



Zoning Code Assessment Report

SEPTEMBER 2016



City of Cedar Rapids

LSL PLANNING | FERRELL MADDEN | CONSERVATION DESIGN FORUM

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I. Introduction and Project Overview

A. Purpose of this Report

The City of Cedar Rapids, working with the zoning consulting team of LSL Planning, Ferrell Madden, and Conservation Design Forum (LSL team), is updating the current zoning ordinance to implement the principals, elements, and goals identified in EnvisionCR, the City’s comprehensive plan, which was adopted in January, 2015. Addressing the priorities for future development and quality of life in Cedar Rapids identified in EnvisionCR will require a change in the way that the city regulates development. The new zoning regulations will emphasize placemaking or regulations and standards that help to create a sense of place within the community. This will include establishing standards for context that specify how structures relate to each other and the surrounding neighborhood, standards for “form” that regulate how buildings, streets, and public spaces work together, and standards for “use” that create new ways for uses to be mixed to create more multifunction, walkable places within Cedar Rapids.



Cedar Rapids bike sharrow

The purpose of this report is to establish the process and roadmap to update the regulations and framework for the new set of zoning regulations. The goals of the ReZone Cedar Rapids project are to undertake a comprehensive rewrite of the existing regulations through a process with significant community outreach and involvement and this report will identify how those goals will be achieved.

B. Project Overview

Over the next 16 months, the community will be working with the city planning staff and LSL team to update the zoning regulations. The outcome of the project will be to provide the city with a modern set of regulatory tools that will meet the needs of residents, developers, and city staff to guide the next decade of growth in Cedar Rapids.

1. Implement EnvisionCR

Updating the zoning code in a timely manner is important to move the community’s hard work in creating EnvisionCR forward. The current regulations have been in place for 10 years and are due for an overhaul. As development patterns and preferences change over time, zoning regulations start showing signs of aging. Important standards to guide new development types may be missing from the code and the existing standards may actually (and inadvertently) create a barrier to development patterns that the community wants to encourage. And while zoning regulations can certainly be amended, it is important to update the entire code periodically to ensure that all of the moving pieces of the regulatory process are designed to function together and don’t end up working at cross purposes or creating language conflicts.

The zoning code will be updated to include regulations designed to partially or fully accomplish the goals for Cedar Rapids established in EnvisionCR:

StrengthenCR

Improve the quality and identity of neighborhoods and key corridors

Adopt policies that create choices in housing types and prices throughout the city

GrowCR

Encourage mixed-use and infill development

Connect growing areas to existing neighborhoods

GreenCR

Be stewards for the environment, promoting economic and social growth while restoring the relationship between the city and natural environment

Have the best parks, recreation, and trails system in the country

Lead in energy conservation and innovation

ConnectCR

Build a complete network of connected streets

Establish a network of complete streets

Improve the function and appearance of our key corridors

Support the development of an effective, regional, multi-modal transportation system

InvestCR

Reinvest in the city's business corridors and districts

ProtectCR

Protect Cedar Rapids from flooding and other hazards

Manage growth and development to balance costs and serviceability to neighborhoods

Maintain and provide quality services to the community

Demonstrate best practices in building construction

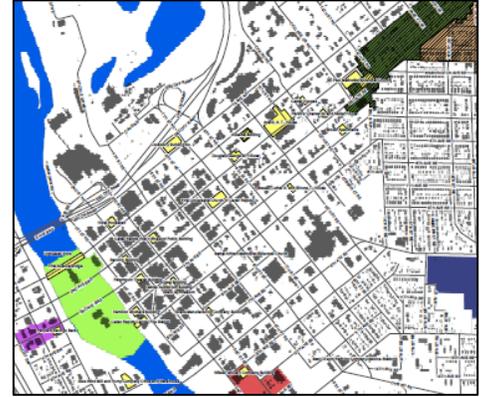
One of the exciting, new zoning tools that the city wants to explore during this update is form-based regulations. Typically referred to as form-based code, these standards establish or reinforce the “form” of a neighborhood or geographic area by regulating how the structures work together, how public and open spaces are provided, and the size and design of streets and sidewalks. Form-based codes also take in account how people’s daily lives are positively or negatively impacted by the built environment. The major change from more traditional zoning is that form-based codes provide sufficient detail in the regulatory process to achieve a more specific outcome that meets the community vision established by EnvisionCR.

Other issues that we anticipate addressing during this update include (but certainly are not limited to):

- (a) Residential development patterns and types of housing mix (i.e., single-family, multi-family)
- (b) Downtown, infill, suburban development, and redevelopment
- (c) Complete streets (i.e., streets that accommodate all modes of transportation and all users).

- (d) Commercial and corridor design standards
- (e) Mixed-use (e.g., residential and commercial) development types
- (f) Neighborhood preservation
- (g) Parks, trails, and open spaces
- (h) Sustainable development patterns
- (i) Creating places that build upon a community's strengths in order to promote community well-being, commonly referred to as placemaking.

Our approaches to regulating each of these issues and incorporating new form-based regulations is described later in the substantive content of this report.



Section of Cedar Rapids
Historic Districts Map

2. Project Approach and Schedule

We will be undertaking the new zoning code project in the following phases:

- Phase 1:** Understand and define issues and opportunities through discussions with the community and city staff
- Phase 2:** Create a roadmap to the new zoning code
- Phase 3:** Draft the new regulations and processes and gather community thoughts and comments
- Phase 4:** Review, revise, and adopt the new zoning code and zoning map

Across each of these four phases, we will rely on extensive public outreach and involvement to ensure that the final code meets the needs of Cedar Rapids. Our preliminary outreach activities, in preparation for this report, have already included three sets of meetings with city staff along with an ongoing series of interviews with local zoning code user groups.



We have also reviewed multiple city planning documents and regulations, including:

Regulations	Plans	Studies and Policy Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Cedar Rapids Zoning Code•Cedar Rapids Zoning Maps•Historic District Maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•EnvisionCR•Vision Cedar Rapids•Parks & Rec. Plan•Sidewalk Master Plan•Comprehensive Trails Plan•Historic Preservation Plan•Wellington Heights Neighborhood Plan•MedQ Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Complete Streets Policy•Housing Needs Update (2015)•Draft plan documents and processes•Highway 30 final report•Permitting information•CR website information•Employee retention study•Neighborhood association information

We have used the information gathered from our meetings and document review to prepare this ReZone Cedar Rapids Zoning Code Assessment Report that provides an overview of the work we will undertake to update the zoning code. Following the completion of this report, we will update the zoning code in three sections as follows:

Code Section Anticipated Drafting Schedule

1. Administrative Procedures	Aug - Dec 2016		
2. Districts and Uses		Oct – Feb 2016	
3. Development Standards			Dec – Apr 2017

There will be many opportunities to participate in the process as the project moves forward, each of which will be announced across multiple city venues. During each phase of the project, the public will be invited to review and comment on the project work and recommendations.

The code includes a set of general provisions (Section 32.01) that establish the legal basis for the regulations, the purposes of the code, and the applicability of the regulations to specific situations. This is followed, in the 2006 zoning code, by Section 32.02 - Review and Approval Procedures. This section provides step-by-step instructions on how to process, review, and approve each of the various zoning application types, as identified in Table 32.02-1: Summary of Review Procedures:

TABLE 32.02-1: SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCEDURES <i>[sample, not all procedures included]</i>										
Procedure			Review and Decision-Making Bodies					Required Notices		
	Pre-app Mtg.	Neigh. Mtg.	Dev. Dept.	Dev. Services	PC	BOA	CC	Post	Mail	Pub
Amendments of Zoning Map or Regulations (including PUDs) Sec. 32.02.030.A.	R	(R)	(R)	R	R/M		D/H	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Amendments to Comprehensive Plan or Future Land Use Plan Sec. 32.02.030.B.	R	(R)	R	R	R/M		D/H	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PUD Master or PUD Preliminary Plan Sec. 32.02.030.A	R	(R)	(R)	R	R/M		D/H	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Major Amendment to Preliminary Plan	R	(R)	(R)	R	D/H			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Approval of Site Plans when City participation is being provided	R	(R)	R	R/D	D/H	D/H	R/D	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Conditional Uses Sec. 32.02.030.D.	R	(R)	(R)	R	R/M	D/H		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Major Amendment to Conditional Use or Conditional Expansion Sec. 32.02.020.M	R	(R)	(R)	R	R/M	D/H		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Variances Sec. 32.02.030.F.	(R)			R		D/H		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Site Development Plans Sec. 32.02.030.G.	(R)		(R)	D			A			
R = Review; (R) = Review if Requested by Staff or Applicant; D = Decision; H = Hearing; M = Meeting; A = Appeal										

Next up in the 2006 code is Section 32.03 – Zone Districts. This section establishes and defines the regulations for each of the zone districts described more fully in Section IV of this Code Assessment. The current regulations include the following zone districts, both base and overlay:

Current Zone Districts			
Residential			
A	Agriculture	R-3D	Two Family Residence
R-T	Single Family Transitional Residence	R-TN	Traditional Neighborhood Residence Transitional
R-1	Single Family Residence	RMF-1	Residential Multi-Family
R-2	Single Family Residence	RMF-2	Residential Multi-Family
R-3	Single Family Residence		
Non-Residential and Mixed-Use			
O-S	Office/Service	C-4	Central Business
C-1	Mixed Neighborhood Convenience	I-1	Light Industrial
C-MU	Commercial Mixed Use	I-2	General Industrial
C-2	Community Commercial	PUD-1	Planned Unit Development One
C-3	Regional Commercial	PUD-2	Planned Unit Development Two
Special Purpose and Overlay			
PUB	Public Zone	EA-O	Ellis Area Overlay
AIR	Airport	KV-O	Kingston Village Overlay
SHWF-O	Solid and Hazardous Waste Facility	MQ-O	MedQuarter Overlay
CB-O	Czech Bohemia Overlay	--	Northwest Flood Mitigation Overlay

The uses allocated to each zone district are described in Section 32.04 – Permitted Uses. This section contains a multi-page use table that identified all permitted and conditional uses allowed in each zone district along with providing a cross-reference to specific standards that are applicable to that use. The use table is followed by use specific standards that establish specific rules such as requiring that aquaculture be conducted only within an enclosed structure, or limiting how many rental vehicles a salvage yard can offer. This section also includes regulations for temporary uses, accessory uses, and home occupations.

Zone district dimensions and rules of measurement are established in Section 32.05 – Dimensional, Parking, and Development Standards. Dimensional standards are allocated by district in two tables, one for residential districts and one for Commercial, Industrial, and Special Purpose districts as follows:

TABLE 32.05-2: DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS (NOTE 1)

DISTRICT		O-S	C-1	C-MU	C-2	C-3	C-4	I-1	I-2	PUB	AIR	SHWFO	PUDO	
Min. Lot Size	Lot Area (sf)	0	1,800	1,600	1,200	800	0	20,000	1 ac					
	Lot Width	50	50	50	50	50	50	—	—					
Min. Yard Setback (Note 2)	Front	There is no minimum front yard setback in commercial or office zone districts. The front yard shall be defined by Section 32.05.010.C.4.c.ii below New development in these districts should follow guidelines set forth in Section 32.05.010.C.4.c.ii below					0	25 + 1 ft/3 ft if structure exceeds 45 ft in height	35 + 1 ft/3 ft if structure exceeds 35 ft in height		Established by City Council for specific use at time of development approval	Must comply with Chapter 39A Airport Zoning Regulations and Established by City Council for specific use at time of development approval	Must comply with Chapter 24 Solid Waste and Chapter 58 Hazardous Substances 32.03	Must comply with 32.03
	Interior Side Single/Combined	0 or 1ft/3ft if structure exceeds 45 ft in height (Note 3)	0	0	0 or 1 ft/3 ft if structure exceeds 45 ft in height (Note 3)	0	15 each + 1 ft/3 ft if structure exceeds 45 ft in height							
	Corner Side (ft)	There is no corner side yard setback in commercial or office zone districts. The corner side yard shall be defined by Section 32.05.010.C.4.c.ii below. New development in these districts should follow guidelines set forth in Sec. 32.05.010.C.4.c.ii. below.					0	25	25					
	Rear (ft)	15 + 1 ft/3 ft if	0	35	0 or 1 ft/3 ft if structure	0	25 + 1 ft/3 ft if structure exceeds							

	structure exceeds 45 ft in height			exceeds 45 ft in height			45 ft in height					
Maximum Height Size (ft)	100	35	50	75 (Note 4)	100 (Note 4)	(Note 4)	100	150 (Note 4)				
Floor Area Ratio	—	—	—	—	—	10 (Note 5)	—	—				

ABBREVIATIONS: sf = Square Footage; ft = Feet; Min. = Minimum

NOTES:

1. Properties located within the Core Area as defined in this Ordinance shall be exempt from the minimum lot size and setback requirements.

2. Minimum Yard requirements and increased setbacks for structures over 45 feet in height shall not apply to any parcel located within the Core Area as defined in this Ordinance.

3. Refer to Sec. 32.05.030.A.5.d.

4. Additional height limits from Sec. 32.05.30.E may apply.

5. In the C-4 district, floor area ratio premiums may be added to such basic floor area ratio in accordance with each one of the following: (A) In any mixed use structure containing both non-residential uses above the ground floor and at least 25 multiple family dwelling units, the square footage of the residential dwelling units shall not be included in calculation of the FAR of the structure; (B) Any space devoted to off-street parking or loading shall not be included in "floor area" if it is located further from the street than the front facade of the principal structure and is located behind an office or retail frontage (so that it is not visible from the street).

Parking and off-street loading requirements are established by use in Section 32.05.020. This is followed by a series of development standards in Section 32.05.030 that include: (A) landscaping, buffering, and screening; (B) exterior lighting; (C) commercial design standards and guidelines; (D) multi-family residential dwelling units; (E) residential development; (F) neighborhood protection; and (G) floodplain regulations. The development standards range in comprehensiveness from fairly simple to much more sophisticated which could be a reflection of the city's comfort level with using more specific regulatory approaches increasing over time and could also be a reflection of the varying regulatory needs of different areas of the city. For example, the commercial design standards in Section 32.05.030.C establish very basic requirements for building façade design, pedestrian circulation, and building entrances:

3. Design Standards and Guidelines

a. Building Facades

i. Articulation

None required for building facades up to (75) feet long. Building facades from (76) feet to (300) feet long shall be broken up into intervals no longer than (75) feet. Building facades longer than (300) feet shall be broken up in intervals equal to or less than 25% of the entire building width. Vertical treatments shall include variations in facade materials or building wall offsets of at least (3) feet.

...

d. Pedestrian Circulation

Site design shall include provision for convenient pedestrian circulation and access to public streets and/or public transportation.

e. Building Entrances

Building entrances should provide strong orientation and character to the building through the use of design elements such as, but not limited to special wall treatments, special sidewalk treatments, highlighted colors, arbors, recesses and projections, porticos, and/or decorative overhead structures.

In comparison, the Czech-Bohemia Overlay District has more extensive and specific standards, including the building elevation requirements described here and building design requirements described on the next page.

TABLE 32.03-3: Building Elevations		
Diagram Reference	Location	Description
A	Street elevation	Elevations along street frontages
B	Interior elevation	Elevations interior to the parcel which are visible from the street
C	Lot line elevation	Elevations without a public entrance which are located within 7' of a rear or side yard parcel boundary which may be obscured by future construction.

Symbol	Description
●	All new or reconstructed elevations must comply with this requirement.
◇	All new or reconstructed elevations are encouraged to comply with this requirement.
×	This requirement is not applicable to the elevation

Czech Bohemia Overlay District Standards	Street Frontages	Interior	Lot line
<p>a) Building design and architectural style create and enhance the character of the Czech Bohemia Overlay District for pedestrians and motorists. A range of architectural styles is preferred. However, all buildings should be designed with common elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open glass storefronts (where retail is provided) or public entrances (other non-residential development); ○ Clearly defined entrances to ground and upper floors (if applicable); ○ Sign bands and awnings incorporated into the design and scale of the buildings; ○ Upper floor windows 	<p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p>	<p>◇</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p>	<p>×</p> <p>×</p> <p>◇</p> <p>×</p>
<p>b) Variations in rooflines are encouraged to add interest to buildings and reduce the massive scale of large buildings. Buildings which are taller than adjacent structures by more than 1 story should consider the use of upper-floor setbacks, dormers or other architectural features to soften the transition between structures.</p>	<p>●</p>	<p>◇</p>	<p>◇</p>

c) The top edge of the building shall be defined by a cornice line or similar articulation.	●	●	◇
d) Windows and doors shall be located, spaced and aligned on the building facade in a manner consistent with the established context of the block.	●	◇	×
e) The sizes of windows and doors shall be consistent with the proportions of historic buildings in the District.	●	◇	×
f) Highly reflective, opaque or darkly tinted glass shall not be used for windows or doors around public entrances.	●	●	×
g) Rear building entrances and facades shall be designed in a manner consistent with the front and a side facade, especially when parking is behind buildings.	×	●	◇
h) Entrances into commercial buildings should not be recessed more than five feet from the exterior building wall	●	●	×
i) Buildings shall primarily be constructed of high-quality materials such as brick, stone, split face block masonry, architectural paneling, and glass. Exterior finish insulation systems (EFIS), stucco and vinyl may be used on upper floors but use should be limited on the ground level. Concrete block, metal or plywood should not be used on building facades or on walls that are visible from streets, driveways, sidewalks or parking areas.	●	●	◇
j) At a minimum 60% of the building elevation dedicated to non-residential uses should be windows, doors, and fenestration.	●	◇	×

Meeting the requirements of EnvisionCR will require the further refinement of many of these design and development standards and the current processes used to apply them to development applications. Updating the regulations to meet the requirements of the comprehensive plan will also require the addition of site design, form, and locational criteria to the development standards, such as those identified for the UHI LUTAs:

LAND USE TYPOLOGY AREAS (LUTA)

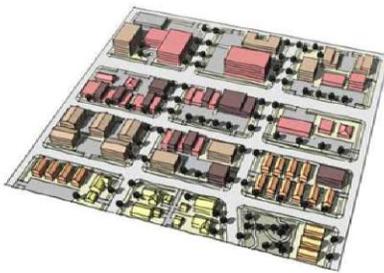


FIGURE 8: Urban - High Intensity



Urban—High Intensity (UHI)

Sub-regional and regional attractors with large office or medical buildings and high density residential living. High density improves economic performance and opportunities for social interaction, and acts as an incentive to redevelop aging buildings and develop vacant lots.

Form, Uses, and Intensity

1. Residential densities range between 8 and 40 units/acre are allowed.
2. Non-residential or mixed use FAR is maxed at 3.0. Parking garages are sometimes found in these areas.
3. Shared parking is encouraged to reduce land used as parking areas.
4. UHI areas should generally have good access to freeways, highways, arterials, and transit, while still being designed around pedestrians.
5. A high-connectivity grid pattern should be used to expand the viable locations for higher intensity land uses, resulting in greater integration of land uses.

Compatibility

Land uses and intensities should be fully integrated and mixed. As compared to UMI areas, compatibility should be achieved through increased attention to traffic circulation and parking, site and building design, and on-site operations.

1. Different land uses can be close together because high levels of service, design, and amenities take into account these juxtapositions and make appropriate accommodations.
2. Form and design rule and performance regulations address aesthetic and functional compatibility.
3. Industrial uses may be allowed with requirements that they mitigate any anticipated negative impacts on adjacent land uses and that they are located on arterial streets or rail lines.
4. Land uses should be fully integrated horizontally and mixed vertically, resulting in complementary and alternating times of use and the ability to share parking areas.
5. Higher levels of urban amenities are necessary to offset the area's intensity level and enhance livability.

Section 32.06 – Signs will be subject to revisions based on EnvisionCR that are designed to address sign aesthetics and to coordinate signage quantity and location with the character of the area in which they are located. In this project, we will also recommend some revisions to ensure that the sign code conforms to a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that changes some of the rules for regulating temporary signs in particular.

Section 32.07 – Nonconformities establishes the requirements for nonconforming situations. The 2006 code update caused a number of nonconformities in Cedar Rapids that we will work to undo as part of this code project. We also anticipate revisions to this section to reflect opportunities to reinvest in existing structures and uses that are viable rather than taking an approach of freezing those structures and uses in place.

Section 32.08 sets the rules for identifying violations and enforcing the code and Section 32.09 defines the terms used in the zoning code.

III. EnvisionCR

A. Comprehensive Plan Overview

EnvisionCR is Cedar Rapids’ comprehensive plan that provides a vision for the future of Cedar Rapids and establishes community-supported priorities for city policies and investments over the next 20 years. As reflected in the plan, EnvisionCR is the legal basis for land use regulations in Iowa:

Section 414 of the Code of Iowa allows cities to adopt land use regulations such as zoning and subdivision ordinances, and to promote the “health, safety, morals or general welfare of the community.” These regulations govern how land is developed within a municipality and its extra-territorial jurisdiction. Land use regulations recognize that people live cooperatively and have certain responsibilities to coordinate and harmonize the uses of private property.

EnvisionCR pg. 12. The plan is organized around seven guiding principles, identified below, that were established through the plan’s extensive public engagement process. These principles help provide focus for the future actions and changes contemplated in Cedar Rapids by EnvisionCR.



The guiding principles are further defined by six strategic elements that describe the detailed goals and initiatives for achieving the plan:

The elements of this plan, with their associated goals, are as follows:

StrengthenCR. Make bold moves in community planning to retain the character of neighborhoods and corridors.

GrowCR. Make bold moves in future planning to encourage sustainable connections of growth areas to existing neighborhoods.

ConnectCR. Create a culture that enhances transportation options for pedestrians and cyclists through complete streets, trails, and public transportation.

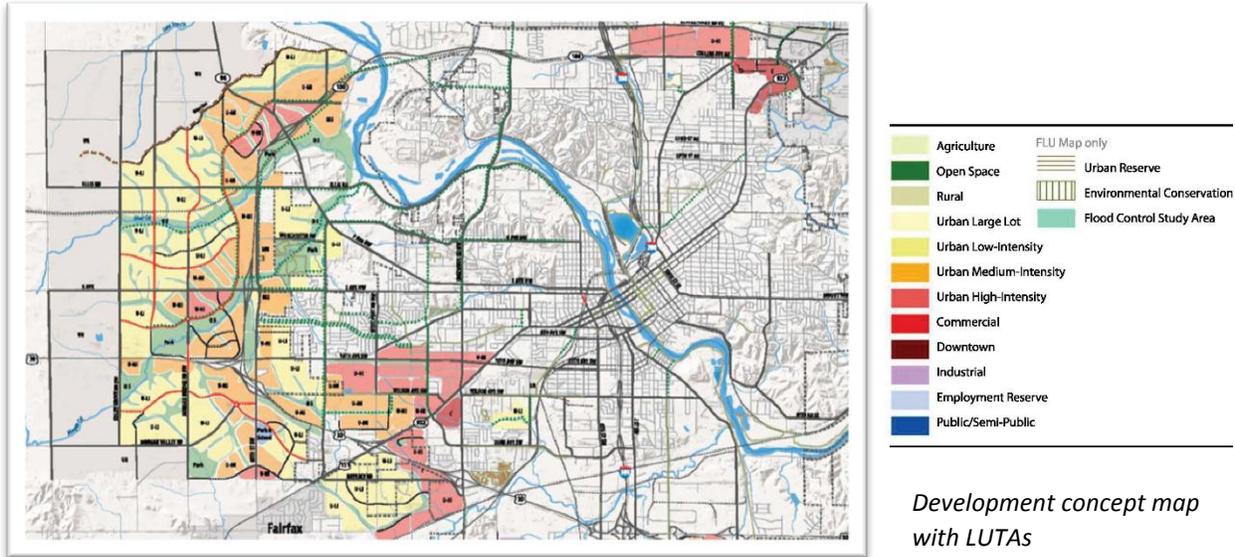
GreenCR. Buffer and connect existing parks, trails, and streams to build a natural network in addition to regional collaborations and individual efforts to improve stormwater management, water quality, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation.

InvestCR. Make Cedar Rapids a desirable place for businesses to start, move, and grow by leveraging resources to invest in business districts and amenities that keep and attract a skilled workforce.

ProtectCR. Provide quality services to increase neighborhood safety and keep moving forward with the flood control system.



While there are many specific instructions in EnvisionCR that relate to the regulatory process, most of the changes to the zoning code will be guided by the land use typology areas (LUTAs) established in the GrowCR element of the plan. The future development of the city identified in EnvisionCR is guided by the LUTAs that set parameters for how growth and redevelopment should take place in Cedar Rapids.



B. Implementation Table

Accordingly, we have used the LUTA descriptions as an organizing structure to identify the list of general and specific changes that need to be made to the zoning code as part of this project. In Table 1, Column 1 identifies the individual LUTAs and the use types permitted in each; Columns 2 and 3 identify the range of permitted development densities in each LUTA; Column 4 identifies the current zone districts that can be used to implement the LUTA; and the Zoning Revisions row below the LUTA classification identifies the general regulatory updates that will need to be made across the zoning code to ensure that development conforms to the plan. We will describe these changes in greater detail in the sections of this report that relate to the location in the zoning code where the new regulations will be located.

Table 1: EnvisionCR Implementation Table

1: LUTA with Use Categories	2: Residential Density (max.)	3: Non-Res/ Mixed Use Intensity FAR (max.) [1]	4: Applicable Current Zone Districts	
AP Agricultural Preserve				
Agriculture Single Family Rural Commercial Parks	1 du/40 A	NA	--	
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider need for new ag district, revised minimum lot size in existing district, or ag overlay • Rural commercial uses and development standards • Agriculture compatibility standards 			
R Rural				
Agriculture Single Family Rural Commercial Parks Public and Civic Facilities	1 du/2 A	NA	--	
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Rural district • Rural commercial uses and development standards • Review and update cluster development standards as necessary • Rural design standards 			
U-LL Urban Large Lot				
Single Family Two-Family Parks Public and Civic Facilities	0-6 du/1 A	0.50	A (1 du/A) R-T (3 du/A) R-1 (4 du/A)	
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing district dimensional clean-up to eliminate lot nonconformities • Two-family standards • Public and civic facility dimensions and standards 			
U-LI Urban Low Intensity				
Single Family Two-Family Multi-family Neighborhood Commercial Community Commercial Parks Public and Civic Facilities	2-12 du/1 A	0.50	R-T (3 du/A) R-1 (4 du/A) R-2 (6 du/A) R-3 (7 du/A) R-3D (7 du/A sfd; 12 du/A sfa) R-TN (10 du/A) RMF-1 (8.7 du/A) RMF-2 (8.7 du/A)	O-S C-1 C-MU C-2
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New residential mixed density (traditional neighborhood) district • New neighborhood conservation overlay district 			

Table 1: EnvisionCR Implementation Table

1: LUTA with Use Categories	2: Residential Density (max.)	3: Non-Res/ Mixed Use Intensity FAR (max.) [1]	4: Applicable Current Zone Districts	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing district clean-up to eliminate density overlap Existing district dimensional clean-up to eliminate lot nonconformities Public and civic facility dimensions and standards Residential development dimensions and standards in commercial mixed-use districts Adjust FAR/Intensity standards in commercial districts Compatibility and transition standards Public and civic facility dimensions and standards 	
U-MI Urban Medium Intensity				
Single Family Two-Family Multi-family Neighborhood Commercial Community Commercial Limited Industrial Parks Public and Civic Facilities	2-24 du/1 A	1.0	R-T (3 du/A) R-1 (4 du/A) R-2 (6 du/A) R-3 (7 du/A) R-3D (7 du/A sfd; 12 du/A sfa) R-TN (10 du/A) RMF-1 (8.7 du/A) RMF-2 (8.7 du/A)	O-S C-1 C-MU C-2 I-1p
Zoning Revisions			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New traditional districts that address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> residential mixed-density (traditional neighborhood) corridor mixed-use artisan/maker (no impact industrial) mixed-use New form districts that address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> urban mixed-use neighborhood center Residential development dimensions and standards in commercial mixed-use districts Adjust FAR/Intensity standards in commercial districts Compatibility and transition standards Public and civic facility dimensions and standards 	
U-HI Urban High Intensity				
Single Family Two-Family Multi-family Neighborhood Commercial Community Commercial Regional Commercial Limited Industrial Intensive Industrial Employment Center Parks	8-40 du/1 A	3.0	R-TN (10 du/A) RMF-1 (8.7 du/A) RMF-2 (8.7 du/A)	O-S C-1 C-MU C-2 C-3 I-1 I-2

Table 1: EnvisionCR Implementation Table

1: LUTA with Use Categories	2: Residential Density (max.)	3: Non-Res/ Mixed Use Intensity FAR (max.) [1]	4: Applicable Current Zone Districts	
Public and Civic Facilities				
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New traditional districts that address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ high density residential (not mixed-use) ○ residential mixed-density (traditional neighborhood) ○ corridor mixed-use ○ artisan/maker mixed-use • New form districts that address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ urban mixed-use ○ neighborhood center • Residential development dimensions and standards in commercial mixed-use districts • Adjust FAR/Intensity standards in commercial districts • Compatibility and transition standards • Public and civic facility dimensions and standards 			
DT Downtown				
Multi-family Neighborhood Commercial Community Commercial Regional Commercial Limited Industrial Intensive Industrial Employment Center Parks Public and Civic Facilities	20 + du/1 A	1.0 and up	N/A	O-S C-1 C-MU C-2 C-3 C-4 I-1 I-2
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New traditional districts that address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ high density residential (not mixed-use) ○ residential mixed-density (traditional neighborhood) ○ corridor mixed-use ○ artisan/maker mixed-use • New form districts that address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ urban mixed-use ○ neighborhood center • Residential development dimensions and standards in commercial mixed-use districts • Adjust FAR/Intensity standards in commercial districts • Compatibility and transition standards • Public and civic facility dimensions and standards 			
C Commercial				
Multi-family Neighborhood Commercial Community Commercial Regional Commercial	16-40 du/ 1 A	1.0	N/A	O-S C-1 C-MU C-2

Table 1: EnvisionCR Implementation Table

1: LUTA with Use Categories	2: Residential Density (max.)	3: Non-Res/ Mixed Use Intensity FAR (max.) [1]	4: Applicable Current Zone Districts
Parks Public and Civic Facilities			C-3 I-1 I-2
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New traditional districts that address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ high density residential (not mixed-use) ○ corridor mixed-use ○ regional commercial center • New form districts that address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ urban mixed-use • Residential development dimensions and standards in commercial mixed-use districts • Adjust FAR/Intensity standards in commercial districts • Compatibility and transition standards • Public and civic facility dimensions and standards 		
I Industrial			
Neighborhood Commercial Community Commercial Limited Industrial Intensive Industrial Employment Center Public and Civic Facilities	NA	N/A	O-S C-2 I-1 I-2
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New artisan/commercial mixed-use district • New neighborhood commercial district (non-mixed) • Public and civic facility dimensions and standards • Industrial design/compatibility standards 		
ER Employment Reserve			
Neighborhood Commercial Community Commercial Limited Industrial Intensive Industrial Employment Center Public and Civic Facilities	NA	N/A	O-S C-2 I-1 I-2
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider need for new employment reserve district or overlay and design/compatibility standards • Public and civic facility dimensions and standards • Industrial design/compatibility standards 		
P Public, Semi-Public			
Parks Public and Civic Facilities	NA	N/A	C-2
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update PUB district • Public and civic facility dimensions and standards 		

Table 1: EnvisionCR Implementation Table			
1: LUTA with Use Categories	2: Residential Density (max.)	3: Non-Res/ Mixed Use Intensity FAR (max.) [1]	4: Applicable Current Zone Districts
OS Open Space			
Parks	NA	NA	PUB
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider need for open space/parks zone, as well as conservation zone with natural area protection standards 		
UR Urban Reserve Overlay			
Agriculture Rural Commercial Parks	1 du/40 A	NA	
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ag with revised minimum lot size Rural commercial uses and development standards Agriculture compatibility standards 		
EC Environmental Conservation Overlay			
Parks	NA	NA	
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider need for conservation zone or environmental conservation standards 		
FC Flood Control Study Area			
Parks	NA	NA	
Zoning Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas designated FC will be re-designated as necessary to allow for future development 		
Notes:	[1] FAR may not achieve desired results in non-form districts, we will explore the outcomes of all measurement approaches.		

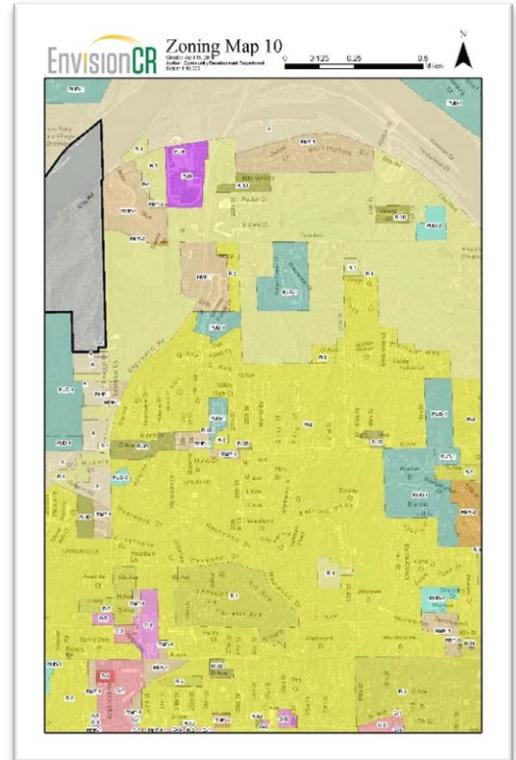
IV. Zone Districts and Uses

Regardless of whether a zoning code is use-oriented and traditional in format or form-based and structure-oriented in format, the basic organizing concept of the regulations is the zone district. Cedar Rapids’ current zoning district line-up is fairly use-based and traditional in format and is not detailed enough to mix use, intensity, and compatibility in a way that will implement EnvisionCR. Most of the zoning code updates and revisions we undertake in this project will be focused on the zone districts and uses as we rebuild and add to them to implement the plan. This section describes the city’s current zone districts, the changes specified by EnvisionCR, and the revisions that will be made to implement the plan.

A. Current Regulations

Cedar Rapids’ current zone district line-up include one agricultural district, six predominately single-family residential districts, two multi-family districts, one office/service district, two commercial mixed-use districts, three commercial districts, two industrial districts, and five special purpose and overlay districts, for a total of 21 zone districts, generally described in Table 2, below. When the zoning code was rewritten in 2006, these districts represented a limited consolidation of the previous 29 districts; most likely this consolidation was undertaken for a variety of reasons designed to streamline the application or use of the code.

Cedar Rapids currently has roughly 46,000 acres of zoned property within the city limits. The majority of the city is zoned residential, with 31,000 acres in the various residential districts, not including PUD zoning, which is also primarily residential. The remaining 15,000 acres are zoned non-residential, mixed-use, or planned development. Over the ten years that the current district line-up has been in place, total acreage per district has been distributed as follows:



One section of Cedar Rapids’ current zoning map

Residential			Non-Residential/Mixed-Use		
District	Zoned Acreage	% of CR Total Acreage	District	Zoned Acreage	% of CR Total Acreage
A Agriculture (1 du/A)	9,665	21	O-S Office/Service	1,269	3
RT SF (3 du/A)	140	0.3	C-1 Mix Neigh. Convenience	55	0.1
R-1 SF (4 du/A)	4,403	10	C-MU Comm. Mix	11	0
R-2 SF (6 du/A)	6,770	15	C-2 Community Commercial	1,255	3

Table 2: Distribution and Coverage of Current Zone Districts

Residential			Non-Residential/Mixed-Use		
District	Zoned Acreage	% of CR Total Acreage	District	Zoned Acreage	% of CR Total Acreage
R-3 SF (7 du/A)	7,529	16	C-3 Regional Commercial	2,155	5
R-3D SF and Two-Family (7-12 du/A)	403	0.9	C-4 Central Business	198	0.4
RTN Traditional Neighborhood (10 du/A)	87	0.2	I-1 Light Industrial	2,390	5
RMF-1 Multi-Family	1,252	2	I-2 General Industrial	4,051	9
RMF-2 Multi-Family	500	1	PUB Public	472	1
			AIR Airport	1,464	3
			PUD-1	1,597	4
			PUD-2	148	0.3

This basic analysis gives us a snapshot of Cedar Rapids development preferences over time. The table shows that much of the city’s single family residential development is in moderate-sized lots (roughly 6-7,000 sq. ft. lots) and that there appears to be a preference for moderate-density (RMF-1) multi-family development over higher density multi-family. Higher density multi-family is blended into the commercial districts such as C-2, C-3, and C-4 where multi-family is a permitted use. This analysis also appears to show that commercial development is grouped either downtown or in community or regional commercial areas but not necessarily distributed in smaller neighborhood commercial centers.

And for the purposes of this project, it also shows that some of the newer districts and mixed-use districts are not well used at this point in time. For example, Commercial Mixed Use was designed to allow residential and commercial mixed-use development in low- to medium-density commercial areas but it has only been applied to 11 acres so far (with some of that acreage lost to a recent rezoning). Similarly, Mixed Neighborhood Convenience was intended to allow neighborhood commercial adjacent to residential development and include a mix of residential uses within the district but it has only been applied to 55 acres within the city. The limited use of mixed-use districts is consistent with the comments that we heard in our meeting with the developer user group; there is a perception of limited demand for mixed-use in Cedar Rapids. There are multiple possible reasons for this, including:

- (a) The mixed-use districts are not easy to use or are not drafted to meet current design requirements (e.g., the 80/20 residential/commercial split in the Commercial Mixed-Use district does not reflect actual market demand) so developers find it beneficial to choose other districts;
- (b) The Great Recession stopped the construction of most development and the market is just rebounding in the less expensive, peripheral real estate areas but not yet sufficiently to see increase requests for these districts; or

(c) There really is no demand for mixed-use development in Cedar Rapids outside of the downtown core and/or there is a lack of willingness on the part of the development community to test a mixed-use product in suburban areas.

Given the emphasis on walkable, compact, and mixed-use development that evolved out of the creation of EnvisionCR with its significant public outreach and involvement, it is more likely that the difficulty of use of the regulations and market crash had more to do with the current amount of mixed-use development in Cedar Rapids than an uninterested buying public. One of the goals of this project will be to update and expand the mixed-use zone districts and development standards to allow a more robust selection of options.

A review of EnvisionCR identifies the need to revise the mixed-use districts along with the following high-level updates to the zoning code that are intended to establish standards for development intensity, mix of uses, and compatibility and the associated regulations that support quality development in Cedar Rapids:

Table 3: Zone District and Use Regulations Updates	
Revisions Identified in EnvisionCR [Implementation Section]	
1.	Modifications to use standards, promotion of mixed-use development, allowance of density bonuses for affordable housing, second units, and joint live/work units in certain zoning districts
2.	Analyze regulatory barriers to mixed-use and infill development, and amend the municipal code to remove barriers and incorporate regulatory incentives
Revisions Needed to Implement Land Use Typology Areas (LUTAs)	
3.	Update existing zone districts, add new districts as necessary to implement range of intensities: districts should conform to LUTA intensity, form, use, and compatibility standards
4.	Establish locational standards within districts to guide structures and uses in alignment with compatibility and infrastructure requirements
5.	Update the use table to reflect LUTA preferences

As we describe below, we will update the current zone districts, include intent statements (Sec. 32.03.010), permitted and conditional uses (Sec. 32.04.010), use specific standards where applicable (Sec. 32.04.030), and dimensional standards (Sec. 32.05.010) and/or add new zone districts as necessary to remove regulatory barriers and fully implement EnvisionCR.

B. Land Use Typology Area Components

Through the establishment of LUTAs, EnvisionCR shifts Cedar Rapids’ zoning approach from predominately use-based to a more refined combination of regulations that take into account development intensity, mix of uses, and compatibility. Each of these concepts is described in the plan and used to define the differences across the LUTAs. The zoning code revisions will reflect the intensity, mix, and compatibility standards in the zone districts, use allocation and standards, and development standards.

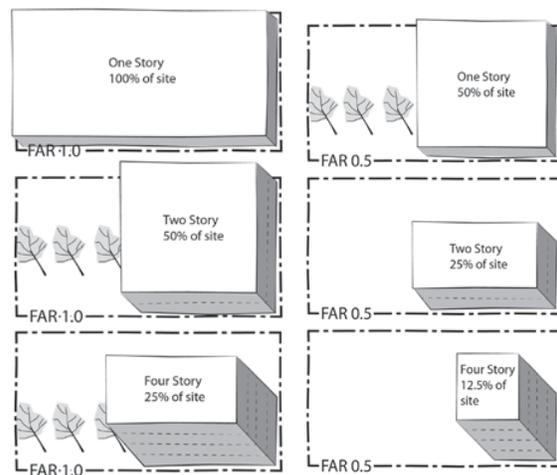
1. Development Intensity

“[t]he [LUTA] concept adds designations based on how much development occurs in an area and how that development affects its neighbors. This is measured by intensity and/or density of development. Density applies to residential use, and is measured by dwelling units per acre for net area of the project site. Intensity is measured by a factor called floor area ratio or FAR, calculated by dividing building area by site area.” EnvisionCR pg. 55, illustrations pg. 56.

EnvisionCR illustrates both density and FAR, shown below, and these measurements are reflected in the dimensional standards for each zone district, as appropriate to the intent of the district. For example, an urban mixed-use district could have a maximum density of 40 du/A and a maximum FAR of 1.0. As part of the regulatory drafting process, the consultant team will work with staff and the development community to ensure that FAR is the best measurement approach to achieving desired outcomes; we recognize it as a “loose” measurement tool that can have unpredictable results. Other dimensional standards in the district will also affect how development is designed on a lot, including required setbacks, maximum height, and maximum impervious surface standards. Required parking also plays a role in determining the size and location of a structure and we will reflect this in our draft regulations.



Measurement of residential dwelling units per acre (du/A)



Measurement of mixed-use or non-residential floor area ratio (FAR)

2. Mix of Uses and Structures

“One advantage of the LUTA concept is its ability to integrate rather than separate different land uses, providing both more interest and more efficiency in the city. Uses may be integrated in two ways: horizontally and vertically. Horizontal integration keeps individual building purposes separate but relates buildings harmoniously to each other. Vertical integration puts more than one use in the same building.” EnvisionCR pg. 55, illustrations pg. 56.

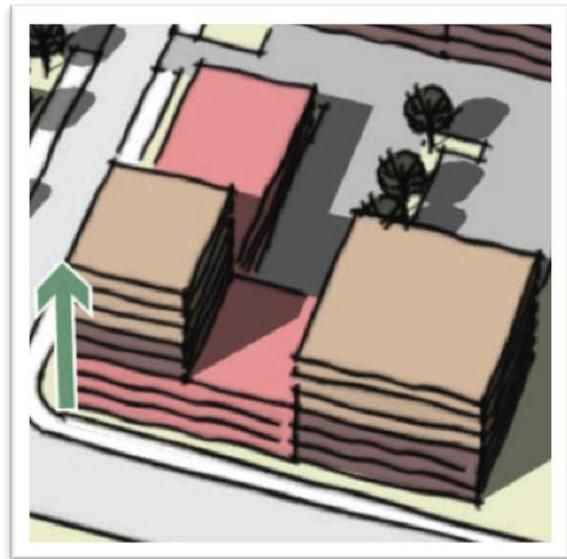
Mixing uses in a single structure is an old idea that has become new again. Long before zoning gave specific instructions about separating residential uses from commercial uses, merchants in many

downtowns across the country owned their buildings and lived in a home over the shop. Widespread car ownership and cheaper land in the suburbs helped to change our development patterns but now many communities, including Cedar Rapids, are hearing from residents about a desire to walk or bike to work, school, or play and our development patterns are changing accordingly. Early attempts at drafting mixed-use districts, however, accomplished some very mixed results. The zone district standards did not always take into account the prevalent design of the surrounding neighborhood, encouraged a mix of uses with a poorly located commercial center where businesses struggled, or set mandatory residential/commercial mix standards that were not linked to local market demand.

The city has gone a long way to define the parameters for mixed-use regulations in EnvisionCR and we will reflect those local preferences in a set of comprehensive updated mixed-use districts.



Horizontal integration of structures and uses



Vertical integration of structures and uses

3. Compatibility

“One of the most important concerns in land use planning is the relationship between different uses and their relative compatibility with each other. In suburban style areas where densities are low, compatibility is usually achieved by spacing between buildings and by congregating like uses together. This simple method is easy to administer and understand; however it leads to some undesirable conditions such as increased commute times with employment and residential areas being further separated from each other. It creates an automobile dependent city, which leads to un-walkable neighborhoods, congestion, and increasing transportation expenses.

Compatibility in today’s world can be attained in a more sophisticated way by focusing on the performance of various uses and designing regulations that allow greater integration of uses. If carefully done, the integration of uses can be achieved so that commute times become shorter, and neighborhoods become more walkable and interesting, all while preserving privacy, security and aesthetics. The LUTAs described below exist on a continuum of intensity. This leads to a continuum of

compatibility methods. That is to say, as LUTAs become more intense and uses become more integrated, compatibility methods focus less on spacing and congregating of similar uses, and more on performance-based methods that directly address issues such as noise, traffic, air quality, privacy, and aesthetics.” EnvisionCR pg. 55, illustration pg. 60.



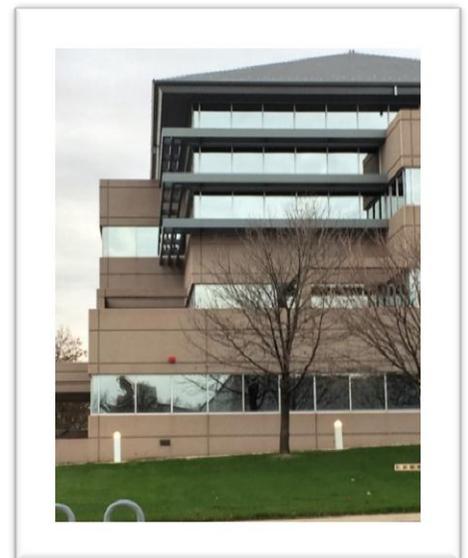
Cedar Rapids has development types that range from agricultural to downtown and will need compatibility standards to work across this full range

C. Implementing EnvisionCR: Adding Character Areas

We will incorporate the intensity, mix, and compatibility standards into the zoning code in two formats: (1) new and revised traditional zone districts, and (2) form-based zone districts. The LUTAs provide an outline for both types of districts and providing a mix of the two will allow Cedar Rapids to choose the best approach for a specific geographic area based on the applicable LUTA and anticipated long-term development of that area.

One aspect of applying the LUTAs that is not addressed in EnvisionCR is how to distinguish the regulatory standards needed when the same LUTA is applied in different locations in the city. For example, the Urban Low Intensity LUTA could be applicable to both an existing traditional neighborhood close to downtown and to a greenfield site with an anticipated suburban neighborhood center on the west side of the city. The development density, form, and compatibility of development in the traditional neighborhood will be dictated, to a great extent, by the style of development that is already in place in terms of context and scale, block design, street network, site and lot configuration, streetscapes and public spaces, and parking location and arrangement. The suburban neighborhood center, in comparison, will be open to the creation of a completely new form for the same design components. To ensure that the choice of zone district within the same LUTA reflects these differences, we have identified the major character areas across Cedar Rapids and cross-referenced those character areas with the LUTAs that could be present within the character area.

We have identified the following character area types in Cedar Rapids, all



of which are more fully described in the Community Character Area Analysis Report.

Downtown, the historic center of Cedar Rapids is large-scale, mixed-use, compact, and walkable. It is the most intense area in the city, and very pedestrian-oriented, although individuals may arrive via many modes of transportation.

Urban Mixed-Use Areas are of moderate to high intensity, and include a range of uses from residential to commercial, and institutional to industrial, within a framework of urban building forms and an interconnected street network, generally surrounding downtown. They often include rail lines. They typically include pedestrian streetscapes and other public spaces.

Traditional Neighborhood Centers are similar in character to a downtown but on a much smaller scale and lower intensity. They typically include locally serving retail, office, and residential uses in a compact, walkable form. They are located within, adjacent to, or between traditional neighborhoods or urban neighborhoods, and may range in size from a few blocks to an individual corner store. These centers may be located on a neighborhood “Main Street” corridor or other large thoroughfares, but they are pedestrian-oriented.

Urban Neighborhoods are predominantly residential areas in close proximity to Downtown, comprised of a range of housing types, from apartments to townhouses and, in limited locations, small lot single family homes, arranged in a compact, walkable form. These areas are more intense than a traditional neighborhood and may encompass a traditional neighborhood center or “Main Street” that includes small commercial uses as well as civic and institutional uses.

Traditional Neighborhoods may be historic neighborhoods or a newer neighborhood development. They have an interconnected network of walkable streets, and include a range of housing types (but are less intense than an urban neighborhood). These neighborhoods may include small mixed-use traditional neighborhood centers within their borders as well as some institutional uses such as elementary schools and small places of worship.

Streetcar or Garden Suburb Neighborhoods were typically developed in the late 19th to early 20th century. They are usually comprised of single-family houses, but may include accessory dwelling units in the form of detached garages or carriage houses, as well as small apartment buildings. Street patterns are often irregular but interconnected. These neighborhoods are typically adjacent to or within walking distance to a traditional neighborhood center (or historic streetcar station or route).

Regional Suburban Centers are large-scale, auto-oriented areas, typically developed as a cohesive center following a master plan, located on major arterials, and often serving as a citywide or regional destination for goods and services. They are predominantly comprised of retail, restaurant and office uses, but may include a residential component. The different uses are often developed in separate pods, separated by streets and/or landscaped buffers. These centers may include an internal (private) street network.

Suburban Mixed-Use Areas are auto-oriented locations of moderate to high intensity, frequently located along a major suburban corridor or highway frontage. The uses range from light industrial to office, from retail to residential, and are typically configured in “horizontal mixed-use” patterns, usually developed separately in standalone buildings or strip centers with pad sites. Highway commercial areas are a sub-category of suburban mixed-use areas. They are very auto-oriented, with a mix of uses

oriented to travelers and easy auto access; most have standalone building forms with minimal landscaping or pedestrian infrastructure, which should be improved.

Suburban Neighborhood Centers are primarily auto-oriented (yet still accessible by pedestrians) commercial areas, but may include attached single-family and multi-family residential sub-areas, as well as some civic and institutional uses. They are a range of sizes, typically less intense than regional suburban centers or mixed-use areas, and are usually located along larger thoroughfares or corridors and provide goods and services to the surrounding suburban neighborhoods.

Suburban Neighborhoods are residential areas, primarily built after WWII up until the present day, developed around a framework of irregular, often large, blocks. Street networks are often curvilinear and disconnected and frequently include cul-de-sacs. Although they may include a range of housing types, these are typically concentrated in sub-districts of a consistent type. (These areas are commonly referred to as subdivisions and apartment complexes.) **Conservation Neighborhoods** are a sub-category of suburban neighborhood. They are low intensity residential areas with limited development potential due to topography or other natural features. (Many were developed as planned unit developments.) The houses may be clustered in order to retain a larger portion of the area in a natural state. The street network is frequently curvilinear, following the topography, and disconnected.

Industrial Areas are large scale and dominated by manufacturing, processing, and distribution facilities, but may also include supporting commercial and retail services, including restaurants. They are frequently located along highway and rail corridors and are easily accessible by large trucks/tractor-trailers. (This character area designation is applied to those large geographic areas fulfilling the parameters above, not to every industrial use and/or parcel within the City limits.)

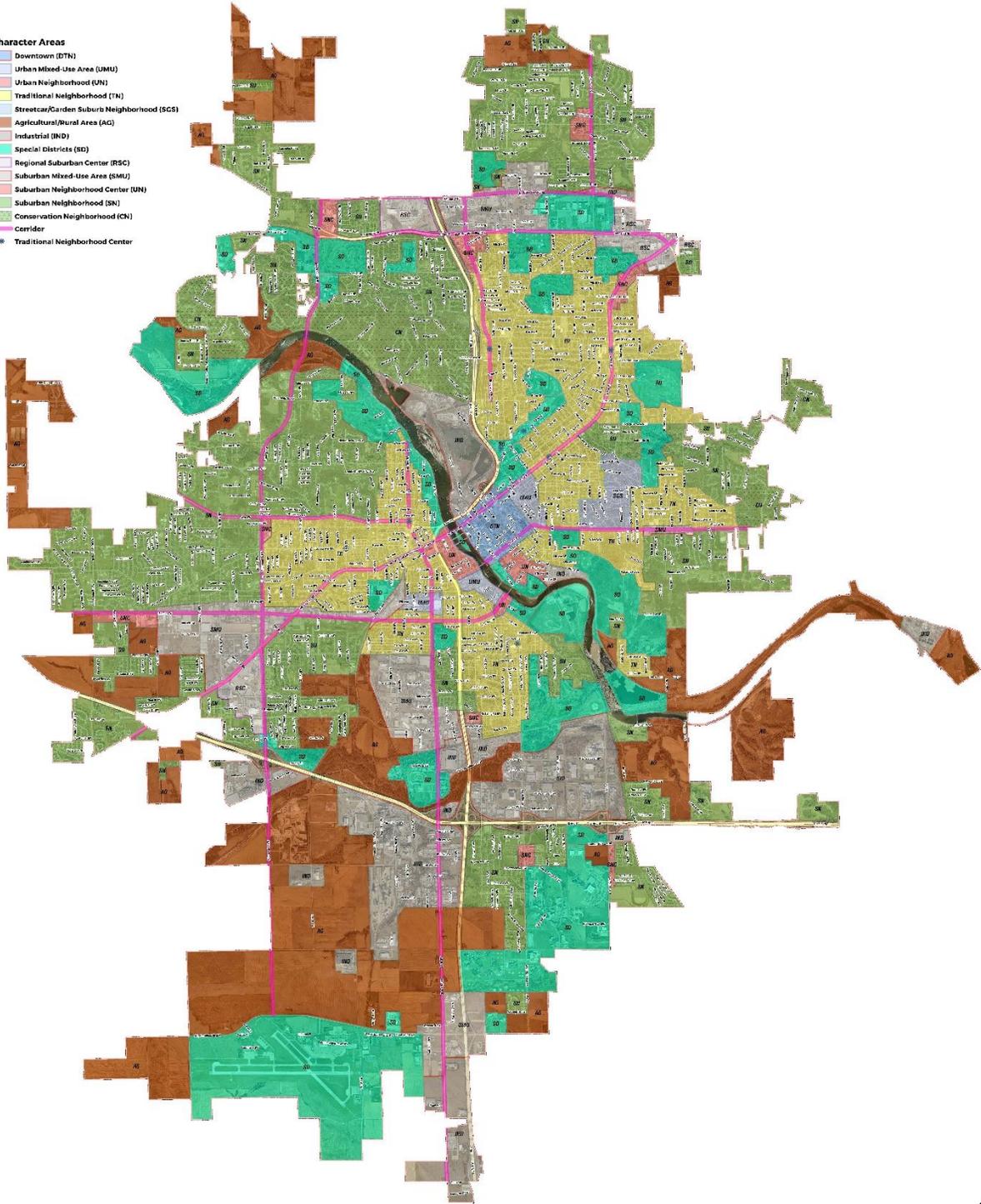
Special Districts are typically single-use areas with a form and character specific to their function and context. They may include small industrial areas, office parks, recreational facilities and signature parks, corporate and college campuses, and large institutional and public uses such as airports or waste-management facilities.

Agricultural/Rural Areas are dominated by active agricultural uses, primarily cultivated fields and pastures with little built form. (These areas may also include other activities such as mining.) The structures that do exist (in addition to individual family residences) are typically accessory to the agricultural use, such as barns and silos. Agriculture-related commercial/retail uses may also exist in a limited number.

Corridors are thoroughfares that provide vehicular connections between and through different Character Areas. (They are not actually character areas in and of themselves, but provide a framework and definition for the adjacent character areas.) Ideally, corridors are directly accessible by the neighborhoods they abut. Longer corridors frequently change form and character along their length, as they pass through various centers and neighborhoods. The built form, landscape and signage along corridors affect the overall character and perception of the city. Corridors may have an urban, suburban, rural, or highway commercial character. They often take on and influence the character of the areas through which they pass. Corridors are typically auto-oriented; but railways and greenways/bike trails also serve as corridors and contribute to the character of different parts of the city.

The Cedar Rapids Character Area Map on the following page shows where each of these character areas can be mapped across the city. These designations are informational, not regulatory. We will use this information as we design zone districts and development standards to be used in the new zoning code.

- Character Areas**
- Downtown (DTN)
 - Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)
 - Urban Neighborhood (UN)
 - Traditional Neighborhood (TN)
 - Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SCS)
 - Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)
 - Industrial (IND)
 - Special Districts (SD)
 - Regional Suburban Center (RSC)
 - Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SMU)
 - Suburban Neighborhood Center (UN)
 - Suburban Neighborhood (SN)
 - Conservation Neighborhood (CN)
 - Corridor
 - * Traditional Neighborhood Center



Cedar Rapids Community Character Area Map

D. Cedar Rapids' New Zone District Line-Up

When we organize the overlap between the existing character areas (Table 5 left columns) and the potential LUTA distribution across the city (Table 5 top rows) we can identify type of future development and redevelopment that will need a varying range of regulatory standards.

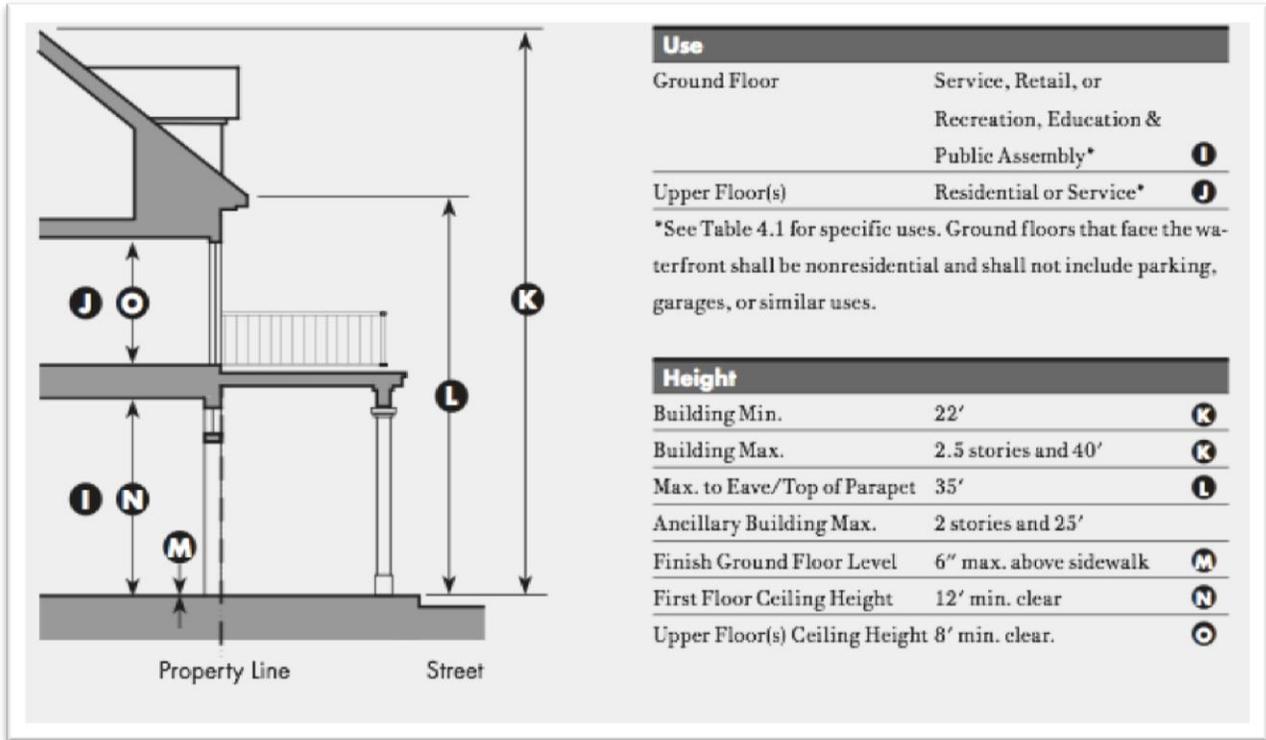
Table 5: Character Area by Land Use Typology Area

			LUTAs												
			Downtown	Urban High Intensity	Urban Medium Intensity	Urban Low Intensity	Urban Large Lot	Commercial	Industrial	Public/Semi-Public	Employment Reserve	Flood Control Study Area	Open Space	Rural	Agricultural Preserve
Character Areas	Urban Form	Downtown	•												
		Urban Mixed-Use Area		•	•			•							
		Traditional Neighborhood Center		•	•			•	•						
		Urban Neighborhood	•	•	•			•							
		Traditional Neighborhood		•	•		•								
		Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood			•	•	•								
	Context/Use-Specific Form	Corridors	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•
		Industrial Areas		•	•			•	•						
		Special Districts		•	•	•		•	•	•		•			
	Suburban Form	Regional Suburban Center		•	•			•							
		Suburban Mixed-Use Area		•	•			•							
		Suburban Neighborhood Center			•	•		•	•						
		Suburban Neighborhood			•	•	•								
	Rural Form	Agricultural/Rural Area					•						•	•	

The instructions within the individual LUTAs about the range and compatibility of development types then help us to identify the specific need for a gradation of intensities, use mix, form, and compatibility standards. For example, the city may need compatibility standards for urban medium intensity development that allow that development type in traditional neighborhoods and slightly different standards that also accommodate that development type in suburban mixed-use areas. We have also identified areas of similar form for the purposes of drafting new standards. These form groupings are identified by different bands of color, such as the white urban form areas or grey suburban form areas. Within each of these groupings there will be a range of regulatory standards that reflect how specifically the form type will be enforced in the zone district. This will range from form-based districts intended for use in areas that are heavily form influenced to more general development standards that reflect some area-specific form priorities but allow a less prescriptive approach to accommodating a project's final design.

Our next step is to determine where in the code to locate the specific regulations. The intensity and use mix requirements are typically drafted into both traditional and form-based zone districts. The form standards are also included in the form-based districts but located in the development standards for traditional districts where approaches to form could vary based on the location and development in the district. Compatibility standards might be addressed in a general manner in form-based regulations but are more typically regulated in the development standards of traditional regulations.

For each zone district, we will update or create density/intensity, dimensional, and use standards that are appropriate for the district as described in the LUTAs. We will work to simplify the arrangement of this information in a more user-friendly manner than is found in the current regulations using graphics and tables for both form-based and traditional zone districts, similar to this illustration from another community:



E. A Note About Nonconformities and Variances

While we are revising the zone district line-up, we will also look for opportunities within the code dimensional standards to bring existing nonconforming lots and structures into compliance to encourage reuse and reinvestment. Staff has provided us with a list of variance requests for the past five years and a significant percentage of the requests relate to setbacks. This a clue to us that the current regulations may be making it more difficult than necessary to build on or use existing lots. Staff has also shared with us that the 2006 zoning code update created a number of nonconforming lots in older, existing neighborhoods where smaller lot sizes are typically more prevalent. It is not common to see entire neighborhoods redevelop to match overly-large minimum lot sizes and that development pattern does not match the preferences expressed in EnvisionCR so we will correspond existing lot sizes to zone district lot requirements as we update the regulations. Similarly, we will update standards related to garages, fences, and decks to address side yard encroachments that were permitted prior to 2006 but then eliminated without a request from the city to make this change.

V. Development Standards

A. Current Regulations and Comments

Development standards are those sections of the zoning code that establish categories of regulations applicable across multiple development types, such as parking, landscaping, signs or commercial design standards. In form-based codes, development standards also include site and lot configuration standards and building form standards. Currently, Cedar Rapids has parking and development standards for landscaping/buffering/screening, exterior lighting, commercial design, multifamily design, residential development, neighborhood protection, and floodplains collected in Section 32.05.

The current standards are drafted in varying levels of detail and, as we discussed above in *Section II: Current Regulations*, the city has been replacing many of the generally applicable development standards, particularly those related to building form, with more specific regulations through the application of overlay districts.

We also heard from our user group interviews about a variety of development standard-related issues including the need for:

- (a) Updated parking standards that work well in an urban setting;
- (b) Revised special event standards;
- (c) Standards that encourage more bicycle and pedestrian trails and non-motorized connectivity;
- (d) Design that includes outdoor open space and green space;
- (e) Updated urban agriculture standards (addressing crops and creatures); and
- (f) Expanded application of neighborhood-specific design standards, which are currently implemented through design review overlay districts.

B. EnvisionCR Instructions

Picking up the conversation from the zone district identification list above, EnvisionCR does not provide as extensive instructions about revisions to the development standards as it does about the preferred character of development, but changes to the development standards will be required to guide development to that preferred character type and to complete the regulations included in the zone districts. EnvisionCR specifically identifies the following updates:

Table 6: Development Standards Updates

Revisions Identified in EnvisionCR [Implementation Section]

1. Analyze regulatory barriers to mixed-use and infill development, and amend the municipal code to remove barriers and incorporate regulatory incentives

Revisions Needed to Implement Land Use Typology Areas (LUTAs)

2. Update existing zone districts, add new districts as necessary to implement range of intensities: districts should conform to LUTA intensity, form, use, and compatibility standards
3. Establish locational standards within districts to guide structures and uses in alignment with

Table 6: Development Standards Updates

	compatibility and infrastructure requirements
4.	Create transitional standards for different forms and structures
5.	Review and revise screening and buffering standards to reflect LUTA compatibility standards

C. Combining Standards

To move to the right blend of development standards to implement the LUTAs across the various character areas, we will first address many form-related issues through the creation of form-based districts. Where applicable, we will also uncouple the form standards from the specific district and make them part of the development requirements in similarly-scaled traditional districts to create a parallel district option where form-based development is not feasible. To fully implement the LUTA compatibility requirements, we will also need to create a range of compatibility standards by revising the landscaping, buffering, and screening standards to work more specifically with multiple development types as well as establishing transitional standards applicable both within zone districts and to adjoining zone districts.

To provide the greatest amount of both flexibility and specific instruction in how the new zoning code will be used to implement EnvisionCR, we anticipate drafting the updated development standards in four categories: urban, infill, suburban, and rural that are designed to be matched with the development type anticipated by the LUTA and character area and combined with the applicable zone district based on the location of the development. While the standards we draft will be specific to Cedar Rapids, this zoning technique is generally referred to as “combining districts.” It is used in other communities, large and small, to address a wide range of location-specific issues. Sonoma County, California, for example, has a “traffic sensitive” combining district that limits new development based on traffic generation:

All permitted uses and uses permitted with a use permit in the applicable district with which the TS district is combined, except that the intensity of such uses shall be limited so as not to exceed anticipated traffic generation levels which are specified below:

1. Each parcel designated "limited commercial" within the Sonoma Valley redevelopment area on the general plan land use map shall be limited to a total of sixty-three (63) trips per acre per weekday evening peak hour.
2. Each parcel designated "limited commercial traffic sensitive" within the aforementioned area shall be limited to a total of eighteen (18) trips per acre per weekday evening peak hour.
3. In addition to the above traffic levels, development on these parcels must also be found consistent with Objective CT-2.1 and Policy CT-2a of the general plan circulation and transit element.

The most recent trip generation manual published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers shall be used to evaluate projects in order to determine the number of trips the proposed uses will generate and thereby the intensity of uses permitted.

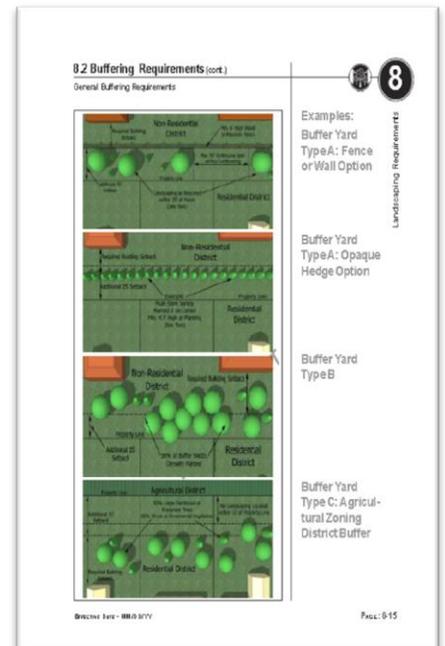
The specificity or flexibility of the applicable development standard will be designed to reflect the character of the development. In some character areas and LUTAs and for infill development projects, we will also identify a menu of development standard options and identify the range of choices

applicable across different development types. A general overview of this approach is described in Table 7:

Table 7: Development Standards Combining Categories				
Key: S – Specific, G – General, M - Menu				
Development Standard	Urban	Infill	Suburban	Rural/ Conservation
Site and Lot Configuration	S	S	G	G
Building Form	S	G	S/G	N/A
Landscaping, Buffering, and Screening	S	M	M	M
Exterior Lighting	G	S	S	G
Streetscapes and Public Realm	S	S	G	G
Parking	S	M	G	G
Transitional Requirements	S	M	S	N/A
Sensitive Areas/Environment Protection	G	G	S	S

This might mean, for example, that in a neighborhood commercial district, perimeter parking lot landscaping in urban areas can be a decorative fence between the parking lot and sidewalk, in suburban areas will be a 10-foot planting strip with trees and shrubs that hide the front end of cars, and it may simply be a berm or setback in rural areas. The correct category of development standards can be indicated in the zone district abbreviation, such as C-NM-S for neighborhood mixed-use with suburban development standards.

Once we have determined the full range of updated and new development standards necessary to implement the LUTAs, we will then update the existing or draft the new standards in a more heavily illustrated and user-friendly manner than the current regulations. Key and complex development requirements will be illustrated to help code users understand the application of the regulations.



VI. Administrative Processes

A. Streamlined Review Process

EnvisionCR does not include specific recommendations to make changes to the development review process; however, we heard through our user group meetings that the system for obtaining development approvals in Cedar Rapids can be uncertain in both process and outcome. Interestingly, the code user comments were not that the process is broken, but that it was “really great” when a staff member was able to help them achieve a desired outcome. We hear this as both a compliment to staff and the identification of some sort of unanticipated road block or barrier in the process. This perception can cause potential applicants to hesitate before bringing applications to the city, weighing the time and cost of an unpredictable process against the benefits of building or doing business in the Cedar Rapids. Making changes to the zoning code to make the development review process more predictable and more effective may help shift this balance in the city’s favor.

Codes that are efficient and effective generally share three key strategies: 1) the general framework for development permitting is not redundant, 2) the procedures used and the review standards relied-upon by both the applicant and local government result in a reasonable degree of certainty, and 3) the review processes are streamlined to the greatest extent possible without sacrificing relevant local oversight. The current zoning code has an extensive and presumably complete set of administrative review standards, more complete, in fact than in many similar communities. This means that the issues might not be located in the paper version of the zoning code or the specific procedures themselves, but in the human use of the zoning code. Crossed expectations between applicants and staff could arise from a variety of sources, including:

- (a) Missing or poorly-drafted development and design standards;
- (b) Differing interpretation between city and applicant in discretionary approvals;
- (c) Unspecified or unclear application review criteria; or
- (d) Use of negotiated development types such as PUD.

Our experience tells us that the use of discretionary review and negotiated development types typically result in a higher incidence of uncertainty and differing expectations that other applications in the development review process. Discretionary review typically involves a public hearing, general standards, and a final decision made by the city council, rather than staff. Discretionary review is a powerful tool that is necessary to control difficult land use situations. This can include controversial uses with the potential for major impacts (such as a new residential tower downtown) that the city wants the ability to consider individually. Discretionary review ensures that these types of uses are not permitted outright, but instead receive careful scrutiny at a public hearing. Discretionary review also means, however, that an applicant has less certainty of the outcome in a particular project, and a lack of uncertainty can be a prime barrier to investment in any development project.

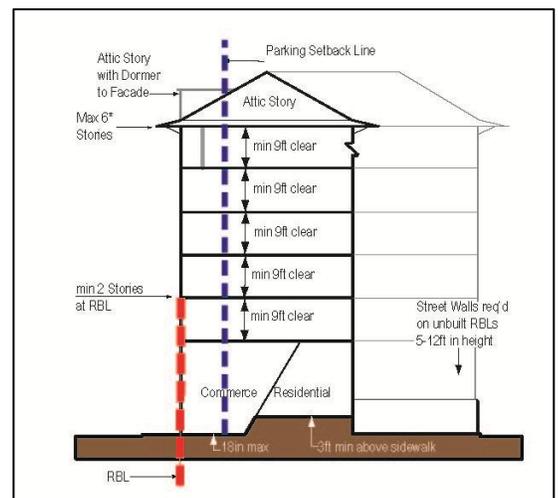
An advantage of discretionary review is that it provides the city the ability to craft conditions that relate to the specific project and neighborhood. The review process, though, even for more straightforward projects can be more time-consuming, expensive, and unpredictable for applicants, decision makers,

and staff. On the development side, some applicants will view the process as a waiting game until they are in front of the final decision-maker. Project issues that could be ironed-out early in the application review process will be held until the city council weighs-in because the applicant believes that those issues will be resolved more favorably (i.e., with fewer requirements) than they would be if resolved by staff. Projects may be “designed at the podium” during the public hearing rather than earlier and under less pressure-filled circumstances. Project conditions that should be studied and engineered are often negotiated at the public hearing rather than set out in advance of the application. This process is also open to manipulation by members of the public who are not in favor of the project. Project opponents will pack the council chambers and repeat a litany of project problems (“bad traffic!” “too much density!” “no need for multi-family development!”) that are not necessarily supported by any actual evidence in hopes that the project will be delayed and ultimately killed.

Cedar Rapids has put a great deal of time and effort into identifying the specifics of the development that should be both permitted and encouraged in the community and the development review process should make it reasonably easy to develop those types of projects. Where the development application matches the zoning regulations and the standards set by EnvisionCR, the application process should be as streamlined as possible to move the applicant through approval and into construction. Where the application is slightly different than EnvisionCR or the zoning regulations, there should be a process to consider whether those changes are still in keeping with the intent of the plan and regulations along with a path to follow where the application generally conforms and a different path to follow where it does not. And where the application really starts in a different place than the priorities the city has established, the applicant should be able to submit their ideas and work with the city’s elected officials to determine whether and how the project should go forward.

B. Form-Based Application Review

Form-based regulations are, on the whole, more specific in design details and more closed linked to a pre-determined site development plan than traditional zoning standards. With the city putting form-based regulations in place, we will need to work with staff to determine the best approach to processing form-based applications. Part of this discussion will be a determination of whether applicants will be required to submit a regulating plan as part of their application or whether the city will prepare regulating plans as part of the on-going planning process. Where a regulating plan is in place and has been approved as part of a public process, applicants with form-based applications are usually processed in a manner similar to that approach described above – administrative review where the application conforms to the regulating plan and form-based standards and discretionary review where it does not. The key to determining which approach is applicable is understanding what type of public involvement took place with the adoption of the regulating plan and determining whether the development application conforms to what the city and public generally expect to occur on the site.



Sample form-based height standards

C. Rezoning with and without a Site Plan

Cedar Rapids had a process of rezoning with a site plan in place for many years and then changed course to allow rezoning without a site plan. This change appears to have been made because large-lot rezonings required the creation of a creative and largely imaginary site plan (cartoon site plan) that did not make sense to applicants. In the academic and theoretical world of zoning study, there are arguments for both approaches: Pro: rezoning with a site plan provides some certainty as to the development that will occur, and Con: zoning is one process and site plan approval is a second process, they do not need to be linked. Both are actually true – communities like certainty in rezoning and site plans are often changed or replaced. We will work with staff to find a middle place in this issue. Cleaning up the existing zone districts, uses, and development standard will take care of some of the certainty issues that site plans were probably filling. Looking at rezoning as a stand-alone process should be easier with EnvisionCR in place aided by the community character analysis. And site plans will still be necessary, but with more standards in place it may be time to move most site plan review and approval into the administrative category.

D. Clarification of Required Studies and Submission Requirements

In establishing a level playing field for all applicants, one issue we will address in the administrative procedures update is identifying when additional studies, such as traffic, sensitive lands, or stormwater are a required submission with the application or at some point in the development review process. The current regulations are not clear about the submission of studies with zoning applications and the cost and time needed to generate these studies can have an impact on the applicant, particularly when required unexpectedly.

E. Pre-Existing Development Conditions

Pre-existing development conditions are those conditions that have been placed on a previous development approval for a property that may impact a current development application. We heard from staff that there are three problems with pre-existing development conditions:

- (a) Many property owners are completely unaware of the existence of these conditions until they submit a development application to the city,
- (b) Some of the pre-existing development conditions conflict with current development standards and are anticipated to continue to conflict with the new zoning code, and
- (c) There is no established process to identify or eliminate inappropriate development conditions.

The identification of existing conditions for property buyers is outside of the scope of this project but we will work with staff to identify any approaches that might be available. As part of this zoning code update, we will work with Cedar Rapids City Attorney's office to establish an approach to review and either eliminate inapplicable conditions or substitute conditions that are appropriate based on the new zoning code.

F. Code Enforcement

Development Services staff has provided us with a list of current code provisions that are difficult or impossible to enforce either because of the wording of the provision or the inability of staff to reasonably prove the violation occurred. We will work through this list to revise problem regulations and suggest alternative regulatory approaches that will be subject to more efficient enforcement.

VII. Annotated Outline

Based on our public outreach, discussions with multiple city representatives, and review of EnvisionCR, we anticipate making a number of changes to update the Cedar Rapids Zoning Code. Because much of the basic format of the current code is functional and everybody who uses the code is familiar with this organizational structure, we will keep or minimally edit many of the existing section titles and make changes within those sections as follow:

A. SECTION 32.01 GENERAL PROVISIONS

This section will remain generally the same and carry forward the general provisions that provide basic instructions about using the zoning code. We will revise or update the following sections:

- (a) 32.01.050 Intent and Purpose updated to incorporate specific provisions from EnvisionCR

B. SECTION 32.02 REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES

The general provisions in this section will remain generally the same. We will revise or update this section to:

- (a) Clarify the use of pre-application meetings versus concept plan review
- (b) Identify requirements for additional studies or reports such as traffic impact analysis or flood impact analysis
- (c) Make other specific revisions as identified by Community Development and Development Services staff

We will revise the application specific procedures section to accomplish the following:

- (a) Establish a complete set of procedures to review form-based code applications
- (b) Specify the processes for zoning approval and site development plan/preliminary plan approval and how they are coordinated
- (c) Establish a process to remove existing development conditions
- (d) Clarify the proper role of the variance process
- (e) Clean-up the code layout and reduce the amount of redundancy of instructions
- (f) Update the application flow charts

C. SECTION 32.03 ZONE DISTRICTS

As identified in Section IV of this report, we will be reviewing and revising many of the current zone districts and establishing new districts to fully implement EnvisionCR. This will include the following:

- (a) Establish new zone districts, both traditional and form-based
- (b) Update use and dimensional standards for existing, remaining districts to better align with EnvisionCR; moving dimensional standards from Section 32.05 to this section
- (c) Establish a supplemental dimensional standards section to address generally applicable dimensional standards and exceptions
- (d) Revise PUD standards to encourage the use of base districts rather than PUD
- (e) Reorganize the section layout to group all zone district information by district (district title, intent, use-table reference, dimensional standards, district-specific use standards, district-specific design standards)
- (f) Collapse the overlay districts into base districts and development standards as appropriate
- (g) Update the maps, graphics, and layout in this section

D. SECTION 32.04 PERMITTED USES

We will revise this section to align the permitted uses more closely to the standards of EnvisionCR and the individual character areas. Changes to this section will include:

- (a) Update the use table
- (b) Review of all use-specific standards and inclusion of new standards where appropriate to move conditional uses to permitted use/administrative review

E. SECTION 32.05 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

As described in Section V of this report, we will be making extensive changes to this section to implement EnvisionCR. These updates and revisions will include the following:

- (a) Move the dimensional standards to Section 32.03 Zone Districts to create complete zone districts with minimal cross-referencing
- (b) Move the dimensional measurement standards to Section 32.03 in a new measurement section; update and illustrate as necessary
- (c) Revise and update the cluster development standards
- (d) Update all of the existing dimensional standards to establish general requirements along with appropriate combining standards for urban/infill/suburban/and rural/conservation areas
- (e) Incorporate generally applicable form-based standards

(f) Create new standards for structure and district transitions, agricultural compatibility, rural design, public and civic facilities, industrial compatibility, sensitive areas/environmental conservation

(g) Consolidate parking standards into broader categories

(h) Add graphics and illustrations across all standards

F. SECTION 32.06 SIGNS

We will review and revise this section for:

(a) Conformance to new U.S. Supreme Court standards for signs

(b) Character and district-specific sign type, design, and maximum coverage standards

G. SECTION 32.07 NONCONFORMITIES

We anticipate making changes to both the zone district dimensions and development standards to eliminate a number of non-conformities that were created by previous code updates. We will also make recommendations for changes to the nonconformities provisions that recognize a distinction between minor nonconformities where expansion of the use or structure should be possible and major nonconformities where the city wants to contain the use or structure for specific, plan-based reasons.

H. SECTION 32.08 VIOLATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

We understand that many of the current code problems with violation or enforcement come from the contents of the zoning regulations, not the provisions of this section. We will revise the specific regulations that are difficult to enforce.

I. SECTION 32.09 MEASUREMENTS AND DEFINITIONS

We will move all measurement standards into this section and rename it Measurements and Definitions. We will confirm the accuracy of all current definitions with staff and recommend new definitions throughout the drafting process.

VIII. Glossary

Character Areas

General categorization of the long-term growth and build-out of a neighborhood, area, or corridor designed to help guide the selection of zone district(s) for that location. Character areas are described in detail in Cedar Rapids Community Character Analysis Report, available on the City's website.

Development Standards

Those sections of the zoning code that establish categories of regulations applicable across multiple development types, such as parking, landscaping, signs or commercial design standards.

Dimensions/Bulk Regulations

Bulk regulations are the combination of controls (lot size, floor area ratio, lot coverage, open space, yards, height, and setback) that determine the maximum size and placement of a building on a lot.

EnvisionCR

The City's comprehensive plan, adopted in January 2015, which provides the guiding policy framework for how the city will grow over the next several years.

Form-Based Code

A method of regulating development (usually within a character area) that emphasizes building form (scale, massing, relationship to public realm) over building use, with the purpose of achieving a particular type of "place" or built environment based on a community vision.

Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

From EnvisionCR, the FLUM is a map of Cedar Rapids that identifies the locations and the boundaries of the Land Use Typology Areas.

Land Use Typology Areas (LUTAs)

From EnvisionCR, the LUTAs specify the intended types, forms, densities, and intensities of development allowed in each area. Cedar Rapids has 15 LUTAs.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Flexible zone district intended to promote developments that have unique project design intended to surpass the quality of development resulting from a strict application of the regulations of conventional zoning districts.

Procedures/Administrative Procedures

All of the permits, processes, and reviews permitted or required as part of zoning approval, all of which are included in the zoning code, such as rezoning, variance, or site development plan review.

Site Development Plan

A technical drawing used to illustrate, in detail, the proposed use(s) and layout of a development site and its relationship to the surrounding area.

Uses

Any activity, occupation, business, or operation conducted in a building or on a tract of land. Uses may be permitted by-right, which means they are allowed in a zone district provided they meet the standards of that district, or as conditional uses, which means they are allowed in a zone district subject to conditional use review and approval. Uses are typically categorized as residential, civic, commercial, industrial, and agricultural, and they are permitted in the code as by-right, conditional, accessory, and temporary.

Use Standards

Standards that are applicable to specific uses that may be generally applicable based on the size of the use, type of use, or zone district in which the use is located. For example, urban gardens may be permitted in mixed-use districts but restricted in industrial districts.

Zoning Code

Set of written regulations and standards that describe how property within specific geographic zones can be used.

Zone Districts

A residential, commercial, mixed-use, or industrial area of the city within which zoning regulations govern land use and building bulk. Special purpose and overlay districts are used to apply specific regulations to limited geographic areas or development types within the city. Zone districts are generally categorized as either: (1) base districts, those districts that establish specific dimensional and use standards for specific geographic areas, and (2) overlay districts, those districts applicable to specific character areas that modify the requirements of the base district.

Zoning Map

A map of Cedar Rapids that indicates the locations and boundaries of the individual zone districts. Used to implement the Future Land Use Map.