



Date of Meeting: October 2, 2025

TOWN OF LEESBURG
PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

Subject: Zoning Ordinance Rewrite

Staff Contact: Michael Watkins, Zoning Administrator
Brian Boucher, Deputy Director
James David, Director

Purpose: Test Cases and Methodology

Background: At their July 20, 2023 Public Meeting, the Planning Commission received an introductory presentation on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project. In October 2023, representatives from Kendig Keast Collaborative (Consultant) presented their code audit of the Town's current Zoning Ordinance and broad recommendations for changes at a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Town Council. In February and September 2024, the consultants delivered their first draft of the new Ordinance via the Town's enCodePlus online zoning platform and provided an overview of concepts in each Article to the Planning Commission. The first draft of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite was released on March 6, 2025 for a 60-day public review period. All Planning Commission and public presentations and the code audit are available on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project page at: leesburgva.gov/zoningordinancerewrite.

Issues: At their September 18, 2025 Work Session, the Planning Commission requested the revisions to data center use standards be brought back at the October 2, 2025 meeting (see Attachment 1). The Commission also asked for revisions to short term residential rental use standards to be brought back for additional discussion. These revisions will be part of the October 16, 2025 packet.

The Planning Commission has identified topics for a deeper dive and further discussion during their review of the first draft Zoning Ordinance Rewrite. These "Dive List" items have been documented and included as Attachment 2. At the meeting on October 2, 2025, discussion will focus on the following italicized Dive List items related to District Test Cases.

District Test Cases

The Planning Commission requested that staff apply the draft development standards of the proposed Residential Medium (RM) District, the Mixed Use (MU) District, and the Innovation Center (IC) District. At the meeting on October 2, 2025, staff will present their findings. To aid in the discussion, this memo provides a high-level overview of the test cases.

Residential Medium (RM) District. The Planning Commission requested a test case in the RM district to evaluate redevelopment potential. There are areas of the proposed zoning district that include oversized lots and older structures that could be candidates for redevelopment. The tests are purely conceptual as there is no active redevelopment activity in the subject area.

Comparison of Existing R-6 Standards vs RM Standards

Item	R-6 (Existing)	RM: SFD	RM: SFA
Community Amenity/Open Space (percent)	0	10	10
Maximum Density (du/ac)	6	6	6 - 8
Lot Width (ft)	75 - 90	65	35
Setback (ft)	15	15	15
Street Side Setback (ft)	15	12.5	12.5
Side Setback (ft)	10	10	10
Rear Setback (ft)	20	20	20
Building Height (ft)	35	35	35

The ZO Rewrite RM District implements the Mixed-Density Residential Neighborhood character area of the Town Plan and accommodates single-family detached, single-family attached, and duplex units. Supporting civic uses are also encouraged. Town Plan policies support the following objectives in the RM District:

- Small-scale, context-sensitive infill development that complements the neighborhood.
- Residential infill development and redevelopment initiatives that increase the range of living and affordability for Leesburg residents.
- Several housing types that provide a range of home choices in the same neighborhood, including accessory dwellings.
- Small blocks that supports a well-connected, cohesive community.
- Neighborhoods that include a connected network of open space that provides gathering space, preserve large tree stands, and help manage stormwater run-off.
- Expanded single family housing types that include small lot “cottage-style” housing or zero lot line housing that offer single family living but with a much smaller scale unit.
 - Single family attached housing types, such as duplex, should be encouraged.

Memorial Drive Comparison. The houses along Memorial Drive are generally viewed as a positive development example of the direction the draft is heading in for the RM District. As illustrated in the below pictures, the lots are generally fifty feet wide, just over 100 feet deep, and have dwellings located as close as 15 feet to the street and five feet to a side yard.



Considering the policy analysis above and the results of the test case, staff recommends the following changes to the RM District dimensional standards:

- Modify the housing type mix. The mix of unit types would apply for any development of 24 units or more and require a minimum of one-third of the units as single-family detached.

The test case demonstrates that the Town Plan goal of a range of housing types on small lots is not achieved with the currently proposed RM District standards.

- Increase the maximum density of single-family attached to 10 dwelling units per acre.

The test case indicates that the dimensional standards limit the ability to achieve the development yield envisioned in the Town Plan Mixed Residential Character Area.

- Decrease the minimum lot widths: SFD 65 to 50, SFA 35 to 30, Duplex Horizontal 75 to 50.

The block used in the test case already includes narrower lots and is characteristic of older subdivisions. The test case also illustrated the fact that redevelopment of existing subdivisions with a wider lot width limits the potential lot yield.

- Revise the setbacks to accommodate driveways in front yards for single-family detached, 20' to the garage façade, and narrow the side (5') and rear (15') setbacks.

The revised dimensions facilitate the dwelling unit size in the Memorial Drive example.

Suggested RM District Revisions for ZO Rewrite		
Standard	Draft	Proposed Revision
Community Amenity Area	10%	10%
Single-family Detached	6	6
Single-family Attached	6	10
Minimum Lot Area	0	0
Minimum Lot Width		
Single-family Detached	65'	55'
Single-family Attached	35'	30'
Front Setbacks		
Single-family Detached	15'	15' Principal Façade 20' Garage Façade
Single-family Attached	10'	10'
Street Side Setback	12.5'	10'
Side Setback		
Single-family Detached	10'	5'
Single-family Attached	5' End Unit Only	5' End Unit Only 25 ft. from adjacent existing development
Rear Setback		
Single-family Detached	20'	15'
Single-family Attached-Garage.	20'	5 ft. from alley or access easement
Single-family Attached-Surface	20'	5 ft. from alley or access easement
Building Height		
Single-family Detached	35'	35'
Single-family Attached	35'	40'
Mix Requirement		

Mixed Use (MU) District. The Planning Commission requested a test case in the MU district to evaluate redevelopment potential of an existing mixed-use center. The tests are purely conceptual as there is no active redevelopment activity in the subject area.

The Village at Leesburg was selected as the MU test case because a portion of the property is currently zoned B-4, Mixed-Use Business. The Village at Leesburg contains a standalone grocery store and recreation facility, and several office, multifamily, and mixed-use structures. The testing scenario was limited to the landbay north of Russell Branch Parkway and the existing development program which is illustrated in the following table.

per 2,500 square feet of nonresidential floor area. Based on the permitted density of Village at Leesburg, over 5.7 million square feet of floor area would be required. Based on the existing Village of Leesburg approvals, there is approximately 715,998 GFA of nonresidential, and 391 dwelling units. Applying the draft MU standards, only 286 dwelling units could be approved, a loss of 105 dwelling units. Or, to achieve permitted density 261,500 of additional nonresidential floor area would be required.

- The Use Mix requirement does not reflect existing approvals or reflect market demand. The Use Mix requirement requires a minimum of 40% of the total gross floor area as Office uses. Using the Village at Leesburg approvals, the total GFA is 1,110,535 sf. 40% of the GFA is 444,214 sf. There is only 191,000 sf of dedicated office space, or only 40% of what is required.

A comparison of the base B-4 District requirements to the proposed MU District is difficult because most of the standard requirements are modified by Town Council during the rezoning process. This occurred with Village at Leesburg and Leegate rezoning applications.

Staff recommends the following changes to the MU District dimensional standards:

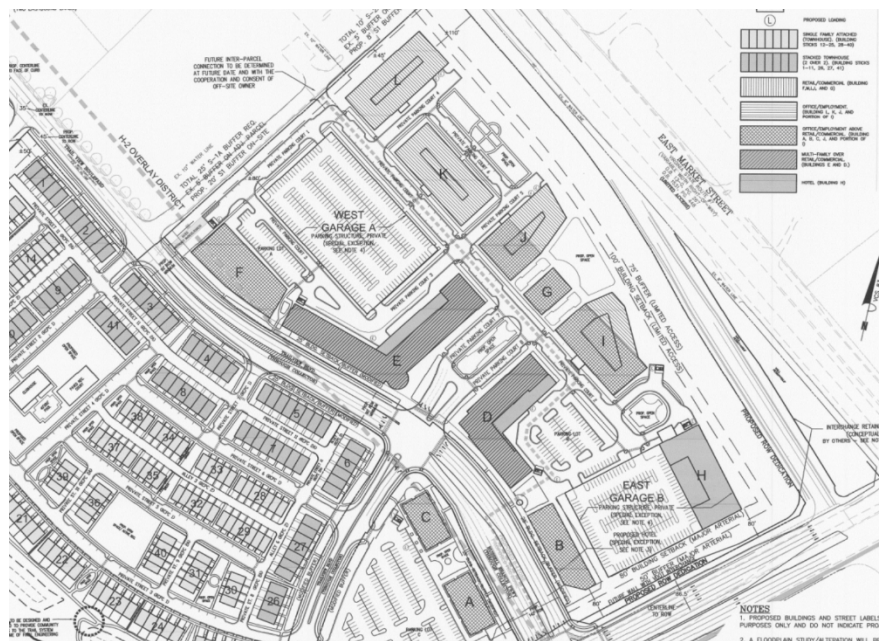
- Modify the Use Mix Standards.

The test case demonstrates that the densities and ratios are unrealistic. Staff recommends revising the minimum residential gross floor area to 30%, and max gross floor area for residential to 60%. Staff further recommends revising the minimum nonresidential and mixed use gross floor area to 40%, and the max gross floor area for nonresidential and mixed-use to 70%.

Innovation Center (IC) District.

The Planning Commission requested a test case in the IC district to evaluate redevelopment potential of an existing development designated as IC. The test is purely conceptual as there is no active redevelopment activity in the subject area.

Leegate was selected as the IC test case because of its designation as IC in the proposed Zoning Ordinance Rewrite and as a project that closely aligns with the purpose of the IC District. A portion of the property is currently zoned B-4, Mixed-Use Business, and PRC, Planned Residential Community. The testing scenario was limited to the vacant landbay north of Trailview Boulevard. The existing development program is illustrated in the following table.



Leegate IC Test Case	
Item	Existing Condition
Total acreage	26.6
Number of dwelling units	391
Residential Density (du/ac)	6.8
Residential GFA	394,537
Office GFA	191,000
Commercial GFA	524,998
Amenity Space (percent)	11
Stormwater (percent)	Off-site
Tree Canopy (percent)	Off-site

The MU testing exercise applied the draft MU Retrofit option use standards to the Leegate development, using that project's development approvals. The exercise was mostly mathematical. The test case showed that Leegate could develop as approved under the proposed IC Zoning District. However, a significant finding was that the draft IC District does not include a mix of uses standard. This is problematic and could result in proposals for 100% residential projects in the IC, which is not compliant with the Town Plan vision for Innovation Center.

Staff recommends the following changes to the IC District dimensional standards:

- Modify the Use Mix Standards.

The test case identified that the property could be developed as 100% residential. A use mix requirement should be added. Staff recommends minimum gross floor area of residential is 0%, and max gross floor area of residential is 30%. Staff further recommends that minimum gross floor area of nonresidential and mixed use is 70%, and max gross floor area of nonresidential and mixed use development is 100%.

- Residential Use Standards.

The draft requirements should be revised to ensure that residential uses are maintained as an accessory use.

- Phasing.

The draft requirements should be revised to ensure that a certain percentage of nonresidential uses are constructed prior to any residential uses.

Next Steps

Tentative PC Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Work Plan

#	Topic	Commission Meeting Date
1	ZO Rewrite Work Plan	January 16, 2025
2	Zoning Map	February 6, 2025
3	Release of Draft Text	March 6, 2025
4	Article 1 General Provisions	
4	Article 2 Zoning Districts and Dimensional Standards	April 3, 2025
5	Article 3 Use Regulations	April 17, 2025
6	Article 3 Use Regulations (continued)	May 1, 2025
7	Article 3 Use Regulations (continued)	May 15, 2025
8	None	June 5, 2025
9	Recap Articles 1-3, Article 4 Development Standards	July 10, 2025
10	Article 5 Review Bodies, Article 6 Review Procedures	July 17, 2025
11	Article 7 Nonconformities, Article 8 Enforcement, Article 9 Word Usage	August 7, 2025
12	No Meeting	August 21, 2025
13	Recap Articles 4-9, Deep Dive List	September 4, 2025
14	Deep Dive List (continued)	September 18, 2025
15	Deep Dive List (continued)	October 2, 2025
16	Deep Dive List (continued), Public Comment Report	October 16, 2025
17	Loose Ends	November 6, 2025
18	Public Hearing	January 15, 2026

Online Zoning Platform (enCodePlus)

The draft Zoning Ordinance Rewrite was available until May 5, 2025 via enCodePlus at the following website address: <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/leesburg-va/>. Planning Commissioners and public are strongly encouraged to review and make comments on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite via this online platform.

The October 2, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting is another of many opportunities throughout the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project for members of the Planning Commission and the public to provide input.

Attachments

1. Public Comment Report
2. Future Discussion Items (Dive List)
3. ZO Rewrite Data Center Use Standards, Revised 09/26/25