

ORDINANCE NO. _____

ORDINANCE: To amend City Code Chapter 25, titled “Zoning Ordinance,” to create the Town Center Interim Comprehensive Plan Floating Zone to implement the 2025 Town Center Master Plan before the planned zoning ordinance rewrite and comprehensive map amendment

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND that Chapter 25 of the Rockville City Code entitled “Zoning Ordinance” be amended as follows:

Chapter 25
ZONING ORDINANCE

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**ARTICLE 6. – PROCEDURES FOR MAP AND ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS,
VARIANCES, AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS**

Sec. 25.06.01. Zoning map amendments.

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e. *Floating zone map amendment applications.*

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2. *Required findings.* A floating zone map amendment application may be approved only if the Mayor and Council finds that the application:

- (a) Is consistent with the Plan and implements the Land Use Policy Map and applicable description of the land use category found in the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Mayor and Council on August 2, 2021, as amended by the 2025 Town Center Master Plan adopted by the Mayor and Council on January 27, 2025;
- (b) Satisfies the intent and standards of the proposed zone and meets all other applicable requirements of this chapter;
- (c) Provides one or more public benefits that enhance or contribute to the objectives of the Plan and are proportionate to the scale of the proposed development; and
- (d) Is compatible with existing and approved adjacent development.

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ARTICLE 14. – SPECIAL ZONES

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Sec. 25.14.35. Interim comprehensive plan floating zones.

- a. *Purpose.* The purposes of the interim comprehensive plan floating zones are to:
1. Provide for alternative development options to the development standards under existing zones.
 2. Implement the land use recommendations of the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan, as amended by the 2025 Town Center Master Plan, prior to full implementation of those plans through a zoning text amendment and comprehensive map amendment adoption of the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Map Amendment.
 3. Enhance the economic, aesthetic, and environmental character of the City through unique developments that conform with the land use recommendations of the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan, as amended by the 2025 Town Center Master Plan.
 4. Incentivize development that advances the recommendations of the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan and 2025 Town Center Master Plan land use goals by providing a cohesive, participatory, and expedient development review process for designated comprehensive plan developments.
 5. Permit the implementation of the goals of the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan, as amended by the 2025 Town Center Master Plan, consistent with adequate public facilities standards.
 6. Provide and allow for flexibility and creative residential and non-residential development of building placement and design, lot layout and size, and properties with physical site constraints that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

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- e. Town Center interim comprehensive plan floating zones.
1. There are three (3) Town Center interim comprehensive plan floating zones, which correspond to the three character areas identified in the 2025 Town Center Master Plan:
 - (a) MD-355 Corridor Character Area—Floating Zone (Corridor-FZ)
 - (b) Core Character Area—Floating Zone (CCA-FZ)
 - (c) Edge Character Area—Floating Zone (ECA-FZ)
 2. Development standards.
 - (a) Except as modified in section 25.14.35.e.2, the use restrictions and development standards of the Town Center interim comprehensive plan floating zones shall be the same as their respective equivalent zones.
 - (i) The MD-355 Corridor Character Area—Floating Zone (Corridor-FZ) equivalent zone is MXTD.

(ii) The Core Character Area—Floating Zone (CCA-FZ) equivalent zone is MXTD.

(iii) The Edge Character Area—Floating Zone (ECA-FZ) equivalent zone is MXCD.

(b) Height.

(i) Maximum height in the Corridor-FZ is 235 feet, with an additional 100 feet permitted for a development providing twenty (20) percent or more on-site dwelling units as MPDUs or other deed restricted affordable housing.

(ii) Maximum height in the CCA-FZ is 200 feet, with an additional 100 feet permitted for a development providing twenty (20) percent or more on-site dwelling units as MPDUs or other deed restricted affordable housing.

(iii) Maximum height in the ECA-FZ is 85 feet, with an additional 50 feet permitted for a development providing twenty (20) percent or more on-site dwelling units as MPDUs or other deed restricted affordable housing.

(c) Parking. For any tract within 0.5 miles of the Rockville Metro Station or 0.25 miles of a planned BRT station, no minimum number of parking spaces is required. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an applicant must provide a minimum of one accessible parking space meeting State design standards for every twenty-five (25) dwelling units, or demonstrate that the requisite number of accessible parking spaces are available within 1,000 feet of an accessible entrance to the residential use. This subsection does not affect any requirements for the provision of loading areas under this Chapter or other applicable law.

(d) Ground floor residential. Residential uses otherwise permitted by a project's equivalent zone are permitted on the ground floor of any building in a Town Center interim comprehensive plan floating zone.

f. ~~Modification Waiver~~ of equivalent zone development standards. The Approving Authority for a project plan being reviewed with a floating zone map amendment application may ~~modify~~ ~~waive~~ one (1) or more of the development standards of the designated equivalent zone upon a finding that the applicant has shown good cause as to why the development standard should not apply to the project. In determining whether the burden of establishing good cause has been met, the Approving Authority must consider the following:

1. Whether the ~~modification waiver~~ of the development standard of the equivalent zone permits the application to meet the intent of the plan;
2. Whether the ~~modification waiver~~ of the development standard results in development that is compatible with development on adjacent properties;
3. Whether applying the development standard of the equivalent zone is consistent with good planning and design principles; and
4. Such other factors as the Approving Authority reasonably deems appropriate.

fg. *Aesthetic standards.* Any development within an interim comprehensive plan floating zone must comply with the following aesthetic standards:

1. *Façades and massing.*
 - (a) Buildings shall be designed in a way that avoids massive scale and uniform and impersonal appearance and provides visual interest consistent with the community's identity, character, and scale. Building design shall provide attractive, well-proportioned orientation to the public realm of streets, plazas, and parks. Building walls greater than one hundred (100) feet long must include projections, recessions, or other treatments sufficient to reduce the unbroken massing of the façade along all sides of the building facing public streets.
 - (b) Any façade facing a public street must include windows, arcades, awnings, or other acceptable features along at least sixty (60) percent of the building length. Arcades and other weather protection features must be of sufficient depth and height to provide a light-filled and open space along the building frontage. Architectural treatment, similar to that provided to the front façade must be provided to the sides and rear of the building to mitigate any negative view from any location off-site and any public area (e.g., parking lots, walkways, etc.) on site.
 - (c) Buildings must include architectural features that contribute to visual interest at the pedestrian scale and reduce the massive aesthetic effect by breaking up the building wall along those sides fronting on public streets with color, texture change, wall offsets, reveals, or projecting ribs.
2. *Roofs.* Roof design must provide variations in rooflines where appropriate and add interest to, and reduce the massive scale of, large buildings. Roof features should complement the architectural and visual character of adjoining neighborhoods. Roofs should include two (2) or more roof planes. Parapet walls must be architecturally treated to avoid a plain, monotonous look. For energy-saving purposes, roof design should also include a light color surface or be planted with vegetation.
3. *Entryways.* Commercial building design must include design elements which clearly indicate to customers where the entrances are located, and which add aesthetically pleasing character to buildings by providing highly visible customer entrances.

gh. *Public benefits.*

1. Any development approved within an interim comprehensive plan floating zone must provide public benefits that enhance or contribute to the objectives of the Plan and that are proportionate to the scale of the proposed development. Public benefits may include, but are not limited to, providing Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) or public use space above the minimum required, streetscape improvements, wayfinding, and environmental building efficiency standards or other benefits that exceed code requirements.

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I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of an ordinance adopted by the Mayor and Council at its meeting of _____, 2025.

Sara Taylor-Ferrell,
City Clerk/Director of Council Operations