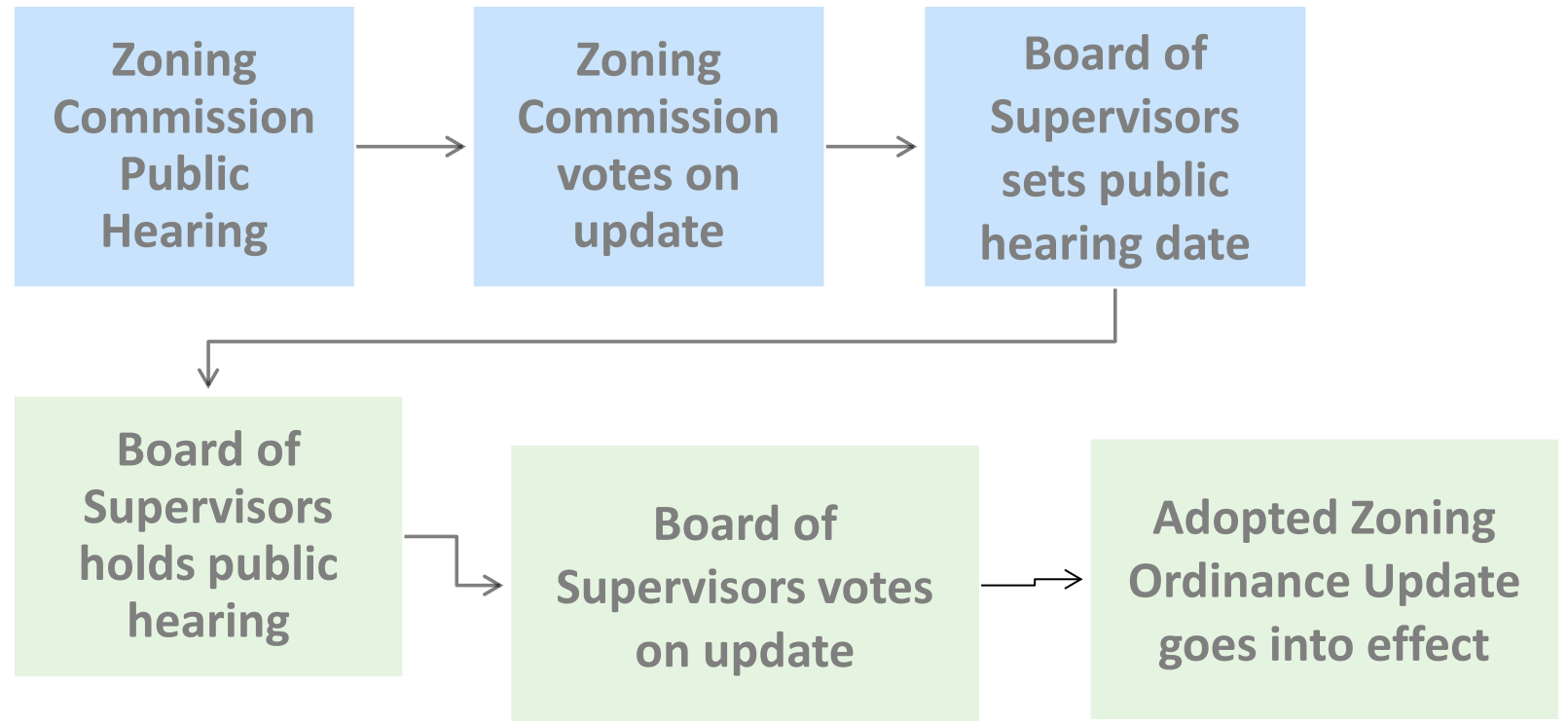
- *NEW* Chapter 5 describes the Commission's responsibilities.
- *UPDATED* procedures for Text Amendments refer to Iowa Code.
- *UPDATED* procedures for Map Amendments (Rezoning) refer to Iowa Code.
- *NEW* Section for Comprehensive Plan Adoption and Amendment refers to Iowa Code.

Chapter 6. Definitions

- *NEW*: Added over 200 definitions and cross-references.
- *NEW*: Illustrations added for some uses and structures.
- *UPDATED*: References to Iowa Code and Administrative Code replace current definitions to ensure Ordinance remains up to date with future State laws.
- *UPDATED*: Regulations within current definitions for parking, lots, setbacks, and other terms moved to Chapter 2.
- *UPDATED*: Definitions for “yards” deleted since they are similar to “setbacks” and therefore confusing.

Zoning Ordinance Update

Ordinance Adoption Process



Zoning Commission Public Hearing

Public Input Process

- The public is invited to ask questions and to comment on the proposal at the public hearing.
- Written comments may be presented to the Commission at or before the public hearing.
- Oral questions and comments will be limited to 3 minutes each.
- Zoom questions and comments will be handled through the Chat feature and limited to 3 minutes each.
- Please wait to be recognized by the Commission Chair and then state your name and address clearly; proceed with your questions and comments.
- The Commission may deny the proposal or approve the proposal, with or without conditions, within the constraints of Iowa Code and the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance.