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Judson Rex

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STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date:	July 14, 2026
Agenda Title:	ZOTA-26-1 – Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Central Business District Lodging, Clubs and Lodges
Requested Action:	Hold a Work Session and a Public Hearing
Department / Agency Lead:	Community Development
Staff Lead:	Heather Jenkins, Zoning Administrator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 14, 2026, Town Council adopted a Resolution to initiate a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to Articles 3, 9 and 12 to allow Hotels of up to 30 or 40 rooms, as well as Clubs and Lodges, as Permitted (by-right) uses in the Central Business District (CBD). On June 16, 2026, the Planning Commission recommended approval (three aye, one nay) to allow Hotels not exceeding 40 rooms, as well as Inns, Bed and Breakfasts, and Tourist Homes, as Permitted, by-right uses in the CBD, subject to new parking standards in Article 9. Currently, the Zoning Ordinance allows Hotels of up to 75 rooms, as well as Clubs and Lodges, as Permissible uses within the Central Business District, requiring the approval of a Special Use Permit by Town Council.

BACKGROUND

The Zoning Ordinance allows for multiple types of lodging uses within the Central Business District, to include Hotels and Motels, not exceeding 75 rooms, as well as the smaller lodging uses of Inns, Bed and Breakfasts, and Tourist Homes. These lodging uses require the approval of a Special Use Permit from Town Council. Additionally, the Ordinance also allows Clubs and Lodges within the Central Business District with the approval of a Special Use Permit.

The proposed Zoning Text Amendment, as recommended for approval by the Planning Commission, will allow smaller lodging uses as Permitted, by-right uses in the Central Business District, while still requiring that Hotels above 40 rooms, and up to a maximum of 75 rooms, be allowed as a Permissible use, with the approval of a Special Use Permit. Clubs and Lodges, under the text recommended by the Planning Commission, will remain as a Permissible use, requiring the approval of a Special Use Permit by Town Council. A table to summarize the existing approval process and the approval process as recommended by the Planning Commission is as follows:

Use	Current Approval Process	Approval Process per Planning Commission Recommendation	Change in Approval Process
Inns	Special Use Permit	Permitted (by-right)	Revised to an Administrative Approval
Bed & Breakfasts	Special Use Permit	Permitted (by-right)	
Tourist Homes	Special Use Permit	Permitted (by-right)	
Hotels not exceeding 40 Rooms	N/A (new use category)	Permitted (by-right)	
Clubs & Lodges	Special Use Permit	Special Use Permit	No Change
Hotels and motels, not exceeding 75 Rooms	Special Use Permit	Special Use Permit	

The Central Business District

The Central Business District, as a separate zoning district, was established in 1976, as a part of the adoption of the newly revised Zoning Ordinance of the time, and encompasses the central, historic portion of the Town, radiating out from the intersection of Culpeper Street, Waterloo Street, Winchester Street, and Alexandria Pike. The majority of the Central Business District is encompassed by the Town's Historic District, with the exception of properties north of Horner Street and Spring Lane.

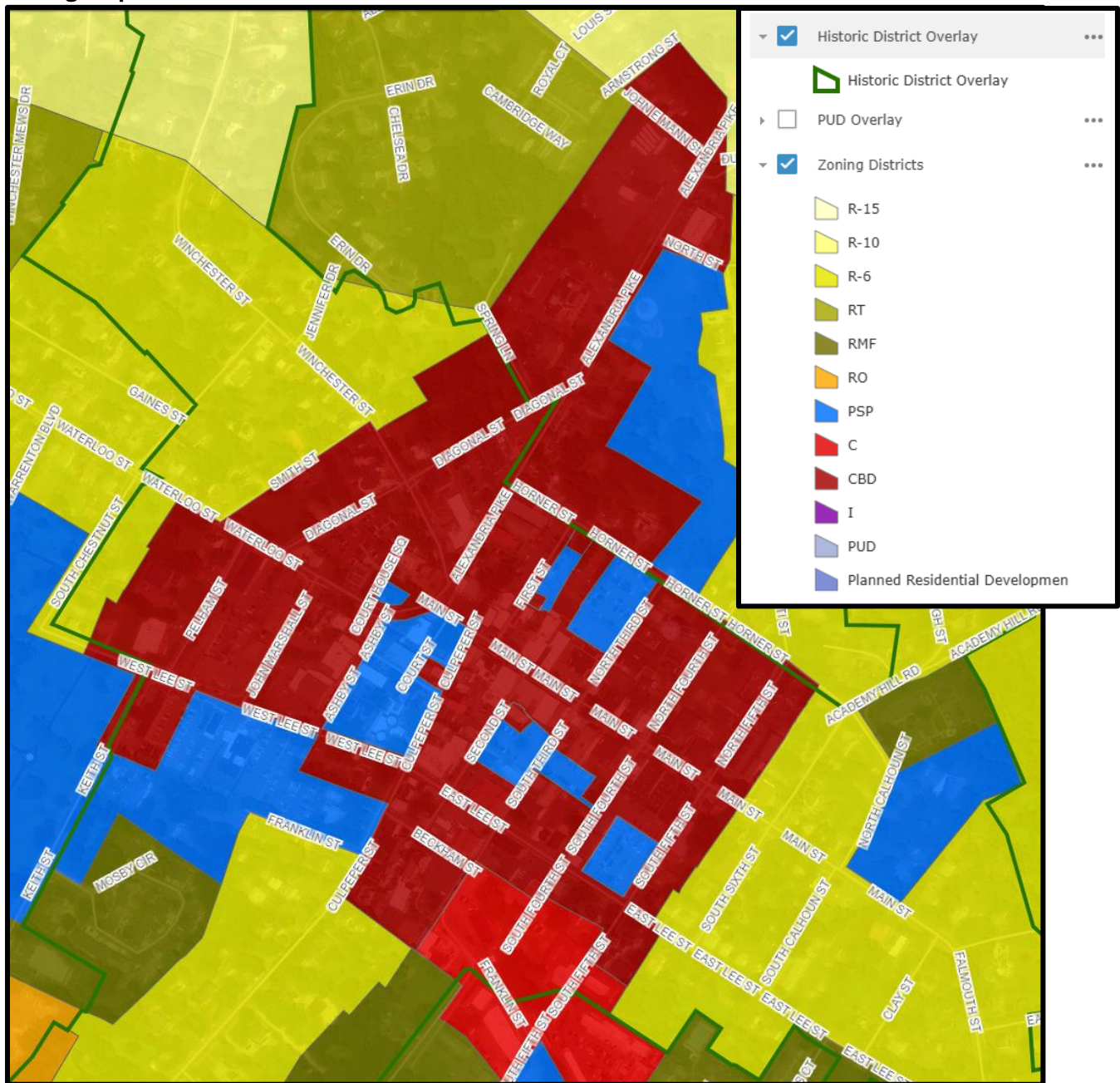
The Central Business District is described in Ordinance Section 3-4.11.1 *Legislative Intent* as:

Legislative Intent. *The intent of this district is to provide for orderly development, infill and revitalization of the central business and commerce area of the Town of Warrenton in accordance with objectives, policies, and proposals of the Comprehensive Plan of the Town; and for the logical and timely development of the land for primarily business purposes providing for higher density residential development, especially on the upper floors of structures on Main Street and encouraging a lively retail environment at the street level of Main Street. The district is designed to encourage the following:*

- *Re-use of existing buildings in ways that are compatible with and supportive of the purposes of the district and of the Comprehensive Plan.*
 - *Preservation of the unified, historic character of the district and its function as the retail and service center for Town citizens and visitors.*
 - *The creation and reinforcement of the street as a public space, defined by buildings fronting the street, to create a harmonious pedestrian environment for Town citizens and visitors.*
 - *Mixed uses within the district, including mixed uses within single structures.*
 - *A uniformity of design to ensure the orderly arrangement of buildings, land uses, and parking areas, and all construction hereafter proposed for this area.*
 - *A cohesive interrelationship of buildings in order to ensure a harmonious environment, allowing a degree of variety in building design provided said variety is within the overall historic, human-scale design framework of the district.*
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- Maximization of a beneficial interrelationship between vehicular facilities (streets and parking lots), pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, malls and plazas), and commercial establishments, with a particular focus on pedestrian, convenience and safety.
- The provision of adequate, appropriately located off-street parking facilities.
- The architectural design and arrangement of buildings and spaces so as to conform to the general character and plans of the district.

Zoning Map – Location of the Central Business District



Use Category Definitions

The use categories that are part of the text amendment are currently defined in Article 12 *Definitions* as:

Hotel: *A facility offering transient lodging accommodations for ten or more individuals on a daily rate and providing additional services, such as restaurants, meeting rooms, and recreational facilities (also see Motel).*

Motel: *A building or group of two (2) or more detached or semi-detached buildings containing rooms or apartments having separate entrances provided directly or closely in connection with automobile parking or storage space serving such rooms or apartments, which building or group of buildings is designed, intended, or used principally for the providing of sleeping accommodations for automobile travelers and is suitable for occupancy at all seasons of the year.*

Inn: *A single-family dwelling, portion thereof, or accessory building to, where short-term lodging is provided for compensation to transient guests only. Additional services, such as restaurants, meeting and event space, and recreational facilities may also be provided. The operator may or may not live on the premises. Up to twelve (12) guest rooms may be provided.*

Bed & Breakfast Facility: *A private residence, or portion thereof, where short-term lodging is provided for compensation (no longer than 14 consecutive days) and meals may be provided, to guests only. The operator of the facility shall live on the premises or in an adjacent premises on the same lot. Up to four (4) guest rooms without cooking facilities may be provided. [Also see Tourist Home; also see Inn]*

Tourist Home: *A dwelling where only lodging is provided for compensation for up to five (5) persons (in contradistinction to hotels and boardinghouses) and open to transients.*

Club: *Buildings and/or facilities owned and operated by a corporation, association, or persons, which serves as a gathering place for a group of individuals organized for a common purpose to pursue common goals, interests, or activities and characterized by certain membership qualifications, payment of fees and dues, regular meetings, and a constitution of by-laws.*

Lodge: *(see Club)*

The Zoning Ordinance currently allows for Hotels and Motels, not exceeding 75 rooms, as a Permissible Use that requires the approval of a Special Use Permit by Town Council, under Ordinance Section 3-4.11.3 *Permissible Uses*. This text amendment proposes to create a new subset of Hotels, of up to 30 or 40 rooms as initiated by Town Council, to be allowed as a by-right use under Ordinance Section 3-4.11.2 *Permitted Uses*; Hotels with more than 30 or 40 rooms, and up to 75 rooms, would continue to require the approval of a Special Use Permit. Hotels and Motels have been required to obtain a Special Use Permit to authorize their use since the 1976 Ordinance; this proposed text amendment would remove the legislative approval requirement for smaller hotel facilities within the Central Business District.

The current Zoning Ordinance allows for Clubs and Lodges as a Permissible Use that requires the approval of a Special Use Permit by Town Council, under Ordinance Section 3-4.11.3 *Permissible Uses*. As originally initiated by Town Council, this text amendment proposes to entirely relocate the Clubs and Lodges use

category from a Permissible Use to a Permitted, by-right use under Ordinance Section 3-4.11.2 *Permitted Uses*, and remove the legislative approval requirement for these uses altogether within the Central Business District. However, as recommended for approval by the Planning Commission, Clubs and Lodges would remain as a Permissible Use requiring the approval of a Special Use Permit; under this scenario, Clubs and Lodges that are accessory to another Permitted by-right use would not require a Special Use Permit.

Required Minimum Parking

Minimum required parking spaces are regulated by Zoning Ordinance Article 7 *Off-Street Parking and Loading*. Not all use categories listed as Permitted or Permissible uses in Article 3 are represented in Article 7, and so in some cases the minimum number of off-street parking spaces must be based off of the closest-available use category, based on parking demand information provided by the developer, or based off of research such as the requirements in other jurisdictions, as is permitted in Ordinance Section 7-8 *Uses Not Specifically Covered by this Schedule*. Minimum required parking spaces for those uses that are a part of or similar to those uses included in this text amendment are as follows:

Use Category	Minimum Parking Requirement	Ordinance Section
Hotel or Motel	One (1) space per room, plus one (1) space for each employee calculated for the work period containing the largest number of employees, plus additional spaces for restaurants.	Sec. 7-6 <i>Commercial Uses</i>
Restaurants, Sit Down	One (1) space per two hundred fifty (250) square feet of gross floor area.	Sec. 7-6 <i>Commercial Uses</i>
Civic Club or Org.	One (1) space per four (4) members, based on the designed occupancy load.	Sec. 7-4 <i>Institutional and Community Service Uses</i>
Country Club	One (1) space per four (4) members, based on the designed occupancy load.	Sec. 7-5 <i>Recreational Uses</i>

Parking for businesses located in the Central Business District are afforded additional flexibility beyond that allowed in other zoning districts, as included in Ordinance Section 7-9 *Special Parking Considerations for the CBD District*. This flexibility allows up to a 50% parking reduction through either reserved spaces in an off-site parking lot within 500 feet of the use, and/or a contribution to the Town's parking fund.

7-9.1 Off-Site Parking in CBD

In the Central Business District, up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the parking requirement for any use may be provided on an off-site parking lot located so long as it is within five hundred (500) feet of the use and the owner or applicant of the use provides to the Zoning Administrator a deed restriction, contract, easement, or some form of written agreement showing that the parking lot will remain available at such off-site location.

7-9.2 Parking Credit in CBD

In the Central Business District, in addition to the off-site parking provisions in Section 7-9.1, an owner or applicant may contribute to the Town's Downtown Parking Fund in lieu of providing up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the otherwise required parking for the site. Such fee shall be in accord with a fee schedule adopted by the Town Council.

Further flexibility is allowed for those uses that are located within 300 feet of a municipal parking lot, where a use may receive approval to forgo up to 100% of the minimum required parking spaces, as allowed by Ordinance Section 7-13 *Proximity to Municipal Parking Lots*. Section 7-13 waives all minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses as long as the use is within 300 feet of a Town-owned parking lot. The flexibility offered in Ordinance Article 7 to non-residential uses in the Central Business District has the potential to completely waive all minimum parking requirements for a business. The specific location of any proposed Hotel, Club or Lodge in relation to an off-site parking lot or Town-owned parking lot would have to be determined with each individual application for that use.

7-13 Proximity to Municipal Parking Lots

Any building or use located within three hundred (300) feet of an existing municipally-operated parking lot shall be exempt from the provisions of this Article. A parking demand study shall be required for the establishment of any new residential uses utilizing municipal parking lot spaces for required parking. The parking demand study shall include weekdays and both weekend days, parking availability at peak times, and the distance to the nearest municipal parking lot via a clear pedestrian path.

The Central Business District currently includes approximately 641 off-street parking spaces located in municipal parking lots, inclusive of all time-restricted, unrestricted, and handicapped parking spaces. The location of these municipal parking lots are shown in the 2017 Parking Study Map, as copied herein. As a note, this map does not include the 39 parking spaces located behind 21 Main Street/Town Hall, as this parking lot was not owned by the Town when the 2017 parking study was completed.

2017 Parking Study Map – Municipal Parking Lot Locations



As a part of the Planning Commission's recommendation of approval, additional standards for parking are included in Article 9 as a new section; these additional standards require that any lodging use of more than twelve (12) rooms within the Central Business District provide parking spaces that are either located on the same property as the lodging use, or located on a separate property and made available through a parking agreement. These new parking standards were proposed by the Planning Commission so as to offset potential parking demand in municipal parking lots that could reduce available parking for other uses in the Central Business District.

The parking requirements for by-right lodging uses in the Central Business District as recommended by the Planning Commission are more strict than the existing parking requirements for non-residential uses in the Central Business District as allowed by Article 7. The proposed standards remove the ability for a by-right lodging business to use existing municipal parking spaces to completely waive all on-site parking requirements as currently allowed by Ordinance Section 7-13 *Proximity to Municipal Parking Lots*. Under the parking standards recommended by the Planning Commission, any by-right Hotel use must either provide on-site parking, provide off-site parking on a private lot via a parking agreement, or request a modification of these requirements from Town Council via a legislative approval process.

Proposed Additional Parking Requirements as Recommended by the Planning Commission:

9-26 Lodging Uses in the Central Business District (CBD)

Hotels not exceeding 40 rooms, Inns, Bed & Breakfasts, and Tourist Homes, as defined in Article 12, are permitted in the Central Business District (CBD), subject to the following additional standards.

9-26.1 Additional Standards

- A. A site development plan, meeting the requirements of Article 10 Site Development Plans, must be submitted for review and approval. The site development plan must demonstrate that:
 - 1. Parking, equivalent to 0.75 parking spaces per room for rent, is provided on the same parcel or lot as the lodging use, and/or provided via an off-site parking agreement that will assure the permanent availability of such spaces.
 - a. Off-site parking spaces must be located within a 500-foot radius of the lodging use, and provide for safe and convenient pedestrian access to and from the lodging use. Any improvements to existing pedestrian facilities that are required to provide safe and convenient access to and from the lodging use are the responsibility of the developer.
 - b. This minimum parking requirement must be met regardless of any parking reductions or credits that may be available for other permitted or permissible uses in the Central Business District as found in Article 7 Off-Street Parking and Loading.
 - c. Any off-site parking agreement used to satisfy the minimum parking requirement must be provided to the Zoning Administrator for review and approval as a part of the required site development plan submittal.
 - d. A modification or waiver to this parking requirement may be granted by Town Council upon a recommendation from the Planning Commission, in accordance with the process as outlined in Article 11, Section 11-3.10 Special Use Permits and Waivers, or as a part of an application for a Zoning Map Amendment as regulated by Section 11-3.9 Zoning Amendments.
 - 2. A loading area is provided that is adequate for guest arrival/departure, luggage loading/unloading, deliveries, valet services, and other such similar activities that generate temporary, short-term vehicular trips.
 - a. For lodging uses with greater than 12 rooms for rent, the loading area must accommodate a minimum of 0.1 passenger vehicles per room for rent.
 - b. Vehicles using such loading area shall not impede traffic. Any use of the public right-of-way for such loading area must obtain a Right-of-Way Permit from the Department of Public Works.
- B. Any accessory use that is associated with the principal lodging use, such as restaurants, meeting rooms, clubs, lodges, or event space, must provide adequate parking for that use subject to the requirements of Article 7 Off-Street Parking and Loading, where these spaces are in addition to those parking spaces required under subsection A.1 above.

Ordinance Comparison – Neighboring Towns

Three comparable jurisdictions were reviewed by staff to compare the approval process for hotel uses, as summarized below. In both Purcellville and Culpeper, hotels are a by-right permitted use in zoning districts that are similar to the Central Business District; in Leesburg, hotels require a legislative approval process, although Leesburg does allow for a reduction in the number of parking spaces in the Community (Downtown) Business District (B-1), limited to one parking space per room, with no additional spaces required for employees or on-site restaurants.

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- Town of Purcellville – Hotels are permitted by-right in the mixed use and neighborhood scale districts (C-1, MC, C-4).
 - Town of Culpeper – Hotels are categorized as ‘Consumer Service – Indoor’, and are permitted by-right in all mixed-use districts (MX, NC, C).
 - Town of Leesburg – Hotels and Motels are permitted with the approval of a Special Exception in the Community (Downtown) Business District (B-1).
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Use Comparison – Similar Lodging Uses

Three existing lodging uses were reviewed by staff to compare the operating characteristics to the proposed text amendment conditions:

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- Chilton House, 97 Culpeper Street, Warrenton – The Chilton House was approved via Special Use Permit, case number SUP-16-06 on March 14, 2017. The approved use was for a Bed and Breakfast, with an approval condition that an owner/operator must reside on site. Currently the business operates as the Chilton House Suites, with the main ‘Manor’ containing five bedrooms, and the ‘Cottage’ containing 2 bedrooms, each able to be rented out either separately or together. Per the business website, the business currently operates without an operator on-site, with no breakfast service, and all booking handled remotely.
 - Suites at 249, 249 East Davis Street, Culpeper – The business is operated as ‘Suites at 249’, and includes six suites, where one suite has two bedrooms and the remainder are all one-bedroom. The business is advertised as a ‘contactless’ and ‘concierge-less’ ‘boutique hotel’, where all booking and inquiries are handled remotely, with no on-site operator. There are no designated parking spaces, except for the one two-bedroom suite, which has two dedicated on-site parking spaces; all other guest parking uses the public parking spaces available in the East Davis Street area.
 - Hilton Garden Inn, 15001 Washington Street, Haymarket – The Hilton Garden Inn is located at 15001 Washington Street, adjacent to the Haymarket Museum. The four-story hotel offers free parking on their website, and aerial maps show approximately 129 on-site parking spaces.
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests that the Town Council hold both a Work Session and a Public Hearing for this item. Should Town Council wish to make a final decision, an Ordinance to Approve and a Resolution to Deny have both been provided for consideration.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

Utility Service Provision

The entirety of the Central Business District is served by Town water and sewer services via the Department of Public Utilities. Should lodging uses be made into Permitted, by-right uses, these businesses would be served by Town-owned water and sewer.

Prior to commencing any new or more-intense use, administrative reviews and approvals by Town staff are required, to include review by the Department of Public Utilities of information such as water use and sewer generation calculations. In the case where no utility capacity exists to serve a proposed use, certificates of occupancy to commence that use could not be issued by Town staff.

Parking and Access

Parcels within the Central Business District are served by public roadways maintained by the Town. Due to the historic nature of the Central Business District area, public roadways or private accessways that serve a proposed Hotel or other new or more-intense use may need to be evaluated with a vehicle turn analysis or other detailed schematic with each individual application to ensure adequate access by emergency response vehicles.

In 2017 Walker Parking Consultants prepared a Parking Management Plan, that looked at the 'core' Old Town area and 'periphery' area surrounding Old Town that encompasses the Central Business District. The completed evaluation found that the peak use period of on-street and municipal lot parking spaces occurs during weekday 'office hours' of 8 AM to 5 PM, with more open parking spaces during evening and weekend hours. The Walker evaluation found that during the 2017 evaluation period that there was an operational surfeit of parking spaces.

According to the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition, the time when most vehicle trips are generated by either a hotel or restaurant is in the afternoon and evening hours, with a second morning peak associated with hotel check-outs. These peak traffic generation periods, where guests arrive during the afternoon and evening, park through the night, and then leave in the morning, are opposite of the expected peak traffic generation associated with weekday, daytime business traffic, where employees and customers park in public spaces during the day. Given these different use hours, parking demands generated by lodging uses are unlikely to interfere with parking needed to serve retail, commercial, and office uses.

Trash and Waste Removal

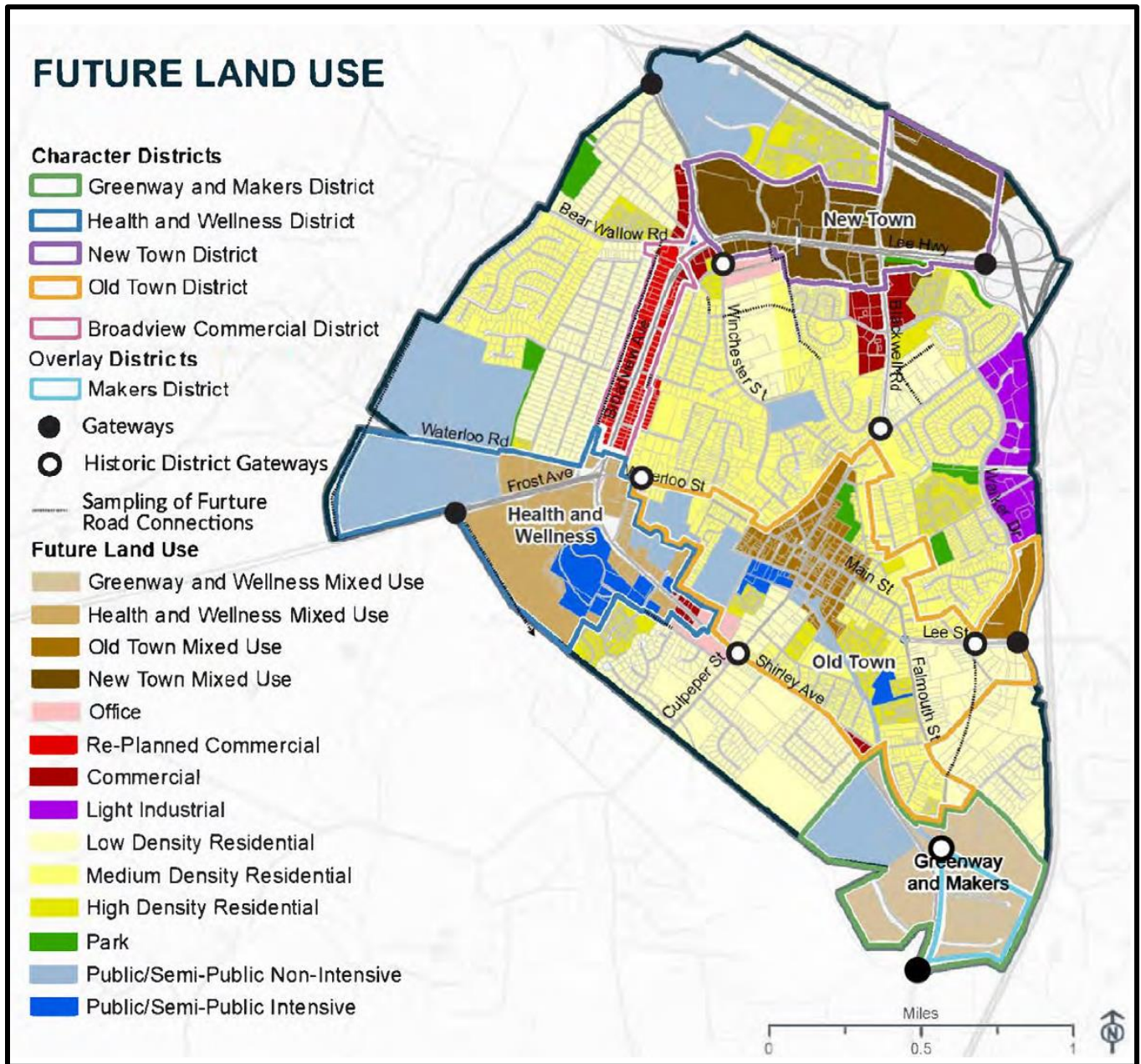
Trash pick-up is provided to businesses within the Central Business District/Historic District in accordance with Town Code, where such service is provided by the Department of Public Works.

Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

The Comprehensive Plan, Land Use and Character District, states that the intent of the Central Business District is to provide for orderly development, infill, and revitalization of the District, and recommends additional Live/Work and Mixed-Use Residential (with commercial at the ground level) to be allowed.

The Future Land Use Map shows the Central Business District zoning district to be located within the Old Town District Character District, and the Old Town Mixed Use Future Land Use Area. The Comprehensive

Plan describes the Old Town District as Warrenton will continue to promote Old Town as the signature, cultural, social, and historic hub. The Town will encourage infill housing and other adaptive reuse of structures to bring more foot traffic to Old Town, but maintain the historic character and scale.



Fiscal Impact

A Fiscal Impact assessment has not been completed.

Legal Impact

This text amendment as recommended by the Planning Commission will allow Hotels of up to 40 rooms, as well as the smaller lodging uses of Inns, Bed and Breakfasts, and Tourist Homes, as Permitted, by-right uses within the entirety of the Central Business District zoning district, where the use may be established with Administrative approval at the staff level with Site Development Plans and/or Zoning and Building Permits as regulated by Zoning Ordinance Sections 11-3.4 *Zoning Permits*, 11-3.5 *Building Permits*, 11-3.6 *Occupancy Permit*, and 11-3.7 *Site Development Plan*. This would remove the requirement for any such use in the Central Business District to obtain a Special Use Permit from the Town Council following public hearings as regulated in Zoning Ordinance Section 11-3.10 *Special Use Permits and Waivers*. However, as required by the proposed additional parking standards, any lodging use that could not meet the minimum required parking of 0.75 spaces per room for rent would be required to obtain a modification or waiver from Town Council via a public hearing process.

Where any proposed use is located in the Town's Historic District, any exterior changes to the structure or property requires the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness as regulated in Zoning Ordinance Section 3-5.3 *Historic District*.

ATTACHMENTS

- [Attachment A](#) – Ordinance to Adopt Text Amendment ZOTA-26-1
- [Attachment B](#) – Resolution to Deny Text Amendment ZOTA-26-1
- [Attachment C](#) – Planning Commission Staff Reports and Presentations