

Attachment 1: Planning Commission Recommendations (Articles 6-8)

This attachment provides additional information on Planning Commission recommendations:

- Use-Based Gross Floor Areas (GFA) restrictions (in Article 6)
- Established setbacks (in Article 7)
- Front yard coverage (in Article 7)
- Deer mesh (in Article 8)

In certain instances, updated Staff recommendations or considerations are also provided.

Use-Based Gross Floor Area (GFA) Restrictions (Article 6)

Uses in Residential zones

The Revised Staff Draft maintains GFA restrictions in the Residential zones for the uses shown in blue in the Table 1, below.

Recommendation: The Planning Commission and Staff recommend retaining restrictions in the Residential zones for all uses listed.

Uses in Industrial zones

The Revised Staff Draft maintains GFA restrictions in the Industrial zones for the uses shown in gray in Table 1, below.

Recommendation: In response to Mayor and Council questions during the April 13 work session, and in consideration of comments provided by the Rockville Economic Development, Inc., dated April 10, 2026, (see page 254-261 of the [ZOR Public Comment Digest](#)) Staff recommend eliminating all numerical GFA restrictions listed for uses in the I-L zone and replacing these restrictions with a requirement that the use be accessory to the principal use.

Single-Tenant Commercial Uses

In 2000, the Mayor and Council adopted regulations for retail stores and shopping centers in the then RPC (Rockville Pike Commercial) and C-2 (General Commercial) zones to address development of "big box" retail stores. These regulations included limiting the floor area of any retail establishment to 65,000 square feet as well as instituting design guidelines. With the adoption of the new Zoning Ordinance in 2009, the 65,000 square foot maximum became a limitation on the ground floor area of any retail establishment in the Mixed Use zones. Upper stories of the same establishment are also limited to 65,000 square feet.

Consideration: The Mayor and Council may wish to eliminate this restriction, understanding that any large-format commercial use would be subject to MX zones design and location standards.

Table

The table below lists the uses in the Revised Staff Draft Zoning Ordinance to which use-based gross floor area (GFA) restrictions apply, compares the regulations in the current and Revised

Staff Draft Zoning Ordinances, and provides a brief explanation for the standard ultimately included in the Revised Staff Draft. Where standards differ between the current Zoning Ordinance and the Revised Staff Draft, those differences are shown in **red text**.

Table 1: Summary of Changes to GFA Restrictions

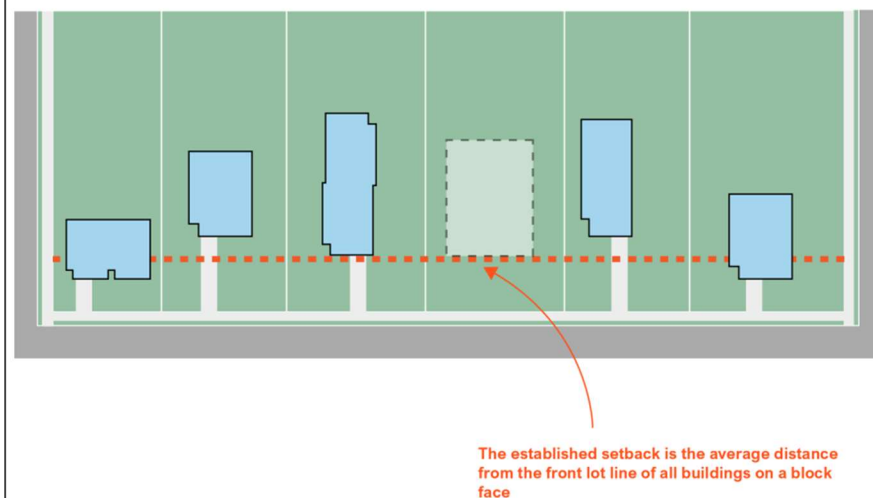
Use	Current Zoning Ordinance		Revised Staff Draft Zoning Ordinance		Explanation
	Zone	Restriction (Max.)	Zone	Restriction (Max.)	
Attached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	R-400 R-200 R-150 R-90 R-75 R-60 R-40 RMD-Infill RMD-10 RMD-15 RMD-25	Generally: 50% of principal dwelling's GFA	All zones	Generally: 75% of principal dwelling's GFA	Updated restriction to conform to State law, which prohibits local jurisdictions from further restricting ADU size. Use permissions expanded to allow ADUs in all zones when accessory to a single-unit detached dwelling.
Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	R-400 R-200 R-150 R-90 R-75 R-60 R-40 RMD-Infill RMD-10 RMD-15 RMD-25	If the principal dwelling has a GFA of 800sf or greater: 50% of principal dwelling's GFA or 750sf, whichever is less If the principal dwelling has a GFA of less than 800sf: 400sf	All zones	If the principal dwelling has a GFA of 800sf or greater: 75% of principal dwelling's GFA or 750sf, whichever is less If the principal dwelling has a GFA of less than 800sf: 600sf	Updated restriction to conform to State law, which prohibits local jurisdictions from further restricting ADU size. Use permissions expanded to allow ADUs in all zones when accessory to a single-unit detached dwelling.
Cottage Court	n/a	n/a	R-400 R-200 R-150 R-90 R-75 R-60 R-40 RMD-Infill RMD-10 RMD-15 RMD-25	1,200sf	Cottage Court is a new use. Limitation modeled on Gaithersburg and others' requirements. Limiting unit size preserves intended scale, supports housing diversity goals.
Home-Based Business	All zones, except I-L and I-H	35% of the GFA of the principal dwelling	All zones, except I-L and I-H	35% of the GFA of the principal dwelling or 400sf, whichever is greater.	Retained from current Zoning Ordinance. Added option for 400 square foot maximum to allow flexibility for smaller dwellings (those under approximately 1,150sf).
Residential Accessory	R-400 R-200	Individual accessory buildings and	R-400 R-200	Individual accessory buildings and	Retained from current Zoning Ordinance. These provisions

Use	Current Zoning Ordinance		Revised Staff Draft Zoning Ordinance		Explanation
	Zone	Restriction (Max.)	Zone	Restriction (Max.)	
Buildings and Structures (except ADUs)	R-150 R-90 R-75 R-60 R-40 RMD-Infill	structures: 750sf or the footprint of the main building, whichever is less Total footprint of all accessory buildings and structures on a lot: 1,000sf or the footprint of the main building, whichever is less	R-150 R-90 R-75 R-60 R-40 RMD-Infill	structures: 750sf or the footprint of the main building, whichever is less Total footprint of all accessory buildings and structures on a lot: 1,000sf or the footprint of the main building, whichever is less	were most recently updated and relaxed through a ZTA in 2022.
Eating and Drinking Establishment	I-L	25% of the GFA of the building. <i>Does not apply to carry out.</i>	I-L	25% of the GFA of the building. <i>Does not apply to carry out.</i>	Retained from current Zoning Ordinance.
Office	I-L	25% of the GFA of the building	I-L	25% of the GFA of the building	Retained from current Zoning Ordinance.
Retail Establishment	n/a	n/a	I-L	25% of the GFA of the building	Retail uses are currently not allowed in the I-L zone. Consistent with recommendations from REDI, accessory retail uses are a Conditional use under the Staff Draft, with a limit on GFA.
Single-Tenant Commercial Use	MXTD MXCD MXCT MXNC MXC MXT MXE MXB	Generally: 65,000sf at the ground level Champion Projects: 100,000sf, if approved by Mayor and Council	MXTD MXCD MXCT MXNC MXC MXT MXE MXB	Generally: 65,000sf at the ground level Champion Projects: 100,000sf, if approved by Mayor and Council	Retained from current Zoning Ordinance.

Established Setbacks (Article 7)

Established setbacks are applied to the front yard setbacks of the R and RMD zones. Established setback is defined in the Staff Draft Zoning Ordinance as “the average distance from the front lot line of all buildings on a block face (one side of a street between two intersecting streets).” The established setback generally applies only when it is *greater than* the setback otherwise required in the zone. Figure 1 (draft Figure 2.3.3-1 in the Staff Draft Zoning Ordinance) illustrates the established setback.

Figure 2.3.3-1: Established Setback



Historically, established setbacks were used to preserve and continue existing development patterns; however, they can entrench low-density development patterns, perpetuate historic choices and inequities, and conflict with modern goals related to walkability, efficient land use, and street interaction. These setbacks can also be confusing and unpredictable for homeowners and builders, as an ‘established’ setback is more difficult to calculate than a numerical setback.

Recommendation: The Planning Commission and Staff recommend eliminating the established setback; however, should the Mayor and Council desire increased flexibility, a provision could be drafted to allow applicants the option to use an established setback that is less than the setback otherwise required in the zone.

Front Yard Coverage (Article 7)

Front yard coverage was introduced with the 2009 update to the Zoning Ordinance. Front yard coverage limits the portion of a front yard that can be covered by driveways, parking areas, and sidewalks. This requirement was intended to guard against front yards being turned into parking lots; however, this concern has never turned into a prominent issue. The front yard coverage requirement can be difficult to enforce, and compliance has typically been gained through after-the-fact enforcement actions. Finally, the front yard coverage requirement, like other coverage requirements contained in the Zoning Ordinance, is separate from and not duplicative of the City’s stormwater requirements contained in Chapter 19 of City Code. Removing the front yard coverage requirement would not impact enforcement of stormwater regulations.

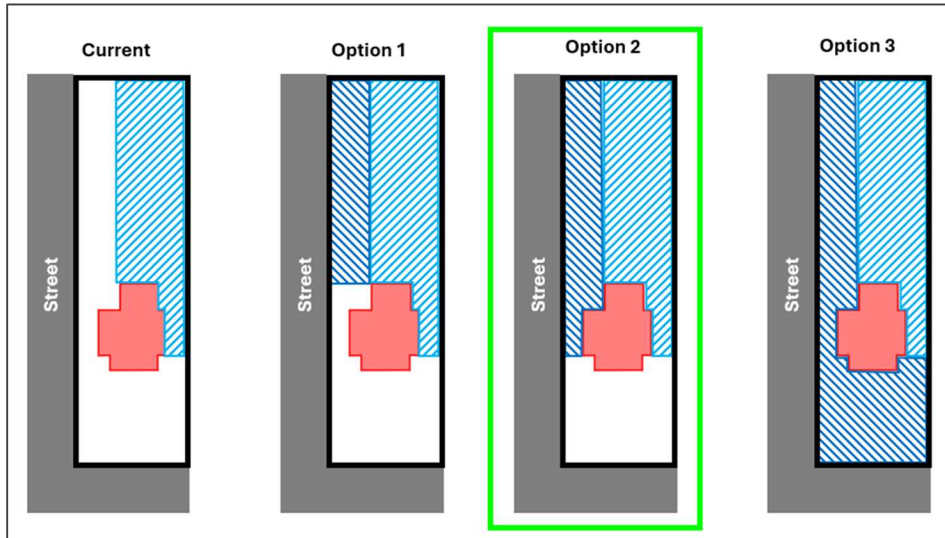
Recommendation: The Planning Commission and Staff recommend eliminating front yard coverage requirements.

Deer Mesh (Article 8)

As discussed during the April 13 work session, the Planning Commission and Staff recommend “Option 2” (see figure, below), which would:

- Retain the prohibition on deer fences in the front yard, except as follows:
 - On corner lots and through lots, allow deer fences in the front yard behind the front façade of the principal dwelling.

This option is supported by a number of interested Rockville residents, one of whom testified during the April 13 ZTA public hearing, and nine of whom signed a related petition (see page 280 of the [ZOR Public Comment Digest](#)). Staff agrees with petitioners that Option 2 would address a community issue while supporting aesthetics.



Recommendation: Staff recommended that Option 2 be considered for incorporation into the Staff Draft Zoning Ordinance for both corner and through lots; however, should the Mayor and Council desire increased flexibility, the body could consider:

- Increasing the height of deer mesh in the front yard to 6.5 feet (as allowed in Montgomery County); and
 - Requiring deer mesh be installed behind a fence that otherwise conforms to City regulations; and/or
 - Requiring deer mesh be set back 10 feet from the right-of-way.