

Master Plan Review

WESTBARD

Approved and Adopted 1982



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 adopted the text of the new code in March. Work on the proposed map amendment continues.

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.

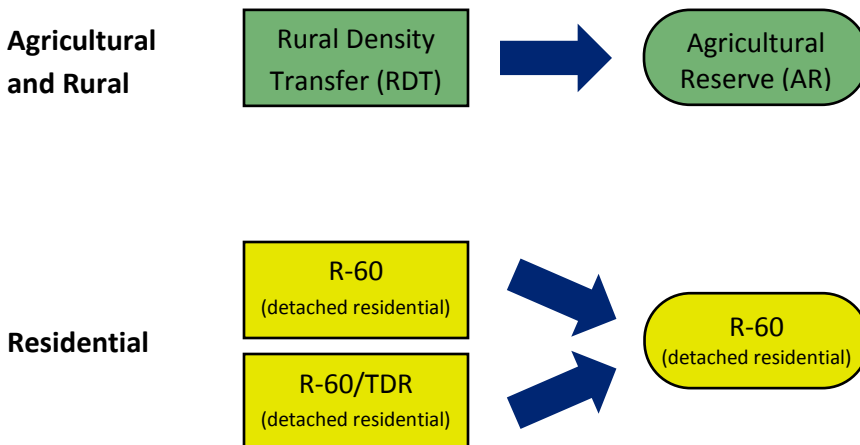
Agricultural, Residential, and Industrial Zone Implementation:

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:



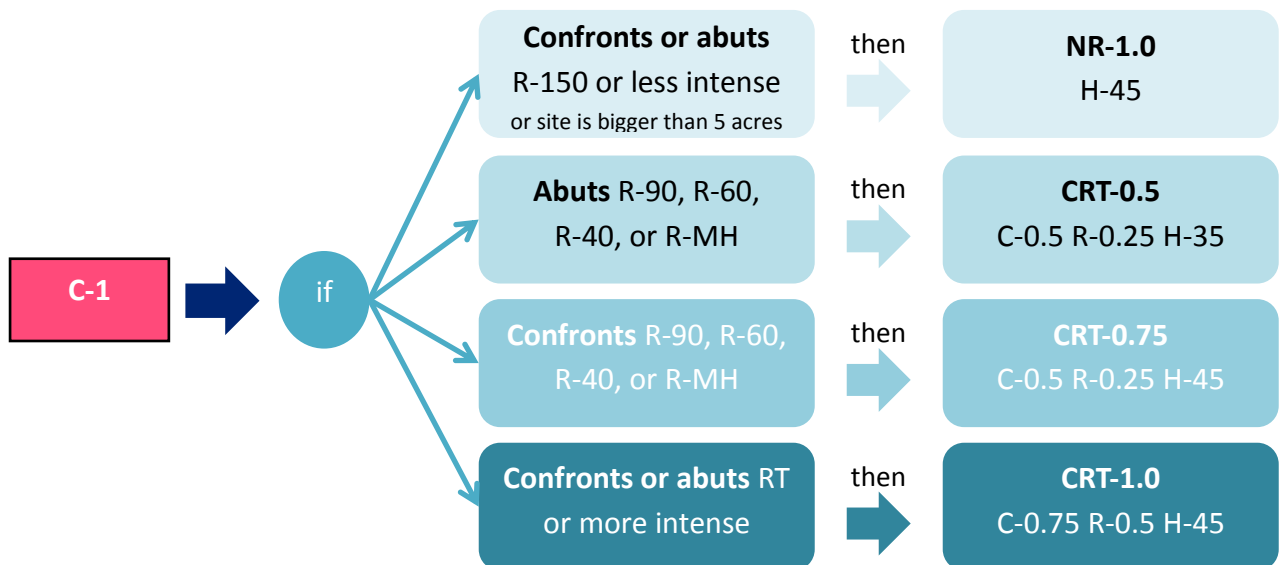
Commercial and Mixed-Use Zone Implementation:

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 Westbard Master Plan was approved and adopted in 1982. The Westbard Planning area is located in the southwestern part of Montgomery County less than one mile from the District of Columbia boundary line. The Westbard area lies in close proximity to both the Bethesda and Friendship Heights CBDs and is surrounded by well-established single family neighborhoods. Main objectives of the Plan include preservation of the Planning Area's residential character against heavy industrial uses, alleviation of Westbard's traffic impediments, redevelopment of dilapidated industrial buildings, and provision of sufficient parking.

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Land Use and Zoning:

- Recommend land uses that are more compatible with one another.
- Recommend planned development zoning for new multi-family, mid-rise residential buildings on the former Marriott property. Allow for modest amounts of general office, research or medical use on the south part of the tract.
- Enhance existing industrial uses straddling the railroad right-of-way south of River Road with access over a new roadway; redesignate this area for light industrial zoning.
- Gradually convert the east side of Butler Road to low office intensity use.
- Retain Westwood Towers' mixture of office and residential use, but prevent further conversion to office use.
- Reaffirm and strengthen the residential character of the neighborhoods surrounding Westbard.
- Reaffirm most of the existing light industrial uses in the southwest quadrant of the Sector Plan area.
- Eliminate all I-2 zoning within the Sector Plan area.



Cherry Blossoms along River Road

- Reaffirm the park use on the eastern border of the Sector Plan area and the garden apartments, townhouses, institutional and other peripheral and transitional uses.
- Limit development in areas zoned C-O and I-1 to three stories in height.

Transportation:

- Improve traffic operations on River Road by retaining the existing roadway within the present mid-block cross section. Study the possibility of improving the intersections at Ridgefield Road and Little Falls Parkway.
- Improve access to industrial properties north and south of River Road by providing roadways along the railroad right-of-way and a new controlled intersection with River Road.



***Intersection at Ridgefield Road and River Road
recommended for improvements in the Westbard Plan.***

Amenities:

- Consider the possibility of establishing a new urban park north of the Westwood Shopping Center at Ridgefield Road and Westbard Avenue.
- Initiate an Urban Boulevard and Gateways improvement project along River Road, include sidewalks and landscape treatment to improve pedestrian movements and make the area more attractive.

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

The Westbard Planning Area currently has 11 zones: 6 Residential, 3 Commercial, 1 Industrial and 1 Planned Development.

Existing Residential:

R-60: Detached Unit, Single-Family
RT-8: Townhouse, Single-Family
RT-12.5: Townhouse, Single-Family
RT-15: Townhouse, Single-Family
R-10: Multi-Family, High Density
R-20: Multi-Family, Medium Density

Existing Commercial:

C-1: Convenience Commercial
C-4: Limited Commercial
C-O: Commercial, Office Building

Existing Industrial:

I-1: Light Industrial

Existing Planned Development:

PD-28: Planned Development

The existing R-60 will remain R-60 (Single-Family, Medium-Density). The existing RT-8, RT-12.5, and RT-15 will remain RT. The R-10 and R-20 will remain the same.

The existing C-O zone has typically consisted predominantly of office uses and will be translated into the proposed Employment Office zone (EOF). The existing C-1 and C-4 zones will translate to the proposed CRT (Commercial Residential Town) or NR (Neighborhood Retail) zones based on the location and context for each of the parcels located in these two zones. Each parcel's proximity to residential neighborhoods was considered in the translation decision, with the overall goal to retain existing allowed heights and densities and maintain context sensitivity.

The existing I-1 zone will be renamed Industrial Moderate (IM) zone. The existing PD-28 will remain.

NON-STANDARD CONVERSIONS

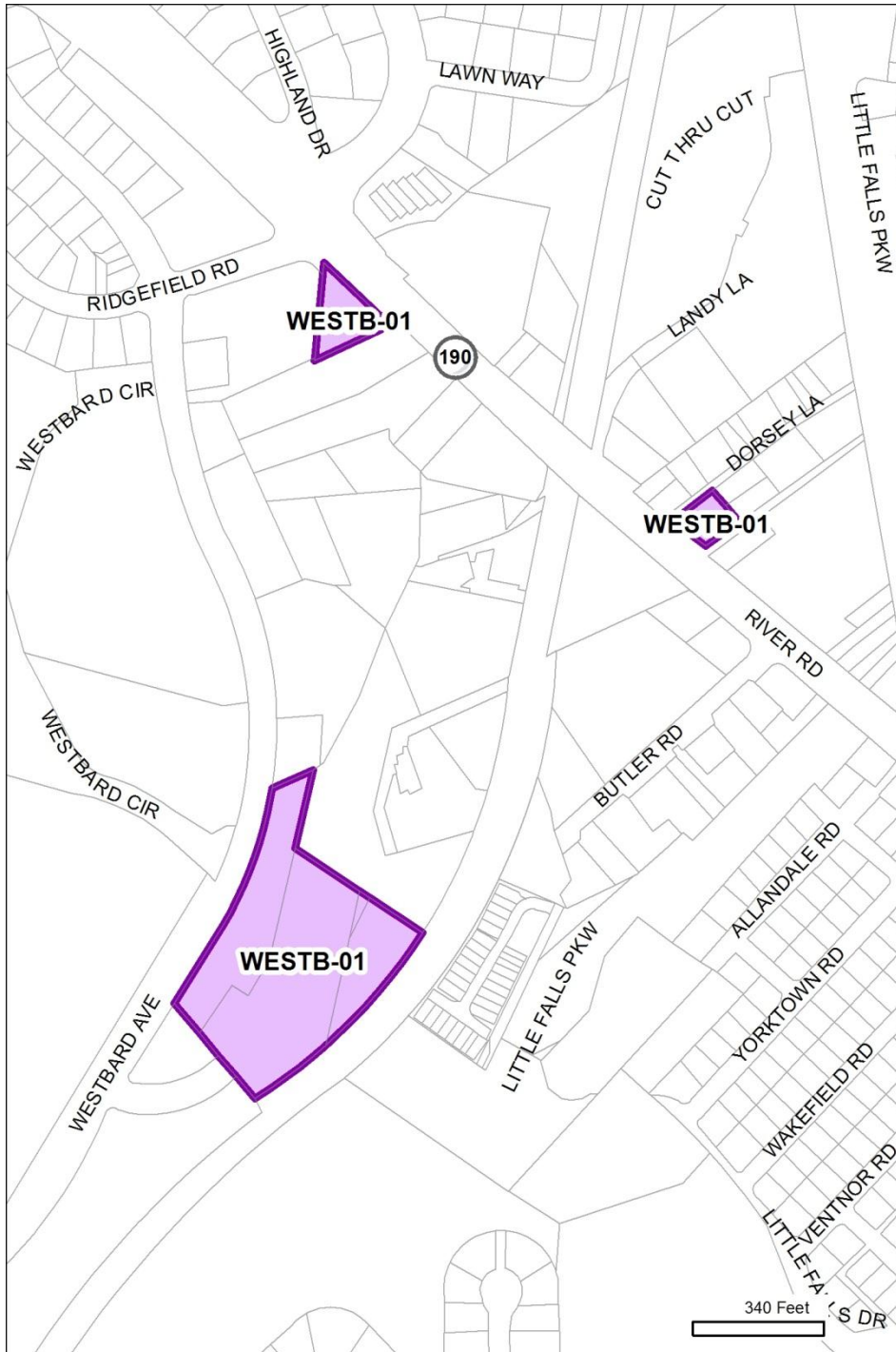
In some cases, properties were not converted using the standard conversions as outlined earlier in the packet.

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.

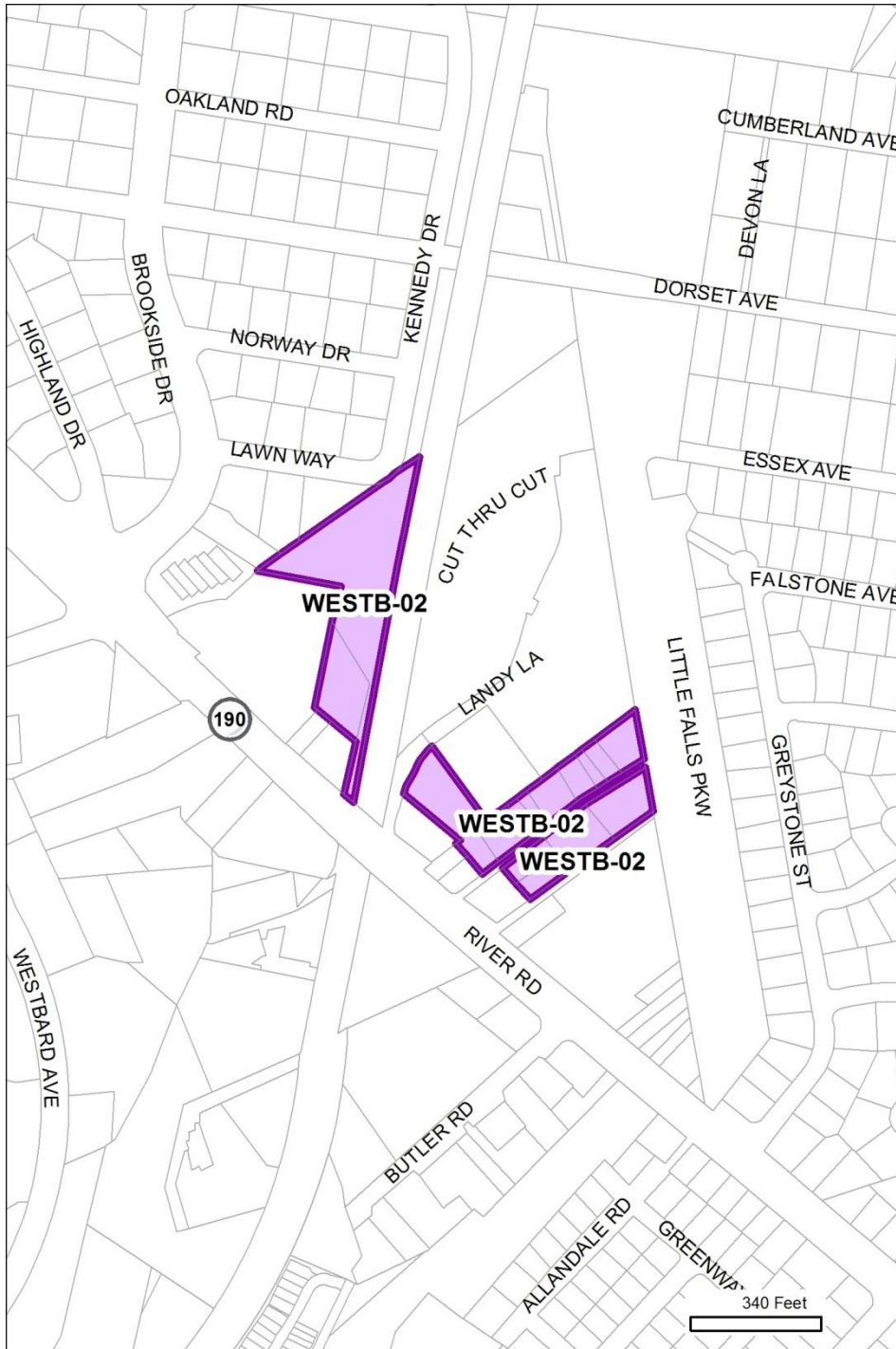
In other cases, the text of the zoning ordinance or an overlay zone can affect the development potential of a site, and therefore affect the conversion given as part of the draft proposed DMA.

Additionally, the PHED Committee instructed that, when requested by a property owner, existing site approvals be reflected in the draft proposed DMA. Non-standard conversions sometimes reflect these project approvals.

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



MP Number:		WESTB-01
Master Plan:		Westbard
Location:		Westbard Ave & Westbard Cir
Existing Zone:		C-O
Standard Conv:		EOF-3.0 H-100
Proposed Conv:		EOF-1.5 H-45
Modifications	Zone Group:	Standard
	Overall FAR:	Reduced to 1.5
	Comm'l FAR:	-
	Resid'l FAR:	-
	Height:	Reduced to 45'
Reason for non-standard conversion:		
Westbard Sector Plan, page 65: <i>Table indicates maximum density in the C-O zone in Westbard should be 1.5 FAR and the maximum height should be 3 stories or 42'.</i>		



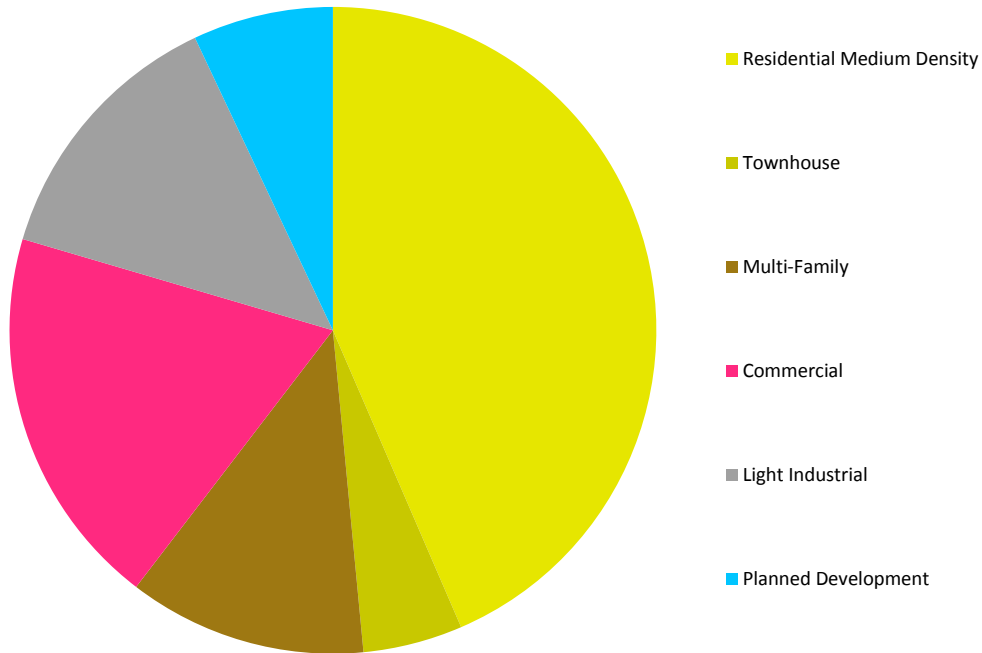
MP Number:		WESTB-02
Master Plan:		Westbard
Location:		River Road & Capital Crescent Trail
Existing Zone:		I-1
Standard Conv:		IM-2.5 H-50
Proposed Conv:		IM-1.5 H-45
Modifications	Zone Group:	Standard
	Overall FAR:	Reduced to 1.5
	Comm'l FAR:	-
	Resid'l FAR:	-
	Height:	Reduced to 45'
Reason for non-standard conversion:		
Westbard Sector Plan, page 65: <i>Table indicates maximum height in the I-1 zone in Westbard is 42'.</i> Westbard Sector Plan, page 41: <i>The Plan calls for lower intensity, but does not set a specific limit on FAR.</i>		

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

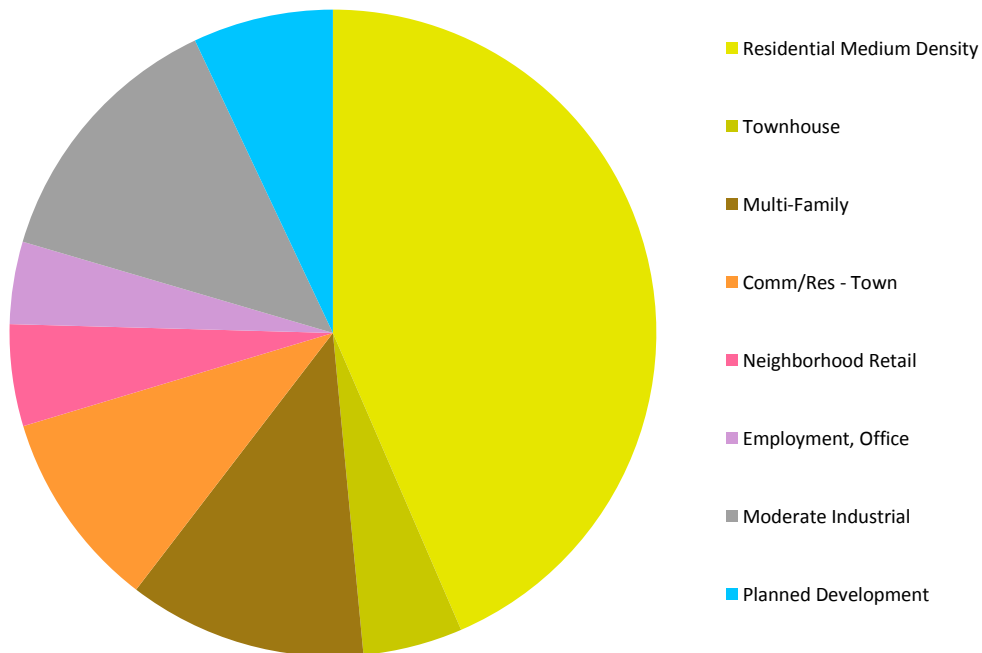
Westbard					
Existing			Proposed		
Zone	Acres	Percent	Zone	Acres	Percent
R-60	68.48	43.51	R-60	68.48	43.51
RT-8	0.89	0.56	RT-8	0.89	0.56
RT-12.5	5.13	3.26	RT-12.5	5.13	3.26
RT-15	1.82	1.16	RT-15	1.82	1.16
R-10	9.01	5.72	R-10	9.01	5.72
R-20	9.75	6.19	R-20	9.75	6.19
C-1	12.76	8.10	CRT-0.75 C-0.5 R-0.25 H-45	2.25	1.43
			CRT-1.0 C-0.75 R-0.5 H-45	2.50	1.59
			NR-1.0 H-45	8.01	5.09
C-4	10.89	6.92	CRT-0.25 C-0.25 R-0.25 H-35	1.07	0.68
			CRT-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.5 H-40	9.82	6.24
C-O	6.48	4.11	EOF-1.5 H-45	6.48	4.11
I-1	21.14	13.43	IM-1.5 H-45	5.76	3.66
			IM-2.5 H-50	15.38	9.77
PD-28	11.04	7.02	PD-28	11.04	7.02
Grand Total	157.39		Grand Total	157.39	

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

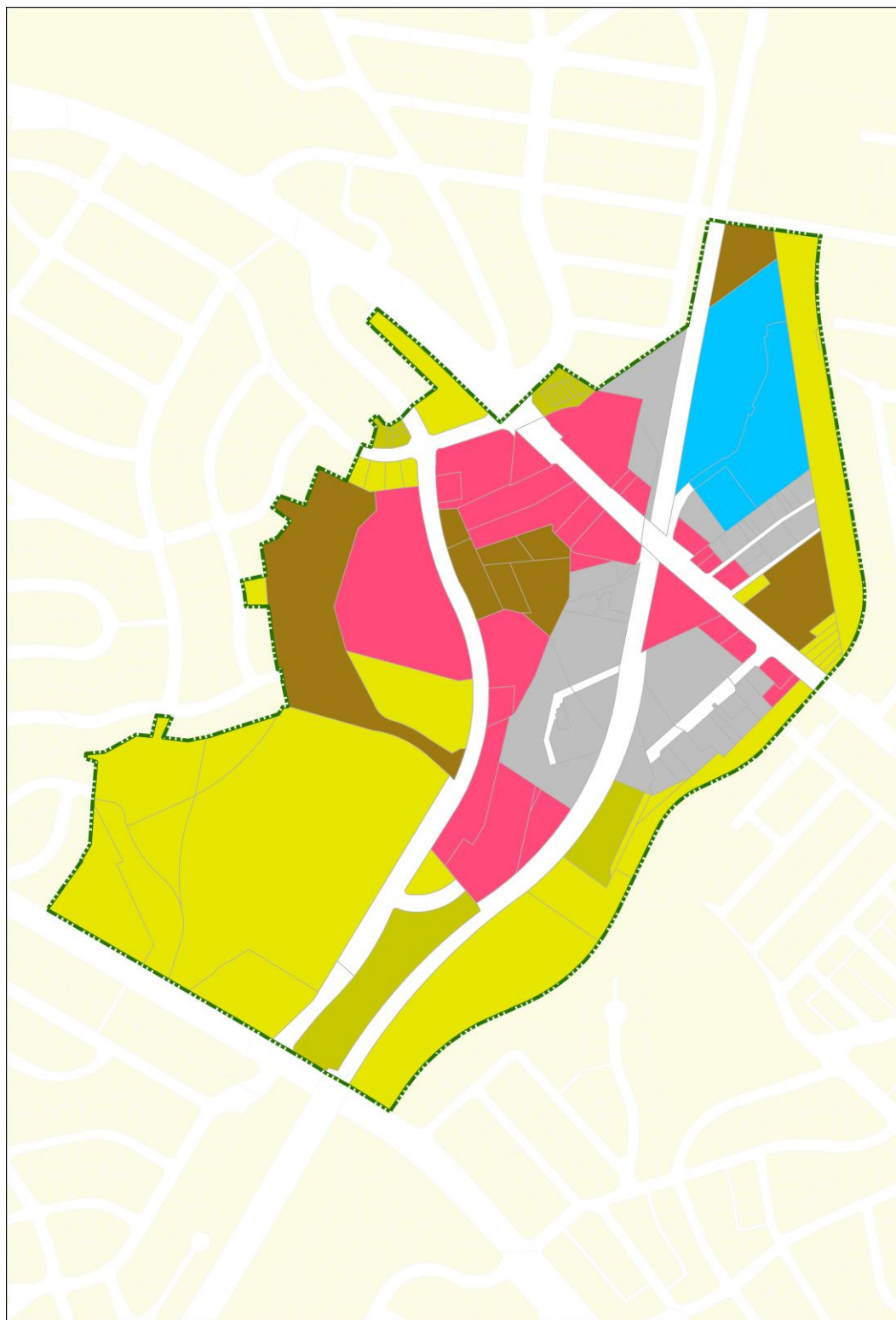
Westbard: Existing Zoning



Westbard: Proposed Zoning



EXISTING ZONING MAP



Existing Zones

Residential Medium Density
R-60

Townhouse
RT-8
RT-12.5
RT-15

Multi-Family
R-10
R-20

Commercial
C-1
C-4
C-O

Light Industrial
I-1

Planned Development
PD-28

PROPOSED ZONING MAP

Proposed Zones

- Residential Medium Density**
R-60

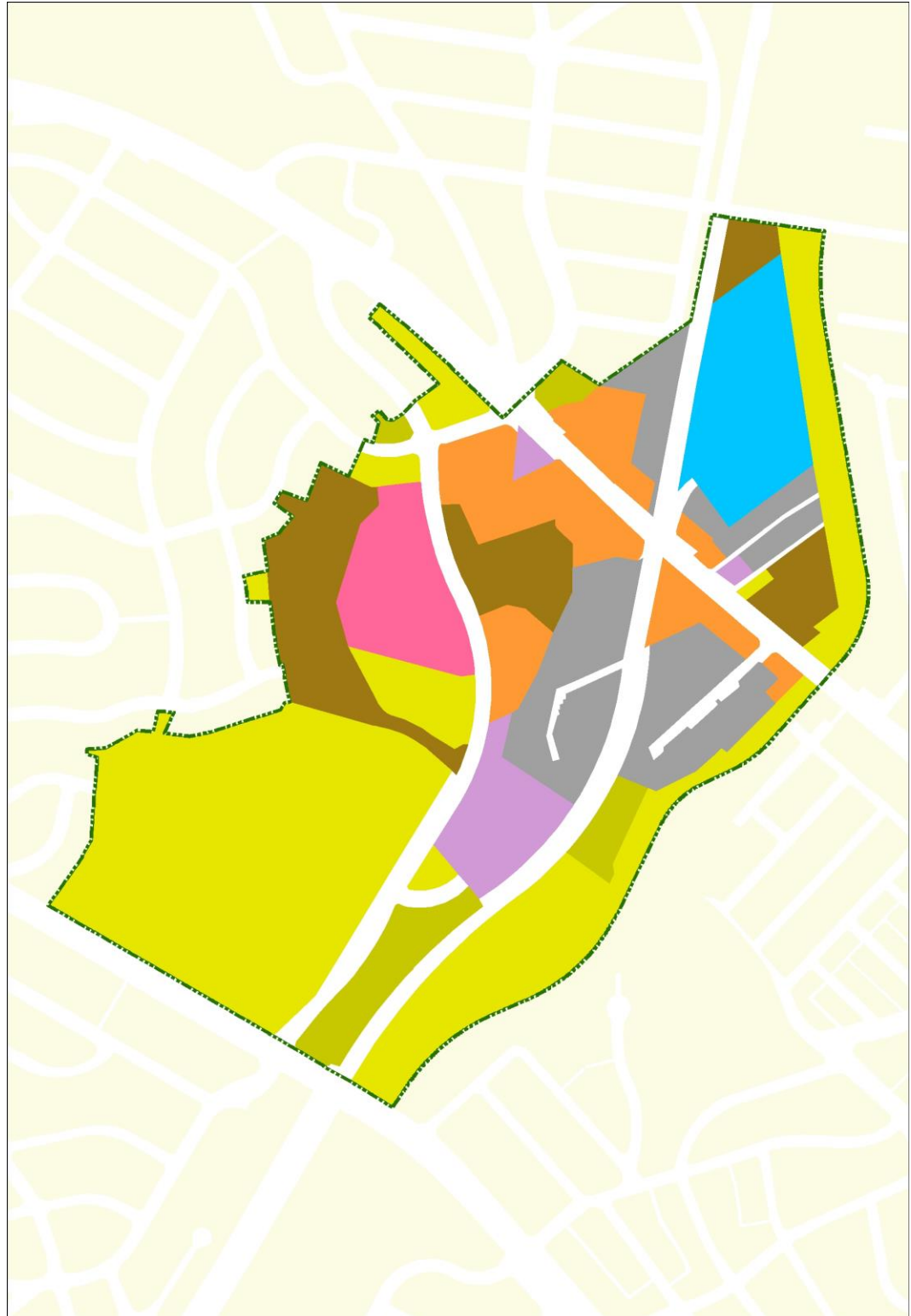
- Townhouse**
RT-8
RT-12.5
RT-15

- Multi-Family**
R-10
R-20

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

- Mod. Industrial**
IM

- Planned Development**
PD-28



PLANNING AREA CONTEXT

