

How did the Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) for Mixed- Use Zoning District (MUZD) process get started in Prince William County?

On June 21, 2016, the Board of County Supervisors initiated a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to allow flexibility in the mix of uses and development standards for mixed-use developments. The initiation was at the recommendation of the Commercial Development Committee (CDC). The CDC was established by the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) to assist the County with developing recommendations to improve the development process for commercial projects.

The BOCS directed county staff to incorporate the following components of the mixed-use concept into the ZTA.

Mixed-use Zoning Districts – Allow flexibility in the mix of uses and development standards for mixed-use developments:

- Revise to current market standards (uses, definitions, buffers, etc.).
- Allow the market to determine the mix of industrial, commercial, and office.
- Create a separate development standards section for only mixed-use development.
- Address mixed uses within a single building.
- Add a mix of uses within industrial districts.
- Consider amending the B-1, General Business, and M-1, Heavy Industrial & M-2, Light Industrial zoning districts to allow indoor recreation facilities.
- Consider provisions for Floor Area Ratios (FAR) to allow them to be satisfied by multiple lots.

As a result of the BOCS's direction, Planning staff began moving forward with the research for ZTA DPA2016-00020, Mixed-Use Zoning District. Furthermore, Planning staff applied for and was successfully awarded a grant from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) Transportation Land-Use Connection (TLC) Program to procure a consulting firm (Renaissance Planning Group) to assist with the development of a report with recommendations as well as a Final Proposed Zoning Ordinance and DCSM text and graphics related to Mixed Use Zoning Districts.

What meetings or actions have taken place related to MUZD?

- On November 29, 2018, staff had a Kickoff meeting with Consultant
- On February 1, 2019, staff and consultant meet with CDC-DORT to discuss the MUZD process.

Development Ordinance Review Team (DORT) – The CDC formed the DORT to conduct a review of the County’s DCSM and Zoning Ordinance and identify changes or additions to be considered for adoption to further promote Prince William County as “Open for Business.”

- On March 15, 2019, staff held a Stakeholder’s meeting to discuss MUZD.
- On April 24, 2019, Planning staff held a Public Meeting
- On May 15, 2019, staff held a Planning Commission work-session on MUZD.

Next Steps include:

- On June 21, 2019, staff intends to present MUZD process to the CDC-DORT.
- Meet with Planning Commissioners one on one to review MUZD process.

Why the Need for Mixed Use Zoning District?

Current zoning regulations within the County, including mixed-use districts, focus on lists of uses and development standards with an emphasis on separating buildings with yards and buffers, and accommodating the needs of automobiles. To implement the vision of Small Area Plans within the County, as vibrant mixed-use multi modal centers, a paradigm shift to the Zoning framework is necessary. There is currently a disconnect between existing regulations and the long-range vision of the Small Area Plans, leaving the County with a lack of implementation tools.

Where has MUZD been used and successful?

Just a few examples of other municipalities that have Mixed Use Zoning Districts/ Corridors are as follow:

Arlington County, Henrico County, City of Charlottesville, City of Chesapeake, City of Fredericksburg, Town of Leesburg, Loudoun County, Howard County, Montgomery County, Prince George’s County and the City of Rockville.

What are the benefits of Mixed- Use Zoning?

The benefits of mixed-use development across a variety of land use contexts have become widely recognized by the planning profession. While traditional zoning was established about a century ago to promote public health and welfare by separating and segregating uses based largely on localized air and water quality concerns, evolutionary changes in both prevailing commercial use types and overarching resource regulations have vastly reduced the need to separate uses for the sake of public health. Conversely, zoning ordinances that require segregation of uses has contributed to a prevailing suburban environment in which many residents spend substantial time and energy traveling between separated uses to conduct activities of daily life. Several benefits of mixed-use development include:

- Reduction in vehicle miles traveled, resulting in lower greenhouse gas emissions, lower commuting costs, and decreased road congestion.
- More balanced transportation systems that support walking, bicycling, and public transit, as well as driving.
- Livelier urban spaces with public gathering places and a variety of shops, restaurants, and entertainment.
- Complete neighborhoods where residents can live, work, and play.
- Diversity of housing for people of all incomes and at all stages of life.
- More vibrant commercial areas that provide retail and services for patrons.
- More compact development that helps preserve open space in outlying areas by reducing the need and demand for low-density, sprawling development.
- Efficient use of services and infrastructure, resulting in cost savings for the public.

What are the challenges with Mixed-Use Zoning?

Although MUZD can be a useful instrument for planning, there are some challenges associated with incorporating this tool. Here are some of the considerations that can pose a challenge with MUZD.

- Must be incorporated in the right area.
- Large scale mixed-use development can be a complex and a time-consuming process.
- The uses within a mixed-use development must be marketable in their own right, and also work together as a whole development.

- It requires detailed but flexible planning, along with management and capital resources in order to be successfully developed.
- Mixed-use development can require additional administration, due to the complexity of development regulations.

How would staff recommend we apply MUZD?

Staff envisions using this planning tool in the small area plans but not county-wide.

How can MUZD be applied in a small area plan?

1. MUZD can be applied as an overlay zoning district, which is a second, mapped zone that is superimposed over the conventional, base zoning districts. The overlay zoning district permits special regulations to exist within parts or all of a zoning district or across a broad area containing several underlying zoning districts by supplementing the base zoning district regulations. The text of the overlay district imposes a set of requirements that are either added to, or in lieu of, those of the underlying use zone.
or
2. MUZD can also be applied in a small area plan as a direct land use designation district which would require the County or Developer to rezone the property/parcels.

What are some of the benefits of using MUZD as an overlay district?

- Allows the County greater protection or quality of the development compared to what is granted in the base district.
- Allows flexible application of standards that are spatially limited to encourage redevelopment.
- Provides more discretion than outright rezoning in situations that are politically sensitive.
- Facilitate achievement of County & Community goals within specified areas.

What are the challenges with MUZD as an overlay district?

- Administrative complexity – Overlay zoning can increase the complexity of zoning administration for staff, property owners, and developers.
- Additional steps can be counterintuitive to encouraging intended development when underlying zoning is easier to accomplish by the developer.

What are some of the benefits of using MUZD as a direct land use designation within a district?

- Provides incentive for developer to streamline the development application process.
- Efficient use of services and infrastructure, resulting in cost savings for the public.
- Reduces buffer requirements associated with separating mixed uses.
- Encourages compact development that helps preserve open space in outlying areas by reducing the need and demand for low-density, sprawling development.

What are the challenges with MUZD as a direct land use designation within a district?

- Reduces the ability for the County to collect proffers from level of service.
- May create non-conforming uses of existing property.
- Reduces the opportunity for additional public input for each application when compared to rezoning conducted by a developer applicant.

Can we employ MUZD in certain areas of Prince William County as a test?

Based on the feedback at the Planning Commission work-session on May 15, 2019, staff can incorporate a MUZD into the North Woodbridge & Parkway Employment Small Area plans as a test to determine the feasibility and gauge the effectiveness of this respective district in future small area plans. MUZD districts will be either MUZD- Neighborhood, MUZD-Town, MUZD-Urban depending on the area it is being implemented.

What are some of the criteria used in MUZD?

Some of the most used criteria in MUZD are:

- Site density expressed as Floor area ratio
- Building height limits
- Setbacks requirements

What is FAR and why is it important?

Floor area ratio (FAR) is the measurement of a building's floor area in relation to the size of the lot/parcel that the building is located on. FAR is expressed as a decimal number and is derived by dividing the total **area** of the building by the total **area** of the parcel (building **area** ÷ lot **area**).

Some examples,

1. If your home is (3,000 ft.²) and you have a one- acre (43,560 ft.²) lot. The FAR would be equal to $3,000 \text{ ft.}^2 / 43,560 \text{ ft.}^2$. The FAR would be 0.069.
2. If you owned a store that was (10,000 ft.²) and you have a one- acre (43,560 ft.²) lot. The FAR would be equal to $10,000 \text{ ft.}^2 / 43,560 \text{ ft.}^2$. The FAR would be 0.23.
3. If you owned a store that was (10,000 ft.²) and the building was two-stories and you have a one- acre (43,560 ft.²) lot. The FAR would be equal to $(2 \times 10,000 \text{ ft.}^2) / 43,560 \text{ ft.}^2$. The FAR would be 0.46.

FAR is important in mixed use because higher densities make it possible for people to walk, bicycle, or use the bus. One **important** way to increase development densities is to increase the allowable **floor area ratio** (FAR). FAR is a measure of how much square footage can be built on a given piece of **land**.