



**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
November 29, 2023**

**WORK SESSION
Council Chamber, 605 E. Main Street**

J. Lloyd Snook, III, Mayor
Juandiego Wade, Vice Mayor
Michael K. Payne, Councilor
Brian R. Pinkston, Councilor
Leah Puryear, Councilor
Kyna Thomas, Clerk

6:00 PM City Council Work Session

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

**II. Presentation of Work Session Topic – "Draft Zoning Ordinance -Special
Deliberations on Zoning Map"**

James Freas, Director of Neighborhood Development Services

III. Council Discussion

IV. Adjournment

This is an in-person meeting with an option for the public to view electronically by registering in advance for the Zoom webinar at www.charlottesville.gov/zoom. The meeting may also be viewed on the City's streaming platforms and local government Channel 10. Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the public meeting may call (434) 970-3182 or submit a request via email to ada@charlottesville.gov. The City of Charlottesville requests that you provide a 48-hour notice so that proper arrangements may be made.

The meeting notice was published simultaneously to the public and the governing body on 11/03/23.



CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

"A Great Place to Live for All of Our Citizens"

Department of Neighborhood Development Services

Memorandum

To: City Council

From: James Freas, Director, Neighborhood Development Services

Date: November 29, 2023

Re: Zoning Map

CC: Sam Sanders, City Manager
Planning Commission

The Zoning Map defines where the requirements of the Zoning Districts apply. As each district's rules define the intensity of development, in terms of height, massing, and mixture of uses, which in turn relates to the types of homes and businesses that can locate there, these districts effectively define the feel of a neighborhood, the opportunities available there, and what types of households will live there. These districts also define the change in these places over time, as the City evolves and adjusts to meet the changing needs of the community for residential and commercial growth, different types of housing, and community expectations for addressing priorities like climate change, historic preservation and others. The opportunity and challenge of developing the zoning map is in addressing the many different interests and perspectives involved.

With the majority of homes and commercial spaces being a product of private, market driven development, it is important to understand how market competition and the basics of supply and demand are a factor in multiple ways when thinking about the zoning map and the distribution of zoning districts. High housing prices are a result of lack of housing supply relative to demand coupled with increasing incomes – as was noted in the presentation from the Weldon Cooper Center, the Charlottesville region continues to have steady growth and is now the most expensive housing market on the east coast relative to incomes. As was described in the UCLA report¹, housing prices are also driven up when insufficient land is zoned for residential development relative to demand because the less land area zoned appropriately, the more existing property owners within the areas zoned for growth can take advantage of the lack of competition and demand higher land prices. The article suggests a "zoning buffer" of 300% of the existing unit count, or more, in high demand localities (p. 8 and 9).

The proposed zoning map responds to the policy objective of increasing the supply of housing and, over time, stabilizing the market, by increasing the opportunity for housing development citywide. The Residential Districts create a base standard that every lot in the City is allowed to

¹ Building Up the "Zoning Buffer": Using Broad Upzones to Increase Housing Capacity Without Increasing Land Values by Shane Philips, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0r53h7pw>

add at least a few additional units. The R-B and R-C districts are focused near community amenities like parks, schools, and transit, to promote access to these important resources. UVA is a major driver of residential demand, the equivalent of a second major downtown for the region in its own right, and the zoning map treats it as such by placing RX districts that will allow more units to be developed in proximity to the University and in an amount that should promote a competitive market for land. Finally, commercial areas are upzoned to allow for the creation of mixed-use urban places with the opportunity for new homes.

The following looks more specifically at areas of the map, and associated zoning rules, where Councilors requested review of the proposed zoning. The online interactive Zoning Map can be found here <https://cvilleplanstogether.com/draft-zoning/>.

Plymouth Road

As an implementation of the Medium Intensity Land Use, the R-B zoning in the area of Plymouth Road is intended to introduce a housing type that can be more affordable than single-family homes, diversifying the housing available in this area. The Medium Intensity designation here likely stemmed from the access to Greenleaf Park.

If Council would like to change the zoning designation here, the next option would be the R-A designation, which would be applied to lots fronting on Plymouth, Harrow, Sherwood, and Oxford. The R-B designation should be retained for Rose Hill Drive.

Davis Avenue

Davis Avenue, and its parallel street, Watson Avenue, have lots and infrastructure that can readily accommodate the proposed R-B zoning designation. The Comprehensive Plan identified this area as Medium Intensity because of the access to Davis Field and associated park space with the intention of introducing a housing type that can be more affordable than single-family homes, diversifying the housing available in this area.

If Council would like to change the zoning designation here, the next option would be the R-A designation, which would be applied to lots fronting Watson, Davis, and Marshal.

Jefferson Park Avenue (JPA)

Dating back as far as the 2003 Comprehensive Plan and associated zoning amendments, the area along JPA has been identified for more intensive development to accommodate student housing. The current zoning allows up to 8 or 9 stories by special use permit for those lots fronting JPA while the side streets are zoned for two-unit buildings.

The proposed zoning is for up to 5 stories (7 with affordable housing bonus) along JPA, with 8 stories at key intersections (10 with affordable housing bonus). The side streets are proposed for 3 stories (5 with affordable housing bonus).

If Council is interested in reducing some of the proposed density in this corridor, the side streets currently proposed for RX-3 (Montebello, Chelsea, Harmon, Washington, and Observatory) could be placed in the R-C district, which could further preserve the feel of individual house scale buildings as viewed from the street. However, staff recommends maintaining the RX-3 zoning along Stadium Road and Shamrock. Council could also decide that Shamrock, where it intersects JPA, is not a “key intersection” in this corridor and replace the CX-8 zoning there with CX-5.

Rugby Avenue

Rugby Avenue is a key corridor connecting Preston, Rose Hill Drive, and the Route 250 bypass and is appropriately designated as Medium Intensity in the Comprehensive Plan. The mapping logic methodology for designating the R-C district identified the intersections of streets designated as neighborhood A streets or higher, which includes both the intersection of Rugby Avenue and Rose Hill as well as Rugby Avenue and Rugby Rd/Preston Ave. The methodology calls for the R-C designation to extend 600 feet or to the next cross street.

If Council would like to change the zoning designation on Rugby Ave, staff recommends reducing the length of the street from the intersection with R-C zoning but not eliminating R-C from this street entirely.

Orange Street

The East High Street corridor is proposed for CX-5. This zoning designation reaches a couple of lots down Orange Street. Council could limit the CX-5 designation to just the first lot on the corner of E. High and Orange and put the following two lots in the R-A district matching the designation of the remainder of the street.

Preston Ave

Preston Avenue between 10th Street and Rugby Road is another significant road that had been identified for multi-unit development. Much of this area is already zoned for that type of use in the current ordinance. There are three small lots on Rosser Street proposed for RX-3 that Council may want to consider shifting to the R-A designation, consistent with the remainder of the street.

Locust & Calhoun

The R-C designation at this location is the result of the mapping logic methodology, which identified corner lots at lower intensity intersections within the Medium Intensity land use areas. If Council would like to change the zoning designation, the next option would be R-B.

Transitions

There are two types of transitions used where higher intensity districts abut lower intensity districts.

Common Lot Line – where the transition occurs along the back or side lot line, the higher intensity property must incorporate setbacks, landscaping, and stepbacks to manage the transition.

Across Street – where the transition occurs across a street, the higher intensity property utilizes stepbacks. A key difference in these transitions is that in these districts, there is still an interest in achieving a strong “streetwall”, which is a defined and consistent edge close to the pedestrian zone that supports the sense of safety and comfort for pedestrians. Therefore, the setback remains 5 to 15 feet in the RX districts and 0 to 10 feet in the CX and NX districts. Significantly, the setbacks are measured after allocating space for the required streetscape, which includes sidewalk and greenzone (trees). The total width for the required streetscape is based on the street type, with the narrowest in the code being 11 feet. With this requirement, every ‘across the street transition’ effectively includes a minimum 6 foot wide sidewalk and a row of street trees in a minimum 5 foot “greenscape zone”.

The Dairy Market project at 10th and West is an example of the use of stepbacks. However, the streetscape on both streets is inadequate compared to what the new development code would require.

In considering the transitions, its important to think about whether the transition is relative to what is there now or what could be there in the future. The structure of the proposed ordinance is future oriented.

If Council is interested in a greater level of transition between higher and lower intensity districts, staff could revisit these requirements, but would need direction on the issue or concern to be addressed. The proposed transitions are balancing issues of scale with developability of frequently small or otherwise constrained urban lots with anticipated outcomes similar to those in many recently approved discretionary permits.

Gateway Areas

Many of the roadways entering the City are proposed for greater heights/higher intensities close to or at the entrance. This result is a reflection of two ideas that guided aspects of the land use map. One of these ideas reflects the urban design principle of marking key intersections with taller buildings and greater intensity of use. Some of these key intersections happen to be near the city borders such as the intersection of E. High and Long Street, which is proposed for CX-8. The other idea was to take advantage of the large suburban style commercial strip malls that are under single ownership and therefore potentially more easily developed with mixed use buildings. Consideration of redeveloping these locations with more mixed-use urban environments has been a consistent theme since the Comprehensive Plan process began in 2017.

While these areas are at the City borders, the majority of people would not recognize that fact. The County’s urban ring has effectively already expanded the urban area of Charlottesville well beyond the city limits such that in many cases one will have traveled for miles in an urbanized

environment before reaching the city border. Further, as the County has also been working to accommodate greater housing density to respond to the region's housing needs, they have also targeted these border areas for greater density. For example, the Pantops Master Plan identifies the area next to the Long Street bridge as the Riverbend Urban Center, described as a pedestrian focused, high density, urban environment and allowing heights of up to 6 stories. Similarly, the County has designated multiple locations on 29 north for urban, mixed-use environments. In all of the mixed-use urban nodes the County has identified, they have articulated urban design principles consistent with those embedded in the City's proposed development code, including the important principle of bringing buildings directly to the street with no more than 10-foot setbacks in order to support a strong pedestrian environment.

Many of these areas are regulated by Entrance Corridor overlay districts. These districts require design review consistent with the adopted design review guidelines, which will need to be updated. While generally, the City has not regulated height as part of this design review, there is nothing in the ordinance that prevents regulation of height or massing and the design guidelines appear to contemplate some form of individual review of height.

Council could lower the intensity or height allowed in these areas by changing the proposed districts or could look to future entrance corridor design guidelines to better articulate the desired design outcomes for these areas.

Conclusion

The proposed zoning ordinance and map work together to implement the policy objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Recognizing that the City is a dynamic and changing place, the map and ordinances will also need to change over time and the City will continue to see rezoning requests from property owners as well as new community-generated plans that will lead to map and ordinance amendment proposals. The Comprehensive Plan guiding principles (Comprehensive Plan page 21) will serve to guide this work as the City adjusts to changing conditions, learns from experience, and amends its zoning map and ordinances.

Attachments

Mapping Logic Document, Dated 12/16/2022.

Mapping Logic

Draft 12/16/2022

LAND USE	ZONING DISTRICT	CRITERIA
RESIDENTIAL		
General Residential	R-A	Applied to all parcels in land use category.
Medium Intensity Residential	R-B	Applied to all parcels in land use category unless criteria met below.
	R-C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Within ~600 ft of key intersections based on the STW plan (neighborhood A streets and up) ▪ Fronting a Mixed Use A street ▪ Corner lots at lower intensity intersections (neighborhood B streets) ▪ Townhomes ▪ Larger non-residential or vacant lots
Higher Intensity Residential	RX-3	Applied to all parcels in land use category unless criteria met below.
	RX-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adjacent to a Urban Mixed Use Corridor/Node except when block is primarily house scale ▪ Fronting a Mixed Use A street ▪ Existing 4+ story building
MIXED USE		
Neighborhood Mixed Use Corridor	CX-3	Applied to all parcels in land use category unless criteria met below.
	CX-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adjacent to a Urban Mixed Use Corridor/Node ▪ Existing 4+ story building
Urban Mixed Use Corridor	CX-5	Applied to all parcels in land use category unless criteria met below.
	CX-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key intersections ▪ Adjacent to Downtown
Neighborhood Mixed Use Node	NX-3	Applied to all parcels in land use category unless criteria met below.
	NX-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adjacent to a Urban Mixed Use Corridor/Node or Business/Tech Mixed Use ▪ Existing 4+ story building
Urban Mixed Use Node	NX-8	Applied to all parcels in land use category unless criteria met below.
	NX-10	Fronting a Downtown street
Downtown Core	DX	Applied to all parcels in land use category.
Business and Technology Mixed Use	IX-5	Applied to all parcels in land use category unless criteria met below.
	IX-8	Adjacent to a Urban Mixed Use Corridor/Node
SPECIAL		
Open Spaces and Parks		
Cemetery	CV	Applied to all parcels in land use category.
Civic		
Education		
UVA	CM	Applied to all parcels in land use category.