

Memorandum



Date: May 4, 2026
To: Planning Commission
From: Kristen Gundersen, Planning and Community Development Director
Subject: **Amendment Unified Development Code (zoning ordinance)– Table 71-J Use Matrix - Residential**

Background

In late 2025, the Unified Development Code (UDC)/zoning ordinance was adopted. While the Planning Commission has been working on amendments to several sections, staff has concern regarding Table 71-J Use Matrix as it relates to Residential. Similar to the amendment taken separately for the creation of the Short-term rental Overlay District, staff would like to address the concerns separately.

As many of you know, there is a housing shortage throughout the country, which does not exclude the city of Buchanan or surrounding communities. To help provide opportunities to create additional housing, many organizations have been creating tools to help increase opportunities for additional housing. There has also been state legislation introduced that would allow more than one dwelling unit per parcel and communities in Michigan and other states have been changing zoning regulations to allow additional dwelling units by right on parcels.

The city owns several vacant properties and published a request for proposals (RFP) last year for the construction of duplex dwelling units throughout the city. While completing reviews of the RFP's, it was found that duplex units are not allowed in the NE district. It is unclear why two dwelling units are not allowed as many of the parcels are larger than those found in the GN or NC districts. Staff also believe properties in the NE, GN and NC districts should have an opportunity under a special use permit to request additional dwelling units.

While reviewing Table 71-J Use Matrix for Residential options, staff was concerned about some of the wording and missing information associated with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) and Group Homes which have additional requirements, found Sections 71-24 and 71-25. Attached is an excerpt from Table 71-J relating to Residential. Below is summary of the proposed changes:

1. Home occupations. Added code reference to "Home occupations" as found in Section 71-24.
2. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) with code reference as an accessory use in the NE, GN, and NC districts. New language

3. Group Homes with code reference to Section 71025 as a permitted use to the NE, GN and NC districts. New language.
4. Accessory Dwelling Units on the ground floor in the rear 50% of a building when there is an existing and active permitted principal use in the front of the building in the D district as an accessory use. Typically, in core downtown areas the creation of residential uses on the ground floor is not desired and the use is allowed on the upper floors. Some communities allow residential in the rear of the building. New language which requires discussion.
5. 1 dwelling unit per lot. Added clarification of “detached” and included D District.
6. 1 dwelling unit per lot (zero lot line). Deleted language that pertained to GN and NC district. Staff does not understand reference to zero lot line.
7. 2 dwelling units per lot. Clarified by adding “attached” dwelling units and included NE district. Staff does not believe the intent was to allow two free-standing dwellings on a single property rather a duplex being next to each other or above each other is allowed.
8. 4 dwelling units per lot. In keeping with #7 above, the clarifying word “attached” was added along with the special use opportunity in the NE district where 4 dwelling units are not an option.
9. 8 dwelling units per lot. In keeping with #7 and 8 above, the clarifying word “attached” was added in addition to the special use opportunity in the NE and GN districts where 8 dwelling units are not an option.
10. More than 8 dwelling units per lot. In keeping with #7-9 above, the clarifying word “attached” was added in addition to the special use permit opportunity in the NE and GN districts where more than 8 dwelling units is not an option and is in keeping with the NC district where a special use permit could be requested.
11. Footnote¹ was added to 1, 2,4 and 8 dwelling units and is associated with the D Downtown district. The footnote prohibits the creation of a dwelling unit on the ground floor/first floor/street level in the D District. Typically, in core downtown areas the creation of residential uses on the ground floor is not desired and the use is allowed on the upper floors.

Recommendation

Please discuss and review the language draft provided and direct staff to make any necessary changes. Staff is proposing this item be on the July 7th agenda for a public hearing.

Excerpt – Table 71-J Use Matrix – Redline of Residential

TABLE 71-J USE MATRIX							
	N	NE	GN	NC	D	SC	I
Residential							
Home occupation		A	A	A	A		
1 dwelling unit per lot		■	■	■			
1 dwelling unit per lot (zero lot line)			■	■			
2 dwelling units per lot			■	■	■		
4 dwelling units per lot			■	■	■		
8 dwelling units per lot				■	■		
More than 8 dwelling units per lot				S	■		
Residential							
Home occupation – See Sec. 71-23		A	A	A	A		
<u>Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) See Sec. 71-24</u>		A	A	A			
<u>Accessory Dwelling Unit on the ground floor in the rear 50% of a building when there is an existing and active permitted principal use in the front of the building</u>					A		
<u>Group Homes – See Sec. 71-25</u>		■	■	■			
1 <u>detached</u> dwelling unit per lot ¹		■	■	■	■		
2 <u>attached</u> dwelling units per lot ¹		■	■	■	■		
4 <u>attached</u> dwelling units per lot ¹		S	■	■	■		
8 <u>attached</u> dwelling units per lot ¹		S	S	■	■		
More than 8 <u>attached</u> dwelling units per lot ¹		S	S	S	■		

¹Residential dwelling units located on the ground floor/first floor/street level in the D Downtown District are prohibited.

- Permitted use ■
- Temporary use T
- Accessory use A
- Special use permit S
- Prohibited use blank space

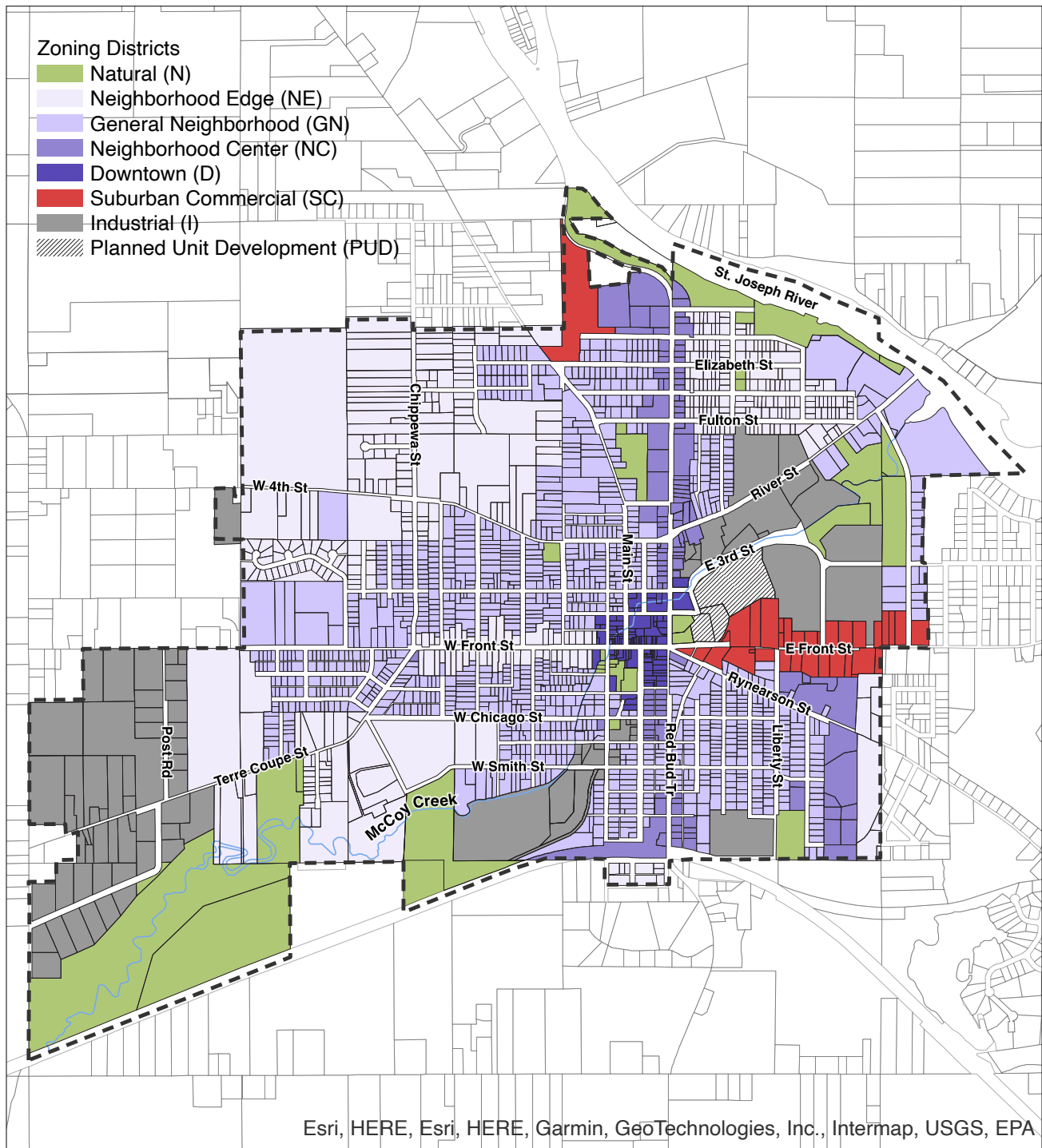


Figure 71-A Buchanan Zoning Map