

UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD CORRIDOR PLAN WORK SESSION #4



Description

The fourth work session will focus on the land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for existing residential blocks between planned Bus Rapid Transit Stations, the recommended overlay zone, and relevant testimony received. The work session will also include a discussion on minor revisions to the floor area ratios (FAR) and heights among properties recommended for the Commercial Residential Town zone in the Draft Plan's Four Corners District.

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SUMMARY

- The Planning Board received testimony on the Public Hearing Draft Plan during the public hearing on February 27, 2025, and received written testimony through March 13, 2025. The first three work sessions were held on March 20, April 3, and April 24, 2025, and covered a summary of the testimony received; land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for properties located near planned Bus Rapid Transit Stations; and the transportation recommendations, respectively.
- The fourth work session will focus on the land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for existing residential blocks between planned Bus Rapid Transit Stations, the recommended overlay zone, and relevant testimony received. The work session will also include a discussion on minor revisions to the floor area ratios (FAR) and heights among properties recommended for the Commercial Residential Town (CRT) zone in the Draft Plan’s Four Corners District, as discussed with the Planning Board during the April 3 work session.
- Staff anticipates returning to the Planning board for the fifth work session on May 15, 2025, to discuss the Draft Plan’s analysis and recommendations for housing, community facilities, and schools.

MASTER PLAN INFORMATION

Draft

University Boulevard Corridor Plan Work Session #4

Date

April 25, 2025

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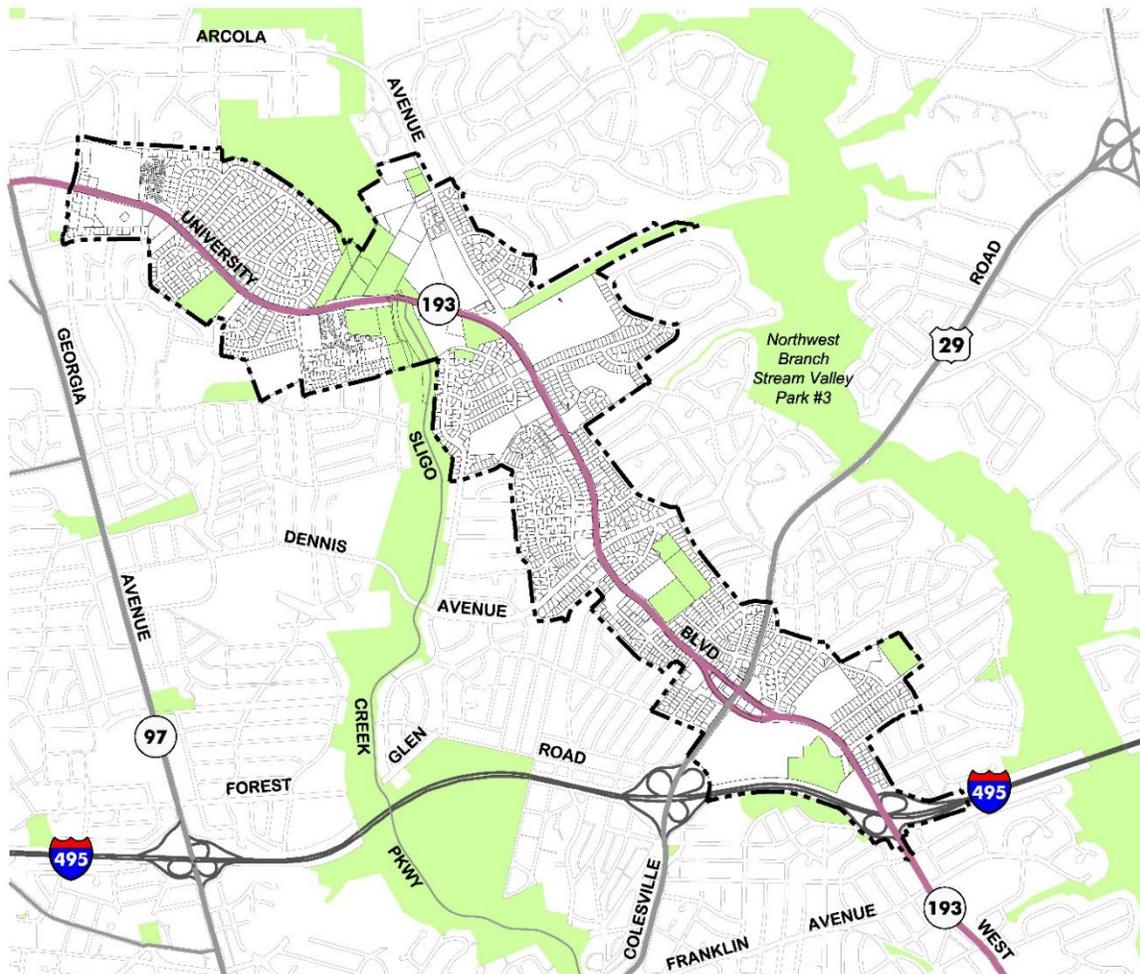
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Planning Board Information

MCPB

Item No. 5

May 1, 2025



-  Parks
-  University Boulevard
-  University Boulevard Corridor Boundary



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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

THRIVE MONTGOMERY 2050

The Public Hearing Draft of the University Boulevard Corridor Plan (Draft Plan) is the first plan to commence following the adoption of *Thrive Montgomery 2050* (Thrive) in October 2022. Thrive recommits to growing in centers of activity, including downtowns, town centers, and small neighborhood centers, and promotes growth along major transportation corridors to maximize infrastructure investment and the efficient use of land as well as create communities that include a range of uses, services, and amenities. Thrive also seeks to “make walking, rolling, bicycling, and transit the most practical, safe, and attractive ways of getting from one place to another¹” and provide more housing of all types, sizes and prices to meet a variety of housing needs. It aims to strengthen the social and physical health of community members, as well as mitigate and adapt to climate change. Thrive’s policies and practices, including its overarching objectives of economic competitiveness, racial equity and social justice, and environmental health and resilience are central to the vision and recommendations of the Draft Plan.

Thrive aspires for compact growth within the county’s centers and along major corridors served by existing or planned transit. Thrive acknowledges that centers of activity can range in scale from large centers, such as Silver Spring, to villages and neighborhood centers, such as Colesville. While Thrive seeks to concentrate existing and future compact growth within centers, the General Plan also acknowledges that the amount and intensity of growth should be commensurate with the center’s location and context.

The Draft Plan envisions a more compact, corridor-focused land use pattern that concentrates future growth along University Boulevard and near five planned bus rapid transit (BRT) stations, consistent with Thrive’s vision for growth corridors. The Plan supports lower density, predominantly residential development with a range of building types between planned BRT stations, and mixed-use growth near planned stations. To achieve this vision, the Plan recommends the Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zone on blocks that front University Boulevard and retains most of the existing detached residential properties in the Plan area as detached residential zones.

The fourth work session will focus on the Draft Plan’s land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for existing residential blocks between planned BRT stations, where the Draft Plan seeks to expand housing choice through corridor-focused growth. The work session will also focus on the recommended overlay zone, and relevant testimony received.

CORRIDOR FOCUSED GROWTH

Thrive offers guidance on the vision for centers, ranging from large centers to villages, and identifies the general locations for growth, including the corridor-focused growth area and the limited growth

¹ Thrive Montgomery 2050, 2022, p. 109.

area. While Thrive identifies growth corridors and acknowledges that “the intensity of development along these corridors should be aligned with the urban, suburban, and rural context of the surrounding area and calibrated to account for existing or planned transit and other transportation infrastructure” (Page 70), it does not specifically define corridor-focused growth.

Following the adoption of Thrive, a common foundation for corridor typologies was developed to be considered through the master planning process in consultation with community members. The [Centers and Corridor Segment Typologies](#) was presented to the Planning Board on June 6, 2024.

CENTERS AND CORRIDOR SEGMENT TYPOLOGIES

The Centers and Corridor Segment Typologies establish a shared vision and definitions for compact, corridor-focused growth within three corridor typologies: 1) transformational growth along the length of the corridor segment, 2) modest growth along the length of the corridor segment, and 3) limited to no growth along the length of the corridor segment. The Corridor Segment Typologies are summarized below, but are more fully described and visually represented in Attachment A.

- Transformational growth: This typology anticipates high density, mixed-use development within the nodes along the corridor segment, and moderate-to-high density mixed-use development fronting the corridor between nodes. This typology includes the development of a grid of streets along the full extent of the segment and frequently spaced protected crossings.
- Modest growth: This segment typology anticipates moderate-to-high density, mixed-use development within the nodes along the corridor segment, and low-to-moderate (gentle), predominantly residential density between the nodes. This typology includes development of a grid of streets along the full extent of the corridor segment and frequently spaced protected crossings.
- No growth: This corridor segment typology anticipates high-density, mixed-use development within centers of activity or nodes along the corridor, but no new development fronting the corridor between the nodes. Rather, this typology anticipates low to-moderate densities and varied uses fronting parallel streets along the corridor between the nodes. In addition, this typology anticipates new development to engage with the corridor at the nodes, either by submerging or elevating the corridor, to reconnect communities on either side of the corridor.

The Centers and Corridor Segment Typologies represent an ideal vision of future development, but do not fully consider the context and development pattern that exist along the Thrive-designated growth corridors today. While these typologies provide a shared understanding of desired development intensity, building mass, scale, and placement, as well as transportation and sustainability elements, the application of these typologies must be paired with existing reality and local conditions through subsequent master plans, such as the University Boulevard Corridor Plan.

CORRIDOR SEGMENT TYPOLOGY APPLIED TO UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD

The Plan area is located between large centers of activity with a variety of services and amenities, and well-served by infrastructure. The land use character and context of University Boulevard within the Plan area is predominantly residential, with intermittent institutional uses and commercial centers. Based on this context, Planning Staff determined that the vision of the “modest growth” corridor segment typology aligned best with the context and conditions of University Boulevard.

APPROACH TO LAND USE AND ZONING

RATIONALE

Consistent with the “modest growth” segment typology, the Draft Plan envisions University Boulevard as a primarily residential corridor, with opportunities for mixed-use, medium density growth (5 to 6-story buildings) on properties with existing commercial development, institutional uses, or properties located near the planned BRT stations. As discussed in the second work session on April 3, 2025, these properties, or “nodes,” are recommended for the Commercial Residential (CR) or Commercial Residential Town (CRT) zones.

Between the “nodes,” the Draft Plan envisions low-to-moderate density residential growth including a range of housing types between planned BRT stations. To achieve this vision and provide opportunities for housing growth near transit, the Plan recommends the Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zone on blocks that front University Boulevard. To ensure that new housing is located near planned transit, the Draft Plan recommends rezoning blocks that front University Boulevard and retaining most of the existing detached residential properties in the Plan area as detached residential zones.

As the University Boulevard Corridor Plan is the first master plan to begin following the approval and adoption of Thrive, it is also the first plan to recommend rezoning properties with detached residential zones, including the R-60 and R-90 zones, which generally allow one detached house on a 6,000 or 9,000 square foot lot, respectively. The Draft Plan recommends rezoning the residential blocks that front University Boulevard to the Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zone to allow additional types of housing, including detached houses, duplexes, townhouses, and small apartment buildings.

CORRIDOR FRONTING BLOCKS BETWEEN TRANSIT NODES

The Draft Plan promotes transit-supportive growth near planned BRT stations or “nodes” and creating opportunities to expand housing choice on blocks fronting University Boulevard between future BRT station locations. On the corridor fronting blocks between transit “nodes” the Draft Plan recommends rezoning properties to Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN). The CRN zone allows a mix of residential and nonresidential uses at varying densities and heights “to promote economically,

environmentally, and socially sustainable development patterns where people can live, work, recreate, and access services and amenities.”²

The CRN zone classification is followed by a number and a sequence of three additional symbols: C, R, and H, each followed by another number. The number following the C is the maximum nonresidential FAR allowed, the number following the R is the maximum residential FAR allowed, and the number following the H is the maximum building height allowed. The Draft Plan recommends CRN 1.0, C-0.0, R-1.0, H-50 for the corridor fronting blocks between transit nodes. This zoning recommendation precludes new commercial development, allows a maximum residential density of 1.0 FAR, and a maximum height of 50 feet (approximately 3-4 stories).

New commercial development between the transit “nodes” is largely prohibited to maintain the corridor’s residential character. Detached residential lots between BRT stations lack depth and proximity to transit, making the delivery of retail space and required parking infeasible. Recognizing that retail space has a better opportunity for success near transit or at established commercial locations along the corridor, the recommended FAR for CRN prioritizes the introduction of new residential over commercial uses.

MORE HOUSING N.O.W. (NEW OPTIONS FOR WORKERS)

More Housing N.O.W. is a package of two zoning text amendments (ZTA), a subdivision regulation amendment (SRA), a bill, and an investment in a Workforce Housing Opportunity Fund recently introduced by Montgomery County Council that aims to create workforce housing. The goals include building more workforce housing, converting vacant commercial spaces into housing opportunities, and establishing new pathways to homeownership. One of the zoning text amendments, ZTA 25-02, would allow additional types of residential dwelling units, including duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, and apartment buildings, along select transportation corridors through a new Optional Method Workforce Housing development in the R-200, R-90, R-60, and R-40 zones, with the provision of 15% workforce housing.

The More Housing N.O.W. legislation and the Draft University Boulevard Corridor Plan both align with the goals of Thrive and are complementary in their efforts to achieve additional housing. However, More Housing N.O.W. seeks to create opportunities for more housing options on lots that abut major transportation corridors across the county, with building form and placement remaining consistent with the existing development. The Draft University Boulevard Corridor Plan includes recommendations specific to the conditions, context, and vision of the Plan area, provides opportunities for additional housing types in corridor fronting blocks, and keeps existing zoning in residential blocks that do not front the corridor. The Draft Plan also considers a broader scope of

² Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance Section 4.5.1.

issues just for the University Boulevard corridor, including the environment, transportation, historical resources, urban design, community facilities, parks, and more.

On April 8, 2025, the County Council approved ZTA 25-03 and SRA 25-01 to incentivize the conversion of vacant office buildings into housing through an expedited approval process, as well as Bill 2-25 which established a 20-year Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for qualifying office to housing conversions that provide at least 17.5 percent affordable housing. The County Council's Planning, Housing, and Parks Committee is anticipated to continue the review of ZTA 25-02 in June 2025, with review by the full County Council following completion of the Committee's review.

If ZTA 25-02 is approved by the County Council, it will supersede existing approved and adopted master plans, but future master plans and master plans that are currently in progress, including the University Boulevard Corridor Plan, can include zoning recommendations for the County Council's consideration that are specific to the unique context and conditions of plan areas.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY RECEIVED

CORRIDOR FRONTING BLOCKS BETWEEN TRANSIT NODES

TESTIMONY SUMMARY

Preserving neighborhood character is a key concern and is expressed as opposition to the Draft Plan's Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zoning recommendations and its perceived potential to produce structures that do not fit the existing neighborhood's character. Concerns are rooted in several key issues:

- **Vehicle Turnarounds and Limited Parking:** The area lacks sufficient vehicle turnarounds and parking spaces. Residents fear that rezoning to CRN will worsen these problems.
- **Lot Consolidation:** If rezoning proceeds, residents are concerned about lot consolidation which they see as a path to large multifamily housing complexes.
- **Pedestrian Safety:** The community relies on direct pedestrian access to nearby amenities and believes higher density development could jeopardize pedestrian safety.

In some cases, opposition is nuanced, with concerns that if only some properties are rezoned, potentially benefiting neighbors while disadvantaging the overall community. Overall, the testimony highlights the community's desire to preserve neighborhood character, ensure safety, and maintain equitable development practices.

RESPONSE

Developments in the Commercial Residential zones recommended in the Draft Plan, including Commercial Residential (CR), Commercial Residential Town (CRT), and Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN), must adhere to compatibility requirements. According to Section 4.1.8 of the

Zoning Ordinance, these zones are required to provide compatible building setbacks and heights when adjacent to properties in residential detached or residential townhouse zones. This ensures harmony in building placement and height.

Additionally, development applications are examined to ensure adequate site access is provided for parking. According to Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance Section 59.6.2, the minimum and maximum number of required vehicle parking spaces depend on the specific usage. For example, a restaurant with 1,000 square feet allocated for patron use (excluding outdoor seating areas) within Commercial/Residential and Employment zones must provide at least 4 parking spaces. Similarly, each townhouse dwelling unit must have a minimum of 2 parking spaces. Detailed tables are available in the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance [here](#).

For developments over a certain square footage, a site plan is required, which allows public comment during the review process. Planning staff and the Planning Board will consider these comments when reviewing the development.

The recommended University Boulevard Overlay Zone also aims to ensure future development transitions well to neighboring properties, maintaining neighborhood scale and character. It includes requirements for permitted and prohibited uses, building setbacks, and lot coverage to ensure compatibility. Approval of the overlay zone will follow public hearings by the Planning Board and County Council.

Compact mixed-use growth reduces car dependency by placing services and amenities closer to homes, encouraging walking, biking, and short public transit trips. This alleviates traffic congestion and improves overall pedestrian safety. Additionally, the Draft Plan includes measures to enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety, such as sidepaths with landscaped buffers, safer crosswalks, and pedestrian signals, especially near schools and transit stops.

CORRIDOR-FRONTING BLOCKS: CONSIDERATIONS

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TYPES - ANALYSIS

Corridor-fronting blocks between planned BRT Stations or “nodes” are characterized by both detached residential properties that front directly on the corridor and properties that back onto the corridor with access from an interior residential street. These defining characteristics offer different opportunities and challenges for infill development. Staff explored development scenarios on individual detached residential properties that included duplexes, townhomes, and small apartment buildings to identify the density and height that could reasonably accommodate these housing types, while also accommodating access, parking, stormwater management, and tree canopy. These scenarios informed the Draft Plan’s zoning recommendation for the corridor fronting blocks: CRN 1.0, C-0.0, R-1.0, H-50.

These development scenarios, shown in Figure 1, also provided insight on the application of the CRN development standards, and highlighted the need for additional guidance in the Draft Plan and provisions in the recommended University Boulevard Overlay Zone (UBOZ) to maintain compatibility with existing detached residential properties anticipated to remain in place. The CRN development standards, recommended guidance, and UBOZ provisions are discussed in greater detail below.



Figure 1: Commercial Residential Neighborhood Development Standards

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The Draft Plan’s CRN zoning recommendation for corridor-fronting blocks supports compact, multi-family building types on detached single-family properties and the conversion of existing homes into multiple units. The CRN zone includes development standards (refer to [Table 4.5.3C](#) in the Zoning Ordinance) specific for single-family, duplex, townhouse, and apartment building (three or more units) types. Standards for single-family and duplex building types include setbacks and lot coverage limitations like those on surrounding detached homes that may remain, ensuring new development will not encroach onto neighboring homes. Standards for apartment buildings allow zero setbacks and greater lot coverage. The following language is recommended for inclusion in the Draft Plan to ensure the setbacks are consistent for all development types on detached lots and up to three consolidated lots, and to specify that development on sites larger than three lots combined (or three acres) shall follow the CRN apartment building standards. The following revision to pages 141-142 of the Draft Plan is recommended (revisions shown on strikethrough and underlined text):

This Plan recommends the CRN Zone for detached residential properties within blocks fronting University Boulevard. The CRN Zone would permit alternative residential building types, such as duplexes and other diverse housing types. To maintain existing neighborhood scale and character, building setbacks for new residential development on one or two lots shall be consistent with the duplex building type setbacks. On three or more lots, building setbacks shall follow the apartment building setbacks as outlined by the CRN Zone. Existing detached residential properties in the R-60 and R-90 Zones, which are farther away from University Boulevard are retained in Plan recommendations.

An overlay zone is recommended for the properties recommended for rezoning by this Plan. Key objectives of the zone are to promote a diverse range of housing options in a compact, transit-oriented form of growth that supports Bus Rapid Transit on University Boulevard and Colesville Road, creates complete communities, maintains neighborhood character and scale, and improves safety for all travelers, with a priority on the most vulnerable people. The proposed overlay zone will consider elements including but not limited to, building placement, site coverage, provision of public open space, and uses to transition in building density and height from the corridor to the neighborhoods. ~~and enhancing tree canopy.~~

BUILDING HEIGHT

The Draft Plan's CRN zoning recommendation allows a maximum height of 50 feet, a modest increase from the maximum height in adjacent single-family zoned properties, which is 35 feet. The increase will facilitate the implementation of the recommended multi-story building types, including duplexes, townhouses, and small apartment buildings, and combined with the recommended language regarding setbacks, the UBOZ provisions, and other in-lot requirements such as access, parking, and stormwater management, new development will maintain neighborhood scale and adequate separation from adjacent detached homes.

COMPATIBILITY WITH ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Compatibility requirements between properties rezoned to CRN and others remaining with existing R-60 or R-90 zones shall be per [Section 4.1.8 of the Zoning Ordinance](#).

Section 4.1.8 requires development to provide side and rear setbacks equal to 1.5 times the minimum side and rear setbacks for a detached house on an abutting property. For example, if a new mixed-use building was constructed on a CRN-zoned property that abutted a R-60-zoned property, the new building would be required to provide a 12-foot side setback and a 30-foot rear setback. Section 4.1.8 also requires buildings to transition in height at a 45-degree angle from the height allowed for a detached house. For example, if a new 50-foot-tall building was constructed on a CRN-zoned property that abutted a R-60 zoned property, the building would be required to transition to 35-feet in height to ensure compatibility with the maximum height permitted in the R-60 zone. An example of the 45-degree angle height transitions are shown in Figures 2 and 3 for abutting and confronting properties³.

³ [Zoning Ordinance Section 1.4.2](#) defines abutting as: "properties are abutting if they share a property line or easement line" and confronting as: "properties that are directly across a right-of-way with a master plan width of less than 80 feet from each other based on a line between the two properties that is drawn perpendicular to the right-of-way. Properties within a 45-degree diagonal across an intersection are also confronting."

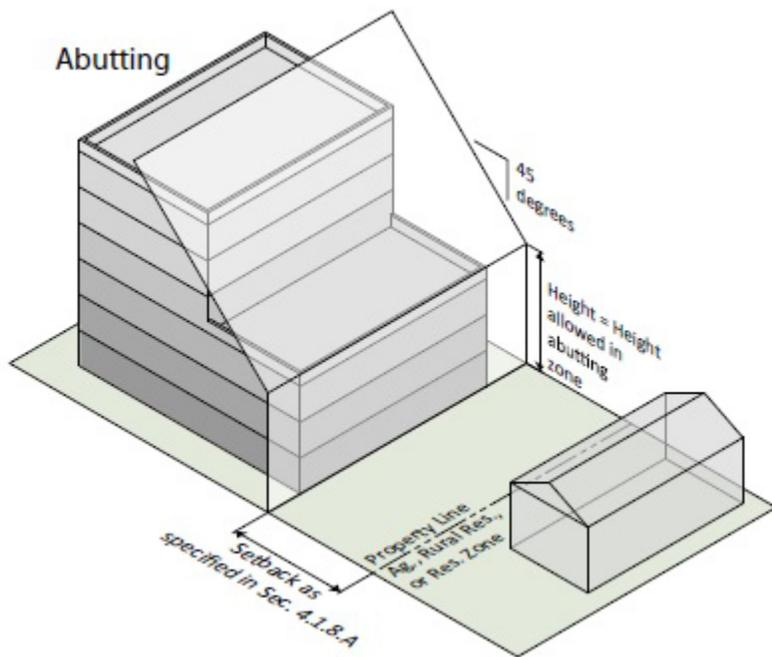


Figure 2: Height Compatibility Requirements for Abutting Properties

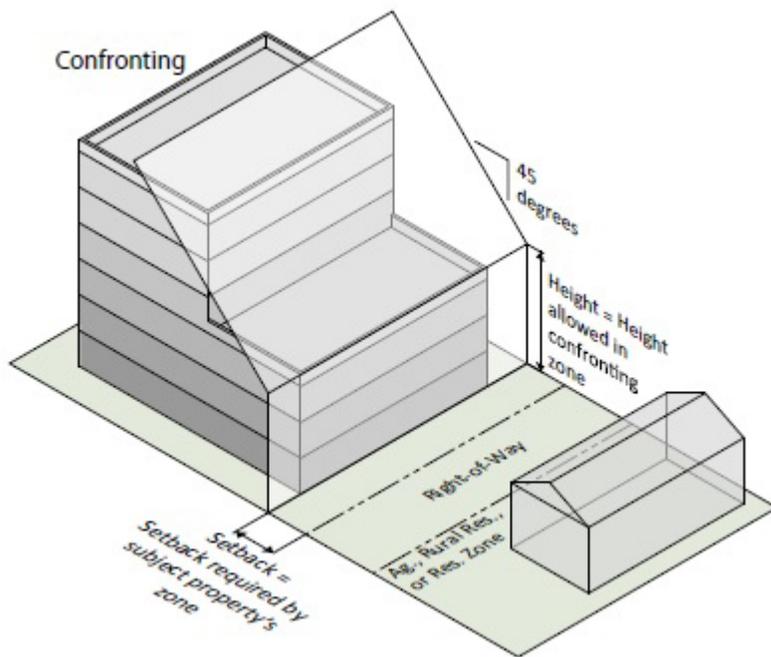


Figure 3: Height Compatibility Requirements for Confronting Properties

ACCESS

The Draft Plan includes a recommendation to minimize the number of curb cuts along University Boulevard, to reduce the number of conflicts between future transit and pedestrian/bicycle facilities. Relocating individual property access would require either access to an interior residential street, or the creation of alleyways internal to these residential blocks.

- Several blocks consist of a single row of detached homes backing onto the corridor with primary access from an interior residential street. At those locations, redevelopment could take advantage of the corridor frontage and maintain access from the residential street.
- Most other residential blocks consist of back-to-back detached homes, where one lot fronts on the corridor and the other fronts onto a residential street. Corridor-fronting lots have no direct access onto the residential street. An internal alley along the center of the block could provide rear access, but block configurations in this area include a middle lot on the side streets, making an alley connection onto a side street a challenge. Internal alleys would require additional and incremental dedication, which would further reduce the developable area of corridor fronting lots. The Draft Plan does not include a recommendation for interior alley dedication within residential corridor-fronting blocks.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Partners for Economic Solutions (PES), an urban economics research firm, was engaged to evaluate the financial feasibility of residential growth in the Plan area, including residential building types possible with the CRN zone and mixed-use development alternatives both in rental and ownership scenarios. The Financial Feasibility Report is included in the Draft Plan's Appendix, and is also included as Attachment B.

The Financial Feasibility Report has significant implications for zoning recommendations in the Draft Plan. It particularly guides policy decisions regarding allowing existing single-family homeowners to potentially develop higher density housing typologies, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, or other small-scale multifamily units. The analysis indicates that certain housing typologies, especially duplexes, are among the most financially viable options under current market conditions. Duplexes, particularly when they include surface parking, show promise for financially feasible development without requiring public subsidy. This finding supports a strategy for targeted rezoning that allows for gradual conversion of single-family homes to slightly higher density units over the Plan's life.

There is also some potential for more complex forms of housing, such as piggyback townhouses; however, market conditions will need to evolve for other typologies to become financially feasible. The report also noted that for-sale townhouses and small-scale condo projects might offer viable paths forward, especially on smaller infill lots if there is potential for lot consolidation or on some of the vacant lots in the Plan area. Finally, the report advocated for zoning reform that simplifies the process of housing development by allowing for a spectrum of typologies with clear guidelines.

Zoning reforms that permit more housing will complement improvements in transit services, particularly Bus Rapid Transit on University Boulevard, and could catalyze more ambitious redevelopment on larger CRT-zoned sites in the future.

Key Findings of the Report include:

- Traditional single-family homes remain financially feasible in the current market.
- Among the recommended building types, new for-sale duplexes offer the greatest potential for a pure market deal without public investment.
- Development of for-sale standard townhouses generates sufficient returns to justify infill development where appropriate in the Plan area.

Tear-down/re-build scenarios, or consolidation of single-family properties are not anticipated, but recommended zoning provides the opportunity for these scenarios in the future. Financial analysis also noted that BRT service on University Boulevard could be a factor that leads to higher rents and developer interest. However, the system implementation and operation (frequency, hours of service, direct connections, and reliability), could have a significant influence.

OVERLAY ZONE

The Draft Plan recommends an overlay zone that would complement the zoning requirements and master plan recommendations to appropriately transition future growth to neighboring properties and maintain overall neighborhood scale and character. The University Boulevard Overlay Zone (UBOZ) is envisioned as a new overlay zone that would apply to properties recommended for the Commercial Residential Zones in the University Boulevard Corridor Plan. While the Commercial Residential Zones allow a variety of residential building types, the overlay zone is needed to adjust permitted land uses and development standards to ensure that new growth is compatible with the surrounding residential character. The proposed overlay zone is divided into four primary sections: purpose, applicability, land uses, and development standards.

Implementation of the recommended overlay zone will require a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to Section 4.9 of the Zoning Ordinance. While a proposed ZTA will be introduced to the Planning Board at a future date, the components of the proposed overlay zone are necessary to consider concurrent with the Draft Plan. The following sections detail an approach and recommended elements of the University Boulevard Overlay Zone. Staff requests guidance from the Planning Board on these elements to inform the draft ZTA.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the UBOZ is to increase diversity and supply of housing in a compact, transit-oriented form of growth that maintains neighborhood character and scale, supports Bus Rapid Transit on University Boulevard and Colesville Road, creates complete communities, and improves safety for all.

The requirements of the UBOZ ensure new residential development intensity is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood character as the community changes over time.

APPLICABILITY

The provisions of the UBOZ apply primarily to properties recommended for the Commercial Residential Zones in the University Boulevard Corridor Plan.

LAND USES

The Draft Plan's CRN zoning recommendations will allow a variety of residential building types, and generally prohibit commercial development. However, the UBOZ seeks to refine the permitted, limited and conditional uses to ensure that the land uses are tailored to the context of the Plan area.

Specifically, the UBOZ recommends permitting the attached and detached accessory dwelling unit uses, which are not currently permitted in the Commercial Residential zones. Also, while the Draft Plan's CRN zoning recommendations will generally prohibit commercial development, the UBOZ recommends allowing uses that are currently permitted or governed by the conditional use process in residential zones today, such as home-based occupations and small family daycares, to maintain neighborhood-serving uses. The UBOZ also recommends prohibiting vehicle related uses, drive thru establishments, manufacturing and production, and self-storage, except as protected by Zoning Ordinance Section 7.7.2, Nonconforming Uses.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

The UBOZ is also recommended to include standards for new compact development types to maintain neighborhood character and scale. Specifically, the UBOZ is recommended to include the following development standards for the properties with an underlying CRN Zone:

- Setbacks for conversions or new development on one or two lots, shall be consistent with the CRN duplex development standards for duplex, townhouse, and apartment building types.
- Site coverage shall be 35% for conversions or new development on one or two lots for duplex, townhouse and apartment building types, similar to the lot coverage requirements for the R-60 residential detached zone. For these building types, the UBOZ will not require an entrance that faces a street or an open space.
- Development on three or more lots is recommended to follow the CRN apartment development standards, as specified in [Table 4.5.3C](#) of the Zoning Ordinance.
- The UBOZ is anticipated to exempt tracts less than 10,000 sf from open space requirements.
- The UBOZ is also anticipated to require rear surface parking to be screened from adjacent properties.

For properties with an underlying Commercial Residential (CR) or Commercial Residential Town (CRT) zone, the UBOZ is recommended to follow the development standards in Sections 4.5.3 and 4.5.4 of the Zoning Ordinance.

In addition to the above development standards, staff is also exploring the threshold at which to require optional method development, and opportunities to utilize the alternative method of compliance for providing a public benefit to incentivize the retention of retail space that serves the needs of the community on properties recommended for the CRT zone.

FOUR CORNERS DISTRICT

Staff presented the land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for the Four Corners District during the second work session on April 3, 2025, and acknowledged that the variations in floor area ratio (FAR) and height among properties recommended for the Commercial Residential Town (CRT) zone could create challenges for consolidated redevelopment. The Planning Board also observed that the size of properties in the Four Corners District could create challenges for redevelopment and requested that staff consider the types of development that may be possible, and how new development would transition to existing detached residential properties. Staff will describe potential development and required transitions during the May 1, 2025 work session, including the requirements outlined in [Section 4.1.8 of the Zoning Ordinance](#), which requires properties in a Commercial Residential zone, including properties in a Commercial Residential Town (CRT) or a Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zone, that abut properties in a Residential Detached zone (such as R-60) to comply with specific setback and height requirements to achieve compatibility with abutting residential houses.

The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of the zoning recommendations by neighborhood in the Four Corners District and discuss minor revisions to the recommended FAR and heights for CRT-zoned properties to provide consistent zoning among properties and facilitate consolidated redevelopment.

While the recommended revisions to densities and heights are generally minor adjustments, the revisions provide consistent zoning for abutting properties. One notable exception are the properties at 115 University Blvd W, 10101 Lorain Ave, and 10105 Lorain Ave which are currently zoned EOF 3.0, H-100. Given the existing zoning of the property provides a density of 3.0 FAR, staff recommends retaining the 3.0 FAR in the recommended CRT zone. Staff also recommends a consistent 75-foot height among all CRT-zoned properties to accommodate a 5-to-6-story mixed-use building with ground floor retail and residential units above the retail. The compatibility requirements of Section 4.1.8, as well as the properties recommended for the CRN zone, provide transitions from the commercial center of the District to the adjacent detached residential communities.

FOUR CORNERS WEST NEIGHBORHOOD

The Four Corners West neighborhood, located between Lorain Avenue and Colesville Road, includes several neighborhood-serving uses, including a Safeway grocery store, post office, convenience retail, fast food restaurants, and a small office park. While the Draft Plan recommends increasing permitted densities and heights to facilitate infill and redevelopment, it provides slight variations in the recommended FAR and height. As these slight variations may create challenges for consolidation and redevelopment of smaller properties, staff recommends revisions to the density and height to improve consistency. Along Lorain Avenue and Colesville Road, the Draft Plan recommends the Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zone as a transition to the South Four Corners Neighborhood.

Recommended revisions to the CRT zones in the Four Corners West Neighborhood are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Four Corners West Neighborhood Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Draft Plan Zoning	Recommended Zoning Revisions
Safeway	R-60 and CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45	CRT 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75
112 University Blvd W	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75
U.S. Post Office	CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-2.0, H-60	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75
100 University Blvd W	CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75
2, 22, 106, 108 University Blvd W and 10040 Colesville Rd	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45	CRT 2.5, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75

FOUR CORNERS NORTH NEIGHBORHOOD

The Draft Plan's Four Corners North neighborhood, located between Lorain Avenue, Timberwood Avenue, Colesville Road, and University Boulevard also includes several small-scale commercial businesses. Similar to the Draft Plan's Four Corners West neighborhood, the Draft Plan supports redevelopment of the existing single-use commercial properties into mixed-use development to complement and support the existing and planned BRT on University Boulevard and Colesville Road. The Draft Plan also recommends rezoning properties at the intersection of University Boulevard and Lorain Avenue from Employment Office (EOF) to CRT, as well as increasing the residential density and heights permitted to encourage a mixture of residential and non-residential uses with redevelopment.

Recommended revisions to the CRT zones in the Four Corners North Neighborhood are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Four Corners North Neighborhood Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Draft Plan Zoning	Recommended Zoning Revisions
10100, 10110, 10118, 10120, 10126, 10130, 10132, 10134 Colesville Rd, and vacant parcels	R-60 and CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-2.0, H-70	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75
10144 Colesville Rd and 110 Sutherland Rd	CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45	CRT 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75
101 University Blvd W	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75
105-111 University Blvd W	CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45	CRT 1.5, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75
115 University Blvd W, 10101 Lorain Ave and 10105 Lorain Ave	EOF 3.0, H-100	CRT 3.0, C-2.0, R-1.5, H-60	CRT 3.0, C-2.0, R-1.5, H-75

WOODMOOR SHOPPING CENTER AND MONTGOMERY BLAIR NEIGHBORHOODS

The Draft Plan’s Woodmoor Shopping Center neighborhood is anchored by the Woodmoor Shopping Center, at the intersection of University Boulevard and Colesville Road. The shopping center includes several neighborhood-serving uses including a bank, grocery store, pharmacy, and bakery. The Montgomery Blair High School neighborhood, anchored by Montgomery County Public Schools’ Montgomery Blair High School, also includes the Four Corners Ethiopian Evangelical Church and Silver Spring Day School, which are in the median of University Boulevard between Colesville Road and Lexington Drive.

Recommended revisions to the CRT zones in the Woodmoor Shopping Center and Montgomery Blair High School Neighborhoods are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Woodmoor Shopping Center and Montgomery Blair Neighborhoods Zoning Summary

Property	Existing Zoning	Draft Plan Zoning	Recommended Zoning Revisions
Woodmoor Shopping Center	CRT 0.75, C-0.75, R-0.5, H-40	CRT 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60	CRT 2.0, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75
Four Corners Ethiopian Evangelical Church	R-60	CRT 1.5, C-0.75, R-1.5, H-75	CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-75

NEXT STEPS

The fourth work session, scheduled on May 1, 2025, will focus on the Draft Plan’s land use, zoning, and urban design recommendations for the existing residential blocks between the mixed-use “nodes,” the recommended overlay zone, and relevant testimony received. The fourth work session will also include a discussion on the FAR and heights recommended for CRT properties in the Four Corners District.

Subsequent work sessions are anticipated to return to land use, zoning, urban design, and transportation, as necessary, but also focus on additional elements in the Draft Plan, including housing, community facilities, schools, historic resources, environmental sustainability, and parks, trails, and open space. Subsequent work sessions are tentatively scheduled on May 15 and May 22.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Centers and Corridor Segment Typologies

Attachment B: Partners for Economic Solutions (PES) Financial Feasibility Report