

Columbus Growth Strategy

Vision for Growth
Guiding Principles
The Columbus Land Use Plan
Land Use Policies
Design Guidelines

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF
DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

The Columbus Growth Strategy is an evolution of Columbus Citywide Planning Policies (C2P2), adopted in 2018 by Columbus City Council. C2P2, in turn, superseded the 1993 Comprehensive Plan as the guiding framework for the city's land use planning efforts. The Columbus Growth Strategy (CGS) will help guide the next generation of development in the city of Columbus. The planning horizon for these policies is 20 years (2025–2045), but it is anticipated that regular updates and revisions will be made to keep these policies effective and fresh. CGS replaces and supersedes Columbus Citywide Planning Policies and any affected land use related recommendations, including land use plan maps, from existing adopted area and neighborhood plans. In the case of any conflict between CGS and any other adopted area or neighborhood plan, CGS prevails.

Since 2018, Planning staff have worked with community stakeholders to develop four (4) C2P2 Land Use Plans based on the C2P2 framework and have extended C2P2 Design Guidelines over most of the city, creating the most robust and widespread land use and design framework in our city's history. Despite this, significant areas of the city lack the benefit of updated land use recommendations, policy, and design guidelines.

As we move into the next phases of the **Zone In** initiative, the time is now for consistent, modern citywide policy guidance that serves as the foundation for our updated zoning code and the development needs of our region's future.

This document begins by stating a **Vision for Growth** that guides the City of Columbus towards a prosperous, connected, inclusive, and vibrant future.

It then provides **Guiding Principles**, big picture ideas that express how the city should develop, and that serve as foundations for other important elements. These are expressed through a Vision Statement and detailed through the use of Principle Statements that align with Land Use Policies and Design Guidelines found later in the document.

One lesson learned from C2P2 is that neighborhood by neighborhood land use planning is not an effective strategy for providing land use recommendations. Despite efforts to

evolve land use plans in this manner, the City has plans that date back to the early 1990's, in part due to the growth of our city throughout the years. Despite continuing efforts, the resources necessary to update and maintain more than 40 separate neighborhood-based plans have resulted in some plans failing to evolve as often as needs would otherwise dictate.

The Columbus Growth Strategy brings a new approach—providing, for the first time once completed, land use recommendations for the entire city in one document. Additionally, in line with recent planning efforts, land use recommendations are also provided for unincorporated areas that may annex into the City of Columbus in the future. Those land use recommendations would only apply if or when those areas decided to join our city.

Land use recommendations take the form of the **Columbus Land Use Plan**. These recommendations help to guide rezonings and variances sought by property owners, and guide City-sponsored rezoning efforts like Zone In. Each parcel, or property, in the Columbus Land Use Plan includes a specific land use recommendation informed by location, existing zoning, existing use, possible future land use, and by community engagement with residents and other stakeholders.

The land use recommendations are explained in the Land Use Chart, which shows what each land use category is and what

Zone In

Zone In is a multi-year, comprehensive, phased approach to updating the City of Columbus zoning code. The first phase relied on over 20 years' worth of area planning and Columbus Citywide Planning Policies (C2P2) guidance. The message from those efforts was clear: major corridors and commercial centers represent opportunities for dense, transit-accessible, mixed-use development. These areas were successfully re-zoned in July of 2024.

The Columbus Growth Strategy serves as the policy basis for Phases 2 and 3 of Zone In.

kinds of development might be expected to be supported by City Planners in a given location. Remember, these are recommendations, not mandates. They give an idea of what uses might be appropriate in the future, but do not require those uses to occur.

For additional details on these different land use recommendations, as well as specific guidance related to individual uses, look to the **Land Use Policies** section. This section includes detailed policies (text) designed to be used with the Columbus Land Use Plan and the Land Use Chart. These policies provide flexible guidance on key land use issues and scenarios.

"Use" is often the first question we ask when determining if a proposal is appropriate. The next question is whether the design is appropriate. An appropriate use that is designed poorly is unlikely to be an asset to the community. On the other hand, an inappropriate use that has a well-designed building and site, such as one with ample landscaping, may be viewed more favorably. To address this, the CGS includes **Design Guidelines** that give recommendations for the placement and design of development (what development should "look" like, and how it should function), including topics such as connectivity, setbacks, parking, open space, and natural resources.

In some cases, these topics are also addressed by other Departments during the site review process—in those cases we may recommend certain elements be considered but ultimately defer in our reviews to our colleagues elsewhere in City government. These Design Guidelines also serve as the jumping off point for the development of Zoning Code standards—the required elements for how a building or site works.



THE COLUMBUS GROWTH STRATEGY IS:

- **Adopted city policy.**
- **Used to guide community and city review of future rezoning and variance requests.**
- **Used as the basis for City-sponsored code update efforts like Zone In.**
- **Used as a guide for City investment.**

- **NOT**...City code or law, and do not change existing zoning already in place.
- **NOT**...used to address operational issues or issues unrelated to the built and natural environment, such as healthcare, code enforcement, and public safety. These items are outside the scope of the planning process.
- **NOT**...used to directly plan for traffic, congestion, or stormwater issues. (Instead, these matters are addressed as part of the development review process managed by the Department of Building and Zoning Services.)

BENEFITS OF THE CGS

The CGS will provide the following benefits to the community:

- Provide consistent, predictable, and up-to-date citywide policies;
- Institute best practices developed by the City of Columbus over 20+ years, and informed by national best practices;
- Provide a clear response to projected growth patterns and pressures for Central Ohio;
- Result in clear, predictable, and consistent responses to development proposals;
- Support housing and job options for a growing and dynamic population;
- Encourage development patterns that support a wide range of transportation options;
- Serve as a basis for code updates like Zone In;
- Serve as a coordinating vehicle for other city planning efforts;
- Serve to guide city capital investments.

THE CGS AND THE COMMUNITY

Establishment of the CGS means that every area of Columbus has the most up-to-date guidance and best practices for land use and design. This brings consistency to a city that previously had 40+ plans that used different terminology and had inconsistent recommendations and design guidance.

Community engagement is a key component of the CGS, with input sought throughout the process and for any future updates at both a citywide and neighborhood level based on the need and type of update proposed.

GOING FORWARD—CGS TIMELINE AND IMPLEMENTATION

The CGS will be adopted in a phased approach consistent with the Zone In effort, as a core role of the CGS is to provide land use planning guidance for that effort. In 2025, CGS engagement focused on the adoption of the majority of the CGS elements, including the Vision for Growth, the Guiding Principles, applicable Design Guidelines, applicable Land Use Policies, and portions of the Columbus Land Use Plan and Land Use Chart that are covered by Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Zone In effort.

In 2026, in alignment with Phase 3 of Zone In, which will take a closer look at the predominately residential areas of the city further from primary corridors, the CGS will establish the remaining portions of the Columbus Land Use Plan, Land Use Chart, and supportive Land Use Policies for those areas. Design Guidelines for those areas will also be updated, as appropriate.

USING THE COLUMBUS GROWTH STRATEGY: BASIC STEPS

Follow four basic steps to review development proposals using the Columbus Growth Strategy:

Step 1: Identify the location of the development on the **Columbus Land Use Plan**. Refer to the map legend to determine the recommended land use for the site location.

Online mapping applications are available at the Columbus Planning Division website.

Step 2: Refer to the **Land Use Chart** for a general description of the land use recommendation for the site.

Step 3: Review the **CGS Land Use Policies** that correspond with the land use recommendation for more specific policy information.

Step 4: Refer to any relevant **CGS Design Guidelines** for the proposed development.

Background

1993 COLUMBUS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In 1993, Columbus City Council adopted the City's first Comprehensive Plan in over 80 years. The effort was, in part, a response to development pressures and service challenges that had emerged during the prior decade. The plan established a framework for addressing planning and development, capital improvements, and community facility issues on a citywide basis. Implementation of the plan led to a number of key initiatives that remain in place today, including

- Parkland Dedication Ordinance
- Traffic Standards Code
- Requirements for sidewalks, street trees, and streetlights
- Traditional Neighborhood Development Code
- Increased emphasis on riparian corridors
- Environmental Conservation District—1st City policy to protect the Big Darby Creek Watersheds

AREA PLANNING 1993–2018

After the 1993 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, the city focused on smaller scale neighborhood and area plans to address land use, urban design, and related issues. Over the 25 years from 1993 to 2018, area planning evolved to be better suited for supporting development review, which was the primary use of the plans. Area plans, over time, no longer addressed operational issues such as refuse collection, safety services, and code enforcement. While important to the community, these issues were difficult to implement through an area plan and were found to be better addressed through specific initiatives. Area plan recommendations instead focused on land use and urban design as a way to directly impact development review in the city. Parcel level land use recommendations were also introduced through the use of geographic information systems (GIS).

Columbus currently has over 40 neighborhood and area plans, covering over 90% of the city's corporate boundaries. The update schedule for area plans was influenced by a number of factors, including development activity, broader city priorities, and the age or relevance of the current document. However, due to the amount of time required to update each area plan, the City was unable to keep all plans updated within the preferred 10-year timeframe. Outdated plans have resulted in a number of challenges

for the city and community, including: significant differences between current and older plan policies, inconsistent policies for property owners and developers working on projects in multiple areas, planning area boundaries that are inconsistent with newly formed area commission boundaries, and an absence of a broader policy framework for citywide development issues.

C2P2: A RESPONSE TO AREA PLAN CHALLENGES

Columbus Citywide Planning Policies (C2P2) was created as a response to the challenges encountered through the past area planning process. Adopted in 2018, it superseded the 1993 Columbus Comprehensive Plan. C2P2 provided the majority of Columbus communities with the most up-to-date, best practices for land use and design, and was designed to be updated regularly. As adopted citywide policy, any updates to the C2P2 Guiding Principles, Design Guidelines and Land Use Policies would apply automatically to every area where C2P2 had been adopted. This method created a consistent neighborhood planning process that allowed all areas within the city to benefit from the most up-to-date policies for land use and design review.

C2P2 was based on best practices developed with community stakeholders over more than 20 years of area planning. The document reflected the city's most current area plan best practices, land use policies, and design guidelines. Implementing citywide policies allowed for clear, predictable, and consistent responses to development proposals throughout the city and also directly responds to findings in insight2050, a public/private initiative in Central Ohio to plan for growth over the next 30+ years.

C2P2 included the concept of Land Use Plans developed specifically for each area in Columbus. Land Use Plans (previously titled Neighborhood or Area Plans) were developed by city staff in partnership with community members to provide specific land use recommendations for an area. C2P2 Land Use Plans included Area Specific Policies and a Recommended Land Use Map.

THE COLUMBUS GROWTH STRATEGY APPROACH

In the years following the adoption of C2P2, four (4) areas of the city benefited from new Land Use Plans, most of the city was able to benefit from modern C2P2 Design Guidelines through the “Early Adoption” process, and the entire city was able to benefit from the C2P2 Guiding Principles and Principle Statements.

Areas that had no plan in place, for the first time, had a basis for Planning staff to comment on development proposals—helping to ensure high-quality development occurred there. These successes were important, but the underlying difficulties with planning area by area remained. This, coupled with the recognition that new zoning was needed to address the housing affordability crisis, led to a pause in new C2P2 Land Use Plans being developed. Instead, Planning staff pivoted to focusing on helping to craft the zoning districts that would emerge in Phase 1 of Zone In.

The Columbus Growth Strategy builds on the successes of C2P2, while forging a bold new citywide approach to land use planning that meets the needs of our entire community. It also ends the Early Adoption approach to the use of the most up to date design guidelines and land use policies. It brings consistency in how we describe and apply land uses across the city and ensures that all communities have the most up to date design guidelines and land use policies. This ensures a comprehensive approach to planning and development review for all communities and creates a logical foundation for the Zone In effort as it extends to the entire city.

Vision for Growth

The image is a composite. The upper portion features a city skyline with several prominent skyscrapers, including one with a distinctive Art Deco style spire. The lower portion shows a lush green park with a river, young trees, and a stone bridge. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular box is overlaid in the center, containing the title and subtitle text.

Vision for Growth

Columbus will embrace and guide growth to build a future that provides opportunities for all residents.

Guiding Principles

CGS Guiding Principles are “big picture” ideas that describe citywide priorities relative to land use and development. The three Guiding Principles serve as the foundation for the Columbus Use Plan, Land Use Policies and Design Guidelines, and each are comprised of a vision statement and principle statements.

Guiding Principle #1

HEALTHY AND COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

Vision Statement: All neighborhoods have a mix of uses that provide a range of housing types, retail and community services, and employment opportunities. Neighborhoods are served by multiple transportation options.

Principle Statements:

- a. Mixed-use and highest density residential development should be focused along primary corridors, at established commercial centers, and at locations recommended for mixed-use development with access to existing, planned, or potential transit.
- b. Transit-oriented development (TOD) should be incorporated along or within walking distance to transit corridors.
- c. Retail development should be strategically located within commercial nodes and mixed-use areas. Support for small-scale commercial development within existing neighborhoods should be considered when the reuse or adaptation of an existing building is proposed.
- d. The creation and preservation of a variety of housing types to support mixed-income communities is a priority for all neighborhoods and is encouraged based on needs identified by the Columbus Housing Strategy and related efforts. This includes support for housing that is affordable to low- and middle-income families, permanent supportive housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), age-friendly housing, missing middle housing, and universally designed housing.



- e. Protection and expansion of employment-oriented land uses, including office and manufacturing, is a priority. Sites recommended for employment-oriented land uses should be evaluated for opportunities for a mix of uses.
- f. Access to neighborhood-based services, such as childcare is a priority, and neighborhood-based uses are encouraged and supported within all neighborhoods, and as a part of mixed-use development.
- g. Local agriculture and supportive uses are encouraged.
- h. Access to parks, open space, and recreational opportunities should be provided for all neighborhoods. These spaces should be developed such that they are fronted upon by buildings to maximize their utility, visibility, and welcoming nature.
- i. Connectivity within and among developments should be provided through universally designed streets, sidewalks, bikeways, multi-use trail networks, and other transit-supportive infrastructure.
- j. Enhanced public transit that provides frequent reliable access to jobs, housing, education and healthcare should be pursued.
- k. Walkable communities whereby residents can meet all of their daily needs within a reasonable distance, should be pursued.
- l. Public engagement should be a priority as tools and strategies to manage growth are considered. Said engagement should include an ongoing effort to educate communities on growth related matters and how they can play a role in guiding the future of their neighborhood.

Guiding Principle #2

GUIDED GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Vision Statement: As Columbus' population grows over the next few decades, how and where development occurs will impact the quality of life in our city. Guided and planned development will conserve both economic and environmental resources, provide access to natural areas and open space, and encourage investment in neighborhoods.

Principle Statements:

- a. The city's growth pattern should be economically and environmentally sustainable.
- b. The zoning code should support inclusive residential growth, prioritize environmental and economic sustainability, and enhance the uniqueness of each neighborhood.
- c. Priority should be placed on the revitalization of Columbus' older neighborhoods through infill development in order to provide economic opportunities and an improved quality of life for all residents.
- d. Development that utilizes existing infrastructure within urban and established suburban neighborhoods is a priority.
- e. Capital investments should be made that reinforce and work to implement the Columbus Growth Strategy.
- f. Development related programs and incentives should be aligned and coordinated to maximize their impact and ensure they work to implement land use policy.
- g. Aging commercial developments with lower rents are recognized as providing opportunities for new businesses. As such, careful consideration should be provided when redevelopment scenarios are explored for said sites.
- h. Strategic land acquisition in support of transit-oriented development (TOD), housing that is affordable to low- and middle-income families, and small businesses is encouraged and supported.
- i. The adaptive reuse or conversion of buildings/sites for housing, such as faith-based buildings, schools, hotels, and offices is encouraged.
- j. Natural resources, including tree canopy, rivers, and wetlands, should be protected and preserved.
- k. Site design should incorporate and highlight natural features and open space.



- l. Parking should be balanced with the goals of reducing development's impact on the natural environment, creating walkable and bikeable neighborhoods, and encouraging the use of transit.
- m. Green building techniques, adaptive reuse, conservation development, and alternative energy sources are encouraged.
- n. Proposed annexations should be consistent with the Columbus Land Use Plan and associated design guidelines.
- o. Annexation should be used to support city development policy, including the need for housing and economic development priorities.

Guiding Principle #3

HIGH-QUALITY DESIGN AND NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY

Vision Statement: Columbus' diverse neighborhoods add to the vibrancy of the city. High-quality development enhances neighborhoods, creates a sense of place for residents, and attracts investment. Design guidelines provide a basis for thoughtful development that is accessible, functional, and beautiful.

Principle Statements:

- a. Downtown Columbus's role as the cultural, political, and economic heart of the region should be recognized and strengthened.
- b. Primary corridors should be improved with high-quality public spaces and new trees as intensification occurs, in coordination with the recommendations of the Urban Forestry Master Plan. These spaces may include plazas, play space, park space, courtyards, or other similar spaces that are open to the public.
- c. Established neighborhoods should be enhanced with high-quality and appropriate infill development guided by land use and design recommendations.
- d. Housing proposals at a density higher than proposed by the Columbus Land Use Plan may be considered with the incorporation and commitment to design standards that mitigate the impact of said density.
- e. Design Guidelines and standards should reinforce high-quality design and materials for new construction and renovation in all neighborhoods, while recognizing that there must be a balance between ensuring said quality and the need to develop housing that is affordable.
- f. Building placement and design should contribute to a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.
- g. Historic resources and contributing buildings that add to the vitality of existing neighborhoods should be considered for preservation, adaptive reuse, and/or incorporation into development.
- h. Higher intensity uses should incorporate design elements to minimize impacts on adjacent lower intensity uses.



- i. Innovative methods should be used to preserve place while accommodating intensity and the creation of new housing.
- j. Public art should be provided in all neighborhoods in partnership with the community, serving to tell their story, in coordination with the Greater Columbus Public Art Plan and related efforts.
- k. Art is encouraged to be incorporated as part of larger new developments as a placemaking tool that improves the public realm and adds long-term value to the development and community.

The Columbus Land Use Plan

For decades, the City of Columbus has engaged in planning efforts at the neighborhood scale. Although these efforts have been effective in guiding land use, the number of plans necessary and the time to develop them has led to inequities for many neighborhoods, including outdated land use recommendations and design guidelines.

The Columbus Land Use Plan takes a new approach by thinking about the entire city's land use needs based on core principles. This comprehensive plan will serve as the foundation for updated zoning districts as part of the Zone In initiative.

How to View the Map

The official location of the Columbus Land Use Plan can be found at the Columbus Planning Division Website.

The layer can be turned on by checking the box for “Policy Related Information (Not Code)” and then clicking on the layer for “Columbus Land Use Plan.”

Since the Columbus Land Use Plan is being adopted in phases, some land use recommendations from existing plans will still be available to review under the “Adopted Plan Recommendations” layer until such time as the Columbus Land Use Plan has full citywide coverage.

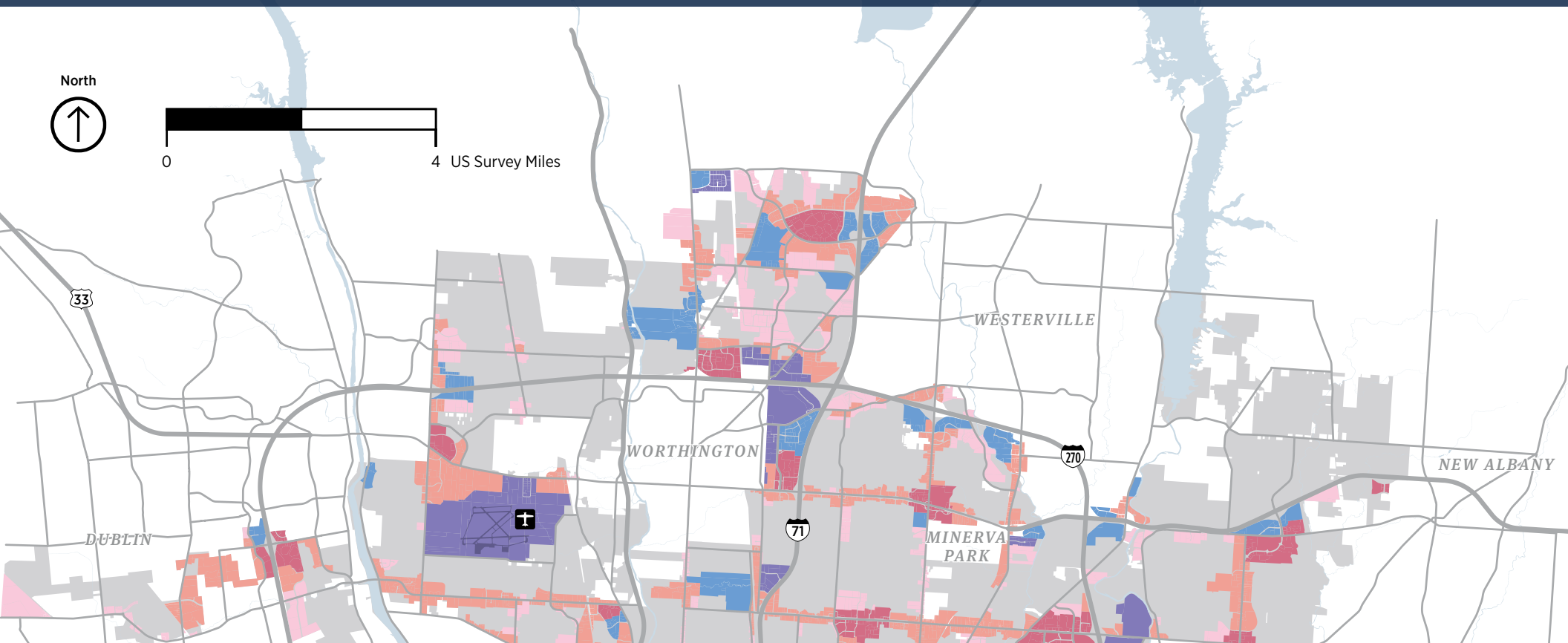
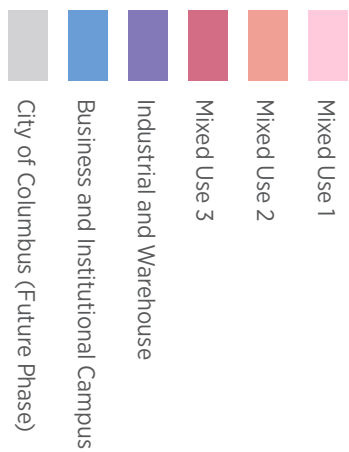
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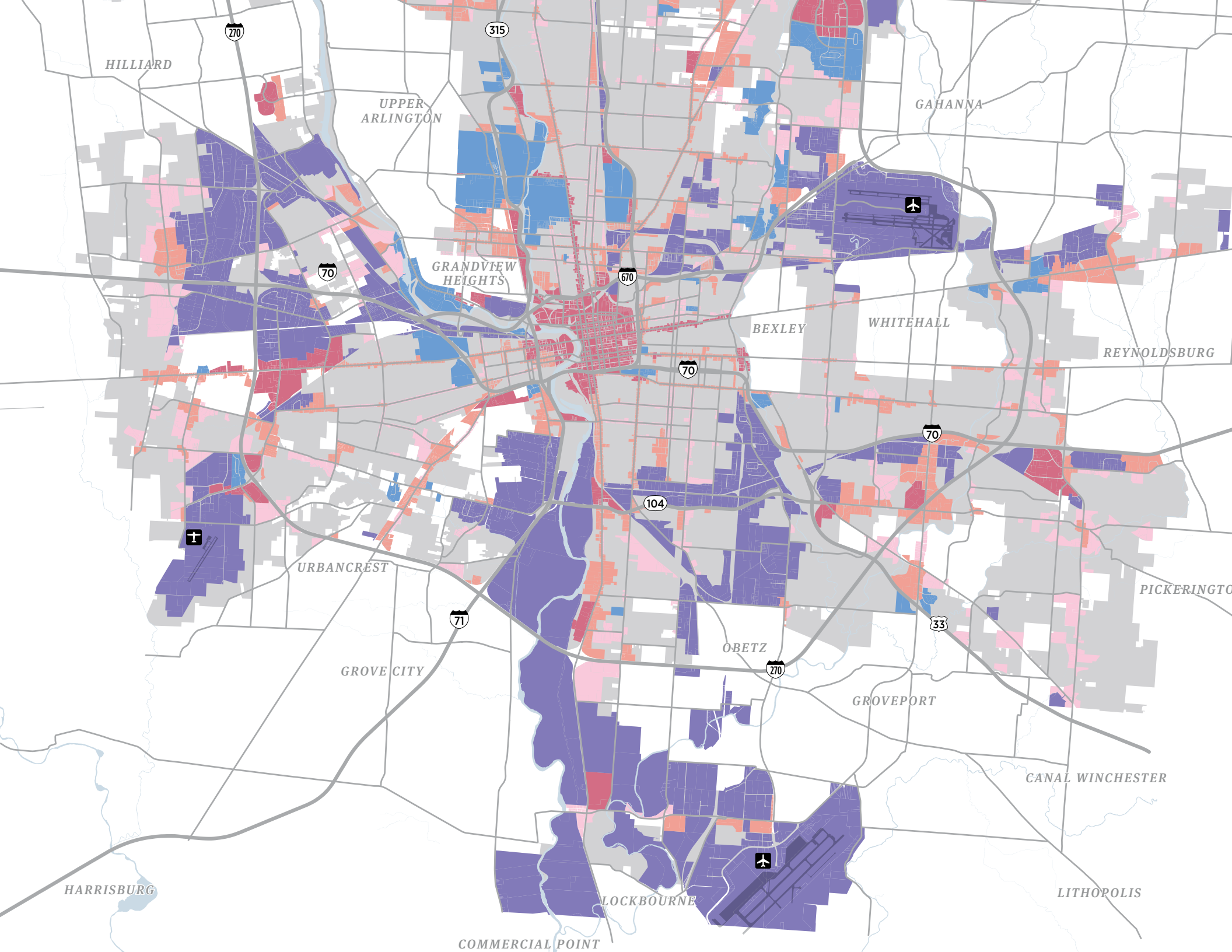
The Columbus Land Use Plan will eventually provide a land use recommendation for every location, or parcel, within the city limits—with a few exceptions. This is expected to occur for the vast majority of the city in 2026 in support of the third phase of Zone In.

Some exceptions exist where the Columbus Land Use Plan may not provide a recommendation consistent with the Land Use Chart. This is true for areas that are planned through the cooperation of other local jurisdictions. Examples of this include the Big Darby Accord area and the Rocky Fork-Blacklick Accord area. The goal is that these areas will eventually be covered by the Columbus Land Use Plan.

The Columbus Land Use Plan also includes recommendations for areas currently outside of the city that could potentially be annexed in the future. Annexations are typically initiated by a property owner, often one seeking redevelopment and/or city services like water and sewer. In the event that a site is annexed, the Columbus Land Use Plan will afford staff with appropriate guidance for that site. Land Use recommendations would otherwise not apply to development occurring outside of the city.

Land Use Map





Land Use Chart

The Land Use Chart provides an overview of every potential Land Use Classification that can appear on the online map for the Columbus Land Use Plan, with a brief description, associated color, and quick reference guidance on the types of uses, buildings, heights, and contexts that might be expected.

The Land Use Chart also provides information on which Design Guidelines should apply, by land use category.

Additional details include:

- The Land Use Chart provides descriptions of the various Land Use Classifications used for the development of both existing and recommended land use maps. As such, these classifications form the foundation of our land use planning and serve as a “menu of options.”
- The Map Color provided for each classification matches the color on the online map.
- The Land Use Chart includes examples of the types of development one might expect to see in each classification but may not cover all types of development that may occur or be viewed as appropriate.
- The Columbus Land Use Plan uses these classifications to make recommendations for every site in the city as well as within areas that may potentially be annexed into the city in the future. It is used alongside the Land Use Policies and Design Guidelines to review and comment on development proposals like rezonings and variances and to guide City-sponsored rezoning efforts, like Zone In.
- All new zoning districts will have, at their root, these Land Use Classifications—though this relationship may not be 1:1.

NOTE: The land use classifications shown in the Land Use Chart are limited to those applicable to the Equitable Access (Phase 1) and Housing and Economic Opportunity (Phase 2) efforts of Zone In.

Additional land use classifications will be developed as part of the Neighborhood Vitality (Phase 3) effort of Zone In in 2026.

Land Use Classification	Density/Height Guideline*	Map Color	General Description including examples of supportable uses	Design Guidelines
Mixed Use 1	24 unit/ac OR 72 BR/ac -- 3-4 stories		Includes a broad range of building types, from single-unit detached housing and single-story commercial to single-use multi-unit to 3- or 4-story vertical mixed-use buildings. These areas are found in many places around the city, including secondary corridors, commercial areas, and residential corridors that may be considered for emerging mixed-use. Allows for some flexibility in use and a residential intensity appropriate to support transit, walkability, and access to housing. Development may include a mix of uses on one site (for example, residential units located either above and/or next to the commercial uses), or it may include only one use per site. In emerging mixed-use areas, a mix of uses may be required, with single use commercial not recommended except as part of the reuse of an existing building. Existing industrial, or industrial otherwise allowed by city code is supportable. These represent connected areas that may or may not have alleys present, with medium-scale, attached and detached, medium- to large-footprint buildings on both compact and large lots. Urban, interior accessed self-storage facilities may be supportable with high-quality design.	<i>Mixed Use</i> <i>Industrial</i> (in some cases) <i>Residential</i>
Mixed Use 2	48 unit/ac OR 144 BR/ac -- 5-7 stories		Includes a broad range of building types, from single-unit detached housing and single-story commercial to single-use multi-unit to 7-story vertical mixed-use buildings. These areas are found in many places around the city, including primary corridors served by transit and major commercial areas. Moderately intense mixed-use areas that allow for flexibility in use, with moderate residential intensity appropriate to support transit, walkability, and access to housing, while not requiring a mix of uses on a site. Development may include a mix of uses on one site (for example, residential units located either above and/or next to the commercial uses), or it may include only one use per site. Existing industrial, or industrial otherwise allowed by city code is supportable. These represent connected areas that may or may not have alleys present, with block-scale, attached, large-footprint buildings on large lots. Urban, interior accessed self-storage facilities may be supportable with high-quality design.	<i>Mixed Use</i> <i>Industrial</i> (in some cases) <i>Residential</i>
Mixed Use 3	Unlimited -- 8+ stories		Includes a broad range of building types, from single-unit detached housing and single-story commercial to single-use multi-unit to vertical mixed-use buildings greater than 8 stories in height. These areas include downtown, areas generally near downtown, or are regional centers with access to transit, major roads, and highways. The most intense mixed-use development is supportable here that allows for the greatest flexibility in both use and density, while not requiring a mix of uses on a site. Development may include a mix of uses on one site (for example, residential units located either above and/or next to the commercial uses), or it may include only one use per site. Existing industrial, or industrial otherwise allowed by city code is supportable. These represent connected areas that typically have alleys present, with block-scale, attached, large-footprint buildings on large lots. Urban, interior accessed self-storage facilities may be supportable with high-quality design.	<i>Mixed Use</i> <i>Industrial</i> (in some cases) <i>Residential</i>
Industrial and Warehouse	None		Dedicated to employment type uses, including office, industrial, research, and warehouse uses. Residential is generally not supported, except where existing. Retail and hotel uses may be appropriate if developed as secondary uses to the primary industrial and warehouse uses. These may be located in isolated or connected areas, typically without alleys, with block-scale, large-footprint buildings on large lots.	<i>Industrial</i>
Business and Institutional Campus	Unlimited -- MU1 Context 3-4 stories MU2 Context 5-7 stories MU3 Context 8+ stories		Allows for a mix of uses, with office, educational, or other employment focused uses being required as part of the mix. Residential, retail, and hotel may be appropriate if developed as part of or in addition to the primary office- or employment-focused uses. 200 square feet of office, educational, or other employment-focused uses provided per residential unit proposed, up to 20,000 SF. Retail square footage not to exceed 50% of Office square footage. These are located in connected areas, typically without alleys, with medium- to block-scale, large-footprint buildings on large lots. Mixed Use 1, 2, or 3 guidance should be used where appropriate based on a site's contextual setting.	<i>Mixed Use</i>

*Note: Density is measured in terms of dwelling units per acre or bedrooms per acre, which assumes 3 bedrooms per unit—the typical single-unit detached format.

The calculation includes the area of the entire site including internal roads and vehicular circulation. Density calculations allow for clustering of units on a smaller portion of the developable site to accommodate natural resource preservation and larger open space areas.

Land Use Policies

Land Use Policies are designed to correspond with the Columbus Land Use Plan and Chart and provide flexible guidance on key land use issues and scenarios. These policies work alongside the Land Use Chart and the Columbus Land Use Plan to form recommendations regarding future land use.

Rezoning and variance proposals are reviewed for consistency with the Columbus Growth Strategy, including the Guiding Principles, relevant Design Guidelines, Land Use Policies, and the Columbus Land Use Plan.

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 the Columbus Growth Strategy is adopted as city policy, not code. These policies do not replace the zoning code or apply to existing uses that are consistent with the zoning code, are legally nonconforming, or covered by the pre-existing use provisions of Title 34 of the Columbus City Code.

1. Development proposals that require a zoning change or variance are reviewed for consistency with the Columbus Growth Strategy, including the Guiding Principles, the Columbus Land Use Plan, Land Use Policies, and relevant Design Guidelines. 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 the CGS.
2. Recommended densities, expressed in dwelling units per acre or in bedrooms per acre, are guidelines for future development which work in conjunction with the CGS Design Guidelines.
3. Density recommendations do not guarantee that development proposals will be approved at the density guideline. 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. For zonings or variances where land use or density are not in question, for instance due to existing zoning or land use allowances, proposals will be reviewed for consistency with relevant design guidelines and will be presumed appropriate in terms of use and density.



4. Density is measured in dwelling units per acre (units/acre) or in bedrooms per acre. The calculation includes the area of the entire site including internal roads and open space.
5. The Columbus Land Use Plan is policy and is to be used as described in this document. As policy, not code, it is intentionally flexible. With regards to development review—i.e. the review of rezonings and variances—all cases are reviewed individually and based on their merits. Proposals that deviate from the Columbus Land Use Plan may be supportable based on mitigating factors, as noted by Staff in their review.
6. A development proposal may be supportable if it is consistent with at least one of the design guidelines. Proposals do not need to be consistent with both design guidelines for the relevant land use classification.
7. 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.
8. Recommendations do not apply to properties outside the City of Columbus but are provided in the event they are annexed to the city in the future.
9. Existing use and prevailing uses in nearby areas are a consideration when evaluating the appropriateness of a development proposal.
10. Requests for home-based daycare within residential areas should be reviewed per State of Ohio standards. Columbus Planning does not consider requests for home-based daycare in residential areas to be a change of use and therefore does not comment on such requests.



Mixed Use 1

Guideline: 24 units/acre

72 bedrooms/acre

Heights of 3–4 stories

This classification supports a mix of land uses, including commercial (retail, office, hotel), institutional, and/or multi-unit 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, neighborhood commercial hubs, or residential corridors with the potential for emerging mixed use. These areas, in consideration of nearby residential areas, are appropriate for a mix of uses including residential densities of 24 units/acre.

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.
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 appropriateness of the site for said use should be carefully considered. Where a saturation of auto-oriented uses already exists, or where future development opportunities are present, new auto-oriented uses are generally not supported.
4. In certain cases, integrating industrial and mixed uses may be supportable based on the nature of the industrial use, whether it is an existing use, and on the context of the surrounding area.
5. Proposals should follow the Mixed-Use Design Guidelines.



Mixed Use 2

Guideline: 48 units/acre

144 bedrooms/acre

Heights of 5–7 stories

This classification is similar to the Mixed Use 1 classification but supports residential densities of 48 units/acre. This classification supports a mix of land uses, including commercial (retail, office, hotel), institutional, and/or multi-unit 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, and apartment residential areas along secondary corridors.

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.
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 appropriateness of the site for said use should be carefully considered. Where a saturation of auto-oriented uses already exists, or where future development opportunities are present, new auto-oriented uses are generally not supported.
4. In certain cases, a mix of industrial and mixed-use may be supportable based on the nature of the industrial use, whether it is an existing use, and on the context of the surrounding area.
5. Proposals should follow the Mixed-Use Design Guidelines.



Mixed Use 3

Guideline: Unlimited units/acre

Unlimited bedrooms/acre

Heights of 8+ stories

This classification is the most intense use in the planning area. It is similar to the Mixed Use 1 and 2 classifications but supports unlimited residential densities. This classification supports a mix of land uses, including commercial (retail, office, hotel), institutional, and/or multi-unit 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 includes downtown, areas that are the commercial hubs and corridors of the given areas, as well as existing large shopping centers.

Within areas designated Mixed Use 3, the following applies:

1. The designation generally 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.
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 appropriateness of the site for said use should be carefully considered. Where a saturation of auto-oriented uses already exists, or where future development opportunities are present, new auto-oriented uses are generally not supported.
4. In certain cases, a mix of industrial and mixed-use may be supportable based on the nature of the industrial use, whether it is an existing use, and on the context of the surrounding area.
5. Proposals should follow the Mixed-Use Design Guidelines.



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 and Warehouse 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. Some areas of the city may have industrial uses with historic or ongoing negative impacts on adjacent neighborhoods. These areas typically have existing zoning permissions that allow them to continue to operate. The Columbus Land Use Plan recommends that many of these locations transition, over time, to Mixed Use, which may include less intense industrial uses. Future revisions and amendments to the Columbus Land Use Plan should continue to evaluate areas recommended for Industrial and Warehouse to consider whether a non-industrial land use recommendation is more appropriate.
4. Loading, storage, and other external activities that generate noise and other impacts should not face public rights-of-way, residential, or institutional uses. In the event that this is not possible, such areas should be fully screened.
5. Proposals should follow applicable Industrial Design Guidelines.



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S

Business and Institutional Campus

The Business and Institutional Campus classification is characterized by a mix of uses with office, educational, healthcare, research, and similar employment-focused (non-retail) uses being required as part of the mix. Residential, retail, and hotel may be appropriate if developed as part of or in addition to the primary employment uses. Within areas designated Business and Institutional Campus, the following applies:

1. In general, Business and Institutional Campus areas should be maintained and supported as job centers.
2. Where residential is proposed, for every one dwelling unit of residential provided, the development should provide no less than 200 sf of employment-focused uses up to the first 20,000 sf, after which additional residential is supportable.
3. Where retail or other similar commercial uses are proposed; the retail/commercial square footage should be limited to no more than 50% of the employment-focused (non-retail) use.
4. For situations where multiple parcels can be considered part of a larger development, the applicant may account for uses on adjoining parcels when considering the residential and retail recommendations.
5. The supportable height and residential density should be informed by review of existing site conditions and conditions in adjacent areas and can be characterized as equivalent to either Mixed Use 1, Mixed Use 2, or Mixed Use 3.
6. Proposals should follow applicable Mixed Use Design Guidelines.

Design Guidelines

The CGS Design Guidelines are recommendations for the placement and design of development (what development should look like), including elements such as connectivity, setbacks, parking, open space, and natural resources. The guidelines include specific standards for design but are intended to allow for flexibility in application. Rezoning or variance applications are reviewed for consistency with the Columbus Growth Strategy, including the Design Guidelines, Land Use Policies, and the Columbus Land Use Plan.

It is important to note that the CGS Design Guidelines are city policy and do not replace the zoning code and its legislatively adopted standards. The guidelines do not replace regulations for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), traffic management, stormwater and sewer management, or parkland dedication. These regulations are managed by the Department of Public Service, Columbus Power & Water, and the Recreation and Parks Department, respectively. Additionally, the guidelines do not replace Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and State notification requirements for construction in the vicinity of airports. Regulations regarding airports are managed by the FAA and Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).



Residential Design Guidelines

GENERAL RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. The appropriateness of infill development should be measured in terms of height, width, setbacks, and lot coverage. Projects that are proposed at a density higher than the recommended land use should be supported if they include a high level of site and architectural design. Projects that are proposed at a density higher than the recommended land use should also be supported if they contribute a variety of housing types, such as affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), age-friendly housing, missing middle housing, and universally designed housing.
2. Sensitive site design, cluster development, and other design approaches should be used to preserve open space, natural resources, and other ecologically sensitive areas.
3. Building materials should be of high quality and durability, such as traditional masonry, stone, stucco, wood, glass, etc.
4. Front facades should be designed to provide aesthetic appeal through the appropriate use and placement of doors and windows.
5. Development adjacent to parks and open space should be oriented towards the park (houses should not back up to parks and open space).
6. Lights should have fully shielded, recessed lamps directed downward to prevent glare and shine below the horizontal plane.
7. Building owners/developers are encouraged to conserve and rehabilitate contributing and/or historic buildings and architectural elements, and to consult the Historic Preservation Office regarding best practices in maintaining and rehabilitating historic structures.

SINGLE AND TWO UNIT

1. New single and two-unit housing should be oriented to the street and reflect the prevailing setback and spacing of nearby homes, as appropriate.
2. The design and nature of new development, including homes, additions, and garages, should be appropriate and based on the principal and nearby structures in terms of height, width, setbacks, lot coverage, roof pitch, other.
3. Garages should be located and accessed from the rear of the property for those sites with alley access. In such cases, the garages should be located as close to the alley as practicable. For additional parking, pull-through garages may be



supportable, with consideration for pervious paving or decorative brick for spaces located between the garage and the primary structure.

4. Accessory buildings (including, but not limited to, detached garages) should be located to the rear of the principal building and be subordinate in size.
5. Functional front porches are encouraged.
6. Attached garages facing front elevations should not exceed 40 percent of the home's width (including the garage) and be set back at least two feet from the front elevation. In situations where it is not feasible to set back the garage from the front elevation, a functional front porch of at least 100 square feet should extend beyond the face of the garage.
7. Side facing garages should provide windows on the front elevation of the home.
8. Single-bay garage doors and/or garage doors with windows are preferred. Other techniques, such as darker colored garage doors, or garage doors with windows are recommended to reduce the visual impact of the garage on the streetscape.

MULTI-UNIT

1. The primary facade on the ground level of multi-unit buildings should include entrances, stoops, porches, balconies, or other features to contribute to street activity.
2. Multi-unit buildings should incorporate building articulation through the use of bays, balconies, cornice lines, or varying rooflines.
3. Multi-unit development should incorporate plazas and courtyards that are open to and visible from the primary street.
4. Variation in building design is encouraged for multi-unit developments with multiple buildings.
5. Building height transitions should be used to create a scale and massing that is appropriate based on the surrounding uses.
6. Setbacks of higher stories from the front facade should be considered for taller buildings to lessen their visual impact.
7. Multi-unit development should include usable open space as described in the Open Space guidelines. Neither required setbacks nor stormwater detention basins substitute for recommended open space.
8. Multi-unit development should face public streets and open space. Parking lots should be placed behind or, if necessary, next to buildings.
9. In urban areas, roof pitches should be appropriate based on nearby contributing buildings' roof pitches.



10. For multi-unit buildings with integrated garages, such as townhome units, where garages and driveways can dominate a frontage, techniques such as dark colored garage doors, garage doors with windows, paver driveways, and pergola structures are encouraged in order to improve the pedestrian experience.
11. Wherever feasible, garage access should be provided from the rear of the building in an alley or auto court.

OPEN SPACE

1. Open space should be integrated into new development, serving in one or more of the following ways: an organizational element, a central green space, connection to adjacent open space, protection of natural areas, and/or as a buffer along scenic roadways.
2. Open space should include landscaping, trees, and connections to sidewalks and/or trails as appropriate. The design and placement of landscaping should consider the type of open space, its relationship to the built environment and the best use of the space.
3. Usable open space should be incorporated along bodies of water (streams, rivers, etc.) for active or passive recreational use. When appropriate, opportunities to connect to the regional trail system should be pursued.
4. Development proposals should clearly delineate areas set aside for stormwater management.
5. Neither required stormwater detention basins nor setbacks substitute for recommended open space.
6. Development should address open space—buildings should front parks and open space.

PARKING

1. Shared parking arrangements are encouraged, particularly between land uses with differing peak hours.
2. The use of green technologies to manage stormwater runoff in parking lots, subject to city engineering requirements, is encouraged. Examples include rain gardens, bio-swales and pervious pavement.
3. Bicycle parking should be incorporated into developments. Additional consideration should also be given to including supporting facilities in multi-unit, office, and mixed-use developments.



4. Structured parking, designed to minimize visual impacts and buffered from adjacent lower-intensity residential, should be considered for high density residential, mixed use, office, or institutional projects.
5. Parking structures should not front primary corridors but should instead be placed at the rear of development.
6. Parking lots should be hidden to the greatest extent possible by locating it to the rear or side of a building.

CONNECTIVITY

1. Development should connect to the public sidewalk, bikeway network, adjacent parks, and multi-use trail network. Within a given site, an interconnected series of streets, sidewalks, and paths should be provided.
2. Connectivity within and from developments to parks and open space should be a design priority.
3. Connectivity between developments via public streets is encouraged. In the case connectivity via public streets is not feasible, pedestrian connections should be considered.
4. Suburban curvilinear block and street design should be avoided unless it facilitates preservation of natural features.
5. Maintenance of existing street and alley grids is encouraged. Evaluation of potential disposal of right-of-way (ROW) should consider whether the subject ROW is improved and the degree to which it provides connectivity not otherwise available.

LANDSCAPING, BUFFERING, AND SCREENING

1. Landscape installations should enhance buildings, create and define public and private spaces, and provide shade, aesthetic appeal, and environmental benefits.
2. Buffering and screening should be provided between residential and non-residential uses.
3. Buffering and screening of adjacent uses should use elements such as existing and new vegetation, fencing, masonry walls, mounding, orientation of residential garages, and placement of site lighting such that it avoids spillage into adjacent sites.
4. Landscaping should be used to support stormwater management goals for filtration, percolation, and erosion control consistent with the City of Columbus Stormwater Manual.



5. Plant species should be adapted to urban conditions. Native species are encouraged, and invasive species should be avoided.
6. Existing mature trees and landscaping should be preserved and integrated into site design where feasible. Tree preservation measures should be density neutral.
7. Service and loading zones should be located to the rear, side, or in an internal location to reduce visibility and noise and should be screened from view.
8. Parking lots should be screened from view from public right-of-way and adjacent development. Screening should include a combination of the following items: walls, mounds, trees, shrubs, and/or landscaping.
9. Chain link and/or fabric fencing is not appropriate for screening.
10. Street trees should be provided as part of new development, with guidance from the City Forester.

NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Development should be designed to conserve natural features as integral components of development or as part of public or private park and recreation systems.
2. Protected natural areas should be clearly delineated from development to prevent encroachment, particularly in the case of single-unit homes (e.g. split-rail fencing and bollards).
3. Usable open space should be incorporated along bodies of water (streams, rivers, etc.) for active or passive recreational use. When appropriate, opportunities to connect to the regional trail system should be pursued.
4. Stream corridors, wetlands, ravines, and the 100-year floodplain should be protected in a natural state (more specific methodology is found in the City of Columbus Stormwater Manual).
5. Mature trees provide significant environmental benefits and should be preserved whenever possible. Tree preservation measures should be density neutral.
6. Alternative “green” methods to manage stormwater should be considered (i.e. bio-swales, vegetated swales, native landscaping, naturalized detention and retention basins, pervious surfaces), consistent with Columbus Water and Power Stormwater Manual.



PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ART

1. Art placed on city property or within public right-of-way must be approved by and meet the evaluation criteria of the Columbus Art Commission, as provided in City Code.
2. Existing art incorporated into structures should be conserved where feasible.
3. Public art should be provided in all neighborhoods in partnership with the community, serving to tell their story.
4. Art is encouraged to be incorporated as part of larger new developments as a placemaking tool that improves the public realm and adds long-term value to the development and community.
5. Works of art should be designed with consideration for maintenance and durability.

Mixed Use Design Guidelines

GENERAL MIXED USE DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Buildings should be generally parallel to and facing the street, with an entrance door(s) connected to the public sidewalk.
2. A consistent level of detailing and finish should be provided for all sides of a building, with an emphasis on those that address a street and allowing for service areas.
3. Building materials should be of high quality and durability, such as traditional masonry, stone, stucco, wood, glass, etc.
4. Buildings should be articulated by dividing façades into modules or bays, use of piers and columns, recessed and projecting bays, varying rooflines and building setback above cornice line.
5. Drive-through pickup windows and coverings should be located to the rear or side of the building.
6. Awnings and associated framing systems should be compatible with building design.
7. For multistory buildings, ground floor uses should address and contribute to the street. This can be accomplished through such design elements as door entries, windows, art, and landscaping.
8. Building owners/developers are encouraged to conserve and rehabilitate contributing and historic buildings, and architectural elements and to consult the Historic Preservation Office regarding best practices in maintaining and rehabilitating historic structures.



FACADES

1. Street level facades adjacent to a public sidewalk should be as transparent as possible to create an interesting pedestrian environment, except for residential spaces on ground floors.
2. Street level facades should incorporate a high level of design and material quality.
3. Blank walls should not be oriented to primary streets. Buildings with blank walls (without doors or windows) adjacent to side streets and residential areas should use building articulation, landscaping, and art to mitigate impacts on adjacent uses.
4. Design elements should be used to distinguish between ground floor and upper stories.

SETBACKS

1. Buildings in urban areas should generally have a small or zero setback. Consideration of larger setbacks should be based on the incorporation of public spaces, placement of adjacent buildings, and/or unique geometry.

HEIGHT

1. Requests for a variance in height will be considered based on:
 - a. Site size and situation
 - b. Adjacent uses
 - c. Quality of architectural design and materials
 - d. Availability, and use, of a height bonus
 - e. Affordable housing provision, beyond that which may be required for the Residential Tax Incentive Program (CRA) and/or height bonus
 - f. Provision of public parking to serve larger area
2. Building height transitions should be used to create scale and massing that steps down relative to shorter adjacent uses.



OPEN SPACE

1. Open space should be integrated into new development, serving in one or more of the following ways: an organizational element, a central green space, connection to adjacent open space, protection of natural areas, and/or as a buffer along scenic roadways.
2. Open space should include landscaping, trees and connections to sidewalks and/or trails as appropriate. The design and placement of landscaping should consider the type of open space, its relationship to the built environment and the best use of the space.
3. Usable open space should be incorporated along bodies of water (streams, rivers, etc.) for active or passive recreational use. When appropriate, opportunities to connect to the regional trail system should be pursued.
4. Development proposals should clearly delineate areas set aside for stormwater management, and activate with trails, benches, gazebos, boardwalks, docks, or other measures.
5. Neither required stormwater detention basins nor setbacks substitute for recommended open space.
6. Development should address open space—buildings should front parks and open space.

PARKING

1. Shared parking arrangements are encouraged, particularly between land uses with differing peak hours.
2. The use of green technologies to manage stormwater runoff in parking lots, subject to city engineering requirements, is encouraged. Examples include rain gardens, bio-swales and pervious pavement.
3. Bicycle parking should be incorporated into development projects. Additional consideration should also be given to including supporting facilities, like showers, secure bike storage, and repair areas, in multi-unit, office and mixed-use developments.
4. Structured parking, designed to minimize visual impacts and buffered from adjacent residential, should be considered for high density residential, mixed use, office, or institutional projects.
5. Parking structures should not front primary corridors but should instead be placed at the rear of development.



6. Parking lots should be placed to the rear or side of a building and be hidden from view to the greatest extent possible. Shopping centers should incorporate outlot development designed in such a way as to screen parking areas. No parking or circulation aisles should be located between outlot development(s) and the right-of-way.
7. A high level of landscaping and screening should be provided between the right-of-way and parking lot.
8. Large commercial parking lots should include a network of pedestrian walkways to provide access to the building (s) and adjacent sidewalk(s).

CONNECTIVITY

1. Development should connect to the public sidewalk, bikeway network, adjacent parks, and multi-use trail network. Within a given site, an interconnected series of streets, sidewalks, and paths should be provided.
2. Connectivity within and among developments, and to parks and open space, should be a design priority.
3. Connectivity between developments via public streets is encouraged. In the case connectivity via public streets is not feasible, pedestrian and bicycle connections should be established.
4. Maintenance of existing street and alley grids is encouraged. Evaluation of potential sale of right-of-way (ROW) should consider whether the subject ROW is improved and the degree to which it provides connectivity not otherwise available.

LANDSCAPING, BUFFERING, AND SCREENING

1. Landscape installations should enhance buildings, create and define public and private spaces, and provide shade, aesthetic appeal, and environmental benefits.
2. Buffering and screening should be provided between residential and non-residential uses.
3. Buffering and screening of adjacent uses should use elements such as existing and new vegetation, fencing, masonry walls, mounding, orientation of residential garages, and placement of site lighting such that it avoids spillage into adjacent sites.
4. Landscaping should be used to support stormwater management goals for filtration, percolation and erosion control consistent with the City of Columbus Stormwater Manual.



5. Plant species should be adapted to urban conditions. Native species are encouraged and Invasive species should be avoided.
6. Existing mature trees and landscaping should be preserved and integrated into site design where feasible. Tree preservation measures should be density neutral.
7. Service and loading zones should be located to the rear, side, or in an internal location to reduce visibility and noise and should be screened appropriately.
8. Parking lots should be screened from view from public right-of-way and adjacent development. Screening should include a combination of the following items: walls, black metal tube fencing, mounds, trees, shrubs, and/or landscaping.
9. Chain link and/or fence fabric is not appropriate for screening in a mixed-use context.
10. Street trees should be provided as part of new development, with guidance from the City Forester.

NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Development should be appropriately sited to conserve natural features as integral components of development or as part of public or private park and recreation systems.
2. Protected natural areas should be clearly delineated from development to prevent encroachment.
3. Usable open space should be incorporated along bodies of water (streams, rivers, etc.) for active or passive recreational use. When appropriate, opportunities to connect to the regional trail system should be pursued.
4. Stream corridors, wetlands, ravines and the 100-year floodplain should be protected in a natural state (more specific methodology is found in the City of Columbus Stormwater Manual).
5. Mature trees provide significant environmental benefits and should be preserved whenever possible. Tree preservation measures should be density neutral.
6. Alternative “green” methods to manage stormwater should be considered (i.e. bio-swales, vegetated swales, native landscaping, naturalized detention and retention basins, pervious surfaces), consistent with Columbus Water and Power Stormwater Manual.



PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ART

1. Art placed on city property or within public right-of-way must be approved by and meet the evaluation criteria of the Columbus Art Commission, as provided in City Code.
2. Existing art incorporated into structures should be conserved where feasible.
3. Public art should be provided in all neighborhoods in partnership with the community, serving to tell their story.
4. Art is encouraged to be incorporated as part of larger new developments as a placemaking tool that improves the public realm and adds long term value to the development and community.
5. Works of art should be designed with consideration to maintenance and durability.

GRAPHICS

1. In urban areas, blade signs are recommended.
2. In suburban areas, monument-style signs are recommended and should not be taller than six feet.
3. Wall signs should not obscure or interfere with architectural lines and details and should be sized to fit in with the scale of the building's facade design.
4. New signage should be designed to be a logical and complementary component of the overall design of a storefront.
5. Buildings should not be dominated by graphics. Crowded or cluttered graphics arrangements should be avoided.
6. Signs for storefronts/businesses in the same building/development should be of coordinated design—reinforcing rather than competing with each other.
7. Large commercial developments should utilize integrated signage, with an emphasis on wall signs and central identification signage for the entire development, rather than multiple freestanding signs.
8. Excessively large signs are discouraged.
9. The following types of signs are generally discouraged (or otherwise prohibited in city code), including ad murals, off-premises signs, billboards, signs with flashing lights or bare bulbs, co-op signs, rotating signs, pole signs, automatic changeable copy signs, bench signs, and roof-mounted signs.



Industrial Design Guidelines

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Durable, low-maintenance materials are encouraged for industrial building exteriors (masonry, metal panels, high-quality precast). For facades visible from streets or residential areas, additional articulation and higher-quality finishes are encouraged.
2. Buildings should avoid long, uninterrupted blank walls facing streets or residential areas; where unavoidable, break facades with bays, landscaping and screening, murals, or other techniques.
3. Buildings are encouraged to include design features that allow future reuse/adaptation (e.g., floor heights, column spacing) to support long-term economic resilience.

SITE ORGANIZATION & ORIENTATION

1. Primary building entries should face the public street where feasible. Production, shipping, and heavy loading should be located away from pedestrian-oriented frontages.
2. Locate service drives, dock doors, and outdoor storage to the interior of the site or along the property line that avoids nearby residential uses.
3. Landscaping, screening, and/or acoustic buffers are encouraged where sites adjoin residential uses.
4. Internal circulation should separate truck routes from employee and visitor parking and pedestrian paths, where feasible.

FRONTAGE & STREETScape

1. Portions of a site that front a public right-of-way should include streetscape improvements such as sidewalks, landscaping, and street trees, in coordination with the City Forester.
2. Developments should provide pedestrian connections from sidewalks to building entrances.
3. Building façades facing streets should include articulation and high-quality materials. For buildings with office or visitor areas, frontages with high levels of transparency are encouraged.



LANDSCAPING, BUFFERING, AND SCREENING

1. Buffer industrial sites from adjacent residential uses with a combination of existing vegetation, planted buffers, visual screens (continuous hedge, mounding, masonry, or screened fencing), and appropriate setbacks.
2. Retain existing mature trees where feasible; preserved tree canopy should be counted toward required buffering.

FENCING

1. Chain link fencing is supportable in industrial areas. When visible from a public right-of-way or adjacent residential area, chain link should include privacy slats or fence fabric to reduce overall visibility into the site. These techniques should be combined with plantings on the outside of the fence that may include trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, etc. to provide additional naturalized screening.
2. Where the site fronts a primary street with sidewalks, chain link fencing is discouraged. Instead, black metal tube fencing, masonry, and landscaping are preferred to enhance the streetscape experience.

SERVICE, LOADING, AND OUTDOOR STORAGE

1. Service and loading areas should be located to the rear or interior of the site whenever possible. Where this is not feasible, these areas should be screened to reduce visibility and other impacts on adjacent properties.
2. Outdoor storage should be fully screened from public view by a combination of planted buffers, fencing, or other techniques. Storage should be well organized and contained.

PARKING AND CIRCULATION

1. Employee and visitor parking should be located to the side of the building. When not feasible, these parking areas may be located between the building entrance and the public sidewalk, with landscaping and screening.
2. Truck/trailer parking should be located in interior yards or screened areas, avoiding interfaces with nearby residential.



LIGHTING

1. All exterior lighting must be fully shielded and directed downward to avoid off-site glare. Uplighting should be avoided.
2. For security lighting, fixtures with timers/motion sensors are preferred so as to avoid constant high-intensity night lighting where not operationally necessary.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ART

1. Integration of public art is encouraged on primary street façades and in employee amenity areas.
2. Where industrial properties abut residential or primary pedestrian corridors, consider murals or façade treatments to reduce blank walls.

COLUMBUS **GROWTH STRATEGY**

Columbus Planning Division
111 N. Front Street, 3rd Floor
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