



Memorandum

To: Megan Hunter, City of Flint
From: John Houseal, Houseal Lavigne Associates
Date: September 15, 2014
Re: Draft Zoning Ordinance

This memorandum includes a summary of pending revisions to the Draft Zoning Ordinance per conversation with City staff and written comments received to date. The items below are intended to serve as talking points to update the Steering Committee and Plan Commission as to the status of the ordinance and represent some of the broader categorical changes that are under way.

[Areas of Additional Concern – 09/10/2014 Staff Memo](#)

In addition to the proposed changes identified in the following section, the following items are in response to additional general comments provided by staff.

1. **Grand Traverse Neighborhood** – The proximity of the Grand Traverse Neighborhood to downtown makes it a desirable location for dense housing. The proposed zoning map identifies a mix of MR-2 and MR-3 in this area.
2. **Carriage Town** – Zoning should serve to historic housing within Carriage Town, but honor the desire for density along Grand Traverse St. and University Avenue. The proposed zoning map identifies a mix of MR-1 and MR-2 in this area.
3. **Open Space** – Areas identified as community open space in the Master Plan, but not owned by City or envisioned as future parks (e.g. Flint Housing Commission land) are located in the Green Neighborhood zoning district. This is the lowest intensity zoning district that will prevent significant investment in flood prone areas or isolated neighborhoods. Zoning privately-owned property as parkland could be viewed as a taking.
4. **Flint Southwestern** – The high school is identified as Green Innovation in the Master Plan. However, this zoning district designation would not include high schools as a permitted use. For the purposes of the proposed zoning map, we recommend that this site be zoned as TN-2 to accommodate the school and allow on-going investment in the facility. Should the school not occupy the site in the future, the City can rezone the property to fit the long-term vision described in the Master Plan. This approach is more appropriate than allowing high schools in all Green Innovation areas, which would create greater conflicts in other parts of the community. The residential areas to the east of the school property are shown as Green Neighborhood (GN-1).

Key Discussion Items for the Staff Review of the Draft Flint Zoning Ordinance

Issue	Conceptual Approach	Actions to Implement Approach
Consistent Terminology		
Different articles use varying terminology for some terms (i.e. Planning Director” vs. “Director of Community Development”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create consistent terminology across all articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit the document to ensure that all terminology is consistent • Review definitions to ensure all potential varying terminology is properly referenced and defined
Administrative Departures		
Current allowances seem arbitrary and too empowering for the Planning Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove instances that seem arbitrary or not based on reasonable and applicable conditions • Remove prominence of administrative departures throughout the document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit document and identify/remove instances that don’t offer specific limits on departures • Create a new section in <i>Article 17. Applications and Procedures</i> entitled “Administrative Departures”, and include a comprehensive table of all regulations (with article and section references) to which administrative departures can be applied (the table will include the allowable flexibility given to the Planning Director) • For all regulations that have applicable administrative departures, place a reference in the appropriate section guiding the reader to the new Administrative Departures section in Article 17
Cross-References		
The zoning ordinance needs references between sections to make it more user-friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include references throughout the document and in tables guiding the reader to related sections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert references on all use tables to uses with regulations in <i>Article 9. Use Regulations</i> • Verify any placeholder references are modified to reference appropriate sections
Graphics		
Graphics need to be developed to illustrate regulatory concepts, definitions, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an inventory of graphics to be created to support regulatory text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with City staff potential sections to be added/removed from the draft document • Create a comprehensive inventory of graphics to be developed based on remaining draft text • Establish a clear and consistent graphic style for diagrams, plans, elevations, and/or 3-D drawings • Develop graphics that are clearly related to and referenced in relevant text

General Provisions and Use Regulations		
<p>Some general provisions or use regulations may be removed or modified based on staff review for applicability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review preliminary regulations for General Provisions and Use Regulations and determine which provisions or regulations 1) may not be applicable, or 2) may go too far in regulating certain aspects of development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff to provide feedback regarding applicability or level of regulation in <i>Article 8. General Provisions</i> and <i>Article 9. Use Regulations</i> Draft articles will be amended based on staff review, and related references and regulations in other articles will be coordinate appropriately
District Standards		
<p>Several district standards are misaligned with Master Plan recommendations or require more clarification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Master Plan recommendations against proposed use, bulk, and design regulations in the draft code In the University Core District, apply a 2-tiered approach that includes general development standards that apply to the entire district as well as specific regulations for development along University Avenue that would more specifically address building placement, access management, and building design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Green Innovation District to ensure it doesn't allow heavy industrial uses that are detrimental to the intent of the area Review the Mixed Residential Districts to ensure they don't allow commercial uses Review the Traditional neighborhood and Green Neighborhood Districts to ensure they reflect appropriate lot sizes and intended use mix Apply more form-based design regulations for the Downtown Core District (everywhere), Downtown Edge District (for non-residential frontage), and University Core District (along University Avenue) Review University Core District bulk standards to ensure they don't allow "suburban" development formats and require pedestrian-friendly site and building design (<i>see attached University Core bulk standards table</i>)

District Structure		
<p>Based on staff review, the structure of proposed zoning districts has been modified to reflect the Master Plan and “on the ground” conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include TN-1 and TN-2 as single-family districts • Include MR-1, MR-2, and MR-3 as high-density single-family and multi-family districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate TN-3 as a proposed zoning district. After further review of this proposed district, it was found to be too isolated or to have existed in a GN area where it was not relevant. Any areas that include small-lot single-family or townhouse development are now addressed through the new MR-1 District described below. This provides a more logical structure of the districts; TN Districts address the typical single-family neighborhoods, and the MR Districts address higher density, transitional, and multi-family housing. • Restructure the MR Mixed Residential Districts to include the MR-1 (Small-lot Single-Family and Attached Single-Family), MR-2 (Low intensity Multi-Family), and MR-3 (Medium to High Intensity Multi-Family). This allows for the appropriate spectrum of bulk standards that reflect on-the-ground conditions and envisioned development types in the community’s more dense residential areas. <i>(See attached residential bulk standards table and preliminary zoning map.)</i> • Tweak the district regulations for MR-1 and MR-2 to account for high-density/small-lot single-family areas (MR-1) and moderated density multi-family areas (MR-2). <i>(See attached residential bulk standards table.)</i>
<p>Green Neighborhood needs some variation to account for some areas where residential development with traditional lot sizes may continue to exist</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split the GN district into GN-1 and GN-2 districts to implement the Master Plan based on varying levels of neighborhood vacancy and anticipated investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a GN-1 District that requires residential development to be on larger lots (150’ lot width) to encourage the transition to green innovation uses <i>(See attached residential bulk standards table and preliminary zoning map.)</i> • Establish a GN-2 District that allows for small-lot residential development (40’-50’ lot width) as a transition between TN and GN-2 areas <i>(See attached residential bulk standards table and preliminary zoning map.)</i>

District Nomenclature		
Districts will be renamed to be more clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise per direction provided by staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rename proposed zoning districts as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GN-1 Green Neighborhood ○ GN-2 Green Neighborhood ○ TN-1 Traditional Neighborhood ○ TN-2 Traditional Neighborhood ○ MR-1 Mixed Residential ○ MR-2 Mixed Residential ○ MR-3 Mixed Residential ○ NC Neighborhood Commercial ○ CC City Corridor ○ UC University Core ○ IC Institutional Core ○ D-1 → <i>DE Downtown Edge</i> ○ D-2 → <i>DC Downtown Core</i> ○ CE Commerce & Employment ○ PC Production Center ○ GI Green Innovation ○ POS → <i>OS Open Space</i>
Zoning Map		
Zoning Map needs to be edited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create modified proposed zoning map that reflects changes to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify zoning map to reflect changes in names to zoning districts, changes in district boundaries, and boundaries for new proposed districts (<i>See attached preliminary zoning map.</i>)

Place Type	District		Maximum Height	Lot Area		Maximum Coverage		Minimum Front Yard	Minimum Side Yard		Minimum Rear Yard
				Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Lot Area Per Dwelling Unit	Interior Lots	Corner Lots		Width of Smaller Side Yard	Aggregate Width of Both Side Yards	
Green Neighborhood	GN-1	Single-family Low Density and Greenspace	2-1/2 stories or 35'	15,000 sq. ft.	15,000 sq. ft.	20%	20%	25'	15'	50'	25'
	GN-2	Single-family Moderate Density and Greenspace	2-1/2 stories or 35'	5,000 sq. ft.	3,000 sq. ft.	50%	50%	25'	5'	15'	25'
Traditional Neighborhood	TN-1	Single-family Low Density	2 stories or 30'	10,000 sq. ft.	10,000 sq. ft.	35%	35%	30'	10'	20'	35'
	TN-2	Single-family Medium Density	2½ stories or 35'	5,000 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.	50%	50%	25'	5'	15'	25'
Mixed Residential	MR-1	Small-lot Single-Family and Single-Family Attached	2½ stories or 35'	3,000 sq. ft.	2,500 sq. ft.	60%	60%	20'	0'	0'	25'
	MR-2	Low Intensity Multi-Family	2½ stories or 35'	10,000 sq. ft.	1,000 sq. ft. per efficiency or one bedroom apartment 1,750 sq. ft. per two or more bedroom apartment	70%	70%	20'	6'	18'	30'
	MR-3	Medium to High Intensity Multi-Family	100'	15,000 sq. ft.	800 sq. ft. per efficiency or one bedroom apartment 1,250 sq. ft. per two or more bedroom apartment	70%	70%	10'	10'	25'	40'

RESIDENTIAL

University Core Bulk Standards Table

District	Min. Lot Width	Min. Lot Area (s.f.)	Front Yard		Corner Side Yard		Min. Interior Side Yard	Min. Rear Yard	Max. Building Height
			Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.			
District-wide UC-University Core	100'	15,000	20'	None	None, unless abutting or fronting on residential development, then 20'	None	None, unless abutting or fronting on residential development, then 20'	None, unless abutting or fronting on residential development, then 40'	45', unless abutting a TN or MR District, then not more than 25' within 100' of the property line
For lots fronting on University Avenue	75'	10,000	0'	10'	None, unless abutting or fronting on residential development, then 10'	15'	None, unless abutting or fronting on residential development, then 10'	None, unless abutting or fronting on residential development, then 40'	45'