



To: Tom Bartholomew, Chair, Committee of the Whole
Members of the Planning Commission

From: Ken Bowers, AICP
Mitchell Silver, AICP

Date: April 30, 2009

Re: Revisions to Future Land Use category descriptions

Please find attached proposed revisions to the narratives describing the Future Land Use Categories. These changes have been prepared in response to issues brought to light during the Committee's review to date, as well as comments from individual PC members. Staff believes that these revisions will serve to improve and clarify the intent and applicability of the 19 land use categories. To highlight:

- Remaining references to building height have been removed.
- The word "retail" has been removed from the mixed-use categories to de-emphasize the importance of retail versus other uses contemplated in these land use classes.
- The reference to "small" supermarkets has been removed from Neighborhood Mixed-Use, and replaced by a general reference to supermarkets excluding super-stores/centers.
- The Office/Research and Development category has been amended to be inclusive of flex development and fabrication ancillary to an R&D use.
- Various other clean-up edits have been made.

Staff recommends that the Committee consider these changes at the May 7 meeting.

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Attachment A: Proposed Amendments to Section A.2: Future Land Uses

Raleigh is a growing city both in terms of the number of residents and jobs and its physical growth and land area. Raleigh's Future Land Use Map (**Map LU-3**) builds upon the City's existing land use patterns and provides a generalized guide for development and conservation decisions. The Future Land Use Map is further defined below. For guidance on the application and use of the ~~the~~ Future Land Use Map as it relates to zoning applications, see the text box entitled "Evaluating Zoning Proposals and Their Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan" later in this section..


- The Future Land Use Map is a generalized depiction of intended uses in the horizon year of the Comprehensive Plan, roughly 20 years in the future. It is not an "existing land use map," although in many cases future uses in an area may be the same as those that exist today.
- The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map. Whereas zoning maps are parcel-specific, and establish detailed requirements for setbacks, height, use, parking, and other attributes, the land use categories of the Future Land Use Map recommend a range of potentially appropriate land uses and intensities. By definition, the Future Land Use Map is a guide to future zoning decisions. Related, the Future Land Use Map is not intended to be referenced as part of the site plan review process, since the zoning regulations set forth the permitted uses for particular parcels.
- Streets and public rights-of-way are not an explicit land use category on the Future Land Use Map. Within any given area, the streets that pass through are assigned the same designation as the adjacent uses.

Definition of Future Land Use Categories


Raleigh's Future Land Use Map contains [17-19](#) color-coded categories that express public policy on future land uses throughout the City as described below:

RESIDENTIAL CATEGORIES

Rural Residential (less than 1 unit per acre)

 This category is generally mapped over areas zoned "RR" (or areas in the ETJ/ USA with rural residential land use designations and rural County zoning) where intensification to more urban uses is not expected due to watershed constraints and existing fragmented parcel patterns. Rural Residential areas are generally developed with "ranchettes," hobby farms, estates, large-lot subdivisions, or ~~elustered~~ [housing conservation subdivisions](#) with large common open space areas. The intent of this designation is to preserve the rural character of these areas and achieve compatible resource conservation objectives such as watershed conservation and tree protection. Overall densities in these areas would be less than one unit per acre, although clustered housing on large tracts could result in small pockets of more densely developed land.

Low Density Residential (1-6 units per acre)

 This category encompasses most of Raleigh's single family detached residential neighborhoods, corresponding roughly to the R-2, R-4, and R-6 zoning districts (but excluding parks within these districts). It also identifies vacant or agricultural lands—in the city and in the county—where single family residential use is planned over the next 20 years. Clustered housing, duplexes, and other housing types would be consistent with this designation as long as an overall gross density not exceeding 6 units per acre was maintained. As defined in the zoning regulations, manufactured home parks could also be appropriate in this land use category.

Moderate Density Residential (6-14 units per acre)

This category applies to some of the city's older single family residential neighborhoods, along with newer small lot single family subdivisions and patio home developments. Other housing types would be consistent with this designation as long as an overall gross density not exceeding 14 units per acre was maintained. Gross density in these areas would be 6 to 14 units per acre. The SPR-30 (Special Residential - 30) zoning district could also be appropriate in this land use category. ~~The Other~~ corresponding zoning districts are R-6 and R-10.

Medium Density Residential (14-28 units per acre)

This category applies to garden apartments, townhomes, condominiums, and ~~one to three story~~ suburban style apartment complexes. It would also apply to older neighborhoods with a mix of single-family and multi-family housing with average overall densities in the 14-28 unit per acre range. Most of these areas are zoned R-15 and R-20, but a few R-10 areas could also fall into this category.

High Density Residential (28 units per acre or more)

This category would apply to apartment buildings and condominiums that are generally four stories or more. Conforming zoning districts would include R-30. Other zoning districts which permit multi-family housing, appropriately conditioned, could be conforming as well. Although this is a residential ~~zone~~ category, ground floor retail uses (with upper story housing) may be permitted under certain circumstances. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element policies should be consulted for additional guidance.

MIXED USE CATEGORIES:

Office Residential—Mixed Use


This category is applied primarily to frontage lots along thoroughfares where low density residential uses are no longer appropriate, as well as ~~Some~~ office areas parks and developments suitable for a more mixed-use development pattern ~~are also mapped using this designation.~~ This category encourages a mix of medium low/moderate to medium density residential and office use. Retail not ancillary to ~~an~~ employment and/or residential uses is discouraged so that retail can be more appropriately clustered and concentrated in retail and mixed-use centers at major intersections and planned transit stations. The Office and Institution zones provide the closest match with the proposed use pattern, although higher-impact uses such as hotels and hospitals are not contemplated or recommended in this land use category.

Neighborhood ~~Retail~~—Mixed Use

This category applies to ~~small scale~~ neighborhood shopping centers and ~~small~~ pedestrian-oriented retail districts. The service area of these districts is generally ~~less than~~ about a one mile radius or less. Typical uses would include corner stores or convenience stores, restaurants, bakeries, ~~small~~ supermarkets (other than super-stores/centers), ~~or~~ drug stores, dry cleaners, video stores, small professional offices, retail banking, and similar uses that serve the immediately surrounding neighborhood. While this is primarily a commercial category, mixed use projects with upper story housing would are also ~~be~~ supported by this designation. Most of the areas mapped with this designation are currently zoned NB (Neighborhood Business) or SC (Shopping Center). Where residential development complements commercial uses, it would generally be in the Moderate to Medium density range (less than 28 units per acre).


Multiple zoning districts could be developed for this category in the future, recognizing that some of the designated areas are established neighborhood “main streets” and others are suburban auto-oriented shopping plazas or strip centers. Although housing would be allowed in all cases, there could be greater incentives for “vertical mixed use” or higher density housing (up to about 40 units per acre) -where these zones adjoin future transit stations, or are on traditional “walking” streets.

Community Retail—Mixed Use


 This category applies to medium-sized shopping centers and larger pedestrian-oriented retail districts such as Cameron Village. Typical commercial uses include large-format supermarkets, larger drug stores, department stores and variety stores, clothing stores, banks, offices, restaurants, movie theaters, hotels, and similar uses that draw from multiple neighborhoods. Development intensities could be higher than in Neighborhood Center areas, with mid-rise buildings as well as low rise buildings. Where residential development occurs, ground floor retail would be encouraged and minimum density standards might be applied. Densities would generally be in the Medium range (14 – 28 units per acre); although High Density (up to about 70 units per acre) would be appropriate around proposed transit stations and along transit-intensive corridors. Most of these areas are now zoned SC and O&I-1. A few are zoned O&I-2.

Multiple zoning districts could be developed for this category in the future, recognizing that some of the designated areas are established neighborhood “main streets” and others are suburban auto-oriented shopping plazas or strip centers. Although housing would be allowed in all cases, there could be greater incentives for “vertical mixed use” or higher density housing where these zones adjoin future transit stations, or are on traditional “walking” streets. For both this category and Neighborhood Mixed Use, higher densities should be accompanied by enhanced public benefits and amenities.

Regional Retail—Mixed Use


 This category applies to the Triangle Town Center area, the Brier Creek area, and the North Hills/Midtown and Crabtree Centers. The intent is to identify the major retail and service hubs that draw customers from across the city. These areas may include high-density housing, office development, hotels, and region-serving retail uses such as department stores and specialty stores. The areas with this designation are currently zoned O&I-2, SC, and TD.

Central Business District


 This category applies to the Raleigh Central Business District, and is intended to enhance Downtown Raleigh as a vibrant mixed use urban center. The category recognizes the area’s role as the heart of the city, supporting a mix of high-intensity office, retail, housing, government, institutional, visitor-serving, cultural, and entertainment uses. Multiple zoning districts apply within the CBD, corresponding to the different character and vision for its various neighborhoods. The maximum residential density in this area would be 320 units per acre. The closest conforming zoning district to this designation is “Bus” (Business) with DOD (Downtown Overlay District).

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES:

Office/ Research and Development


 This category identifies major employment centers where housing is not considered an appropriate future land use. Principal uses are office parks, free-standing office buildings or corporate headquarters, banks, research and development uses, hotels, and ancillary service businesses and retail uses that support the office economy. This category can also apply in appropriate locations to office-industrial hybrids such as light fabrication and assembly ancillary to an R&D use, flex parks, and office-distribution combinations. Most of these areas are currently zoned O&I-1, O&I-2, O&I-3, or Thoroughfare District (TD).

Business and Commercial Services

 This category is for higher-impact or “heavy” commercial activities that would not be compatible with residential uses, or that have locational needs (such as thoroughfare or interstate frontage) that are not


conducive to mixed use development. Examples would include auto dealerships, auto repair and service businesses, lumberyards, nurseries, contractor suppliers, warehousing, printers, truckstops, distribution centers, and other uses that are quasi-industrial or highway-oriented in character. Most of these areas are currently zoned TD and I-1.

General Industrial


 This category designates areas programmed for industrial land uses, including manufacturing, concrete plants and other extractive industries, junkyards/ scrap yards, and outdoor storage uses. These uses tend to have greater impacts than the commercial service uses, and may require additional buffering or separation from nearby uses. Some of these uses are dependent on rail for freight movement, and others require convenient thoroughfare or interstate access for truck deliveries and shipments. Most of these areas are zoned I-1 and I-2. Railyards, power plants, and similar uses are also included in this designation.

PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL CATEGORIES:

Public Facilities


 This category identifies large publicly owned non-park properties, including public schools, city facilities (such as libraries, fire stations, public works yards, etc.), stadiums, state government facilities, the fairgrounds, and federal government facilities (postal distribution centers, etc.). Such sites are identified on the Future Land Use Map if they cover more than about two acres.

Institutional


 This category identifies land and facilities occupied by colleges and universities, large private schools, hospitals and medical complexes, religious organizations, and similar institutions. Smaller institutional uses such as churches are generally not mapped unless they are sites that are more than two acres in size. Institutional properties may be public or private.

PARK, OPEN SPACE, AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION CATEGORIES:

Public Parks and Open Space

 This category includes permanent open space that has been publicly acquired for recreational or resource conservation uses. Included are neighborhood, community, and regional parks and greenways. Also included are publicly owned lands that are managed for watershed protection, resource conservation, hazard prevention, and the protection of important visual resources. Land with this designation will remain in open space in perpetuity.

Private Open Space

 This category includes open space that is privately owned and maintained, including private golf courses and country clubs, cemeteries, open space easements, [land zoned Conservation Management](#), and land that should be retained in its natural state to protect public health and safety (such as floodways and steep slopes), preserve sensitive or important ecological resources (such as important tree stands), or provide a public benefit (such as watershed protection). Land with this designation may have a limited amount of development potential, and may be used for agriculture, forestry, pasture, etc. but the overall intent is to protect its open and undeveloped character through the horizon year of the Plan.

CRITICAL AREAS:

Critical Areas



The critical areas overlay is mapped over lands that are environmentally sensitive and merit preservation and protection from development. The critical areas overlay encompasses publicly and privately owned land mostly encumbered by the 100-year floodplain. Some of this area is currently zoned Conservation Management; other portions are zoned for a wider range of use. The use of an overlay on top of another designation recognizes that while preservation is the long term goal, private landowners are entitled to a productive use of the property as allowed by the underlying zone district until such time as the appropriate steps can be taken to protect these resources.

SPECIAL STUDY AREAS:

Special Study Area



The Future Land Use Map includes another category to identify areas where the future land use pattern has yet to be determined. These areas are outlined with a dashed line, labeled, and in some cases left “blank” (white) on the map, indicating the precise land use pattern was still under study at the time of Plan adoption. The text of the plan provides further detail.

This designation is used on large sites where land use planning studies incorporating focused community outreach are necessary to determine a preferred land use pattern. Examples include areas such as active rock quarries, landfills, large tracts outside of the City's current jurisdiction but in its future urban services area, and publicly-owned sites of particular importance. These areas should be the subject of Area Planning Studies as described under [Small Area Studies](#) in the [Implementation](#) element.

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