

Master Plan Review

WHEATON

Approved and Adopted
November 2011



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 HIGHLIGHTS

The Wheaton CBD Sector Plan, adopted in November 2011, envisions Wheaton as a major mixed-use center for the Georgia Avenue corridor and eastern Montgomery County.

The plan seeks to build upon the strengths of Wheaton and encourage investment, while maintaining the neighborhood's special character. The plan recommends building on the role of Metro and Wheaton as a regional transit hub to promote high-density, high-quality growth and redevelopment in the core. In the end, Wheaton will emerge as a mixed-use Central Business District with new development that blends with existing small and family-owned businesses.

The Wheaton CBD serves both local and regional retail demand, with many small businesses and a large regional shopping mall. Much of the housing stock is comprised of small, post-World War II homes, making it attractive for newcomers to the community.

By creating a more diverse local economy and building on the existing diverse uses, Wheaton can enhance its role as a shopping destination that includes independent and national retailers, ethnic restaurants, and unique local small business offerings. By providing opportunities for increased density and expanding the connections between the CBD, the regional mall, and surrounding residential communities, Wheaton is positioned to become a future growth area for the county.

The plan calls for ensuring a sustainable economy by balancing new land uses with existing uses, which are predominantly retail in nature. New office space should be encouraged to increase daytime population. More employees and more residential development will provide customers for local services and businesses. Redevelopment may displace some existing businesses, but it will also create more demand for specialty retail and small businesses.



Wheaton scenes

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

The Wheaton Planning Area currently has 13 zones: 6 Residential, 4 Commercial, and 3 Planned Development.

Existing Residential:

- R-60: Detached Unit, Single-Family
- R-90: Detached Unit, Single-Family
- RT-8: Townhouse, Single-Family
- RT-10: Townhouse, Single-Family
- RT-12.5: Townhouse, Single-Family
- R-20: Multi-Family, Medium Density

Existing Commercial

- CR: Commercial Residential
- CRN: Commercial Residential Neighborhood
- C-2: General Commercial
- C-T: Commercial, Transitional

Existing Planned Development

- PD-11: Planned Development
- PD-18: Planned Development
- PD-9: Planned Development

Standard Translation:

The existing R-60 and R-90 zones will remain the same. RT-8, RT-10, and RT-12.5 will remain RT (Townhouse). The R-20 (Multiple Family, Medium Density Residential) zone will remain R-20 (Multiple Family, Medium Density Residential).

CRN (Commercial Residential Neighborhood) and CR (Commercial Residential) will remain the same. C-2 will translate to GR (General Retail), and C-T will be renamed CRN (Commercial Residential Neighborhood).

The existing Planned Development zones will remain PD.

NON-STANDARD CONVERSIONS

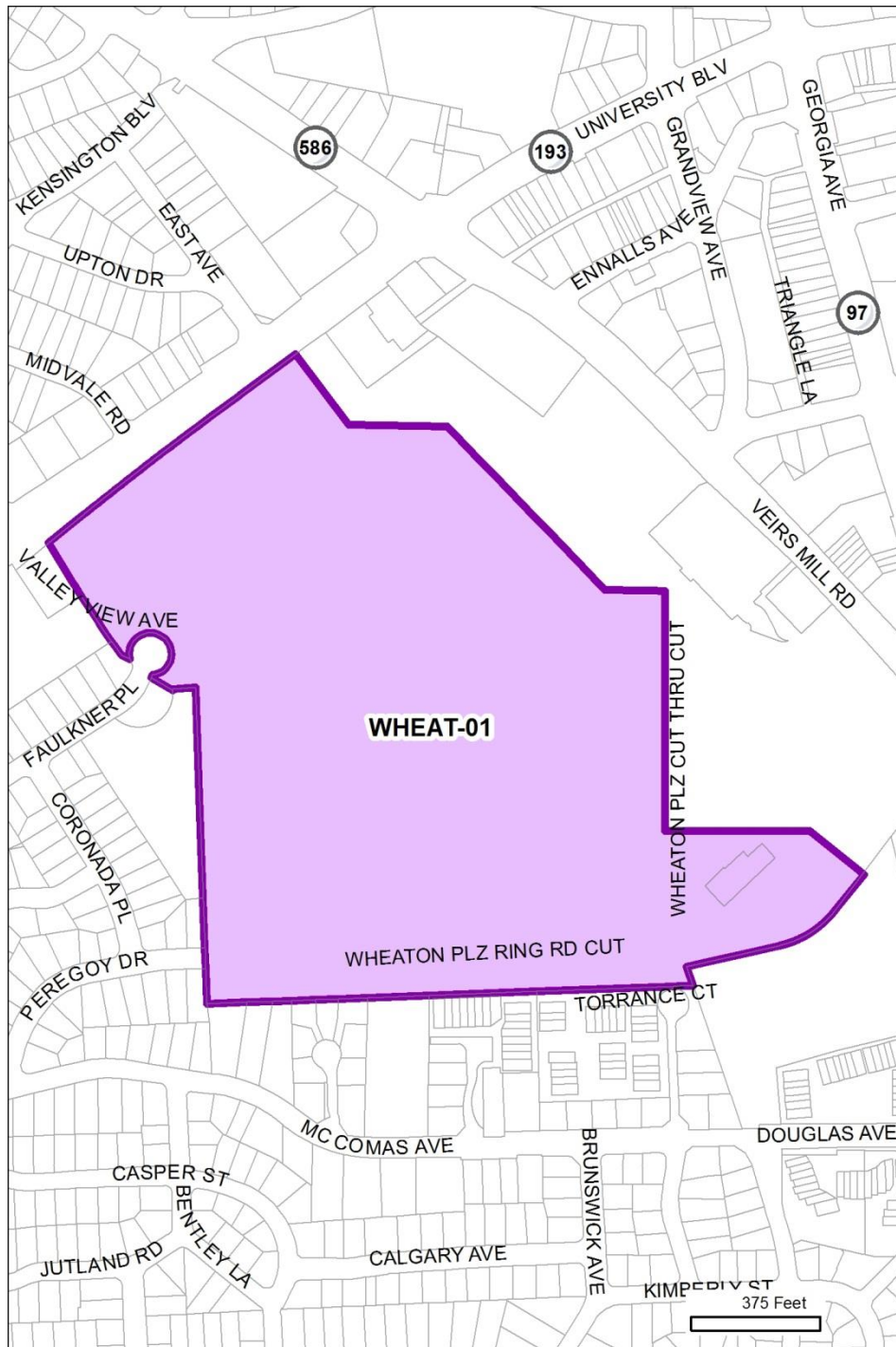
In some cases, properties were not converted using the standard conversions as outlined earlier in the packet.

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.



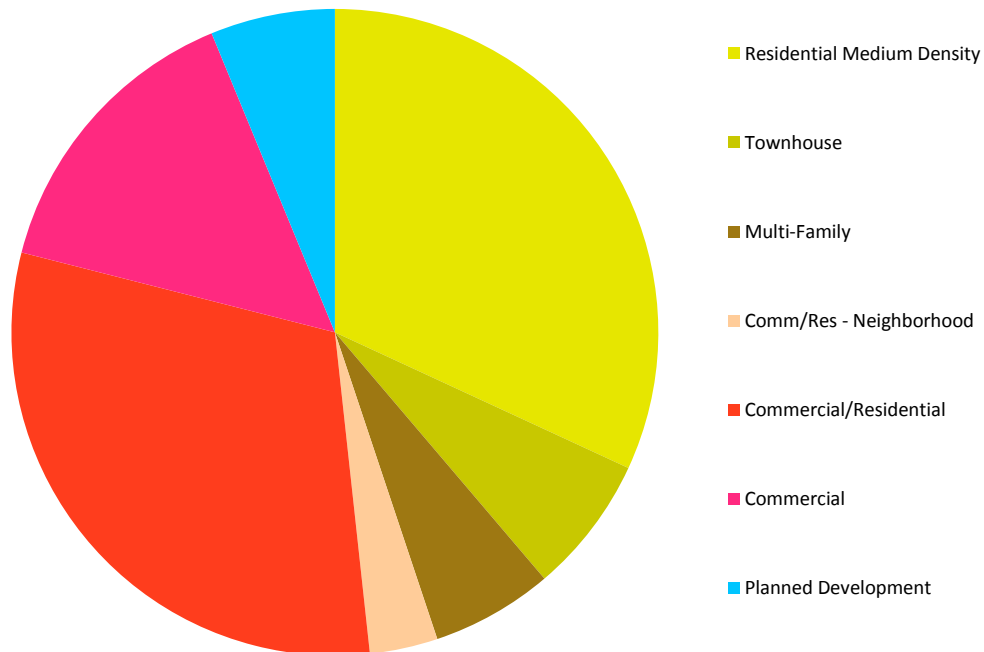
MP Number:		WHEAT-01
Master Plan:		Wheaton
Location:		Wheaton Plaza
Existing Zone:		C-2
Standard Conv:		CRT-1.5 C-1.5 R-0.75 H-45
Proposed Conv:		GR-1.5 H-45
Modifications	Zone Group:	Changed to GR
	Overall FAR:	Standard
	Comm'l FAR:	-
	Resid'l FAR:	-
	Height:	Standard
Reason for non-standard conversion:		
Wheaton CBD Sector Plan, page 52-53		
<p><i>The Sector Plan calls for retaining the C-2 zone where the Wheaton Plaza shopping mall currently stands. The Plan calls for keeping the mall as a regional shopping center, and therefore the site is not appropriate for the CRT zone.</i></p> <p><i>Under the current zoning ordinance, development in the C-2 zone can reach 1.5 FAR without mixing uses. It is within 300' of single-family detached residential, so height should be limited to 45' according to the current zoning ordinance.</i></p>		

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

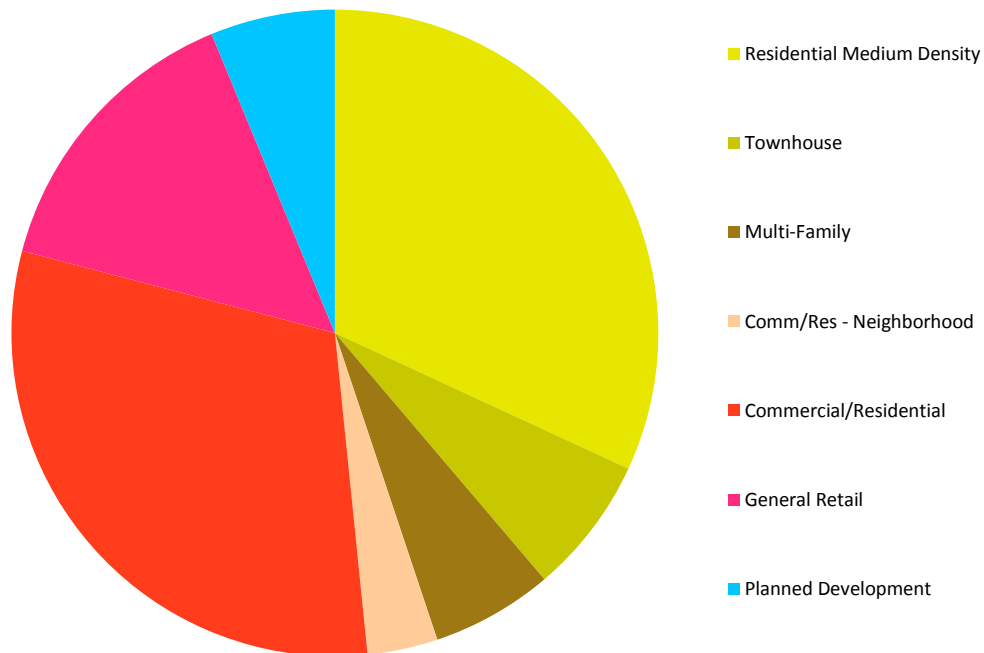
Wheaton					
Existing			Proposed		
Zone	Acres	Percent	Zone	Acres	Percent
R-60	109.72	28.77	R-60	109.72	28.77
R-90	11.9	3.12	R-90	11.9	3.12
RT-8	7.42	1.95	RT-8	7.42	1.95
RT-10	2.47	0.65	RT-10	2.47	0.65
RT-12.5	16.38	4.3	RT-12.5	16.38	4.3
R-20	23.22	6.09	R-20	23.22	6.09
CRN-1.0 C-0.25 R-1.0 H-45	0.88	0.23	CRN-1.0 C-0.25 R-1.0 H-45	0.88	0.23
CRN-1.0 C-0.5 R-1.0 H-45	1.04	0.27	CRN-1.0 C-0.5 R-1.0 H-45	1.04	0.27
CRN-1.5 C-0.25 R-1.5 H-45	1.29	0.34	CRN-1.5 C-0.25 R-1.5 H-45	1.29	0.34
CRN-1.5 C-0.5 R-1.5 H-45	9.76	2.56	CRN-1.5 C-0.5 R-1.5 H-45	9.76	2.56
CR-2.0 C-1.5 R-1.5 H-75	21.6	5.66	CR-2.0 C-1.5 R-1.5 H-75	21.6	5.66
CR-3.0 C-2.5 R-2.5 H-100	3.15	0.82	CR-3.0 C-2.5 R-2.5 H-100	3.15	0.82
CR-3.0 C-2.5 R-2.5 H-75	8.5	2.23	CR-3.0 C-2.5 R-2.5 H-75	8.5	2.23
CR-4.0 C-3.5 R-3.5 H-100	16.15	4.24	CR-4.0 C-3.5 R-3.5 H-100	16.15	4.24
CR-5.0 C-4.5 R-4.5 H-130	7.55	1.98	CR-5.0 C-4.5 R-4.5 H-130	7.55	1.98
CR-5.0 C-4.5 R-4.5 H-150	8.15	2.14	CR-5.0 C-4.5 R-4.5 H-150	8.15	2.14
CR-6.0 C-5.5 R-5.5 H-200	48.33	12.67	CR-6.0 C-5.5 R-5.5 H-200	48.33	12.67
CR-6.0 C-6.0 R-3.0 H-250	3.64	0.95	CR-6.0 C-6.0 R-3.0 H-250	3.64	0.95
C-2	56.01	14.69	GR-1.5 H-45	56.01	14.69
C-T	0.44	0.12	CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.25 H-35	0.44	0.12
PD-11	2.99	0.78	PD-11	2.99	0.78
PD-18	5.56	1.46	PD-18	5.56	1.46
PD-9	15.19	3.98	PD-9	15.19	3.98
Grand Total	381.33		Grand Total	381.33	

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

Wheaton: Existing Zoning



Wheaton: Proposed Zoning



EXISTING ZONING MAP



Existing Zones

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

- Townhouse**
RT-8
RT-10
RT-12.5

- Multi-Family**
R-20

- Commercial**
C-T
C-2


- Comm/Res-Neighborhood**
CRN


- Commercial/Residential**
CR


- Planned Development**
PD-9
PD-11
PD-18

PROPOSED ZONING MAP

Proposed Zones

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


 **Townhouse**
RT-8
RT-10
RT-12.5


 **Multi-Family**
R-20

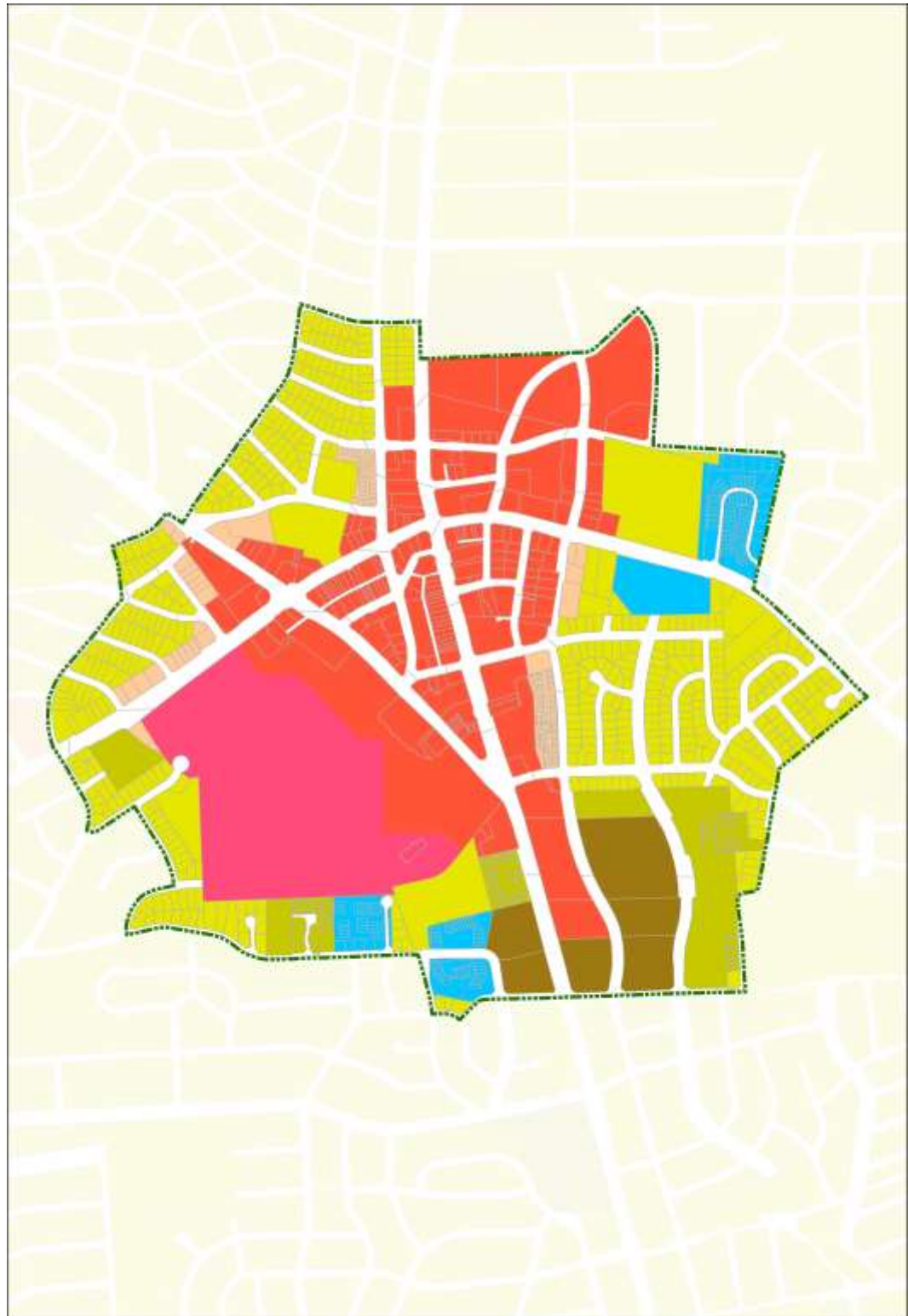
 **Comm/Res-
Neighborhood**
CRN

 **General Retail**
GR

 **Comm/Res-
Neighborhood**
CRN

 **Commercial/
Residential**
CR

 **Planned
Development**
PD-9
PD-11
PD-18



PLANNING AREA CONTEXT

