

Master Plan Review

FOUR CORNERS

Approved and Adopted
December 1996



BACKGROUND

In 2007, the Montgomery County Council directed the Planning Department to undertake a comprehensive zoning ordinance rewrite. Last rewritten in 1977, the current 1,200 + page code is viewed as antiquated and hard to use with standards that have failed to keep pace with modern development practices.

With only about four percent of land in the County available for greenfield development, the new zoning code can play a crucial role in guiding redevelopment to areas like surface parking lots and strip shopping centers. An updated zoning code is important for achieving the kind of growth Montgomery County policymakers and residents want.

Initial sections of the new code were drafted by Code Studio, a zoning consultant. These drafts were subsequently analyzed and edited by planners based on feedback from the Zoning Advisory Panel (a citizen panel appointed by the Planning Board to weigh in on the project's direction), county agency representatives, residents and other stakeholders. In September 2012, planning staff began the release of a draft code in sections accompanied by a report highlighting changes from the current code. The staff drafts were reviewed at length by the Planning Board.



The Planning Board held worksessions and public hearings between September of 2012 and May of 2013. On May 2, they transmitted their draft to the County Council. The Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee held worksessions during the summer and sent the draft to the full Council in December 2013. The full Council held worksessions in January 2014 and is expected to vote on the proposal at the end of February.

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

An important aspect of the Zoning Rewrite process is the potential simplification of 123 existing zones into about 30 proposed zones. While some of the proposed zones are a direct one-to-one translation of existing zones, others are the result of combining existing zones with similar standards. Additionally, existing zones that are not currently mapped or are no longer used in the County have been eliminated from the proposed code. Through the implementation process, Montgomery County aims to simplify the number of zones, eliminate redundancy, and clarify development standards. A full translation table for all zones can be found in the documents section of our website: www.zoningmontgomery.org.

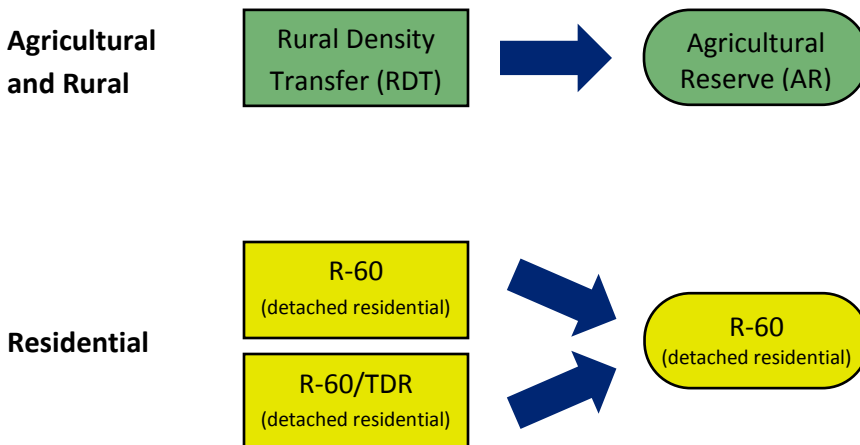
Agricultural, Residential, and Industrial Zone Implementation:

For agricultural and rural zones, the existing zones will be translated to proposed zones on a one-to-one basis, with the exception of the Low Density Rural Cluster zone which is not currently used in the County and will be eliminated.

Many of the existing residential zones will remain the same. Other residential zones will be combined with existing zones that have similar development standards. The R-4Plex zone, which is not currently mapped anywhere in the county, will be removed from the proposed code.

Implementation of Industrial zones will combine similar zones (Rural Service, I-1, and R+D) into the proposed Industrial Moderate (IM) zone. The existing heavy industrial zone (I-2) will be renamed as the Industrial Heavy (IH) zone.

Examples:



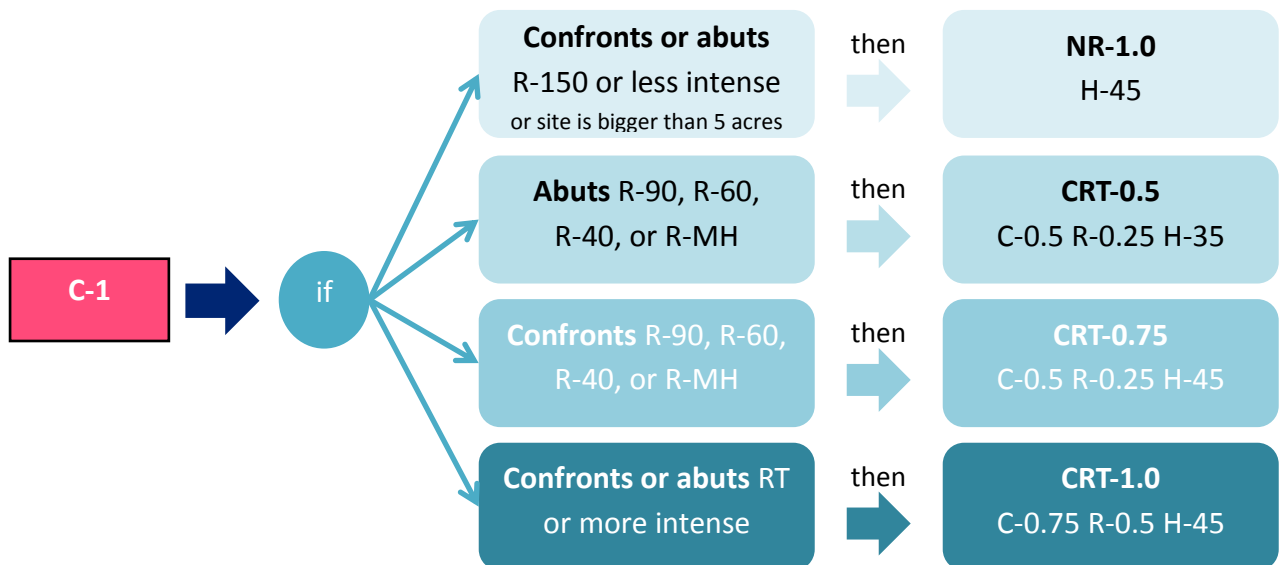
Commercial and Mixed-Use Zone Implementation:

Parcels located in the existing Commercial, Mixed-use, Central Business District (CBD), and Transit Station zones will be translated into one of the proposed Commercial/Residential (CR) or Employment (E) Zones using a two-tiered process.

First, decisions about specific parcels in these zones were based on recommendations within the Master Plan. Planning staff reviewed each Master Plan in the County. When the Master Plan provided specific recommendations about allowed density, height, or mix of uses for individual commercial or mixed-use parcels, those recommendations were used to build the formula of the proposed zone. This ensures consistency with currently allowed density and height, and helps codify Master Plan recommendations in a parcel-specific manner.

Second, if the Master Plan did not make specific recommendations, the current zone changed to a proposed zone on a one-to-one basis or the proposed zone was determined using a specific standardized decision tree (*see example below*). The standardized decision tree translates existing zones by considering each specific parcel's proximity to single-family neighborhoods or other factors. The goal of the implementation decision tree is to retain currently allowed heights and densities and maintain context sensitivity.

Example: C-1 Convenience Commercial



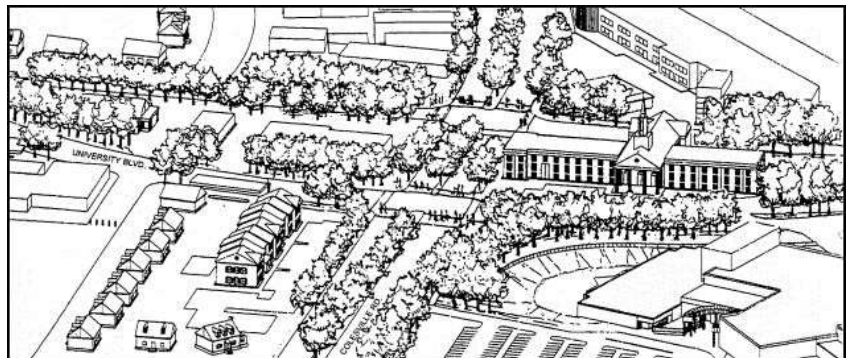
PLAN VISION

The Four Corners Master Plan was approved and adopted in December 1996. The Master Planning Area contains 1.58 square miles in southeastern Montgomery County and includes the neighborhoods of Northwood-Four Corners, Woodmoor-Pinecrest, South Four Corners, Indian Spring, and North Hills of Sligo. The Master Plan vision reinforces Four Corners as a community of neighborhoods and includes recommendations for four concepts: community and center, transportation network, community facilities and linkages, and environment.

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Community and Center

- Retain existing residential zoning to protect and reinforce the neighborhood as the foundation of the community.
- Retain the existing commercial district boundaries and encourages clear delineation between residential and non-residential areas through landscaping or other physical barriers.
- Improve the function and appearance of the commercial district with the public projects planned in Four Corners - Blair High School, and the Colesville Road and University Boulevard intersection improvement
- Improve the entire commercial district through a public-private partnership between local owners and County's commercial revitalization program.



Transportation Network

- Support the improvements planned for the intersection of the Colesville Road and University Boulevard, including the pedestrian and streetscape amenities and encourages continued cooperative implementation of the project and coordination with merchants and residents before and during roadway construction.

*Four Corners Commercial Center with Pedestrian
and Streetscape Improvements*

- Develop traffic management plans that are cooperative between the County and the neighborhoods to reduce through traffic on local streets.
- Enhance pedestrian circulation by constructing sidewalks that will connect Four Corners neighborhoods to shops, parks, schools, community facilities, and transit stops.
- Expand the existing bikeway network to support the local and regional systems and to enhance its value as an alternative means of travel.
- Increase the use of transit with bus service that connects Four Corners with Metro stations at Silver Spring and Forest Glen.

Community Facilities and Linkages

- Strengthen and improve the physical connections – sidewalks and bikeways – between the community's resources and residents.
- Acquire the six-acre property at 315 University Boulevard for parkland.
- Develop a portion of the new Blair High School for community use.
- Preserve and maintain existing parkland and recognize the scenic features of the Northwest Branch as a valuable County resource.
- Establish greenways in the Northwest Branch, Sligo Creek, and Long Branch stream valley parks to protect the scenic features and natural habitats.



Montgomery Blair High School

Environment

- Continue cooperation among government agencies in the restoration of Sligo Creek and Northwest Branch.
- Address the stream bank erosion problems along the edge of the Northwest Branch Park through a combined effort of County agencies and citizens.
- Encourage community participation in Montgomery County Park and County government programs.
- Consider meeting part of the requirements for reforestation of the Blair High School site within the Four Corners Master Plan area.

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

The Four Corners Planning Area currently has 8 zones: 2 Residential and 6 Commercial.

Existing Commercial:

- C-1: Convenience Commercial
- C-2: General Commercial
- C-4: Limited Commercial
- C-O: Commercial, Office Building
- C-T: Commercial, Transitional

- O-M: Office Building, Moderate Intensity

Existing Residential:

- R-60: Detached Unit, Single-Family.
- R-90: Detached Unit, Single-Family

The existing R-60 and R-90 will remain.

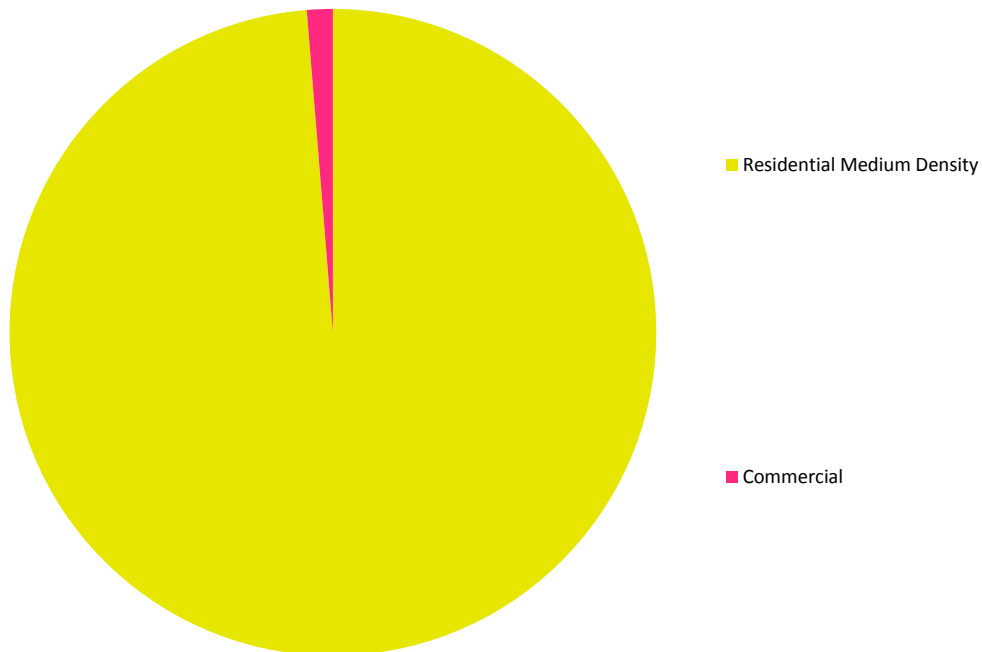
The existing C-1, C-2, and C-4 zones translate to the proposed zone CRT (Commercial Residential Town). These conversions are each based on the location and context for each of the parcels and their surroundings. Each parcel was translated using the standardized translation, with the overall goal to retain currently allowed heights and densities and maintain context sensitivity.

The C-O zone will translate to a proposed EOF (Employment Office) zone and the O-M will translate to a proposed EOF (Employment Office) zone. The existing C-T zone will translate to the proposed CRN (Commercial Residential Neighborhood) zone.

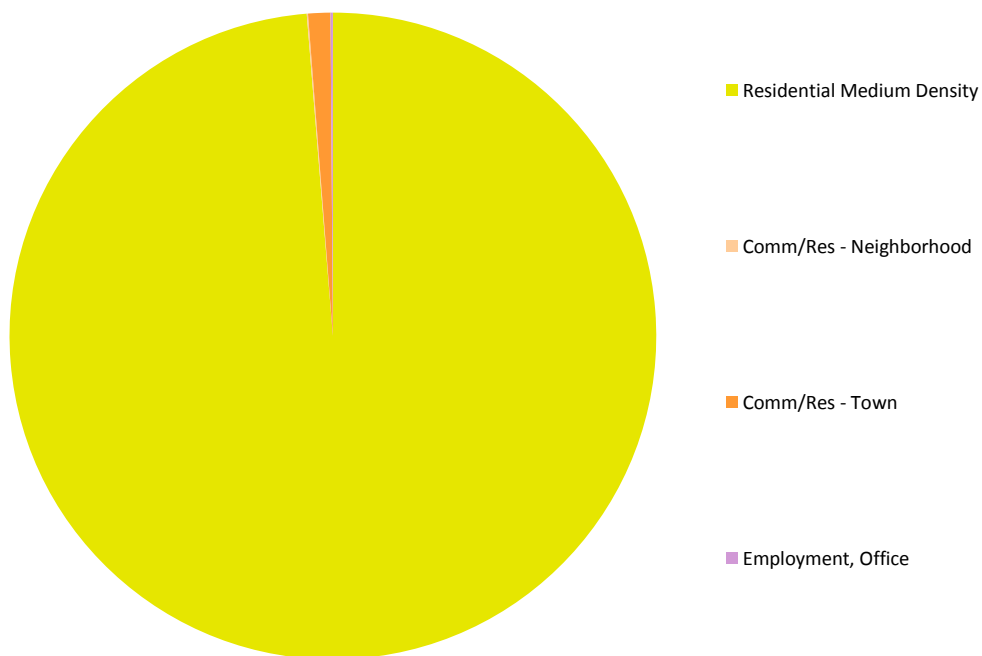
Four Corners					
Existing			Proposed		
Zone	Acres	Percent	Zone	Acres	Percent
R-60	1,009.56	98.11	R-60	1,009.56	98.11
R-90	6.15	0.60	R-90	6.15	0.60
C-1	0.58	0.06	CRT-0.75 C-0.5 R-0.25 H-45	0.58	0.06
C-2	6.16	0.60	CRT-1.5 C-1.5 R-0.75 H-45	2.31	0.22
			CRT-2.0 C-1.5 R-0.75 H-45	0.60	0.06
			CRT-2.25 C-1.5 R-0.75 H-45	3.25	0.32
C-4	4.67	0.45	CRT-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.5 H-40	4.67	0.45
C-O	0.88	0.09	EOF-3.0 H-100	0.88	0.09
C-T	0.65	0.06	CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.25 H-35	0.65	0.06
O-M	0.34	0.03	EOF-1.5 H-60	0.34	0.03
Grand Total		1,029.00	Grand Total		1,029.00

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

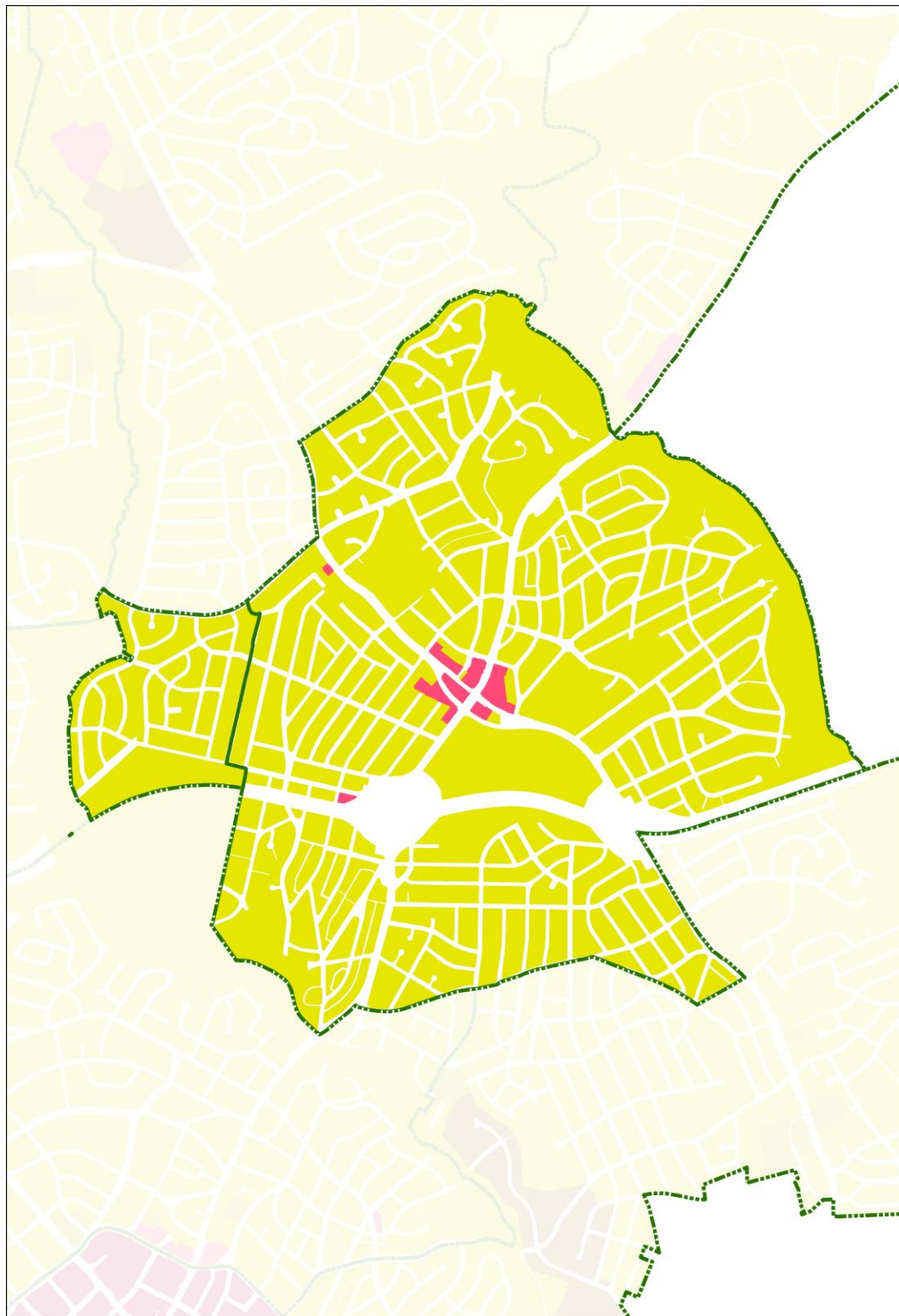
Four Corners: Existing Zoning



Four Corners: Proposed Zoning



EXISTING ZONING MAP



Existing Zones

**Residential
Medium Density**
R-60
R-90

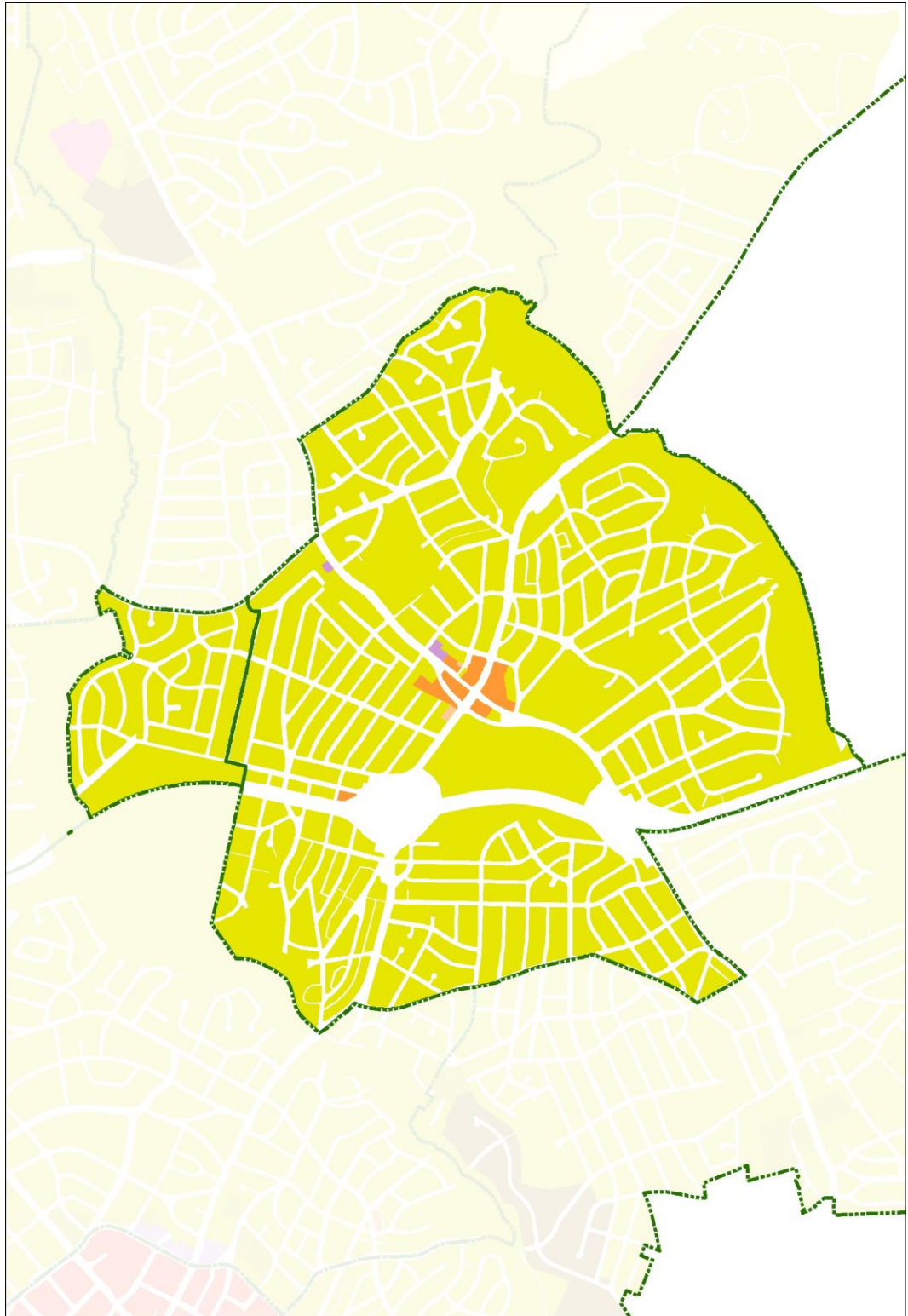
Commercial
C-1
C-2
C-4
C-O
C-T
O-M

PROPOSED ZONING MAP

Proposed Zones

- Residential
Medium Density**
R-60
R-90

- Comm/Res-
Neighborhood**
CRN
- Comm/Res-
Town**
CRT
- Employment,
Office**
EOF



PLANNING AREA CONTEXT

