



CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC ZONING MAP REVISION FAQ

Late January 2021

What is being considered by City Council?

City Council is reviewing and receiving input on a new zoning map. The map is the second step in adopting a long-needed revision to the zoning and land development ordinance. Now called the Uniform Development Ordinance (UDO) and adopted in 2019, these new regulations replace a 40-year old ordinance that is problematic in many ways, to include that it is contradictory, difficult to understand and administer, and does not necessarily reflect desired development patterns.

What is the Zoning Map Revision Process?

The City of Columbia recently adopted, with a future implementation date, a new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), which consolidates and revises the current zoning and land development ordinances. The UDO establishes zoning districts to provide a contextual method to implement land use and development regulations. There are residential, commercial, mixed-use, industrial, and institutional districts that each have a different set of permitted uses and development standards. To implement the new districts a new zoning map designating the location of these new districts must be drafted and adopted by City Council. This process is intended to provide a way to seek feedback from and educate the public about the new map. The effective date of the UDO was set for a later date to permit time to draft and adopt the new maps.

What is zoning and a zoning map? Why is it important?

Zoning regulates land use, density, setbacks, parking, lot coverage, building size, and more. It provides a means to implement the Land Use Plan known as *Plan Together* and more broadly, the Comprehensive Plan, known as *Columbia Compass*. The overall objectives of planning and zoning are to protect public health, safety and welfare, to promote compatibility between various land uses and developments and to promote an attractive and well-planned community. Zoning districts are established by ordinance and the Official Zoning Map identifies the location of these districts, thereby specifying the land use and development requirements affecting each parcel of land within the City.

Why is the City rewriting these regulations?

The current zoning ordinance is over 40 years old. Over time piecemeal changes have created a code that is contradictory, difficult to understand, and does not necessarily reflect desired development patterns. The new zoning code, combined with land development regulations and called the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) resolves these issues and is intended to simplify and streamline development review, provide an easy to understand set of rules, while creating a more modern code that fosters growth and development while maintaining neighborhood character.

What does the new zoning map mean for residential neighborhoods?

In all but a handful of cases, the classification of parcels in residential districts has stayed the same. Generally, if a parcel was RS, it is now RSF and if it was RG it is now RM or RD. In addition, the standards and uses permitted remain largely the same.

Are there any protections for neighborhoods near commercial corridors?

Yes. The new code includes new standards to ease the interface of commercial development with residential parcels. Known as Neighborhood Compatibility Standards, these requirements encourage the aspects of development that may be disruptive to a residence to be located away from the neighborhood and oriented towards the commercial corridor.

What changes are there in the zoning districts?

Changes range from significant, such as new zoning districts, to minor, such as renaming existing districts. Within the commercial district range, there are far more mixed-use districts that will permit residential and commercial uses along our corridors. These districts, known as Activity Centers/Corridors, are based on their context: Neighborhood, Community, or Region. Other districts such as M-1 (Light Industrial) and M-2 (Heavy Industrial) are now renamed LI and HI respectively. Residential districts are similar to what exists with consolidation of some standards, modifications to reflect actual development patterns and have been renamed. For instance, single family was designated by RS and is now RSF, while General Residential was denoted by RG and is now known as RM or Mixed Residential.

What factors were taken into consideration when assigning the new zoning categories to properties?

A number of factors were used to determine the new zoning categories. These include the current zoning classification, the Future Land Use classification, as well as the current use of the property.

How are historic, design, and community character overlay districts impacted?

Historic, Design, and Community Character Overlay districts have been renamed, but will remain in the same geographic location as they are currently.

When will the new ordinance and map go into effect?

The code and official zoning map is planned to go into effect August 30, 2021.

At what point will the new Zoning code and map impact permit review?

Applications will be covered by the Transitional Provisions of the UDO. If a permit application is submitted prior to the effective date of new code AND it is considered complete, it will be reviewed under the existing code even if final permit issuance does not occur until after the effective date. If it is considered a new application and it is after the effective date, it will be reviewed under new code.

Where can I review the new code and draft map and learn more about the process?

Please visit the project website at www.weplantogether.org for a project history and links to the regulations and draft map. Here you can also sign up to receive e-mail updates on the progress of the project.

What is the impact on existing historic, design, or community character districts?

These districts remain in place in the new code and map.

Will the changes affect the amount of taxes homeowners pay?

No.

What is the major change in commercial corridors?

The new code and map provide more opportunities for mixed-use districts along our corridors. When the current ordinance was written in the 1970s, there was a belief and desire to strictly separate commercial uses from residential uses and rely more on vehicles to get from one place to another. While that certainly is still the primary way most residents get around, there is a desire for additional options that don't always require a car or bus trip. Allowing for residential and commercial uses along our corridors will provide the opportunity to create the conditions where residents can live, work, and recreate within walking or biking distance, while maintain the residential character of our neighborhoods.

How can I see what the current and proposed zoning is for a property?

There is an on-line viewer that shows the current and proposed zoning district. It can be viewed here: <https://colacitygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b23a1c9113984c69a34edf9404154c2a> If you wish to make an appointment to see a hard copy, please call 803-545-3333.

Where can I read the new Uniform Development Ordinance?

You can read the new code here: <https://weplantogether.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Updated-UDO-Final.pdf> and a summary is here: <https://columbiasc.net/depts/zoning/docs/Summary%202020.pdf> Please visit www.weplantogether.org for additional information on the project.

How long has this been under consideration?

The process to rewrite the zoning regulations and map began with the first public meeting in 2015 with the Shaping Columbia workshop. Since then, a number of public meetings and workshops have occurred to obtain public input on both the ordinance and the map.

What if I have more questions about the map or my property?

Attached is an FAQ or you can call the Zoning Division at 803-545-3333 to set-up an appointment or e-mail zoningmap@columbiasc.gov.

What is the schedule to adopt the map and ordinance?

January 19, 2021	Public Hearing
January 20 - February 26, 2021	Period for additional input/Stakeholder-Neighborhood Meetings
March 16, 2021	City Council amend effective date to August 30, 2021/Review input and proposed changes
April 6, 2021	City Council 1 st Reading of new zoning map
May 3, 2021	Planning Commission consideration of revisions to zoning map
June 6, 2021	City Council 2 nd Reading of new zoning map (effective August 30, 2021)
July 20, 2021	City Council Public Hearing and 1 st Reading on revisions to zoning map
August 3, 2021	City Council 2nd Reading on revisions to zoning map (effective August 30, 2021)
August 30, 2021	UDO and Map Effective