

Master Plan Review

UPPER ROCK CREEK

Approved and Adopted April 2004



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.

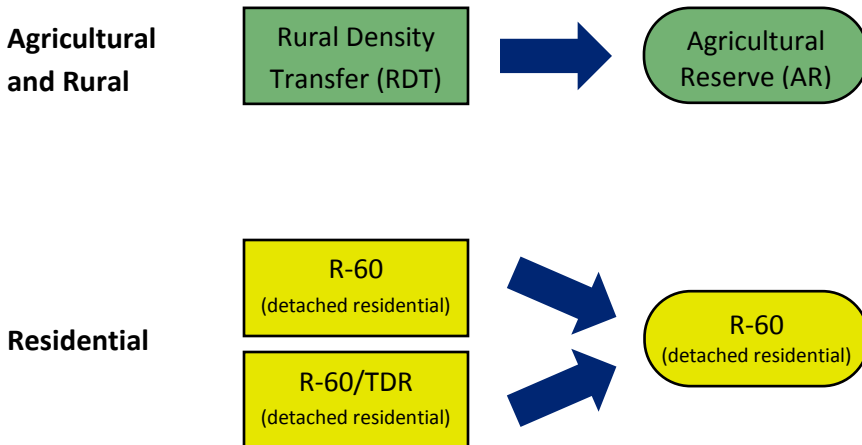
Agricultural, Residential, and Industrial Zone Implementation:

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:



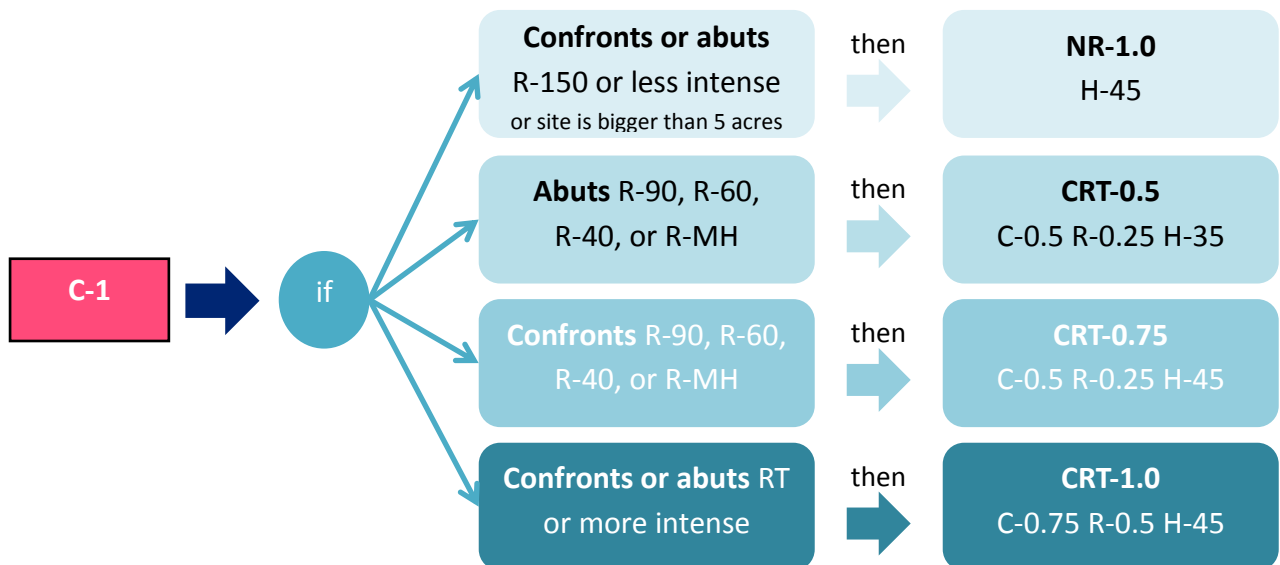
Commercial and Mixed-Use Zone Implementation:

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 HIGHLIGHTS

The Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan was approved and adopted in April 2004. The Upper Rock Creek Planning Area lies in the east central part of Montgomery County and encompasses roughly 60% of the Upper Rock Creek Watershed. The environmental setting of the Upper Rock Creek Area has significantly influenced the Plan's two primary goals: protect the area's environmental resources and stream quality, and to preserve the area's residential character.

To protect the area's environmental resources and stream quality, the Plan seeks to direct development away from environmentally sensitive areas, preserve open space through creation of low density zones for undeveloped properties, increase open space with easements or direct acquisition, and apply an impervious surface cap to minimize impacts of development on water quality. To preserve the area's residential character the Plan maintains low densities near river valleys and along ridges and encourages that the design of future development be compatible with the existing neighborhoods.

Two secondary goals of the Master Plan are to enhance neighborhood centers and industrial areas and to connect communities. To achieve these goals, the Plan recommends providing additional housing adjacent to the Redland's commercial area, retaining existing industrial zoning, and developing a trail and bikeway network to improve access within the community.



Agriculture History Farm Park

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

The Upper Rock Creek Planning Area currently has 13 zones: 1 Rural, 6 Residential, 2 Commercial, 3 Industrial, and 1 Planned Development

Existing Rural:

RNC: Rural Neighborhood Cluster

Existing Residential:

RE-1: Detached Unit, Single-Family
RE-1/TDR: Detached Unit, Single-Family
RE-2: Detached Unit, Single-Family
R-200: Detached Unit, Single-Family
R-90: Detached Unit, Single-Family
RT-12.5: Townhouse, Single-Family

Existing Commercial:

C-1: Convenience Commercial
C-4: Limited Commercial

Existing Industrial

I-1: Light Industrial
I-4: Light Industrial
I-2: Heavy Industrial

Existing Planned Development:

PD-2: Planned Development

The existing RNC zone will remain RNC.

The existing RE-1 and RE-1/TDR zones will be combined into the proposed RE-1 zone. The RE-2 will remain RE-2. The R-200 will remain R-200 (Residential Low Density). The existing R-90 will remain R-90 (Single-Family, Medium-Density). The existing RT-12.5 will remain. The residential TDR zones will be incorporated into a new TDR Overlay zone.

The existing I-1 will be renamed IM (Industrial Moderate) and the I-4 zone will change to the proposed IL (Industrial Light) zone. The existing I-2 zone will be renamed IH (Industrial Heavy). The existing PD-2 zone will remain the PD-2 zone.

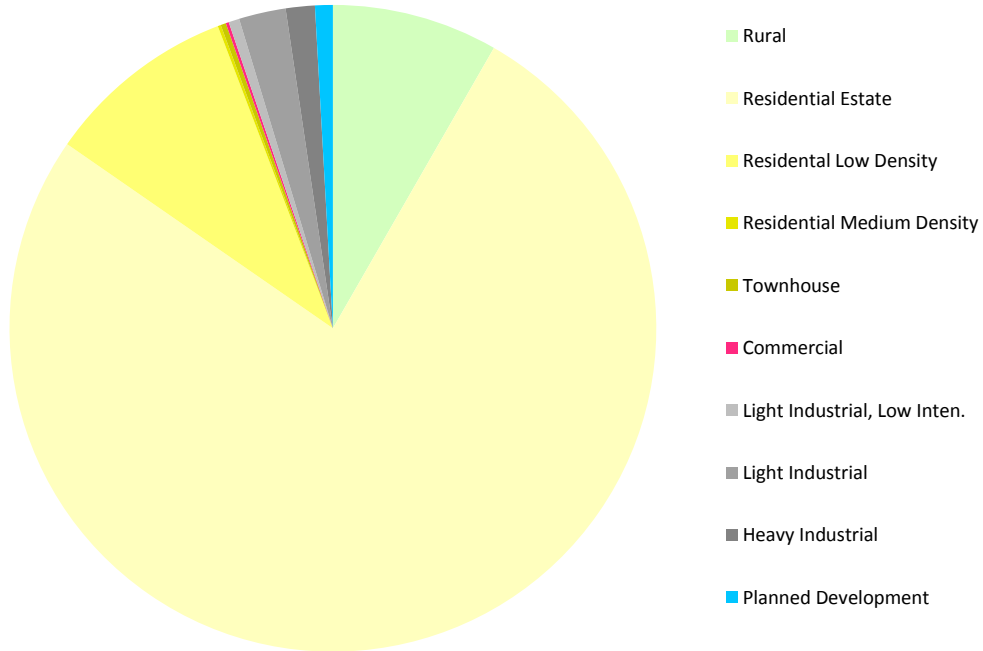
The existing C-1 zone translates to CRT (Commercial Residential Town) and NR (Neighborhood Retail), and the C-4 zone will translate to CRT (Commercial Residential Town). The translation is based on the location and context for each of the parcels located in the zone. Each parcel's proximity to residential neighborhoods was considered in the translation decision, with the overall goal to retain currently allowed heights and densities and maintain context sensitivity.

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

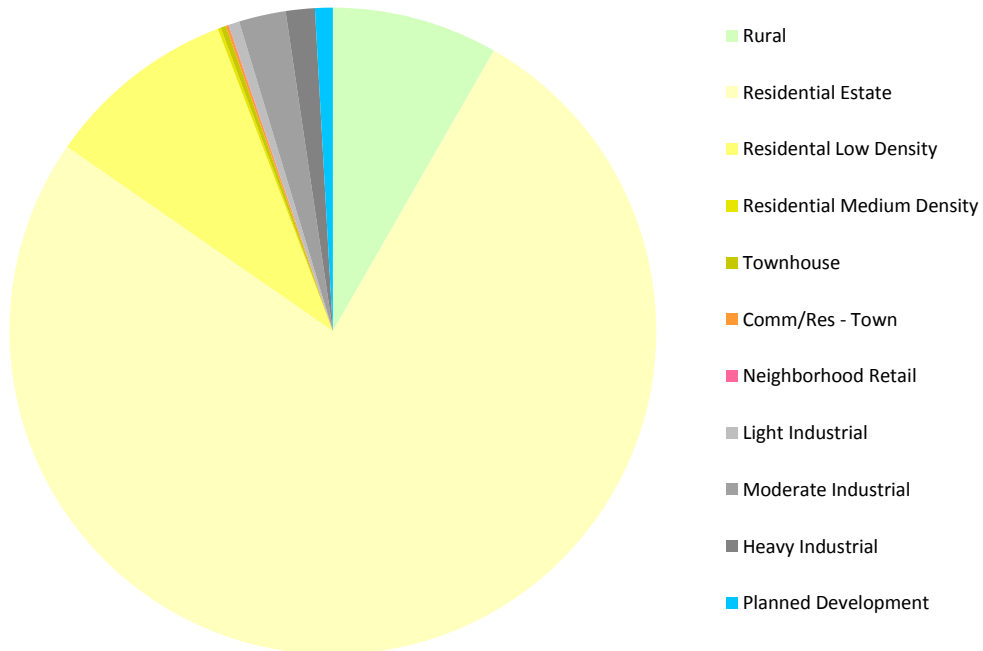
Upper Rock Creek					
Existing			Proposed		
Zone	Acres	Percent	Zone	Acres	Percent
RNC	840.41	8.30	RNC	840.41	8.30
RE-1	3,945.44	38.96	RE-1	4,072.59	40.21
RE-1/TDR	127.15	1.26			
RE-2	3,658.96	36.13	RE-2	3,658.96	36.13
R-200	968.62	9.56	R-200	968.62	9.56
R-90	15.47	0.15	R-90	15.47	0.15
RT-12.5	26.99	0.27	RT-12.5	26.99	0.27
C-1	11.89	0.12	CRT-1.0 C-0.75 R-0.5 H-45	8.88	0.09
			NR-1.0 H-45	3.01	0.03
C-4	3.58	0.04	CRT-0.25 C-0.25 R-0.25 H-35	3.58	0.04
I-1	237.51	2.35	IM-2.5 H-50	237.51	2.35
I-4	54.15	0.53	IL-1.0 H-50	54.15	0.53
I-2	147.20	1.45	IH-2.5 H-70	147.20	1.45
PD-2	89.75	0.89	PD-2	89.75	0.89
Grand Total	10,289.21		Grand Total	10,289.21	

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

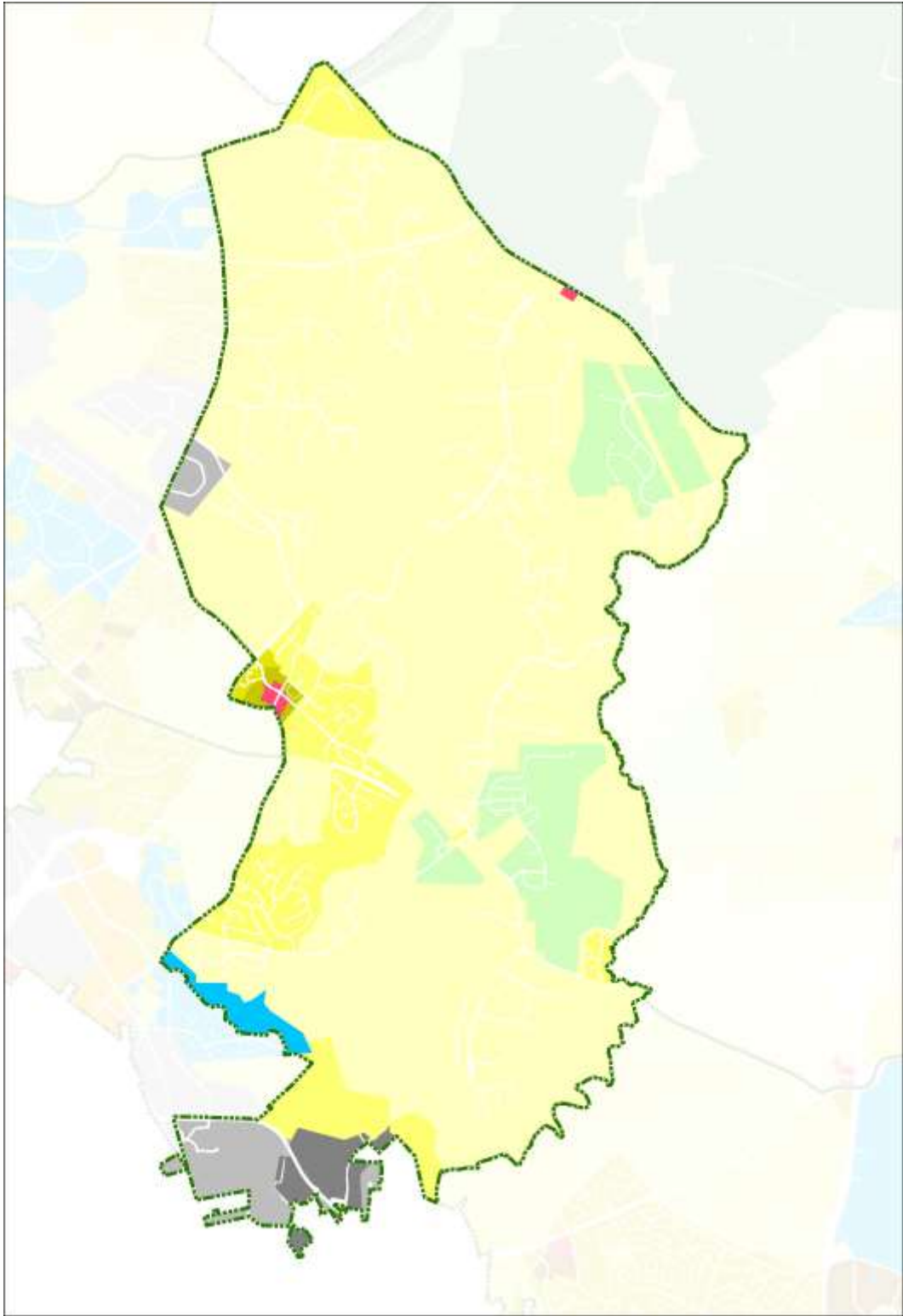
Upper Rock Creek: Existing Zoning



Upper Rock Creek: Proposed Zoning



EXISTING ZONING MAP



Existing Zones

- Rural**
RNC

- Residential Estate**
RE-1
RE-1/TDR
RE-2

- Residential Low Density**
R-200

- Residential Medium Density**
R-90

- Townhouse**
RT-12.5

- Commercial**
C-1
C-4

- Light Industrial**
I-1
I-4

- Heavy Industrial**
I-2

- Planned Development**
PD-2

PROPOSED ZONING MAP

Proposed Zones

- Rural**
RNC

- Residential Estate**
RE-1
RE-2

- Residential Low Density**
R-200

- Residential Medium Density**
R-90

- Townhouse**
RT-12.5

- Comm/Res-Town**
CRT

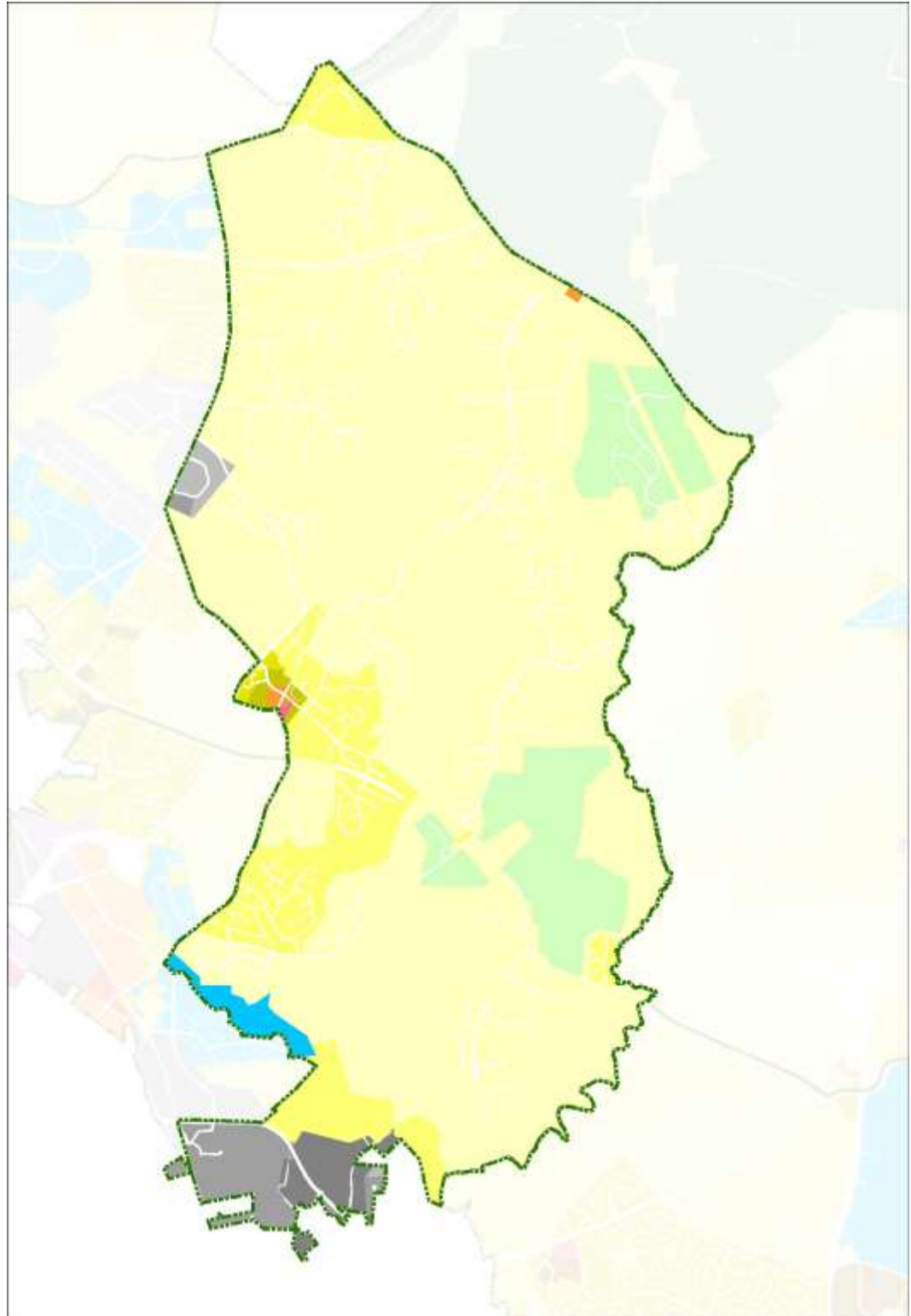
- Neighborhood Retail**
NR

- Light Industrial**
IL

- Mod. Industrial**
IM

- Heavy Industrial**
IH

- Planned Development**
PD-2



PLANNING AREA CONTEXT

