

LAND USE POLICIES

Columbus Citywide Planning Policies

FIRST EDITION

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Land Use Policies

INTRODUCTION

The C2P2 Land Use Policies are text designed to correspond with an area's Recommended Land Use Map (within a C2P2 Land Use Plan) and provide flexible guidance on key land use issues and scenarios. The policies and map work together to form recommendations regarding future land use. Development proposals are reviewed for consistency with Columbus Citywide Planning Policies, including the Design Guidelines, Land Use Policies, and Land Use Plan (see also *About C2P2*, pp. 8-11).



What is density?

Density refers to the number of residential units within a given area. It is calculated by dividing the total number of residential units on a site by the total acreage of the site. For example, a development with 100 residential units on a 10-acre site has a density of 10 dwelling units per acre (du/ac), or a development with 40 residential units on a 10-acre site has a density of 4 du/ac. The density ratio does not differentiate between the type of residential development (single-family vs. multifamily). Density calculations allow for clustering of units on a smaller portion of the developable site to accommodate natural resource preservation and larger open space designations.

GENERAL LAND USE POLICIES

The general land use policies apply to multiple land use classifications and are used to review development proposals when applicable. It is important to note that Columbus Citywide Planning Policies are adopted as city policy, not code. The policies do not replace the zoning code or apply to existing uses that are consistent with the zoning code or are legally nonconforming.

1. Development proposals that require a zoning change or variance are reviewed for consistency with Columbus Citywide Planning Policies, including the Design Guidelines, Land Use Policies, and Land Use Plan (see also *About C2P2*, pp. 8-11). Land use and design are both integral components of development proposals, and site plans and related information should be provided to review for consistency with C2P2.
2. Recommended density ranges are guidelines for future development which work in conjunction with the C2P2 Design Guidelines.
3. Density ranges do not guarantee that development proposals will be approved at the maximum density. Additionally, consideration may be given to densities higher than the recommendation for projects that include a high level of site and architectural design and/or access to enhanced transit.
4. Density is typically measured in terms of dwelling units per acre (*i.e.* "Gross Density"). The calculation includes the area of the entire site including internal roads and open space.
5. Density calculations allow for clustering of units on a smaller portion of the developable site to accommodate natural resource preservation and larger open space designations.
6. Recommendations of this plan do not apply to properties outside Columbus. Land use recommendations for areas that are currently not in Columbus are provided in the event they are annexed to the City in the future.
7. Requests for homebased daycare within residential areas should be reviewed per State of Ohio standards. Columbus Planning does not consider requests for homebased daycare in residential areas to be a change of use, and therefore does not comment on such requests.



VERY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, <4 DU/ACRE

Very low density residential development is predominantly comprised of single-unit homes at a density of less than 4 du/acre. This classification applies to the least intense residential portions of an area and includes existing low density residential neighborhoods, single-unit homes on large lots, and areas of undeveloped land. It is recognized that undeveloped land and existing homes on large lots, particularly those that are located along primary corridors, may be subject to development proposals inconsistent with the land use recommendation in terms of use and/or density. Alternative proposed uses and/or higher density proposals may merit support if they are consistent with the Columbus Citywide Planning Policies (C2P2) Guiding Principles. Principles that may apply include: enhancing established neighborhoods with high quality and appropriate infill development, revitalizing Columbus' older neighborhoods through infill development, and utilizing existing infrastructure. Refer to the C2P2 Guiding Principles for more information (pages 15-19).

In situations where a proposed use is inconsistent with the Very Low Density Residential recommendation, the following should be considered:

1. Densities higher than the recommended land use may be appropriate in instances where more intense uses are present, such as higher density residential, manufacturing, or commercial, or when site design mitigates impacts on adjacent residential uses and significant natural resource preservation is provided.
2. In situations where higher densities may be appropriate, the proposed net density (not including regulated floodway, floodplain or stream corridor protection zones) will be reviewed for compatibility with adjacent uses, potential impact on natural resources, and other factors.
3. New uses could include office, residential, institutional, recreation, and/or open space, depending on the scale and intensity relative to surrounding uses.
4. Proposals should follow the C2P2 Design Guidelines for the proposed use.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, 4-6 DU/ACRE

This classification is similar to the Very Low Density Residential classification and includes single-unit homes and limited amounts of multiunit housing developed at a density of 4-6 du/acre. Proposals should follow the Residential Design Guidelines.



LOW-MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, 6-10 DU/ACRE

Low-Medium Density Residential is characterized by smaller lot, single-unit homes, doubles, townhouses, and smaller scale multiunit housing developed at a density of 6-10 du/acre. Proposals should follow the Residential Design Guidelines.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, 10-16 DU/ACRE

This classification is similar to the Low-Medium Density Residential classification, but with somewhat higher densities. It is characterized by smaller lot, single-unit homes, doubles, townhouses, and smaller scale multiunit housing developed at a density of 10-16 du/acre. Proposals should follow the Residential Design Guidelines.

MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, 16-24 DU/ACRE

Medium-High Density Residential is characterized by multi-story, multiunit housing developed at a density of 16-24 du/acre. Higher density residential development in primary corridors and commercial districts support neighborhood retail by creating a strong local market, and facilitating a walkable, transit supportive environment. The Mixed Use 1, 2 and 3 land use classifications also support residential densities in this range. Proposals should follow the Residential Design Guidelines.

HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, 24-45 DU/ACRE

This classification is similar to the Medium-High Density Residential, but with somewhat higher density. It is characterized by multi-story, multiunit housing developed at a density of 24-45 du/acre. Higher density residential development in primary corridors and commercial districts support neighborhood retail by creating a strong local market, and facilitating a walkable, transit supportive environment. The Mixed Use 2 and 3 land use classifications also support residential densities in this range. Proposals should follow the Residential Design Guidelines.

VERY HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, >45 DU/ACRE

The Very High Density Residential is characterized by multi-story, multiunit housing developed at a density of 45 du/acre or greater. Higher density residential development in primary corridors and commercial districts support neighborhood retail by creating a strong local market, and facilitating a walkable, transit supportive environment. The Mixed Use 3 land use classification also supports residential densities in this range. Proposals should follow the Residential Design Guidelines.



MIXED USE 1, <24 DU/ACRE

This classification supports a mix of land uses, including commercial (retail, office, hotel), institutional, and/or multiunit residential. Development may include a mix of uses on one site (for example, residential units located either above or next to the commercial uses) or only one use per site. Mixed Use 1 areas generally represent the smaller shopping corridors and neighborhood commercial hubs. These areas, in consideration of nearby residential areas, are appropriate for a mix of uses including residential densities less than 24 du per acre. Within areas designated Mixed Use 1, the following applies:

1. The designation does not require a mix of uses, but instead promotes mixed use development where it is a viable development scenario.
2. Mixed use development should support a variety of mobility options including walking, biking and transit (see also *Connectivity* section, page 24).
3. While commercial auto oriented uses are included in the Mixed Use 1 classification, proposals for an auto oriented use will be reviewed for potential negative impacts on surrounding development and the neighborhood. Examples of auto oriented uses include gas stations, auto sales, auto service, car washes, etc. In situations where a commercial auto oriented use is proposed, the following should be considered:
 - a. The appropriateness of the site for an auto oriented use, including the number of similar uses in a neighborhood and future development opportunities. In situations where a saturation of auto oriented uses exist within an area, new auto oriented uses are generally not supported.
 - b. In areas where a commercial overlay exists, proposals should meet overlay standards.
 - c. New development should include a high level of site and architectural design to mitigate impacts on existing and future development.
4. Proposals should follow the Residential and/or Commercial Design Guidelines, as appropriate.



MIXED USE 2, <45 DU/ACRE

This classification is similar to the Mixed Use 1 classification, but supports residential densities less than 45 du/acre. This classification supports a mix of land uses, including commercial (retail, office, hotel), institutional, and/or multiunit residential. Development may include a mix of uses on one site (for example, residential units located either above or next to commercial uses) or only one use per site. Mixed Use 2 areas are the commercial hubs and corridors of the area, as well as existing large shopping centers. Within areas designated Mixed Use 2, the following applies:

1. The designation does not require a mix of uses, but instead promotes mixed use development where it is a viable development scenario.
2. Mixed use development should support a variety of mobility options including walking, biking and transit (see also *Connectivity* section, page 24).
3. While commercial auto oriented uses are included in the Mixed Use 2 classification, proposals for an auto oriented use will be reviewed for potential negative impacts on surrounding development and the neighborhood. Examples of auto oriented uses include gas stations, auto sales, auto service, car washes, etc. In situations where a commercial auto oriented use is proposed, the following should be considered:
 - a. The appropriateness of the site for an auto oriented use, including the number of similar uses in a neighborhood and future development opportunities. In situations where a saturation of auto oriented uses exist within an area, new auto oriented uses are generally not supported.
 - b. In areas where a commercial overlay exists, proposals should meet overlay standards.
 - c. New development should include a high level of site and architectural design to mitigate impacts on existing and future development.
4. Proposals should follow the Residential and/or Commercial Design Guidelines, as appropriate.



MIXED USE 3, >45 DU/ACRE

This classification is the most intense use in the planning area. It is similar to the Mixed Use 1 and 2 classifications, but supports residential densities greater than 45 du/acre. This classification supports a mix of land uses, including commercial (retail, office, hotel), institutional, and/or multiunit residential. Development may include a mix of uses on one site (for example, residential units located either above or next to commercial uses) or only one use per site. Mixed Use 3 areas are the commercial hubs and corridors of the area, as well as existing large shopping centers. Within areas designated Mixed Use 3, the following applies:

1. The designation does not require a mix of uses, but instead promotes mixed use development where it is a viable development scenario.
2. Mixed use development should support a variety of mobility options including walking, biking and transit (see also *Connectivity* section, page 24).
3. While commercial auto oriented uses are included in the Mixed Use 3 classification, proposals for an auto oriented use will be reviewed for potential negative impacts on surrounding development and the neighborhood. Examples of auto oriented uses include gas stations, auto sales, auto service, car washes, etc. In situations where a commercial auto oriented use is proposed, the following should be considered:
 - a. The appropriateness of the site for an auto oriented use, including the number of similar uses in a neighborhood and future development opportunities. In situations where a saturation of auto oriented uses exist within an area, new auto oriented uses are generally not supported.
 - b. In areas where a commercial overlay exists, proposals should meet overlay standards.
 - c. New development should include a high level of site and architectural design to mitigate impacts on existing and future development.
4. Proposals should follow the Residential and/or Commercial Design Guidelines, as appropriate.



COMMERCIAL

The Commercial classification includes retail, office, or institutional uses. Fuel service stations are also supported in this classification. Within areas designated Commercial, the following applies:

1. Retail, services, and office uses are important components of neighborhoods and should be clustered where possible for increased viability.
2. Neighborhood plans do not distinguish between types of retail proposals within the commercial land use recommendation.
3. Proposals should follow the Commercial Design Guidelines.
4. Expansion of commercial developments beyond an alley into primarily residential districts is generally discouraged. Such expansion may be supported in limited circumstances. In situations where an expansion beyond an alley is proposed, the following should be considered:
 - a. The proposed principle use should be generally compatible with the adopted land use plan.
 - b. Proposals should comply with existing commercial overlays.
 - c. New development should be designed to minimize or mitigate impacts, including noise and light, on the adjacent uses, especially residential uses.
 - d. Buffering and landscaping should be provided to minimize impacts on the adjacent neighborhood.
 - e. Proposals should attempt to preserve the existing structure, if historic or contributing.
5. Existing “corner” store buildings located within residential areas offer benefits to the community. When reviewing zoning or variance requests for retail or office uses in these buildings, the following should be considered:
 - a. The proposed use is within an existing storefront.
 - b. New development should be designed to minimize or mitigate impacts, including noise and light, on the adjacent uses, especially residential uses.
 - c. Expansion of the building footprint of the retail or office use is discouraged.
 - d. Residential uses in existing units above the storefront and/or conversion of the storefront space to a residential use may also be considered, provided the proposed residential use is consistent with the plan’s density and other recommendations.



OFFICE

The Office classification includes traditional and medical office uses. Within areas designated Office, the following applies:

1. Office uses are important centers of employment in the city, and the maintenance of office uses is a priority for the City of Columbus.
2. Proposals should follow the Commercial Design Guidelines.
3. Proposals for alternative uses in areas designated for office are generally not supported. In situations where a proposed development is inconsistent with the Office land use recommendation, the following should be considered:
 - a. The site is part of a larger development trend in the vicinity, or is otherwise isolated.
 - b. New uses could include residential, institutional, recreation, and/or open space. Retail uses are generally discouraged in existing office locations.
 - c. Proposals should follow the C2P2 Design Guidelines for the proposed use.

EMPLOYMENT CENTER

The Employment Center classification is reserved for sites primarily dedicated to employment, including office uses. This classification may also include industrial and warehouse uses when appropriate. Within areas designated Employment Center, the following applies:

1. Considerations for industrial and warehouse uses will be based on adjacent uses and additional site factors.
2. Generally, retail and residential uses are not supported in these areas.
3. Retail and hotel uses may be supported as a secondary use to the primary business.
4. Proposals should follow the Commercial Design Guidelines.





INSTITUTIONAL

The Institutional classification includes schools, libraries, government offices, places of worship and other institutional uses. Within areas designated Institutional, the following applies:

1. Proposals should follow the Residential and/or Commercial Design Guidelines, as appropriate.
2. Existing institutional sites may be subject to redevelopment. In situations where a proposed development is inconsistent with the Institutional land use recommendation, the following should be considered:
 - a. Pending support of the Recreation & Parks Department, opportunities for parkland should be explored.
 - b. A broad range of adaptive reuses may be appropriate for existing institutional uses and sites, but is largely dependent on the specific location and associated impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, natural resources and other factors.
 - c. New uses could include office, residential, recreation, and/or open space, depending on scale and intensity relative to surrounding uses.
 - d. New development should be designed to minimize or mitigate impacts on the adjacent uses, especially residential uses, through such means as landscaping, buffering and enhanced setbacks.
 - e. For new residential uses, the proposed net density (not including regulated floodway, floodplain or stream corridor protection zones) will be reviewed for compatibility with adjacent uses.
 - f. Retail and entertainment uses may be appropriate on commercial corridors, but are not appropriate in residential areas.



INDUSTRIAL AND WAREHOUSE

The Industrial and Warehouse classification is characterized by industrial, manufacturing, and warehouse uses. Industrial uses play an important role in employment and the economic vitality of the city. Within areas designated Industrial and Warehouse, the following applies:

1. In general, industrial areas should be maintained and supported as job centers.
2. Industrial development should be designed to minimize or mitigate impacts on adjacent uses, especially residential uses, through such means as landscaping, buffering, enhanced setbacks and consideration of building height.
3. Loading, storage, and other external activities that generate noise and other impacts should not face public rights-of-way or residential or institutional uses. In the event that this is not possible, such areas should be fully screened.
4. Proposals should follow applicable Commercial Design Guidelines.

RECREATION AND PARKS

The Recreation and Parks classification designates publicly owned facilities that provide recreation amenities not typically found within sites in the Open Space classification. The following considerations should be noted:

1. Recommendations for new parkland will be coordinated with the City's Recreation and Parks Department and will be based on the standards and priorities identified by Recreation and Parks staff. Area and neighborhood plans cannot recommend new parkland without the support of the Recreation and Parks Department.
2. Connectivity within and among developments to parks and open space should be a design priority.





OPEN SPACE

The Open Space classification refers to natural areas that do not provide recreational facilities and includes areas with development restrictions, such as cemeteries, regulated floodway, and conservation holdings. Open space areas could also be owned by the Recreation and Parks Department and developed with parks facilities in the future. Rights-of-way controlled by the city or other government bodies are not considered or designated Open Space. The Open Space classification is limited to the following scenarios:

1. City and other public agency owned property designated for such use;
2. Privately owned property for which development restrictions are in place, for example, a conservation easement or floodway; or
3. Acquisition is actively underway by a state or local agency, such as the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District.

PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

The Private Open Space classification is characterized by private golf courses and sports fields. It also includes dedicated open space within a development and open space owned by Home Owners Associations. Within areas designated Private Open Space, the following applies:

1. Existing private open space sites may be subject to redevelopment. In situations where a proposed development is inconsistent with the recommended land use, the following should be considered:
 - a. Pending support of the Recreation & Parks Department, opportunities for parkland should be explored.
 - b. A broad range of adaptive reuses may be appropriate for existing private open space uses and sites, but is largely dependent on the specific location and associated impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, natural resources and other factors.
 - c. New uses could include office, residential, institutional, recreation, and/or open space, depending on scale and intensity relative to surrounding uses.
 - d. New development should be designed to minimize or mitigate impacts on the adjacent uses, especially residential uses, through such means as landscaping, buffering and enhanced setbacks.



- e. For new residential uses, the proposed net density (not including regulated floodway, floodplain or stream corridor protection zones) will be reviewed for compatibility with adjacent uses.
- f. Retail and entertainment uses may be appropriate on commercial corridors, but not in residential neighborhoods.
- g. Proposals should follow the C2P2 Design Guidelines for the proposed use.

AGRICULTURE

The Agriculture classification is characterized by urban and rural food production sites. Within areas designated Agriculture, the following applies:

1. Existing agricultural sites may be subject to redevelopment. In situations where a proposed development is inconsistent with the Agriculture land use recommendation, the following should be considered:
 - a. Pending support of the Recreation & Parks Department, opportunities for parkland should be explored.
 - b. A broad range of adaptive reuses may be appropriate for existing agricultural uses and sites, but is largely dependent on the specific location and associated impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.
 - c. New uses could include office, residential, institutional, recreation, and/or open space, depending on scale and intensity relative to surrounding uses. Careful attention should be given to impacts on adjacent properties and residences.
 - d. New development should be designed to minimize or mitigate impacts on the adjacent uses, especially residential uses, through such means as landscaping, buffering and enhanced setbacks.
 - e. For new residential uses, the proposed net density (not including regulated floodway, floodplain or stream corridor protection zones) will be reviewed for compatibility with adjacent uses.
 - f. Retail and entertainment uses may be appropriate on commercial corridors, but not in residential neighborhoods.
 - g. Proposals should follow the C2P2 Design Guidelines for the proposed use.