

Master Plan Review

SANDY SPRING – ASHTON

Approved and Adopted
July 1998



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.

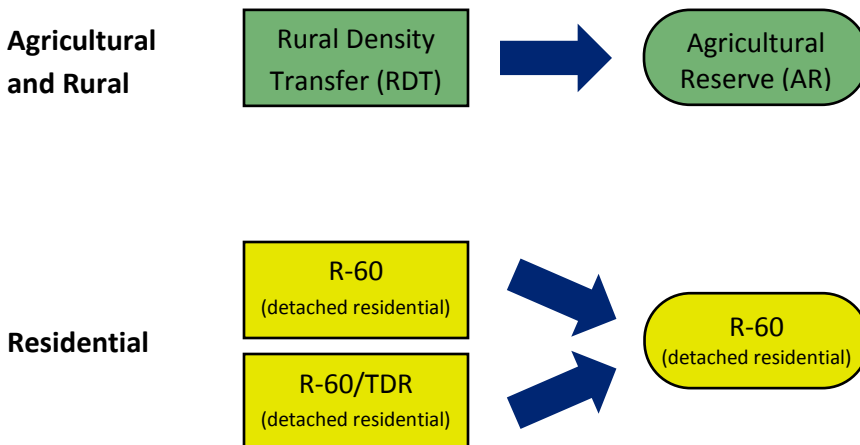
Agricultural, Residential, and Industrial Zone Implementation:

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:



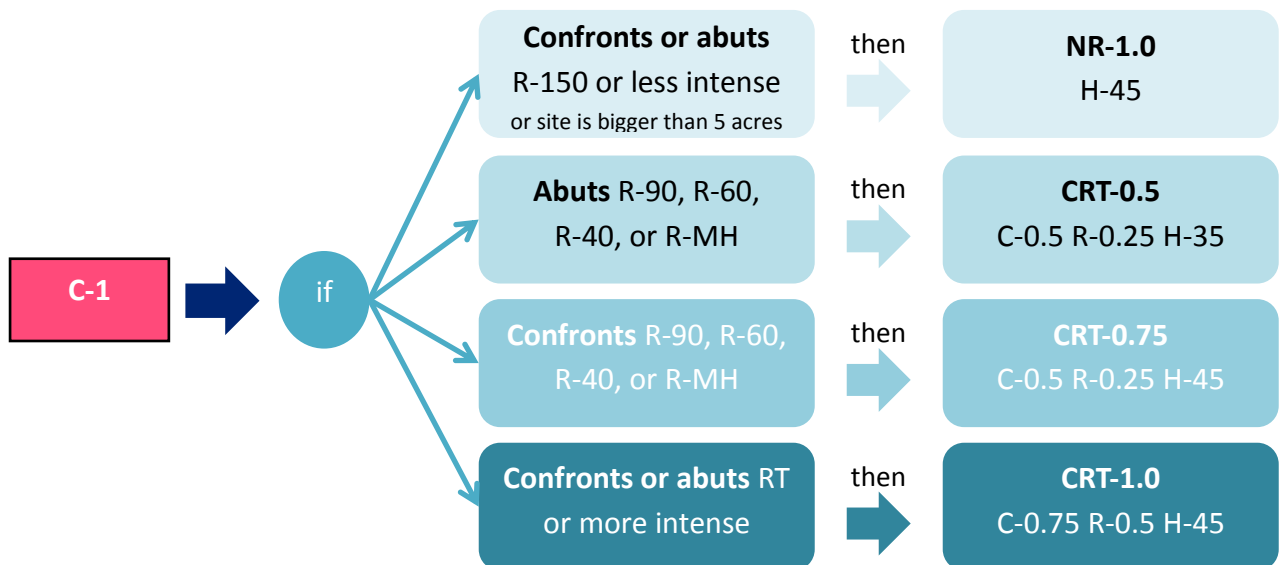
Commercial and Mixed-Use Zone Implementation:

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



SANDY SPRING - ASHTON

PLAN VISION

The Sandy Spring - Ashton Master Plan was approved and adopted in July 1998. The priority established by the Plan is to maintain the area's rural character including its rural open space, rural traditions, new rural neighborhoods, rural roads, and villages. The Sandy Spring - Ashton Master Plan emphasizes the importance of its rural character throughout land use, transportation, environment, and community resources objectives.

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The Master Plan's land use and zoning recommendations promote accommodating new residential growth, while maintaining a rural setting in the Rural Legacy Area through the use of cluster development. The Plan also emphasizes the importance of preserving the distinct identities of the community's rural villages through a number of land use and design recommendations. A third land use objective recommends continuing low-density, land use patterns to protect farmland and rural open space.

The Plan's transportation, environment, and community resources objectives strive to promote a balance with its priority for preserving the area's rural character. Examples of these recommendations include enhancement of the area's bicycle and pedestrian pathways, watershed protection, forest preservation, and additional parkland acquisition, protection of historic resources in Sandy Spring - Ashton, and continued use of the Sandy Spring Fire Station 4 as a community landmark.



Sandy Spring Fire Station 4

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

The Sandy Spring - Ashton Planning Area currently has 16 zones: 3 Rural, 8 Residential, 4 Commercial and 1 Planned Development.

Existing Rural

R: Rural

RC: Rural Cluster

RNC: Rural Neighborhood Cluster

R-60: Detached Unit, Single-Family

RT-10: Townhouse, Single-Family

Existing Residential:

RE-2: Detached Unit, Single-Family

RE-2C: Detached Unit, Single-Family

RE-1: Detached Unit, Single-Family

R-200: Detached Unit, Single-Family

RMH-200: Detached Unit, Single-Family

R-90: Detached Unit, Single-Family

Existing Commercial:

C-1: Convenience Commercial

C-2: General Commercial

O-M: Office Building, Moderate Intensity

C-INN: Country Inn

Existing Planned Development:

PD-5: Planned Development

Standard Implementation:

The existing Rural, RC, and RNC zones will remain.

The existing RE-1, RE-2, and RE-2C zones will remain. The existing C-INN zone will revert to the zone assigned to the parcel prior to being rezoned as C-INN. In Sandy Spring-Ashton, the Country Inn will revert to the RE-2 zone. The R-200 and the RMH-200 will combine to form the proposed R-200 zone (Residential Low-Density). The existing R-90 and R-60 will remain. The existing RT-10 will remain. The existing PD-5 zone will remain.

The existing C-1, C-2, and O-M zones will translate to the proposed zones to CRT (Commercial Residential Town), NR (Neighborhood Retail), and EOF (Employment Office) using both the standard translation criteria and specific Master Plan recommendations. Commercial parcels that do not have specific Master Plan recommendations will translate to the proposed zone based the standard zone translation table.

Each parcel's proximity to residential neighborhoods was considered in the translation decision, with the overall goal to retain currently allowed heights and densities and maintain context sensitivity.

NON-STANDARD CONVERSIONS

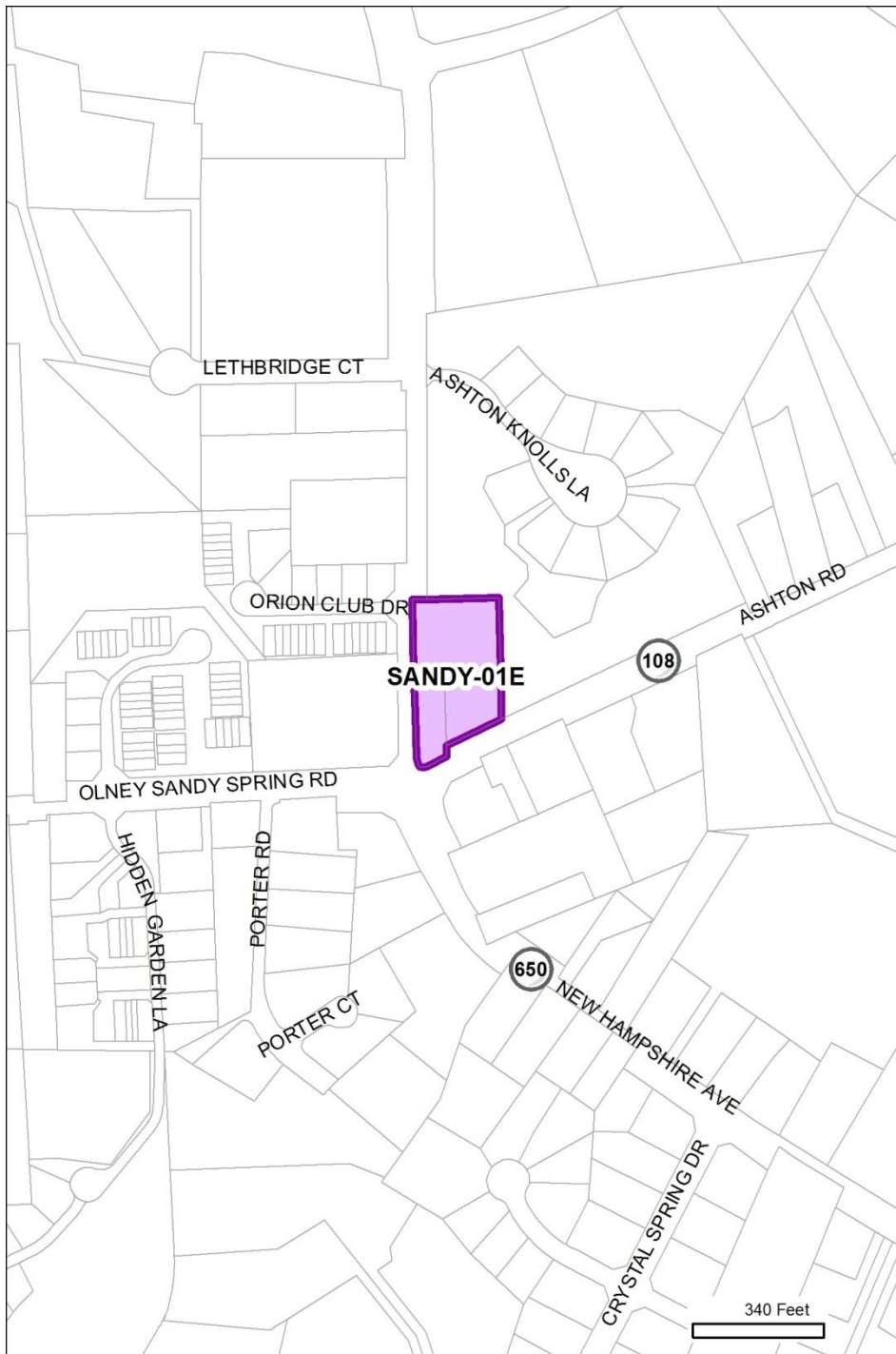
In some cases, properties were not converted using the standard conversions as outlined earlier in the packet.

Generally, this is because the relevant Master or Sector Plan made recommendations regarding the appropriate density, height, or mix of uses on a given site.

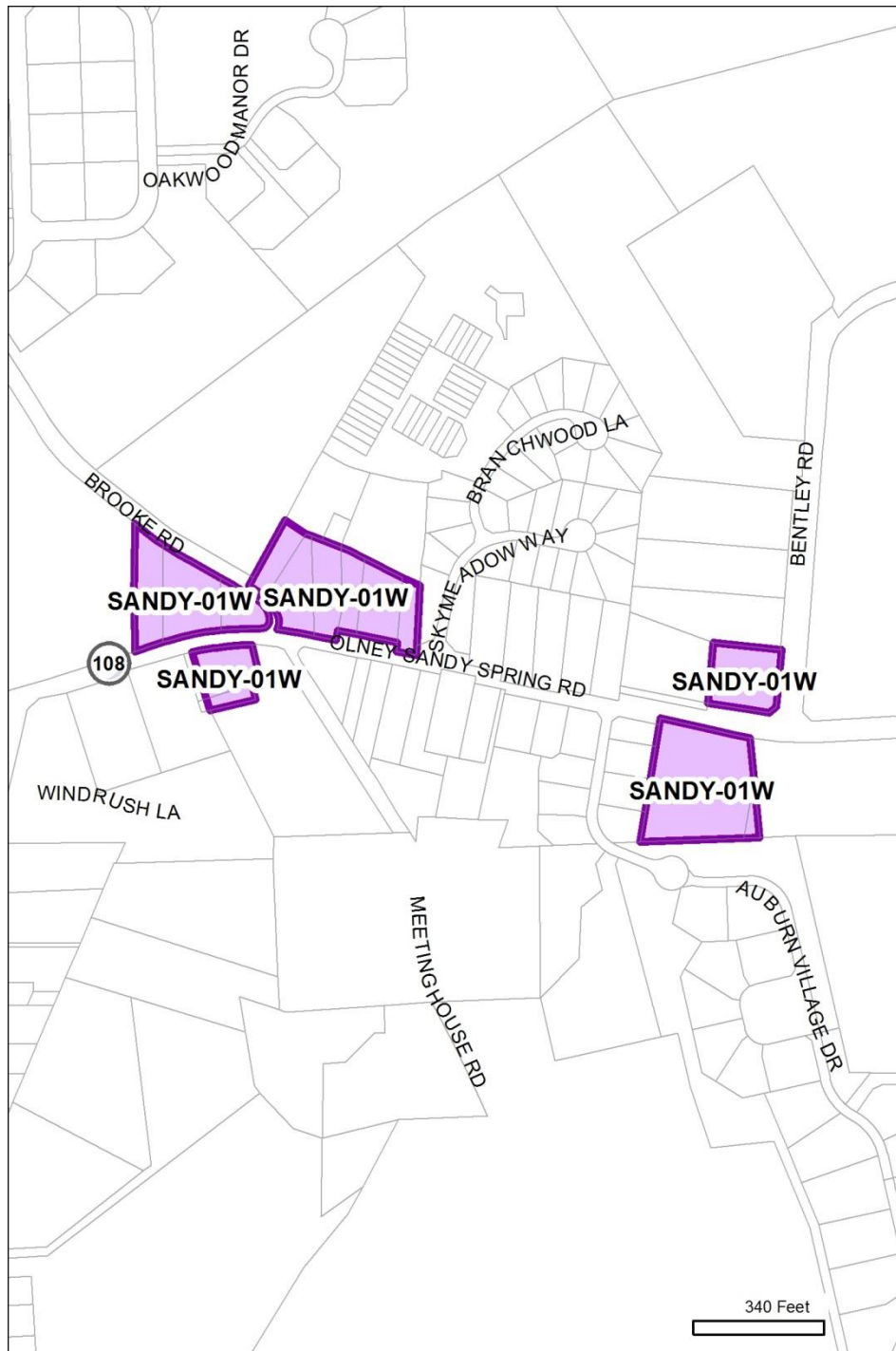
In other cases, the text of the zoning ordinance or an overlay zone can affect the development potential of a site, and therefore affect the conversion given as part of the draft proposed DMA.

Additionally, the PHED Committee requested that existing site approvals be reflected in the draft proposed DMA, so non-standard conversions sometimes reflect what projects have been approved for.

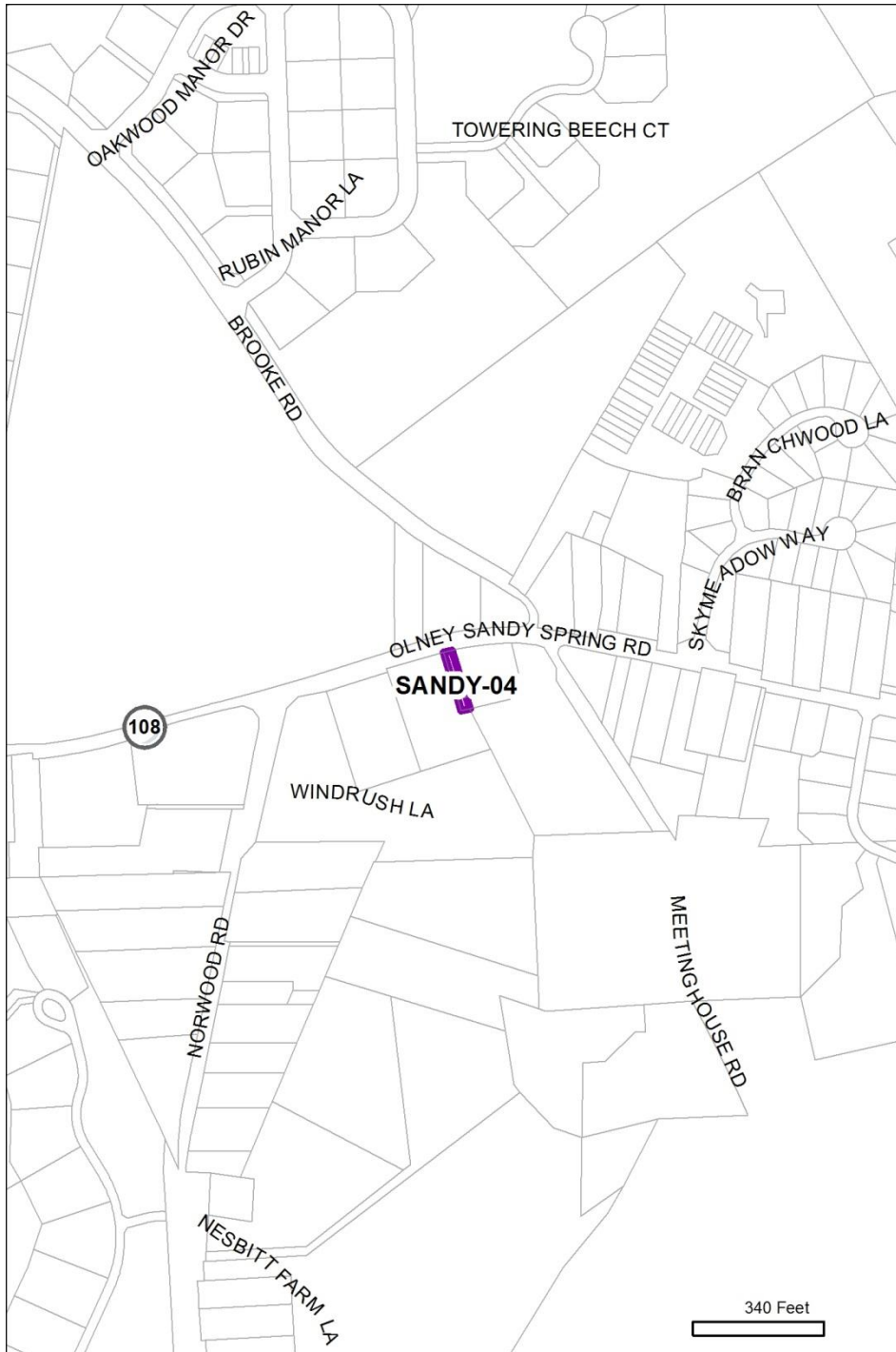
The following pages will give detail on all of the non-standard conversions in this plan area.



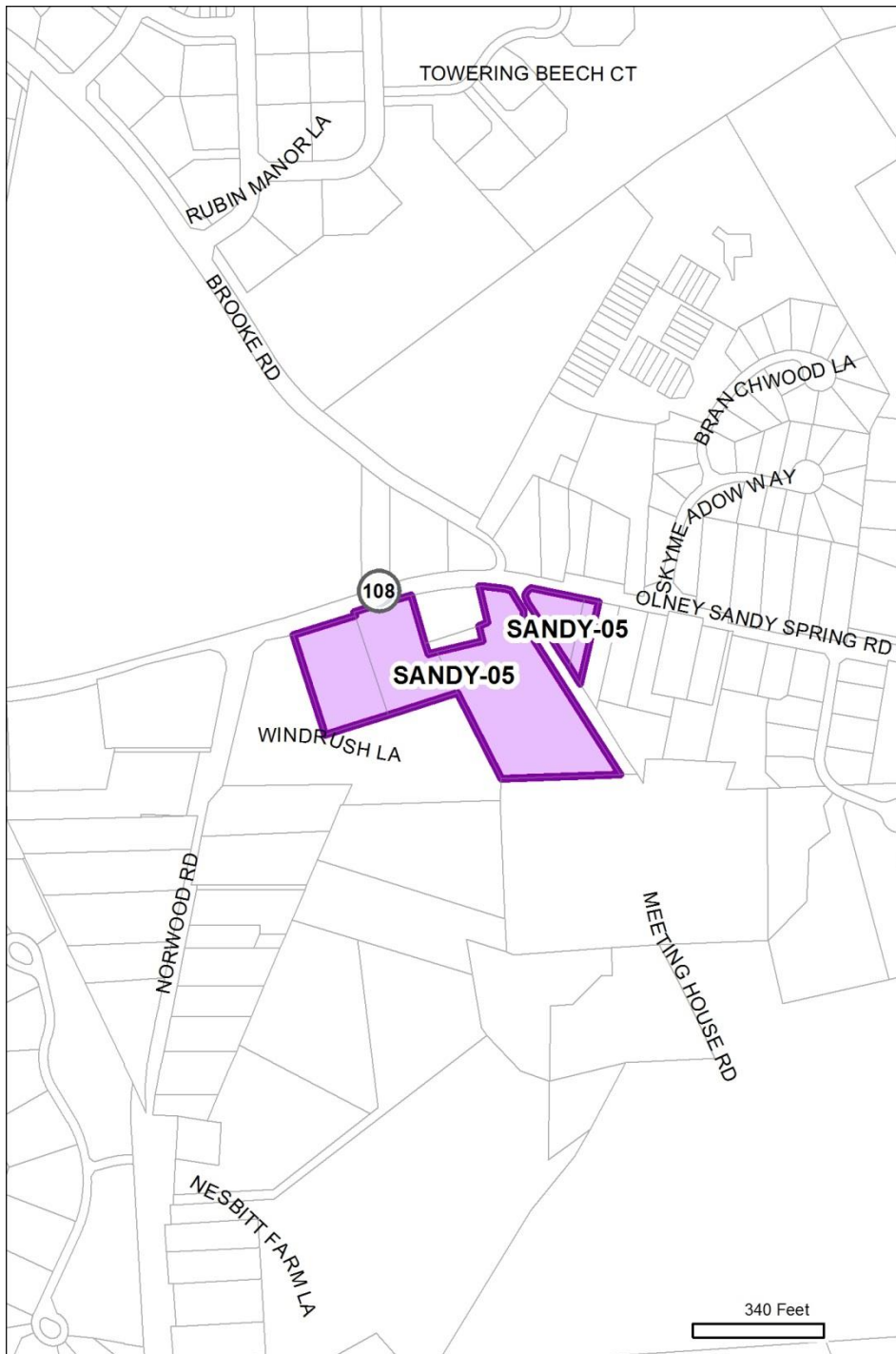
MP Number:		SANDY-01E
Master Plan:		Sandy Spring/Ashton
Location:		New Hampshire Av & Ashton Rd
Existing Zone:		C-2
Standard Conv:		GR-1.5 H-45
Proposed Conv:		CRT-1.5 C-0.75 R-0.75 H-35
Modifications	Zone Group:	Changed to CRT
	Overall FAR:	Standard
	Comm'l FAR:	-
	Resid'l FAR:	-
	Height:	Reduced to 35'
Reason for non-standard conversion:		
Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance §59-C-18.182(a)(1)(C): <i>"Building height: A main building must not exceed a height of 35 feet."</i> Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance §59-C-18.182(b)(2)(B): <i>"Floor area ratio: The floor area ratio for commercial uses is limited to FAR 0.75 and is computed only on the area of the underlying commercial zoned portion of the site."</i> Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance §59-C-18.181 <i>"It is the purpose of this overlay zone to:</i> <i>(a) Preserve and enhance the rural village character of the Sandy Spring and Ashton village centers by ensuring an attractive and traditional pattern of houses, commercial establishments, open spaces and their relationship to roadways.</i> <i>(b) Encourage a compatible relationship between new or expanded houses or businesses and traditional neighboring structures that reflects the best of local village character, particularly in terms of scale, siting, design features, and orientation on the site."</i>		
Notes:		
The overlay calls for a traditional pattern of development, so the GR zone is inappropriate for this site. Instead, the CRT zone is proposed here, with commercial and residential densities limited to 0.75 FAR to match the requirements of the Overlay.		



MP Number:		SANDY-01W
Master Plan:		Sandy Spring/Ashton
Location:		Sandy Spring village center
Existing Zone:		C-2
Standard Conv:		GR-1.5 H-45
Proposed Conv:		CRT-1.5 C-0.75 R-0.75 H-35
Modifications	Zone Group:	Changed to CRT
	Overall FAR:	Standard
	Comm'l FAR:	-
	Resid'l FAR:	-
	Height:	Reduced to 35'
Reason for non-standard conversion:		
Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance §59-C-18.182(a)(1)(C): <i>"Building height: A main building must not exceed a height of 35 feet."</i> Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance §59-C-18.182(b)(2)(B): <i>"Floor area ratio: The floor area ratio for commercial uses is limited to FAR 0.75 and is computed only on the area of the underlying commercial zoned portion of the site."</i> Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance §59-C-18.181 <i>"It is the purpose of this overlay zone to:</i> <i>(a) Preserve and enhance the rural village character of the Sandy Spring and Ashton village centers by ensuring an attractive and traditional pattern of houses, commercial establishments, open spaces and their relationship to roadways.</i> <i>(b) Encourage a compatible relationship between new or expanded houses or businesses and traditional neighboring structures that reflects the best of local village character, particularly in terms of scale, siting, design features, and orientation on the site."</i>		
Notes:		
The overlay calls for a traditional pattern of development, so the GR zone is inappropriate for this site. Instead, the CRT zone is proposed here, with commercial and residential densities limited to 0.75 FAR to match the requirements of the Overlay.		



MP Number:		SANDY-04
Master Plan:		Sandy Spring/Ashton
Location:		Sandy Spring village center
Existing Zone:		C-1
Standard Conv:		CRT-1.0 C-0.75 R-0.5 H-45
Proposed Conv:		CRT-1.0 C-0.75 R-0.5 H-35
Modifications	Zone Group:	Standard
	Overall FAR:	Standard
	Comm'l FAR:	Standard
	Resid'l FAR:	Standard
	Height:	Reduced to 35'
Reason for non-standard conversion:		
Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance §59-C-18.182(a)(1)(C): "Building height: A main building must not exceed a height of 35 feet."		



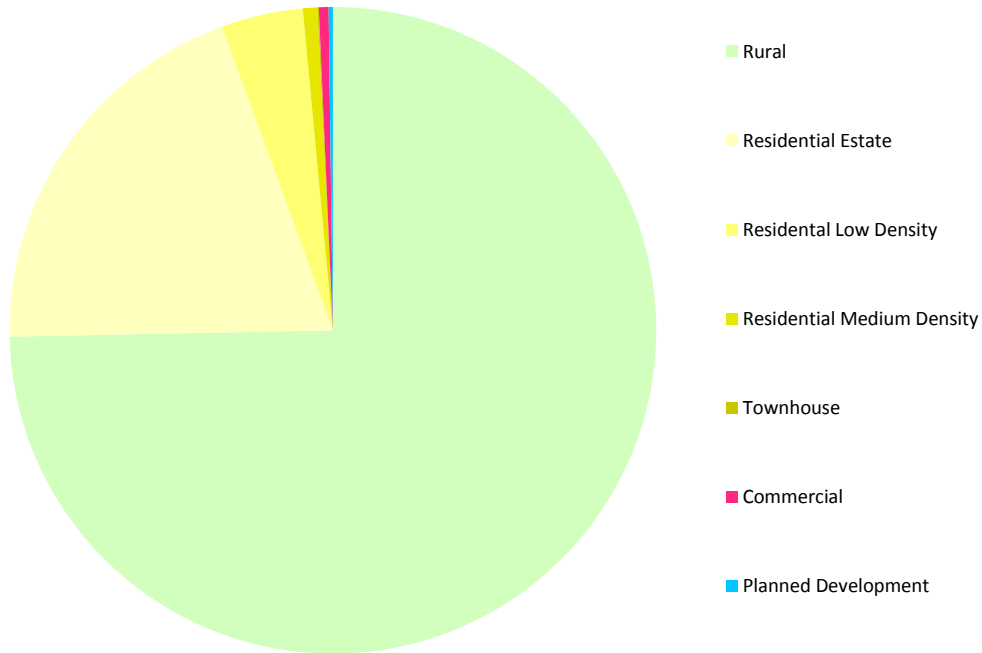
MP Number:		SANDY-05
Master Plan:		Sandy Spring/Ashton
Location:		Sandy Spring village center
Existing Zone:		O-M
Standard Conv:		EOF-1.5 H-75
Proposed Conv:		EOF-1.0 H-35
Modifications	Zone Group:	Standard
	Overall FAR:	Reduced to 1.0
	Comm'l FAR:	-
	Resid'l FAR:	-
	Height:	Reduced to 35'
Reason for non-standard conversion:		
Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance §59-C-18.182(a)(1)(C): <i>"Building height: A main building must not exceed a height of 35 feet."</i> Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance §59-C-18.182(b)(2)(B): <i>"Floor area ratio: The floor area ratio for commercial uses is limited to FAR 0.75 and is computed only on the area of the underlying commercial zoned portion of the site."</i>		
Notes:		
In the EOF zone, up to 30% of floor area can be used for residential development. Allowing an FAR of 1.0 would permit up to 0.7 FAR of commercial and 0.3 FAR of residential. The 0.75 FAR cap placed on commercial is in the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay, which will remain in place, therefore the 0.75 FAR cap on commercial will still be in force.		

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

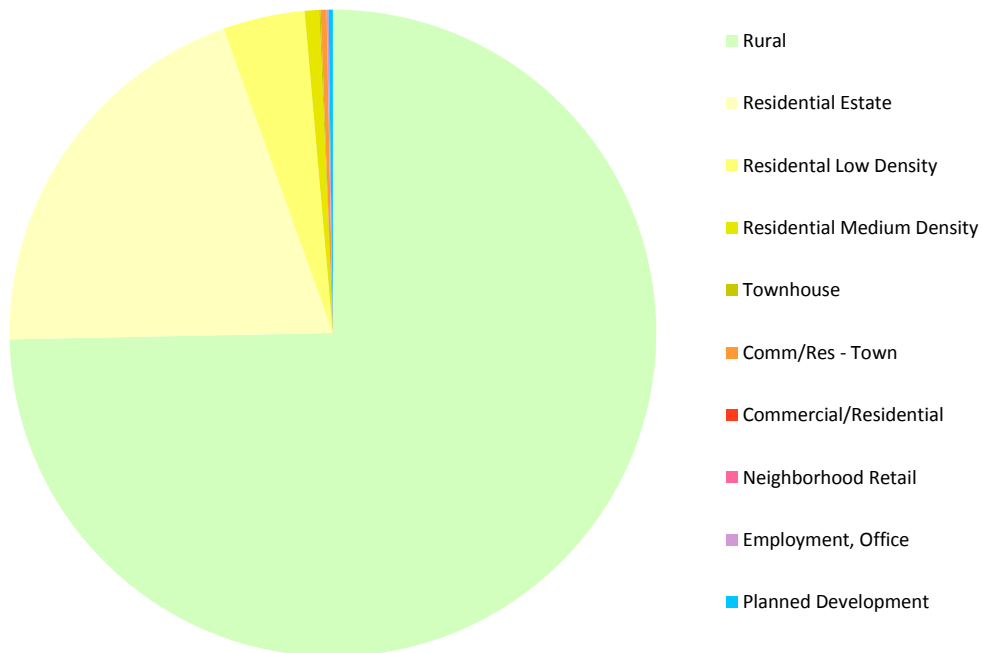
Sandy Spring Ashton					
Existing			Proposed		
Zone	Acres	Percent	Zone	Acres	Percent
RURAL	362.77	6.34	RURAL	362.77	6.34
RC	3,003.03	52.45	RC	3,003.03	52.45
RNC	909.84	15.89	RNC	909.84	15.89
RE-1	4.30	0.08	RE-1	4.30	0.08
RE-2	1,125.76	19.66	RE-2	1,130.86	19.75
C-INN	5.10	0.09			
R-200	61.34	1.07	R-200	234.10	4.09
RMH-200	172.76	3.02			
R-60	18.28	0.32	R-60	18.28	0.32
R-90	22.99	0.40	R-90	22.99	0.40
RT-10	3.92	0.07	RT-10	3.92	0.07
C-1	9.08	0.16	CRT-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.25 H-35	8.20	0.14
			CRT-1.0 C-0.75 R-0.5 H-35	0.08	0.00
			NR-1.0 H-45	0.80	0.01
C-2	8.39	0.15	CRT-1.5 C-0.75 R-0.75 H-35	8.39	0.15
O-M	5.28	0.09	EOF-1.0 H-35	5.28	0.09
PD-5	11.99	0.21	PD-5	11.99	0.21
Grand Total	5,725.26		Grand Total	5,725.26	

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

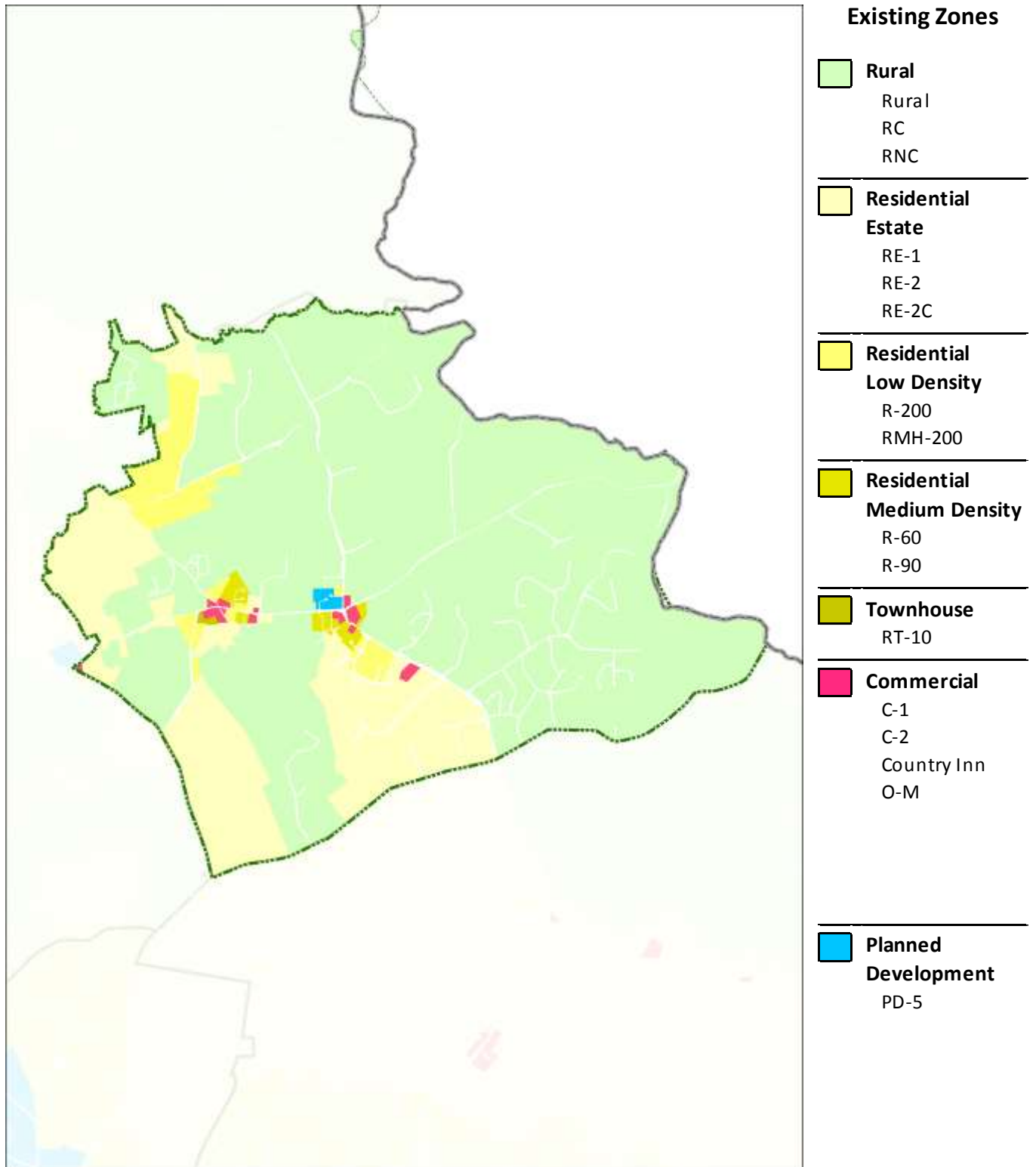
Sandy Spring/Ashton: Existing Zoning



Sandy Spring/Ashton: Proposed Zoning



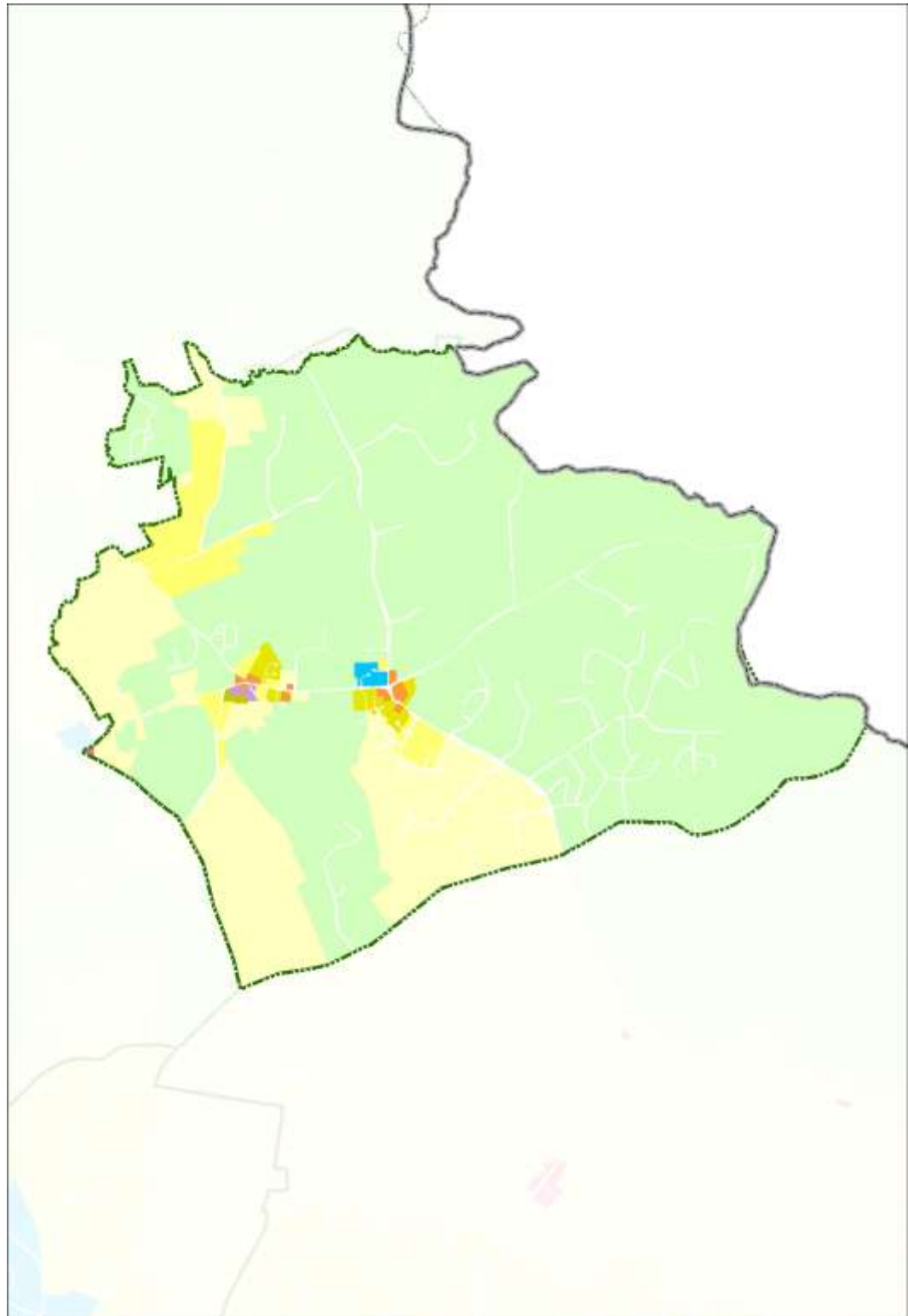
EXISTING ZONING MAP



PROPOSED ZONING MAP

Proposed Zones

	Rural Rural RC RNC
	Residential Estate RE-1 RE-2 RE-2C
	Residential Low Density R-200
	Residential Medium Density R-60 R-90
	Townhouse RT-10
	Neighborhood Retail NR
	Comm/Res-Town CRT
	Employment, Office EOF
	Planned Development PD-5



PLANNING AREA CONTEXT

