

Master Plan Review

BETHESDA PURPLE LINE STATION

Approved and Adopted
February 2014



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 Council adopted the text of the new code in March and adopted the new zoning map in July 2014.

The new code and map will go into effect on October 30, 2014.

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.

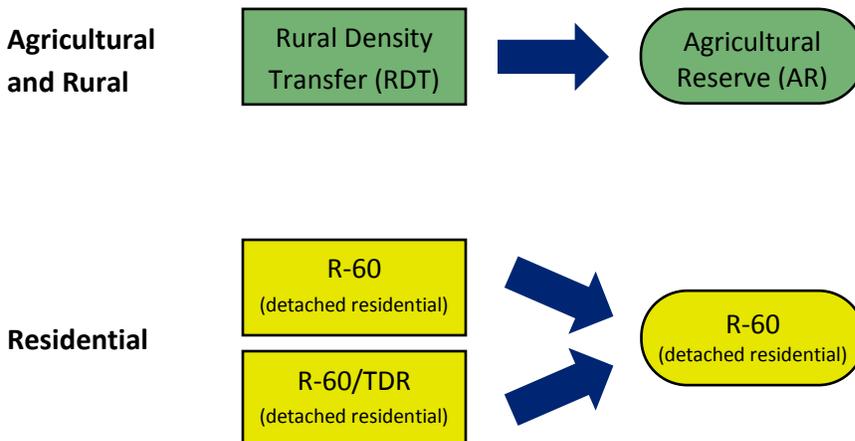
Agricultural, Residential, and Industrial Zone Implementation:

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:



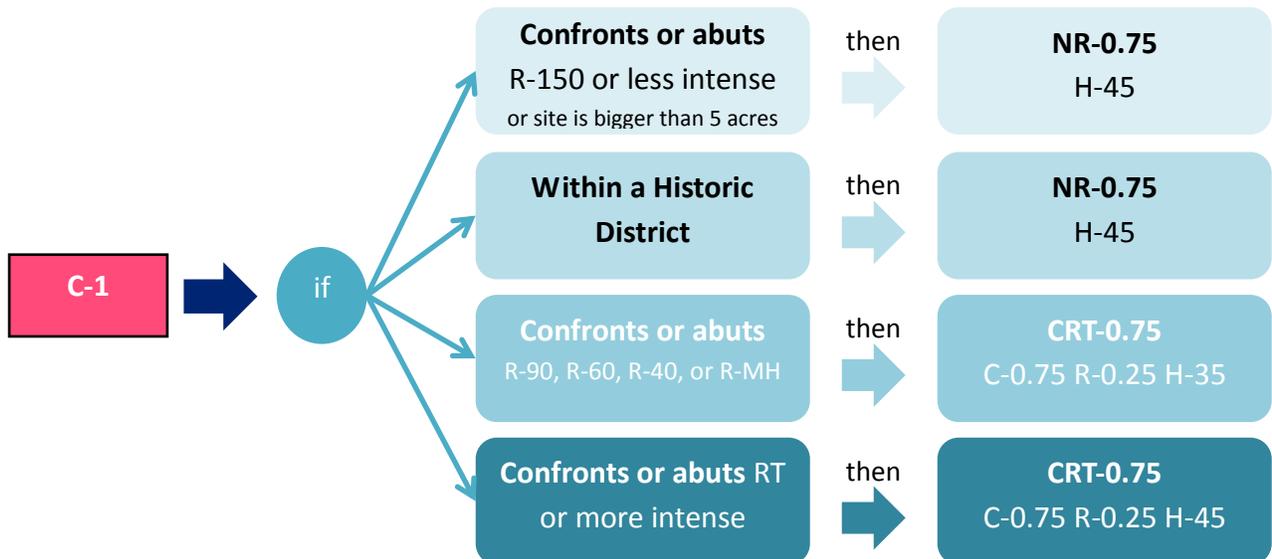
Commercial and Mixed-Use Zone Implementation:

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



BETHESDA PURPLE LINE STATION

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The Bethesda Purple Line Station Minor Master Plan Amendment was approved and adopted in February 2014. This Minor Master Plan Amendment envisions an urban multi-modal transit station that is integrated into the life of Bethesda. Thousands of transit riders will use the station to come to Bethesda to live, work, and play and to go elsewhere from Bethesda to access the many rich benefits of the region. Hundreds of cyclists will use the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) to get to the many centers and neighborhoods between Silver Spring and Georgetown.



The Plan vision for the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Elm Street showcases a generous and welcoming plaza at the ground floor of a signature building, where commuters have easy direct access to the Purple Line station and, via high-speed elevators, to the Red Line Metro station below. The spacious Purple Line station would be welcoming and easy to navigate, with a large open platform and plenty of room for the projected ten thousand plus daily riders. Getting to the Red Line station would be efficient and streamlined. One level below the street, cyclists will be able to rapidly move through the CBD to get to work, play, or home, in an environment free of automobiles.

From Woodmont Avenue, pedestrians would walk past the many shops, cafes, and restaurants, into the landscaped Woodmont Plaza and directly into the Purple Line station. Cyclists would have a direct route through the plaza into a short tunnel that comes out just the other side of Wisconsin Avenue, with an easy ride through Elm Street Park and on towards Rock Creek Park and Silver Spring.

Businesses around the station would benefit from greatly increased pedestrian traffic, with more eyes on shop windows. Offices, hotels, and apartments around the station block will command premiums for their proximity to the multi-modal station, the CCT, and the Bethesda Row entertainment district.

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

The Bethesda Purple Line Station Planning Area currently has 3 zones: 1 Residential and 2 Commercial/Residential.

Existing Residential:

R-60: Detached Unit, Single-Family

Existing Commercial/Residential

CR-5.0 C-5.0 R-5.0 H-145

CR-8.0 C-7.5 R-7.5 H-250

Standard Implementation:

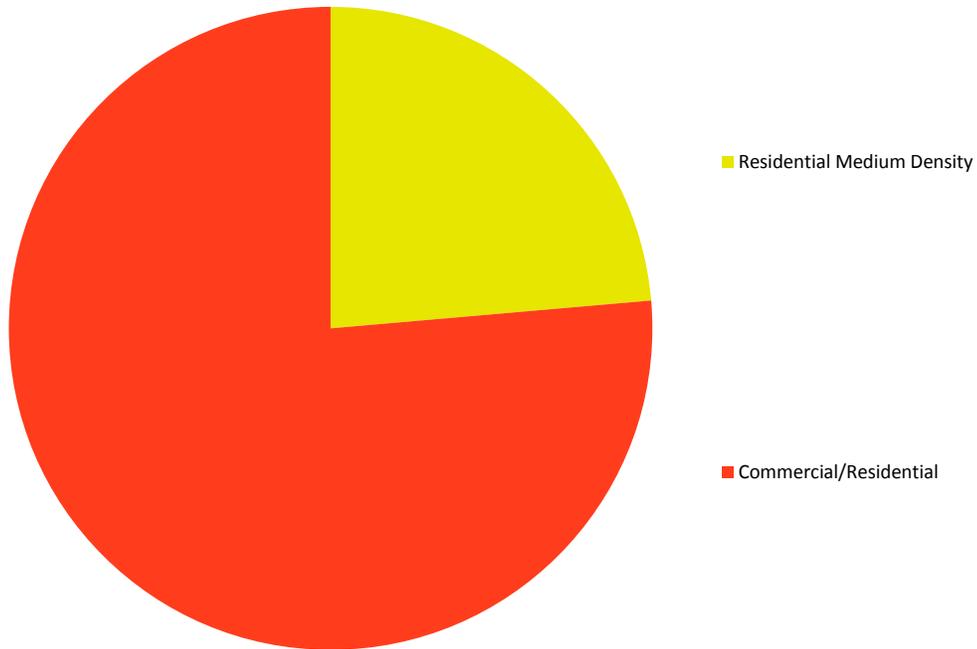
All of these zones will remain exactly as they are, since their standard translations keep them the same.

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

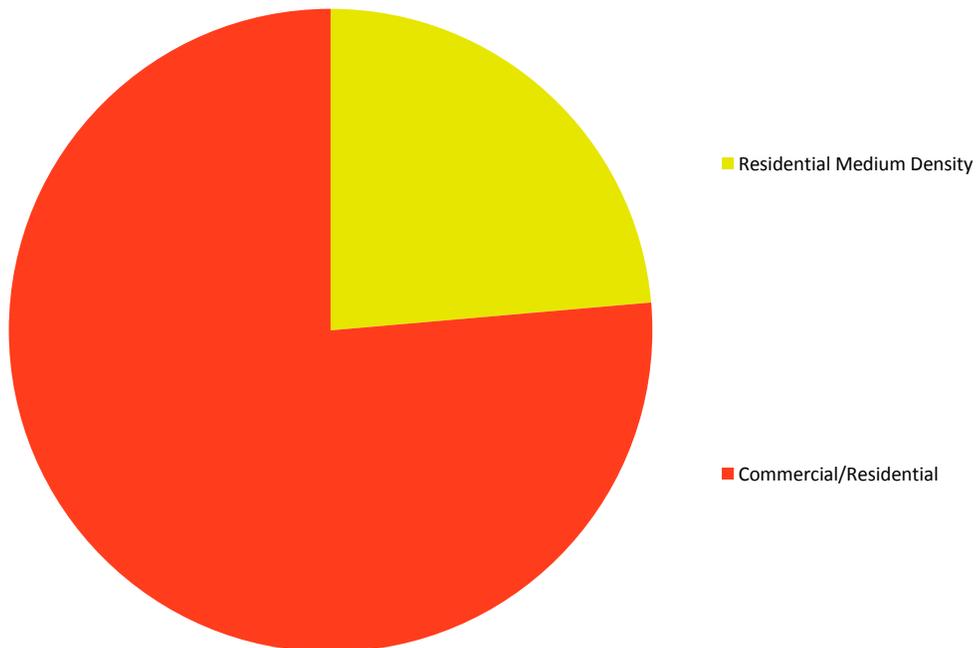
Bethesda Purple Line Station					
Existing			Proposed		
Zone	Acres	Percent	Zone	Acres	Percent
R-60	2.01	23.6%	R-60	2.01	23.6%
CR-5.0 C-5.0 R-5.0 H-145	4.62	54.3%	CR-5.0 C-5.0 R-5.0 H-145	4.62	45.3%
CR-8.0 C-7.5 R-7.5 H-250	1.88	22.1%	CR-8.0 C-7.5 R-7.5 H-250	1.88	22.1%
Grand Total		8.51	Grand Total		8.51

ZONE IMPLEMENTATION

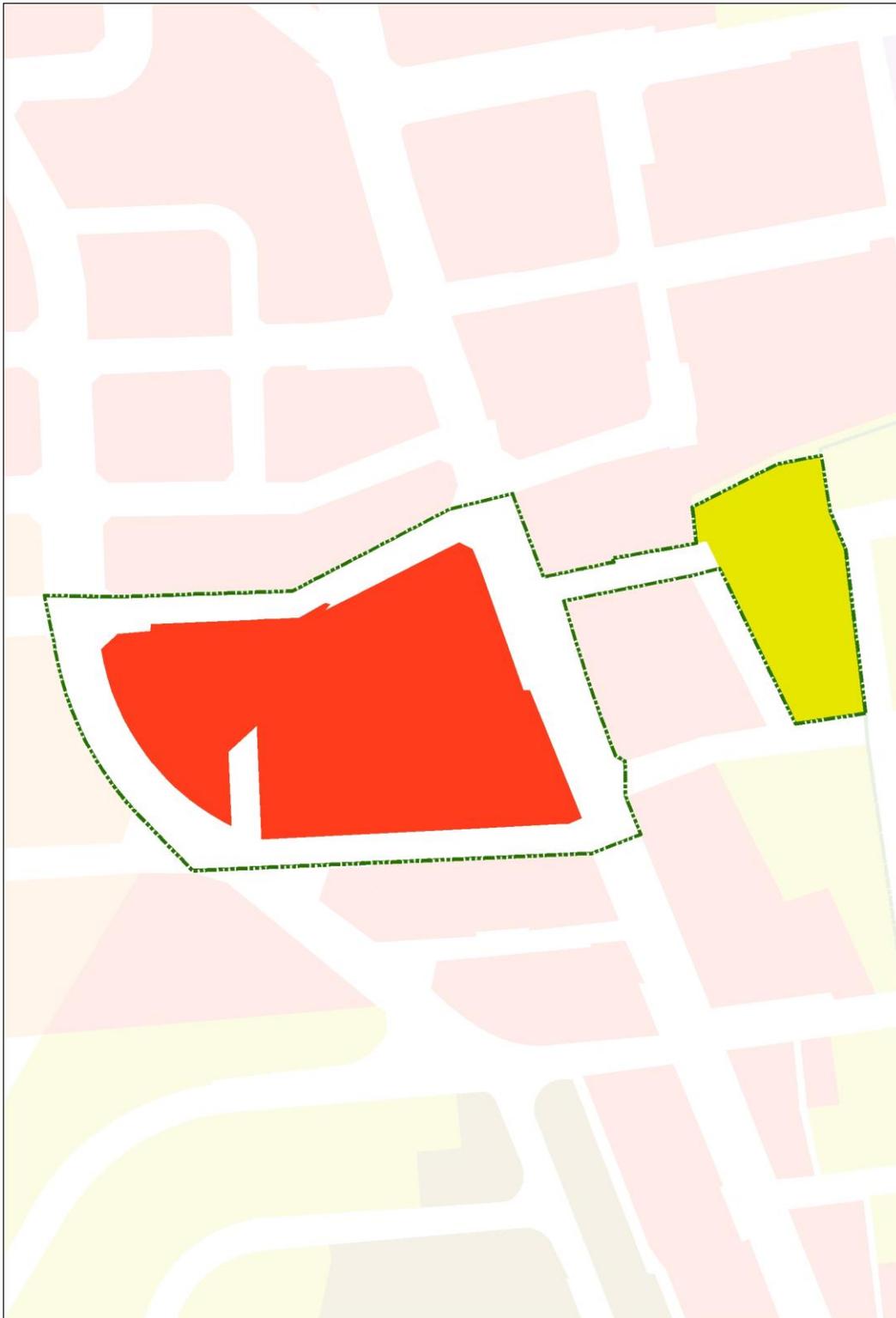
Bethesda Purple Line Sta: Existing Zoning



Bethesda Purple Line Sta: Proposed Zoning



EXISTING ZONING MAP



Existing Zones

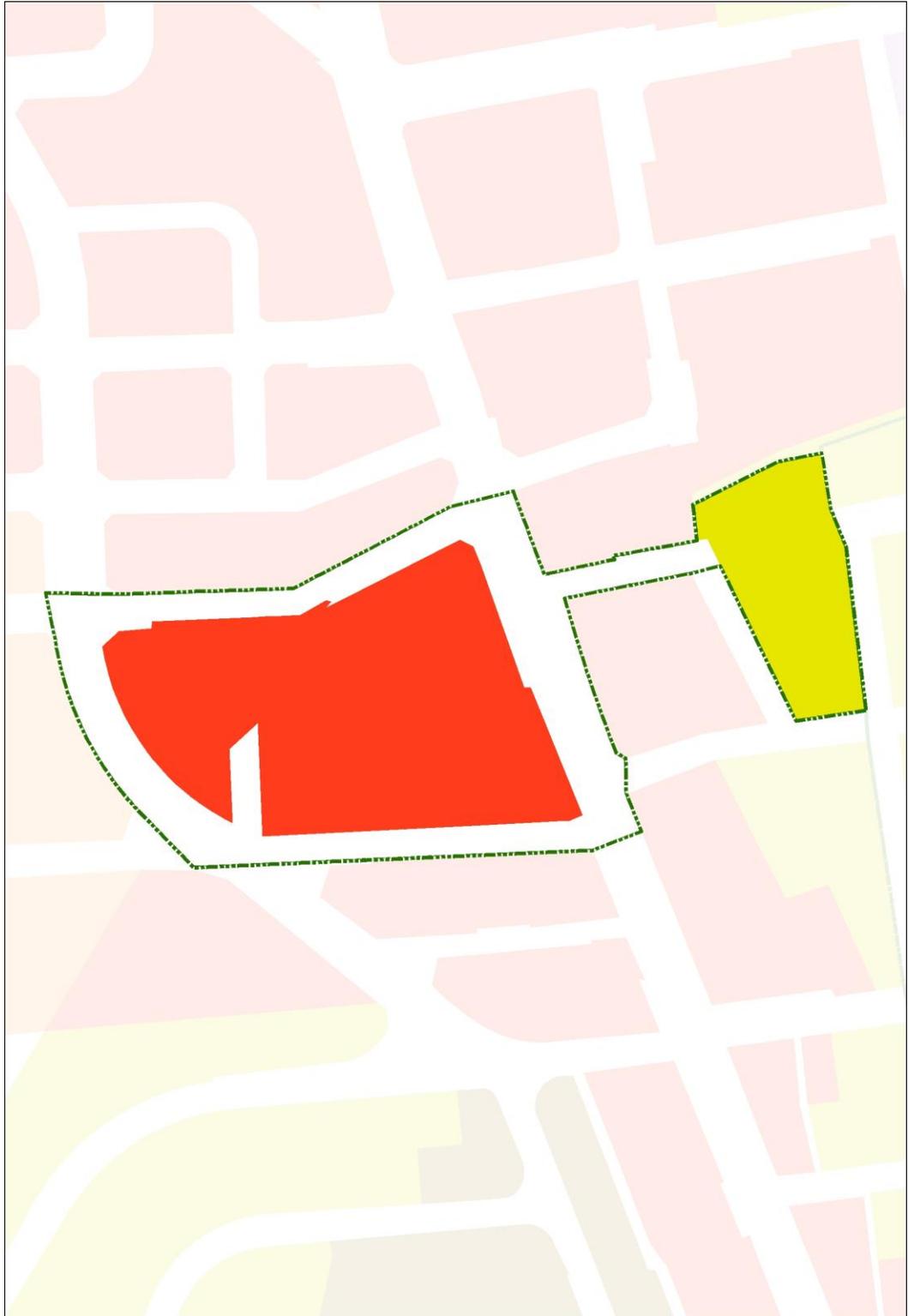
- Residential Medium Density R-60

- Commercial/Residential CR

PROPOSED ZONING MAP

Proposed Zones

-  Residential Medium Density R-60
-  Commercial/Residential CR



PLANNING AREA CONTEXT

