

City of Columbus Zoning Code Update Project Check In & Review

**Joint Plan Commission &
Common Council Meeting
May 19, 2026**

Meeting Purpose

•Today

- Review the project timeline and current project status
- Recap the Zoning Code Rewrite process and major themes
- Summarize Plan Commission policy direction to date
- Share focus group feedback on key themes and specific issues
- Discuss direction and obtain additional feedback from Council

Project Schedule

Timing	Project Phase
Fall 2025	Development New Zoning Districts, Land Uses, and Bulk Standards
Winter/Spring 2026	Prepare Draft Zoning Ordinance
Spring 2026	Project Progress Review
Summer 2026	Review Draft Zoning Ordinance with City Staff, Plan Commission, and City Council
Summer 2026	Revisions to Draft Ordinance and Map
Fall 2026	Prepare for Adoption of the New Zoning Ordinance and Map

Purpose for Zoning Code Rewrite

- Increase **user-friendliness, improve clarity, and correct errors**
- Match zoning standards to **fit existing development**, especially in older areas of the community
- **Address housing challenges** and provide greater flexibility/opportunity
- Reduce the reliance on **Conditional Use Permits**
- Address **state and federal law changes**
- Establish standards that **encourage high-quality development and promote mixed-use opportunities**

What We Heard: September 2025 Workshop

Public Support For Exploring New Standards Related To:

- **Parking:** reduce minimums, consider maximums, shared parking, bicycle parking
- **Housing:** multiple options for SF, TF, MF, ADUs, and mixed-use
- **Transportation:** standards for street connectivity, street alignment, sidewalks, bike/ped access
- **Building Design:** standards for downtown, corridors, multi-family
- **Landscaping/Screening:** standards for landscaping, trash and storage screening
- **Signs:** allow electronic messages and pylon signs

Zoning Evaluation & Audit Summary October 2025

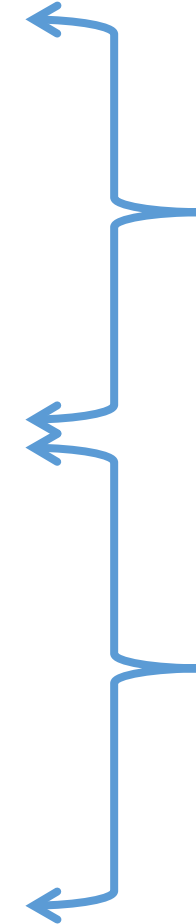
Key Recommendations:

- Reorganize the code
- New zoning districts
- Address housing challenges and provide greater flexibility
- Greatly reduce CUPs
- Modernize standards and legal compliance
- Streamline zoning process
- Improve user-friendliness (less jargon, clearer standards)
- Encourage high-quality development and promote mixed use

Code Organization

- Proposed Reorganization of the Zoning Code

- Article 1: Introduction
- 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: Signage
- Article 10: Administration and Procedures
- Article 11: Definitions



Part 1

Part 2

Proposed New Zoning Districts

- New names and mix of zoning districts
- Overlay zoning districts:
 - Environmental Corridor
 - Historic Preservation
 - Planned Development
 - Wastewater Treatment
 - Wellhead Protection

Residential Zoning Districts

SR-1	Single Family Residential – 1
SR-2	Single Family Residential – 2
MR-1	Multi-Family Residential – 1
MR-2	Multi-Family Residential – 2
MH	Mobile Home Residential

Nonresidential Zoning Districts

Mixed-Use

INST	Institutional
CMU	Corridor Mixed-Use
DMU	Downtown Mixed Use

Industrial

BP	Business Park
LI	Light Industrial
HI	Heavy Industrial

Other

PR	Parks and Recreation
C	Conservancy
IOA	Intensive Outdoor Activity

Agricultural

AG	Agricultural
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Overlay Zoning Districts

EC	Environmental Corridor
HP	Historic Preservation
PD	Planned Development
SW	Shoreland and Watercourse
WT	Wastewater Treatment
WP	Wellhead Protection

Example Big Change: CUPs

Significantly fewer overall CUPs. Now oriented toward permitted by-right or not permitted.

If CUP meets requirements of the ordinance, it really can't be denied without finding substantive evidence (facts).

- CUP requires public hearing, notice, and additional review steps
- Public hearing
 - Pro: notifies neighbors of situation
 - Con: in the face of all neighbors saying they are against it, Plan Commission may have to say yes

Example Big Change: User-Friendly Code

- Summary bulk table (dimensions)
- Summary land use table
- Simplified zoning district pages

- (1) **(SR-1) Single Family Residential-1 Zoning District.**
 - (a) Intent. This district is intended to create, preserve, and enhance areas for single family detached dwellings.
- (2) **(SR-2) Single Family Residential-2 Zoning District.**
 - (a) Intent. This district is intended to create, preserve, and enhance areas for single family detached dwellings at generally higher densities than the SR-1 district. This district is designed for smaller lot front-loaded homes but may accommodate alley-loaded homes.
- (3) **(MR-1) Mixed Residential-1 Zoning District.**
 - (a) Intent. This district is intended to create, preserve, and enhance areas for two family attached dwellings such as duplexes, twin homes, and two flats at generally higher densities than the SR-2 district.
- (4) **(MR-2) Mixed Residential-2 Zoning District.**
 - (a) This district is intended to create, preserve, and enhance areas for multi-family uses such as duplexes, townhomes, two-flat, townhomes, apartment, and multiplex dwellings at generally higher densities than the MR-1 district.

Sections 114.04.11 Table of Bulk Dimensions – Residential Zoning Districts

	SR-1	SR-2	MR-1	MR-2	MH
	<i>Single Family Residential</i>	<i>Single Family Residential</i>	<i>Mixed Residential</i>	<i>Mixed Residential</i>	<i>Mobile Home Residential</i>
Density and Intensity Limits					
Maximum Impervious Surface Percentage	60%	70%	70%	70%	70%
Lot Requirements					
Minimum Lot Area (1)	8,000 sq ft	5,000 sq ft	5,000 sq ft or 3,000 sq ft (1)	5,000 sq ft or 3,000 sq ft (1)	5,000 sq ft
Minimum Lot Width (at front setback line) (1)	60 ft	50 ft	50 ft or 25 ft (1)	50 ft or 25 ft (1)	50 ft
Minimum Lot Frontage at Right-of-Way	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft
Principal Building Setbacks					
Minimum Front Yard and Street Side Corner Setback	20 ft	15 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft

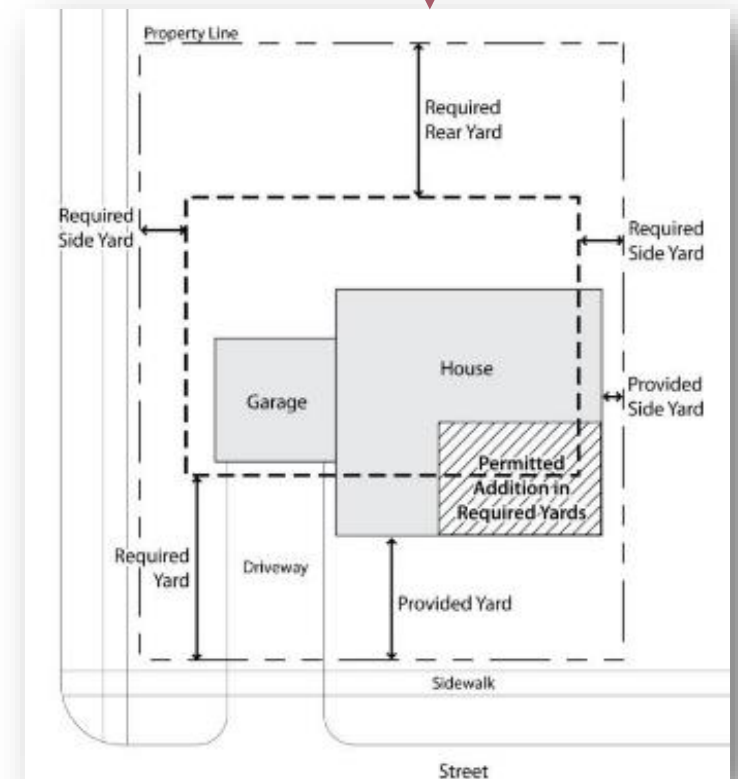
Bulk Dimensions Summary Table



Example Big Change: Residential

- New single-family districts
 - Smaller lots
- New multi-family districts
 - Accommodates greater densities by right
- New accessory uses (ADU, Short Term Rental)
- Unique situations:
 - Yard setback adjustments
 - Projections into required yards

Illustrative Diagrams



Example Housing Change: Accessory Dwelling Units

Existing Code

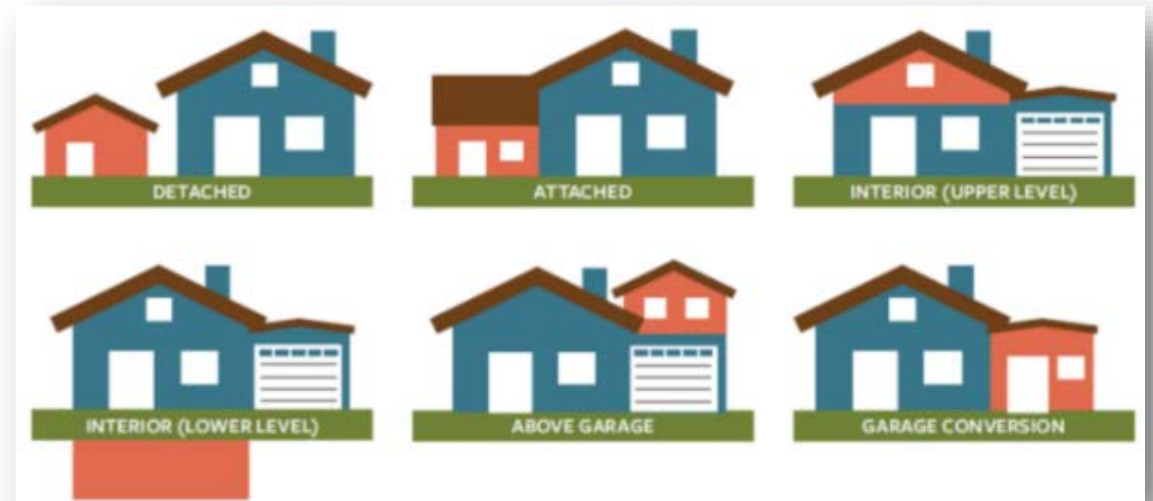
- Not permitted

Draft Code Approach

- Permitted use in residential zoning districts
- Distinct from In-Family Suites, which are internal to an existing dwelling

Key ADU Standards

- Maximum 1 ADU per lot, limited to one family
- Detached ADUs must be in rear/side yard, meet setbacks, with walkway/driveway
- ADU cannot be sold separately and must not exceed 800 sf



Example Housing/Redevelopment Change: Downtown Residential Land Uses

New DMU zoning district for downtown areas

Ground-floor use restrictions

- No ground floor residential in the downtown core with residential allowed outside of E. James St and Ludington St



Example Big Change: Reduced Parking Requirements

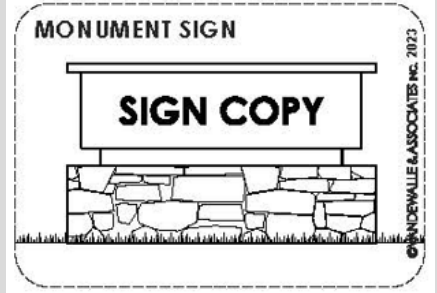

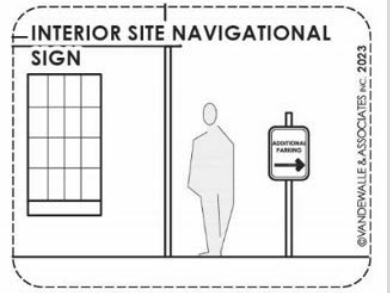
Category	Amount
Estimated Square Footage	14,000 sf
Existing Parking Requirement	Minimum: 70 spots
Existing Parking On Site	75 spots
New Parking Requirement	Minimum: 28 spots Maximum: 42 spots

Existing: Five spaces per 1,000 square feet, in excess of 2,000 square feet* (for retail establishments, under 60,000 square feet in size)
Min: 1 space per 500 square feet of gross floor area
Max 1.5 space per 500 square feet of gross floor area



**Commercial Parking:
Walgreens**

Signage: New Groups, Categories, and Types

Sign Group	Sign Categories	Sign Types	Example
Permanent Business Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freestanding On-Building Pedestrian Changeable Copy 	Monument, Dual Post, Pylon Wall, Awning, Canopy, Marquee, Projecting Suspended Menu Board, Sandwich, Bulletin, Drive-Thru	 <p>MONUMENT SIGN</p> <p>SIGN COPY</p> <p>©VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC. 2023</p>
Other Business Signs (Temporary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Window Board/Banner Flag/Feather Development 	Window Board, Banner Flag, Feather Active Building, Active Plat	 <p>BANNER SIGN</p> <p>SIGN COPY</p> <p>©VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC. 2023</p>
Misc. Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Guidance Placemaking Yard 	On-Building Locational, Interior Site Navigation Metal Plaque, Permanent Gateway, Community, Community Interior-Oriented Stake, Frame, Arm and Post	 <p>INTERIOR SITE NAVIGATIONAL SIGN</p> <p>ADDITIONAL PARKING</p> <p>©VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC. 2023</p>

Overarching Signage Changes

Consolidated Sign Types – Content Neutral

- Personal Message, Home Improvement, Real Estate, Temporary Open House, Sold, Election, Yard Sale= Yard Signs

Retained Requirements That Work

- Maximum size, location, number per site/building, etc.

Increased User-Friendliness

- Tables, diagrams, examples

Less Interpretations/Ambiguity

- Definitions, metrics-based standards, signs in ROW and off-premise prohibited

Expedited Approval Time

- Staff approval for most sign types

Focus Group Feedback April 2026

- Supportive of standards that promote additional housing development.
- Smaller lots
- No explicit housing unit cap based on density metric
- ADUs permitted use
- Reduced parking requirements
- Supportive of objective design review standards for the downtown
- Supportive of revised (clearer) processes and illustrative diagrams, tables, charts

Next Steps and Other Questions

Next Steps

Future Plan Commission Working Meetings:

- Zoning Map
- Draft Part 2 Design & Landscaping

Future Council Working Meeting:

- Full Draft Review