

Chapter 18.20

OFFICE, RESEARCH, AND MANUFACTURING (MOR, ROLM, RP and GM) DISTRICTS

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18.20.010 Purposes

The office research, industrial and manufacturing zoning districts provide sites for office, light industrial, research and development, and limited commercial uses. The specific purposes for each district are listed below.

(a) Medical Office and Medical Research (MOR) District

The MOR medical office and medical research district provides for medical office, medical research, and some medical support services in areas characterized by low building intensity, large site size, and landscaped grounds. The MOR district is primarily intended for land that is designated for research and office park use in the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan, and that is near hospitals.

(b) Research, Office and Limited Manufacturing (ROLM) District

The ROLM research, office and limited manufacturing district provides for a limited group of office, research and manufacturing uses in a manufacturing/research park environment, where uses requiring larger sites and available natural light and air can locate. Office uses can be accommodated, but should not predominate in the district. The ROLM district is primarily intended for land designated for research and office park use by the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan and located east of El Camino Real.

(c) Research, Office and Limited Manufacturing Subdistrict – Embarcadero [ROLM(E)]

The research, office and limited manufacturing subdistrict [ROLM(E)] modifies the site development regulations of the ROLM research, office and limited manufacturing district to apply to smaller sites in areas with limited access or with environmental sensitivity due to their proximity to the Palo Alto Baylands in the Embarcadero Road area.

(d) Research Park District [RP]

The RP research park district provides for a limited group of research and manufacturing uses that may have unusual requirements for space, light, and air, and desire sites in a research park environment. Premium research and development facilities should be encouraged in the RP district. Support office uses should be limited and should exist primarily to serve the primary research and manufacturing uses. The RP district is intended for application to land designated for research and office park use in the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan on sites that

are west of El Camino Real and held in large parcels, which may or may not also be subject to ground leases.

(e) Research Park Subdistrict 5 [RP(5)]

The Research Park site subdistrict [RP(5)] modifies the site development regulations of the RP research park district to regulate large sites in hilly areas.

(f) General Manufacturing District [GM]

The GM general manufacturing district provides for light manufacturing, research, and commercial service uses. Office uses are very limited in order to maintain the district as a desirable location for manufacturing uses. The GM district is intended for application to land designated for light industrial use in the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan.

(Ord. 4884 § 2 (part), 2005: Ord. 4883 § 7 (part), 2005)

18.20.020 Applicable Regulations

The specific regulations of this chapter and the additional regulations and procedures established by this Title 18 shall apply to all Office Research, Industrial, and Manufacturing districts.

(Ord. 4884 § 2 (part), 2005: Ord. 4883 § 7 (part), 2005)

18.20.030 Land Uses

(a) Permitted and Conditionally Permitted Land Uses

Table 1 lists the land uses permitted or conditionally permitted in the industrial and manufacturing districts.

**TABLE 1
INDUSTRIAL/MANUFACTURING DISTRICT LAND USES
[P = Permitted Use • CUP = Conditional Use Permit Required]**

	MOR	ROLM ROLM(E)	RP RP(5)	GM	Subject to Regulations in Chapter:
ACCESSORY AND SUPPORT USES					
Accessory facilities and activities customarily associated with or essential to permitted uses, and operated incidental to the principal use.	P	P	P	P	Chs. 18.40, 18.42
Automatic Teller Machines	P	P	P	P	18.20.030(d)
Home Occupations, when accessory to permitted residential uses.	P	P	P	P	Chs. 18.40, 18.42
EDUCATIONAL, RELIGIOUS, AND ASSEMBLY USES					
Business and Trade Schools				P	
Religious Institutions		P	P	P	
Colleges and Universities	P	P	P		
Private Clubs, Lodges, or Fraternal Organizations	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	
Private Schools (K-12)	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	

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	MOR	ROLM ROLM(E)	RP RP(5)	GM	Subject to Regulations in Chapter:
HEALTH CARE SERVICES					
Ambulance Services	CUP				
Convalescent Facilities	CUP			CUP	
Medical Office	P	CUP	CUP		
Medical Research	P	P	P		18.20.030(c)
Medical Support Retail	P				18.20.030(b)
Medical Support Services	P				18.20.030(b)
MANUFACTURING AND PROCESSING USES					
Manufacturing		P	P	P	
Recycling Centers		CUP	CUP	CUP	
Research and Development	CUP	P	P	P	
Warehousing and Distribution		P	P	P	
OFFICE USES					
Administrative Office Services		P	P	CUP	
Financial Services		CUP	CUP		
Professional and General Business Offices		P	P		
PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC USES					
Service and Equipment Yards				P	
Utility Facilities				CUP	
Utility Facilities essential to provision of utility services but excluding construction/storage yards, maintenance facilities, or corporation yards.	CUP	CUP	CUP		
RECREATION USES					
Commercial Recreation		CUP	CUP	CUP	
Neighborhood Recreational Centers	CUP				
RESIDENTIAL USES					
Single-Family	Not permitted				18.20.040(b)
Two-Family	Not permitted				
Multiple-Family	CUP	CUP	CUP		
Residential Care Homes	P	P	P	CUP	
RETAIL USES					
Eating and Drinking Services, excluding drive-in and take-out services		CUP	CUP	CUP	
Retail Services		CUP	CUP	CUP	
SERVICE USES					
Animal Care, excluding boarding and kennels				P	
Boarding and Kennels				CUP	
Day Care Centers	P	P	P	CUP	

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	MOR	ROLM ROLM(E)	RP RP(5)	GM	Subject to Regulations in Chapter:
Family Day Care Homes					
Small Family Day Care	P	P	P	P	
Large Family Day Care	P	P	P	P	
General Business Services				P	
Lodging					
Hotels providing not more than 10% of rooms with kitchens	CUP				
Mortuaries and Funeral Homes				P	
Personal Services		CUP	CUP	CUP	
Vehicle Services					
Automobile Service Stations, subject to site and design review in accord with the provisions of Chapter 18.30(G)		CUP	CUP		
Automotive Services				CUP	
Off-site new vehicle storage for auto dealerships located in Palo Alto		CUP		CUP	
TEMPORARY USES					
Temporary Parking Facilities, provided that such facilities shall remain no more than five years.	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	
TRANSPORTATION USES					
Passenger Transportation Terminals				CUP	
P = Permitted Use		CUP = Conditional Use Permit Required			

(b) Limitations on Medical Support Service and Medical Support Retail Uses in the Medical Office and Medical Research (MOR) Zone

- (1) The intent of this limitation is to restrict medical support service and medical support retail uses in the Medical Office and Medical Research (MOR) zone in order to preserve and facilitate space for medical offices and medical research facilities.
- (2) Floor area devoted to medical support services and medical support retail uses in the Medical Office and Medical Research (MOR) zoning district shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total gross floor area within the district.
- (3) The director may require a report from the property owner or applicant whenever application is made to the city to develop new space for medical support service or medical support retail uses or to convert existing space to such uses. The report shall identify the gross floor area of buildings on each site within the zoning district and the gross floor area of medical support service and medical support retail uses for each site. The director may, from time to time, establish procedures and standards implementing this Section 18.20.030(b).

(c) Automatic Teller Machines

- (1) Automatic teller machines may be allowed as an accessory use in the MOR, ROLM, ROLM(E), RP, RP(5), and GM districts when incidental to a primary use on the site and when accessible only from the interior of a building.
- (2) Automatic teller machines may be allowed as a permitted use in the MOR, ROLM, ROLM(E), RP, RP(5), and GM districts when incidental to a primary use on the site and when accessible from the exterior of a building. Staff level Architectural Review is required prior to issuance of a building permit.

(Ord. 4884 § 2 (part), 2005; Ord. 4883 § 7 (part), 2005)

18.20.040 Site Development Standards

Development in the office research, industrial, and manufacturing districts is subject to the following development standards, provided that more restrictive regulations may be required as part of design review under Chapter 18.76 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code.

(a) Development Standards for Non-Residential Uses

Table 2 shows the site development standards for exclusively non-residential uses in the industrial and manufacturing districts.

**TABLE 2
INDUSTRIAL/MANUFACTURING NON-RESIDENTIAL SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

	MOR	ROLM	ROLM(E)	RP	RP(5)	GM	Subject to Regulations in Chapter:
Minimum Site Specifications							
Site Area (sq. ft.)	25,000	1 acre		1 acre	5 acres		
Site Width (ft.)	150	100		100	250		
Site Depth (ft.)	150	150		150	250		
Minimum Setbacks	<i>Setback lines imposed by a special setback map pursuant to Chapter 20.08 of this code may apply.</i>						
Front Yard (ft)	50 ⁽³⁾	20		20	100	(1)	
Rear Yard (ft)	10 ⁽³⁾	20		20	40		
Interior Side Yard (ft)	10	20		20	40		
Street Side Yard (ft)	20 ⁽³⁾	20		20	70		
Minimum Yard (ft) for site lines abutting or opposite residential districts	10 ⁽³⁾	20		20		10	18.20.060(e)(1)(D) 18.20.060(e)(1)(E)
Maximum Site Coverage	30%	30%		30%	15%		
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.5:1	0.4:1 ⁽⁴⁾	0.3:1 ⁽⁴⁾	0.4:1 ⁽⁴⁾	0.3:1 ⁽⁴⁾	0.5:1	
Parking	<i>See Chs. 18.40, 18.42</i>						Chs. 18.40, 18.42
Landscaping	<i>See Section 18.20.050 (Performance Criteria)</i>						18.20.050

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	MOR	ROLM	ROLM(E)	RP	RP(5)	GM	Subject to Regulations in Chapter:
Maximum Height (ft)							
Standard	50	35 ⁽⁴⁾		35 ⁽⁴⁾		50	
Within 150 ft. of a residential zone ⁽⁵⁾	35	35		35		35	
Within 40 ft. of a residential zone ⁽⁵⁾	35	25		25		35	
Daylight Plane for site lines having any part abutting one or more residential districts.							
Initial Height	_ (2)					10	
Slope	_ (2)					1:2	

- (1) For any property designated GM and fronting on East Bayshore Road a minimum setback of 20 feet along that frontage is established.
- (2) Daylight plane requirements shall be identical to the daylight plane requirements of the most restrictive residential district abutting the side or rear site line. Such daylight planes shall begin at the applicable site lines and increase at the specified slope until intersecting the height limit otherwise established for the MOR district.
- (3) In the MOR district, no required parking or loading space shall be located in the first 10 feet adjoining the street property line of any required yard.
- (4) See subsection 18.20.040(e) below for exceptions to height and floor area limitations in the ROLM and RP zoning districts.
- (5) Residential zones include R-1, R-2, R-E, RMD, RM-15, RM-30, RM-40 and residential Planned Community (PC) zones.

(b) Development Standards for Exclusively Residential Uses

Residential uses shall be permitted in the MOR, RP, RP(5), ROLM, ROLM(E), and GM zoning districts, subject to the following criteria.

- (1) It is the intent of these provisions that a compatible transition be provided from lower density residential zones to higher density residential or non-residential zones. The Village Residential development type should be evaluated for use in transition areas and will provide the greatest flexibility to provide a mix of residence types compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.
- (2) No new single-family or two-family residential development is permitted in any of the office, research and manufacturing districts. Existing single-family and two-family uses shall be permitted to remain, consistent with the provisions of Chapter 18.70 (Nonconforming Uses and Noncomplying Facilities).
- (3) MOR District. All multi-family development in the MOR zoning district shall be permitted subject to approval of a conditional use permit and compliance with the development standards prescribed for the RM-30 zoning district.
- (4) RP and RP(5) Districts. All multi-family development in the RP, and RP(5) zoning districts that is located within 150 feet of an R-E, R-1, R-2, RMD, or similar density residential PC zone shall be permitted subject to approval of a conditional use permit and compliance with the development standards prescribed for the RM-15 zoning district, including Village Residential development types. Multi-family development in the MOR, RP, and RP(5) zoning districts that is located greater than 150 feet from an R-E, R-1, R-2, RMD, or low density residential PC shall be permitted subject to

approval of a conditional use permit and compliance with the development standards prescribed for the RM-30 zoning district.

- (5) ROLM (E) District. All multi-family development in the ROLM(E) zoning district shall be permitted subject to approval of a conditional use permit and compliance with the development standards prescribed for the RM-15 zoning district.
- (6) ROLM District. All multi-family development in the ROLM zoning district shall be permitted subject to approval of a conditional use permit and compliance with the development standards prescribed for the RM-30 zoning district.
- (7) GM District. All residential development is prohibited in the GM zoning district.

(c) Development Standards for Mixed (Residential and Nonresidential) Uses in the ROLM, ROLM(E), and GM zoning Districts

Mixed (residential and nonresidential) uses shall be permitted in the ROLM, ROLM(E), and GM zoning districts, subject to the following criteria:

- (1) It is the intent of these provisions that a compatible transition be provided from lower density residential zones to higher density residential, non-residential, or mixed use zones. The Village Residential development type should be evaluated for use in transition areas and will provide the greatest flexibility to provide a mix of residence types compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.
- (2) ROLM(E) District. Mixed (residential and nonresidential) development in the ROLM(E) zoning district shall be permitted, subject to approval of a conditional use permit, determination that the nonresidential use is allowable in the district and that the residential component of the development complies with the development standards prescribed for the RM-15 zoning district. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for mixed use development is 0.3 to 1.
- (3) ROLM District. Mixed (residential and nonresidential) development in the ROLM zoning district shall be permitted, subject to approval of a conditional use permit, determination that the nonresidential use is allowable in the district and that the residential component of the development complies with the development standards prescribed for the RM-30 zoning district. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for mixed use development is 0.4 to 1.
- (4) GM District. Mixed use (residential and nonresidential) development is prohibited in the GM zoning district.

In computing residential densities for mixed (residential and nonresidential) uses, the density calculation for the residential use shall be based on the entire site, including the nonresidential portion of the site.

(d) Floor Area Bonus for Child Care Facilities

Floor area operated as a licensed child care facility shall not be included when calculating floor area ratios for a site. In addition, the permitted floor area on the site shall be increased by an amount equal to fifty percent (50%) of the floor area of the child care facility. The floor area bonus is not exempt from parking requirements and shall not be granted unless the director determines that on-site circulation (including for pick-up and drop-off) for the child care facility is adequate.

(e) **Height and Floor Area Exceptions for Equipment Storage and Access in the RP and RP(5) Districts**

- (1) The intent of this subsection is to provide flexibility in height and floor area limitations to accommodate equipment needs for research and development and similar facilities.
- (2) The maximum height in the RP and RP(5) zoning districts may be increased to forty (40) feet where a) interstitial space is provided between floors to accommodate mechanical and/or electrical equipment, b) the load for such interstitial space is limited, to the satisfaction of the Building Official, to preclude conversion to habitable space, c) the building contains no more than two stories of habitable space above grade, and d) the portion of any building over 35 feet in height is located a minimum of 150 feet from the nearest property line of a residential zone or residential PC zone. Interstitial space refers to intermediate floors used for mechanical or electrical systems and access for equipment maintenance purposes.
- (3) Rooftop and/or basement areas used to enclose mechanical equipment shall be excluded from floor area calculations, provided that the total of any such excluded areas does not exceed one-third of the building footprint area. Rooftop equipment or rooftop equipment enclosures shall not extend above a height of fifteen (15) feet above the roof, and any enclosed rooftop equipment located adjacent to residential property shall be set back at least 20 feet from the building edge closest to the residential site or a minimum of 100 feet from the residential property line, whichever is closer.

(f) **Limitations on Outdoor Uses and Activities.**

- (1) In the GM district, outdoor sales and display of merchandise and outdoor eating areas operated incidental to permitted eating and drinking services are permitted subject to the following regulations:
 - (A) Outdoor sales and display shall not occupy a total site area exceeding the gross building floor area on the site, except as authorized by a conditional use permit.
 - (B) Areas used for outdoor sales and display of motor vehicles, boats, campers, camp trailers, trailers, coaches, house cars, or similar conveyances shall meet the minimum standards applicable to off-street parking facilities with respect to paving, grading, drainage, access to public streets and alleys, safety and protective features, lighting, landscaping, and screening.
 - (C) Exterior storage shall be prohibited, unless screened by a solid wall or fence of between five and eight feet in height. This requirement is not applicable to recycling centers.
- (2) In the ROLM and RP districts, all outdoor activities or uses are prohibited except:
 - (A) Outdoor activities associated with residential use;
 - (B) Landscaping;
 - (C) Parking and loading facilities;
 - (D) Recycling centers that have obtained a conditional use permit;

(E) Noncommercial recreational activities and facilities accessory to permitted or conditional uses; and

(F) Activities and facilities accessory to conditional uses, when authorized by a conditional use permit.

(3) In all industrial and manufacturing districts, equipment such as generators and air conditioning compressors is permitted outdoors so long as it is located out of setbacks adjacent to (including across a street from) a residential use, and is screened from view from the residential area.

(4) Any outdoor storage or use of hazardous materials in excess of exempt quantities prescribed in Title 15 of the Municipal Code or outdoor storage, use or handling of any amount of toxic gas or materials regulated under Title 15 shall also require a conditional use permit.

(g) Employee Showers.

Employee shower facilities shall be provided for any new building constructed or for any addition to or enlargement of any existing building as specified in Table 4.

**TABLE 4
EMPLOYEE SHOWERS REQUIRED**

Uses	Gross Floor Area of New Construction (ft ²)	Showers Required
Medical, Professional, and General Business Offices, Financial Services, Colleges and Universities, Business and Trade Schools, Research and Development, General Business Services, and Manufacturing	0-9,999	No requirement
	10,000-19,999	1
	20,000-49,999	2
	50,000 and up	4

(h) Nuisances and Hazards

In all office research, industrial, and manufacturing districts, excluding the MOR Medical Office and Medical Research district, all uses, whether permitted or conditional, shall be conducted in such a manner so as to preclude any nuisance, hazard, or commonly recognized offensive conditions or characteristics, including creation or emission of dust, gas, smoke, noise, fumes, odors, vibrations, particulate matter, chemical compounds, etiological (biological) agents, electrical disturbance, humidity, heat, cold, glare, or night illumination. Prior to issuance of a building permit or occupancy permit, or at any other time, the building official may require evidence that adequate controls, measures, or devices have been provided to ensure and protect the public interest, health, comfort, convenience, safety, and general welfare from such nuisance, hazard, or offensive condition.

(i) Recycling Storage

All new development, including approved modifications that add thirty percent or more floor area to existing uses, shall provide adequate and accessible interior areas or exterior enclosures for the storage of recyclable materials in appropriate containers. The design, construction and accessibility of recycling areas and enclosures shall be subject to approval by the architectural review board, in accordance with design guidelines adopted by that board and approved by the city council pursuant to Chapter 18.76.

(j) Designated Sites

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Section 18.20.040, on those sites that are Designated Sites under the Development Agreement between the City of Palo Alto and Stanford University approved and adopted by Ordinance No. 4870, the maximum floor area ratio shall be 0.5 to 1 as provided in that Agreement.

(Ord. 4884 § 2 (part), 2005; Ord. 4883 § 7 (part), 2005)

18.20.050 Performance Criteria

All development in the Office/Research/Manufacturing zoning districts shall comply with the requirements and guidelines outlined in Chapter 18.23. Such requirements and guidelines are intended to reduce the impacts of these non-residential uses on surrounding residential districts.

(Ord. 4884 § 2 (part), 2005; Ord. 4883 § 7 (part), 2005)

18.20.060 Grandfathered Uses**(a) Applicability**

- (1) Except as provided in this section, nonconforming uses and noncomplying facilities are governed by Chapter 18.70 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- (2) Any use allowed as a conditional use but legally existing as a permitted use prior to the effective date of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance modifying the allowable uses in the MOR, ROLM, ROLM(E), RP, RP(5), or GM districts shall be considered a conforming use, except that a conditional use permit shall be required if the use is expanded as outlined in Section 18.74.020.

(b) Grandfathered Uses in the GM District

- (1) The following uses are grandfathered in the GM District, subject to the provisions in subsection (2):
 - (A) Retail sales service uses or general business office uses existing on January 13, 1986.
 - (B) General business office uses existing on September 6, 1984.
- (2) The uses specified in subsection (1) may remain as grandfathered uses provided that those uses:
 - (A) are located in the GM district;
 - (B) existed on the specified date;
 - (C) on that date, were lawful permitted uses or conditional uses operating subject to a conditional use permit; and
 - (D) on that date, were conforming uses.

(c) Permitted Changes

The following regulations shall apply to grandfathered uses in the GM district, as specified in subsection (b) above:

- (1) Such uses shall be permitted to remodel, improve, or replace site improvements on the same site, for continual use and occupancy by the same use, with the following provision:
 - (A) Unless a design enhancement exception is granted pursuant to Chapter 18.76, remodeling, improvement or replacement shall not:
 - (i) result in increased floor area or number of rooms,
 - (ii) result in shifting of building footprint,
 - (iii) increase the height, length, building envelope, or size of the improvement, or
 - (iv) increase the existing degree of noncompliance.
- (2) If a grandfathered use ceases and thereafter remains discontinued for twelve consecutive months, it shall be considered abandoned and may be replaced only by a conforming use.
- (3) A grandfathered use which is changed to or replaced by a conforming use shall not be reestablished, and any portion of a site or any portion of a building, the use of which changes from a grandfathered use to a conforming use, shall not thereafter be used except to accommodate a conforming use.

(Ord. 4884 § 2 (part), 2005; Ord. 4883 § 7 (part), 2005)

18.20.070 Conflict with Development Agreement

In the event that any provision of this Chapter 18.20 conflicts with any provision of the Development Agreement between the City of Palo Alto and Stanford University approved and adopted by Ordinance No. 4870, the provisions adopted by Ordinance No. 4870 shall apply.

(Ord. 4884 § 2 (part), 2005; Ord. 4883 § 7 (part), 2005)

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