



We Are Columbia

CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC ZONING MAP REVISION FAQ

December 2020

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 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 currently scheduled to go into effect March 31, 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.