

City of Columbus Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Rewrite

**Plan Commission
November 13, 2025**



**VANDEWALLE &
ASSOCIATES INC.**

Tonight's Goals

- Review and provide feedback on draft:
 - Zoning Districts
 - Bulk Dimension Standards
 - Land Uses

Familiarize Plan Commission with “core elements” of the new code before reviewing the full draft text and the zoning map.

Proposed Reorganization of the Zoning Code

	Proposed Outline
Article 1	Introduction and Definitions
Article 2	Establishment of Zoning Districts ←
Article 3	Land Use Regulations ←
Article 4	Bulk Regulations ←
Article 5	Nonconforming Situations
Article 6	Performance Standards
Article 7	Exterior Building Design Standards
Article 8	Landscaping Requirements
Article 9	Sign Ordinance
Article 10	Administration and Procedures

Review
Today

Part 1

Part 2

Draft New Zoning Districts

Zoning Districts – Residential

Existing Zoning District	Proposed New Zoning District	Rationale/Land Use Types
RD	Remove	Doesn't reflect community's housing goals
R-1	SR-1 and SR-2	Variation in lot size to reflect modern development
R-2 & R-3	MR-1	Single-family, duplex, twin home, two-flat, smaller-scale multi-family
R-4	MR-2	Single-family, duplex, twin home, two-flat, smaller-scale multi-family
R-5	MH	Mobile Home

Zoning Districts – Commercial/Mixed Use & Industrial

Existing Zoning District	Proposed New Zoning District	Rationale/Land Use Types
CBD-1	DMU	Downtown
B-2 & B-3	CMU	Commercial corridors
P	INST	Government and non-profits
NEW	BP	Business parks with higher design standards
I-1	LI	Industry without higher design standards like (BP)
I-2	Remove	Consolidate into LI and HI
NEW	HI	Rezone required for heavy uses

Zoning Districts – Other & Overlays

Existing Zoning District	Proposed New Zoning District	Rationale/Land Use Types
NEW	AG	Rural Holding, Annexation, Remnant
NEW	PR	
CON	C	Environmental
NEW	IOA	Rezone for high impact uses

Draft Bulk Dimension and Land Use Tables

Bulk Dimension and Land Use Tables

Draft requirements for new zoning districts. Each table provides comparison to existing zoning district standards.

Bulk Dimension Table

- Lot sizes, setbacks, lot coverage, heights, principal + accessory

Land Use Table

- Permitted by-right, permitted with CUP, or prohibited in each District

Navigating the Bulk Dimension Table

Existing Zoning District Category	RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS			
Proposed Zoning District:	<i>Remove</i>	SR-1	SR-2	MR-1
Existing Zoning District:	RD	R-1	NEW	R-2 & R-3
Purpose of the Zoning District:	Rural Development District (New Large-Lot)	Single Family Residential	Single Family Residential	Mixed Residential Low Density
Density and Intensity Limits:				
Maximum Buildable Area (% of lot) Maximum Impervious Surface Percentage of Lot		30% (60%)	70%	40%/40% (70%)
Lot Requirements:				
Minimum Lot Area (square feet)	87,120	12,150 (8,000)	5,000	9,000 (single-family) 12,000 (two-family) /7,000 (single-family) 12,000 (two-family) (5,000 or 3,000)**
Minimum Lot Width at Front Setback Line (feet)	270	90 (60)	50	75/50 (50 or 25)**
Minimum Lot Depth (feet)	110	110 (None)	None	110/110 (None)
Minimum Lot Frontage at Right-of-Way		30	30	30
Minimum Floor Area (square feet by unit type)		None	None	600sf (two-family)/600sf (two-family) (None)
Minimum Lot size per unit (square feet)		None	None	None
Minimum Unit Count		None	None	None

- **Black** is EXISTING
- ***Black Italic*** is REMOVE EXISTING
- **Red** is NEW
- Example:
 - Existing R-1
 - Proposed SR-1
 - Min. existing lot area is 12,150 sf
 - Min. proposed lot area is 8,000 sf
- Proposed to remove minimum floor area, etc.

Navigating the Land Use Table

Zoning District Category	RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS			
Proposed Zoning District:	Remove	SR-1	SR-2	MR-1
Existing Zoning District:	RD	R-1	NEW	R-2 & R-3
Purpose of the Zoning District:	Single Family Large Lot	Single Family Residential	Single Family Residential	Mixed Residential Low Density
Accessory Land Uses				
Accessory Dwelling Unit		P	P	P
Communication Antenna		P	P	P
Company Cafeteria				
Detached Residential Accessory Structure		P	P	P
Drive-Through Facility, Accessory				
Electric Vehicle Charging		P	P	P
Farm Residence				
Garage, Private	P	P	P	P
Garage, Public				
Garage, Storage	C			
Home Occupation	C	C (P)	C (P)	C (P)

- **Black** is EXISTING
- ***Black Italic*** is REMOVE EXISTING
- **Red** is NEW
- Example:
 - R-1 District → “Accessory Dwelling Unit” prohibited
 - SR-1 District → “Accessory Structure” is a permitted use
 - Home Occupation was a Conditional Use, now proposed Permitted

Big Picture Proposed Change

- Significantly fewer overall CUPs (now oriented to permitted by right or not permitted)
 - If CUP meets requirements of the ordinance, it really can't be denied without finding substantive evidence (facts).
- Grouped land use categories
- Simplify regulations – less standards

Discussion Items

We will have an opportunity to discuss these and more with Part 1.

Bulk Standards:

1. Reduced setbacks and lot sizes
2. Simplify standards
3. Increase height
4. Residential accessory structures
5. Design considerations
6. Reduce CUPs for flexibility

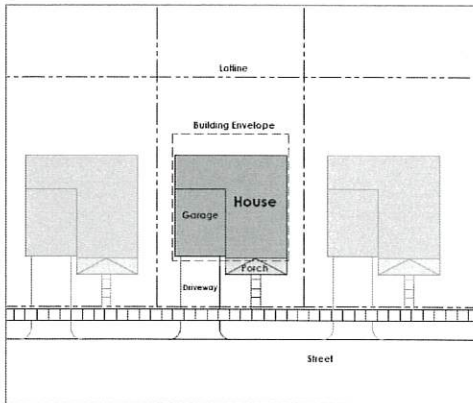
Land Uses:

1. Land Use Definitions
2. High Intensity Zoning District
3. Mixed Use
4. Accessory Land Uses

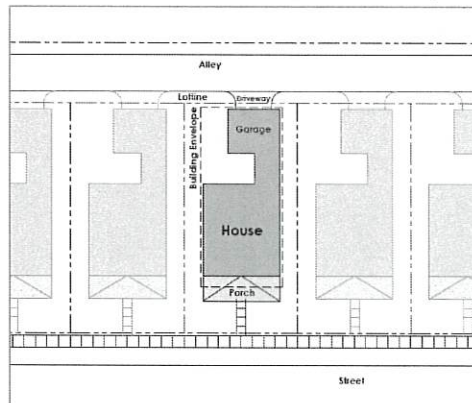
1. Reduced Setbacks and Lot Sizes

- **Issue:** large setback and lot size requirements that is greater than existing development patterns and has required a PUD for new development.
- **Alternative Approach:** reduce standards to reflect existing development patterns and enable new development without the need for a PUD

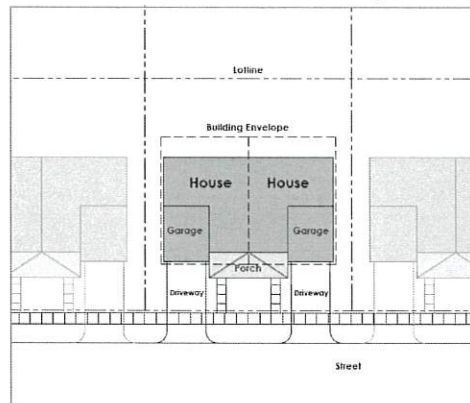
Smaller Lot Single-Family



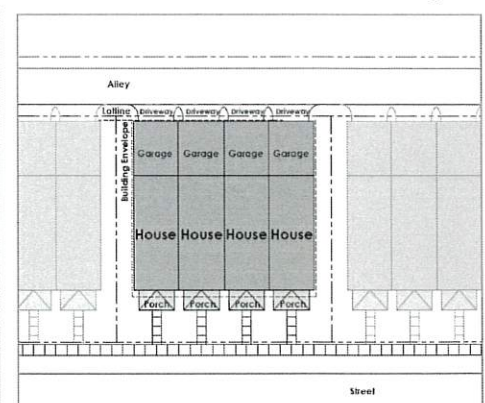
Rear Accessed Single-Family



Smaller Lot Two-Family

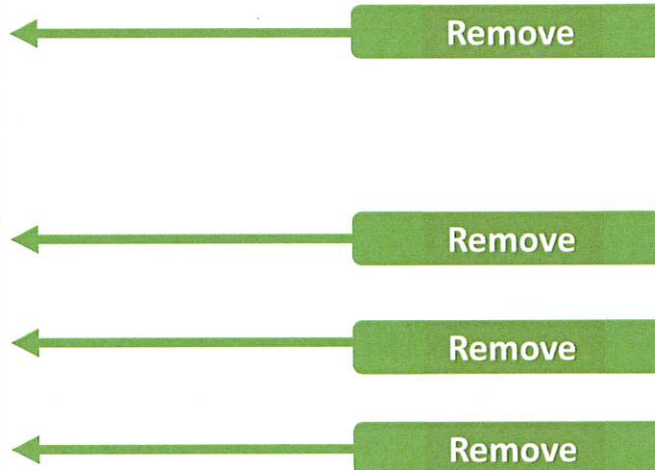


Rear Accessed Multi-Family



2. Simplify Standards

Lot Requirements:
Minimum Lot Area (square feet)
Minimum Lot Width at Front Setback Line (feet)
Minimum Lot Depth (feet)
Minimum Lot Frontage at Right-of-Way
Minimum Floor Area (square feet by unit type)
Minimum Lot size per unit (square feet)
Minimum Unit Count



3. Increased Height

- Heights don't match number of stories permitted: average floor to ceiling per story height is 12'-14' + roof type and roof elements (+/- 5')

Existing Zoning District	Existing Height Maximum	Draft New Zoning District	Proposed Height Maximum
R-1	35	SR-1 and SR-2	35 and 2.5 stories
R-2 and R-3	35/35	MR-1	45 and 3 stories
R-4	Formula for exceedance past 30 feet	MR-2	60 and 4 stories

3. Increased Height

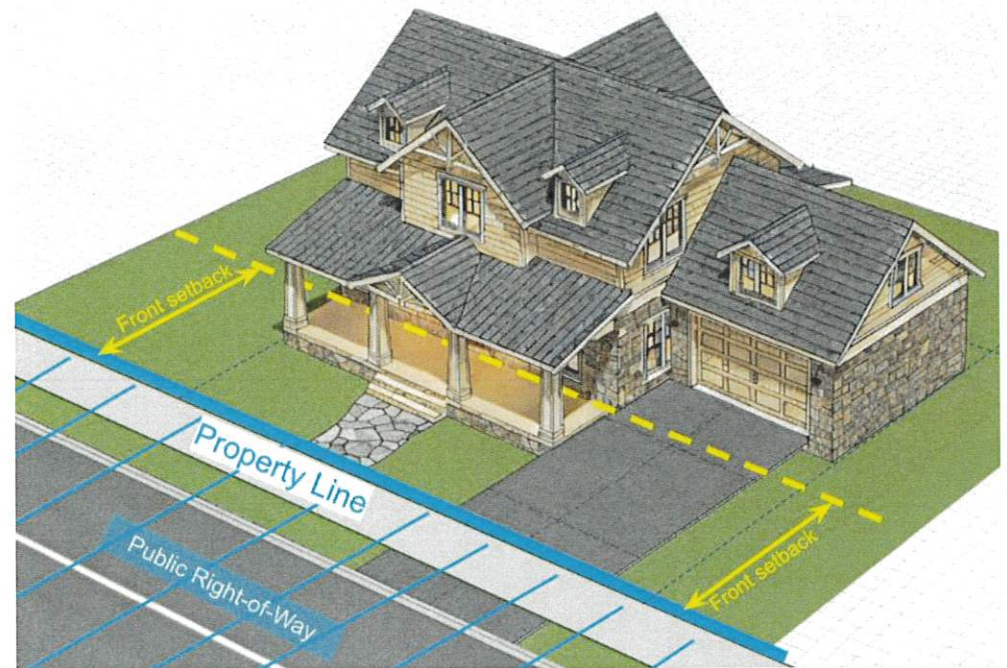
- **Issue:** limited maximum heights for multi-family, commercial, mixed-uses and industrial development today that don't reflect actual construction heights for number of stories permitted.
- **Alternative Approach:** increase height to accommodate taller development and reflect actual construction heights, use stories and max height to reflect the desired outcome, and may use Zoning Map Amendment process to allow taller buildings (MR-2: 4 stories).

4. Accessory Structures

- **Issue:** Code uses special exceptions for taller heights and more lot coverage
- **Alternative:** Avoid special exceptions. Build in predicable standards.
 - Building separation – default to building code
 - Use impervious surface standard instead of 35% lot coverage
 - Height for accessory structures, different if meeting principal setbacks

5. Design Considerations

- Issue: Residential design standards silent on garages/porches.
- Alternative Approach
 - Allow flexible porch protrusion



5. Design Considerations

- Issue: Residential design standards silent on garages/porches.
- Alternative Approach
 - Limit garage protrusion



6. Reduce CUPs for Flexibility

- **Issue:** Many instances where CUPs are relied on for flexibility
 - Example: existing Institutional district
- **Alternative:** Use predictable standards

1. Land Use Definitions

- **Issue:** too many specific land uses – increased complexity, interpretation challenges

- **Alternative:** group land uses with examples and specific definitions

Example: Indoor Institutional

vs.

Religious Assembly
School, Elementary or Secondary
School, Specialty or Personal Instruction
Social Service Facility
Cultural Institution
Library

Example: Heavy Industrial or
Light Industrial

vs.

Small Scale Data Center
Large Scale Center
Accessory Data Center

Example in LI?
Example in HI?
Accessory Land Use?

2. High Intensity Zoning District

- **Issue:** may be required to approve a CUP
- **Alternative:** use a rezone approach for high intensity uses (greater legislative discretion)

Example:
Quarry

- Remove C
- Allow in IOA Only

Zoning District Category	RESIDENTIAL				INDUSTRIAL			OTHER	
	ZONING DISTRICTS				ZONING DISTRICTS			ZONING DISTRICTS	
	Remove	SR-1	SR-2	MR-1	LI	Remove	HI	CON	IOA
Proposed Zoning District:	RD	R-1	NEW	R-2 & R-3	I-1	I-2	NEW	C	NEW
Existing Zoning District:	Single Family Large Lot	Single Family Residential	Single Family Residential	Mixed Residential Low Density	Light Industrial	General Industrial	Heavy Industrial	Conservancy	Intensive Outdoor Activity
Purpose of the Zoning District:									
Institutional Land Uses									
Adult Family Home	P	P	P	P					
Ambulance Service					C	C			
Assisted Living Facility									
Active Outdoor Recreation		(P/C) P	P	(P/C) P	(P/C) P	(P/C)	P	P (P)	P
Cemetery or other Place of Interment	C	C		C					
Extraction and Disposal Land Uses									
Composting					P		P		P
Extraction	C	C		C	C	C		C	P
Material recycling facility									
Material reclamation facility					C	C			
Mixed-waste processing facility					C	C			
Salvage or Junkyard									P

3. Mixed Use

- **Issue:** no apartments in business districts, mixed use requires CUP outside of downtown
- **Alternative:** allow mixed use buildings and residential in the downtown and all business districts

Policy:

- Should we prohibit apartments in downtown?
- Add detail: limits on ground floor residential in downtown?

Zoning District Category	BUSINESS ZONING DISTRICTS		
	DMU	CMU	INST
Proposed Zoning District:	CBD-1	B-2 & B-3	P
Existing Zoning District:	Downtown Mixed Use	Corridor Mixed Use	Institutional
Residential Land Uses			
Apartments/Multiplex	P	P	
Boarding House Living Arrangement	C (C)	C	C
Mobile Home			
Single Family Dwelling (1 unit)	C		
Townhouse (no unit maximum)		P	
Twin House/Duplex/Two-Flat (2 units)		P	
Mixed-Use Land Uses			
Live/Work Unit	P	P	P
Mixed Use Building	P (P)	C (P)	P

4. Accessory Land Uses

- **Issue:** not many accessory uses
- **Alternative:** improve interpretation, flexibility, address modern uses

Zoning District Category	RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS						BUSINESS ZONING DISTRICTS		
Proposed Zoning District:	Remove	SR-1	SR-2	MR-1	MR-2	MH	DMU	CMU	INST
Existing Zoning District:	RD	R-1	NEW	R-2 & R-3	R-4	R-5	CBD-1	B-2 & B-3	P
Purpose of the Zoning District:	Single Family Large Lot	Single Family Residential	Single Family Residential	Mixed Residential Low Density	Mixed Residential High Density	Mobile Home District	Downtown Mixed Use	Corridor Mixed Use	Institutional
Accessory Land Uses									
Accessory Dwelling Unit		P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Communication Antenna		P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Company Cafeteria							P	P	P
Detached Residential Accessory Structure		P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Drive-Through Facility, Accessory							C	C	
Electric Vehicle Charging		P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Farm Residence									
Garage, Private	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Garage, Public								P	
Garage, Storage	C							P	P
Home Occupation	C	C (P)	C (P)	C (P)	C (P)	C (P)	C (P)	C (P)	P
Incidental Commercial Entertainment							P	P	P
Incidental Indoor Sales							P	P	P
Incidental Light Industrial							P	P	P
Incidental Outdoor Display and Sales							P	P	P

Next Steps

Draft Part 1

- V&A Draft Part 1
- Review with Staff
- Review with Plan Commission

Process

Timing	Project Phase
Summer 2025	Information and Input Gathering and Issues Identification
Fall 2025	Development New Zoning Districts, Land Uses, and Bulk Standards
Fall/Winter 2025/26	Prepare Draft Ordinance
Spring 2026	Review Drafts with City Staff, Plan Commission, and City Council
Summer 2026	Public Review of Drafts Prepare for Adoption of the New Zoning Ordinance and Map

Questions?

Key Issues

Key Issues to Address

- 1) Address **housing barriers** and bulk dimensional standards
 - Greater housing choices
- 2) Increase **user-friendliness** and improve **consistency**
 - Easier to use, navigate, and administer
- 3) Allow a **mix of uses and promote infill and redevelopment**
 - Mix of uses in the same building and site, is residential permitted on the ground floor
- 4) Defined **exterior building design and landscaping** standards
 - Modernize standards and approach
- 5) Update and standardize **performance standards**
 - Increase clarity, expectations, and approach

Key Issues to Address

6) Address **parking requirements**

- Reduce minimums, explore maximums, and ideas for bike parking

7) Make ordinance **compliant with state and federal laws**

- Avoid legal issues in administration and practice

8) Update **definitions for increased clarity**

- Resolve existing administration issues

9) Modernize **Subdivision Code**

- Reorganization, integration with zoning, best practices

10) Determine best-fit **impervious surface** approach

- Balance flexibility with flooding impacts