

Henrico 2010 Land Use Plan Amendment



URBAN MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AREA (UMU) AMENDMENT INFORMATION

**Adopted by the Board of Supervisors
August 13, 2002**

This portion of the 2010 Land Use Plan presents the amendment to the Plan adopted relative to the Urban Mixed Use Development Area (UMU). This amendment was approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 13, 2002. The portions of the 2010 Plan affected are as follows:

1. Land Use Plan Map and Guidelines for Future Growth – Land Use Plan Map – Land Use Plan Map Classifications - Commercial Classifications - Urban Mixed Use Development Area (UMU) (p. 15).
2. 2010 Land Use Plan Maps – Urban Mixed Use Development Area (UMU) (p. 21-30).
3. Land Use Plan Map and Guidelines for Future Growth - Urban Mixed Use Development Guidelines (p. 67).

The page numbers in parentheses are the corresponding page numbers for the sections in the 2010 Plan. The UMU classification and UMU Development Guidelines are contained on the following pages.

Land Use Plan Map Classifications

COMMERCIAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Urban Mixed Use Development Area (UMU) is an area characterized by mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, activity centers which may contain a variety of uses, including business, office, multi-family residential, cultural, educational, open space, and other public and private uses. A mix of uses is permitted in a single structure or a group of structures on a parcel or group of parcels. Greater regulatory flexibility is intended to encourage innovative and creative design and high quality development and redevelopment. This classification corresponds to the Urban Mixed Use District.

URBAN MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Urban mixed use development is characterized by pedestrian-oriented streetscapes and may feature multi-level buildings offering various combinations of uses - including business, office, multi-family residential, cultural, and other uses - within the same building. An urban mixed use project should be a unique destination conveying a "sense of place" and providing a desirable destination to live, work, and recreate. The area should serve as a hub for cultural activity and offer an attractive destination for visitors.

Carefully Selected Locations

Provisions for urban mixed use development are not intended for general application throughout the County but will encourage investment and reinvestment in carefully selected areas. The provisions are not intended to encourage "leapfrog" development. Appropriate locations will include previously developed areas and may include vacant mall sites, brownfields, or underutilized industrial or commercial areas or office parks.

The Urban Mixed Use (UMU) classification will draw attention to areas where consideration should be given to the redevelopment of property according to the Urban Mixed Use District. Therefore, the location of UMU designations should be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis. To be considered for the UMU classification, a proposal must prove the following:

- Must be compatible with existing land uses.
- Must have adequate infrastructure and cannot contain uses that stress the County's ability to provide service.
- Must have sufficient public facilities and public services.
- Must be served by necessary transportation facilities (i.e., public transit, close proximity to an interstate interchange, rail center, etc.).
- Must provide sufficient design criteria demonstrating a high level of quality.
- Must demonstrate a desirable mix of land uses and a balance among the various uses.
- Must prove the ability to meet the design standards as set forth in the Urban Mixed Use District.

Mixture of Uses

Traditional zoning is based on the rigid separation of land uses. Urban mixed use development guidelines will encourage development and redevelopment in designated areas of the County by increasing regulatory flexibility and providing a larger mix of uses within a building or on a parcel. For example, street-level retail shops, restaurants, offices, and residential dwellings units may be in close proximity to one another, and upper floor residential above retail or office uses will be encouraged. Retail could also include portable carts and small kiosks when appropriately located to enhance diversity and street level activity.

Urban mixed use development will permit a variety of neighborhood business and office uses, however it is not intended to support "big box" retail or industrial uses. The intermingling of the disparate uses must prove mutually beneficial to residents, workers, businesses, visitors, and the County.

Higher densities of development are envisioned. Land uses must be planned and coordinated to achieve an overall balance among the various uses. The synergy that results from an appropriate and well designed mixture of uses is intended to create healthy and vibrant neighborhoods and a high quality of life.

Urban Design

Architecture and design within an urban mixed use development should foster a welcoming and pedestrian-friendly character and create a distinct and desirable visual impression. The aesthetics of the community must further define and cultivate a sense of place, reinforce the sentiment of being a place where people want to live and work, and promote repeat visitation.

Urban mixed use development must be carefully planned and must strategically incorporate open space, setbacks, and landscape features where appropriate. Sufficient and suitably located open space and recreation and park facilities should be provided to serve residents and visitors.

High quality urban design incorporates physical features to enhance the pedestrian friendly nature of the development. Benches, walls for sitting, fountains, outdoor cafes, shade trees, and interesting and varied shop windows are examples of physical features that will ensure people feel welcome and comfortable.

Urban mixed use development should include a multi-modal transportation system – including close proximity to an interstate interchange or rail center, mass transit, and well designed pedestrian, bicycle, handicapped, and automobile routes – providing for the safe and efficient movement of people. An urban mixed use project must provide convenient and adequate parking for businesses, residents, and visitors.

Urban mixed use development regulations encourage quality and creative design and architecture by establishing a more flexible regulatory framework than traditional zoning controls governing land use, densities, setbacks, parking, and other development regulations. In lieu of certain traditional zoning restrictions, project specific design criteria prepared by the developer will be required for each project to supplement Urban Mixed Use District regulations.

Project Specific Design Criteria

Project specific design criteria will be prepared by the developer prior to the construction of each urban mixed use project. The principal intent of these criteria is to promote the unique, high quality attributes of the project and to ensure their implementation as the project builds out. Project specific design criteria will clearly define development expectations and reinforce high quality engineering and architectural design concepts.

Project specific design criteria can be presented in the master plan for the project, in proffers, or may be required as conditions of the provisional use permit. The criteria will be unique for each urban mixed use project and will ensure ensuing development proposals (i.e., plans of development) adhere to the same high quality design criteria. The guidelines will be an essential element in defining and characterizing the unique features of the community, supporting a unified architectural theme, creating a sense of place, and resulting in a well conceptualized development.

Project specific design criteria must be sufficiently extensive and substantive to regulate or standardize different phases of development as the project builds out. The criteria could be presented in a variety of formats including schematic plans, architectural renderings, right-of-way profiles or cross sections, and in narrative form. The criteria should provide further details about the development standards set forth in the Urban Mixed Use District (mixture of uses, required open space, landscaping, lighting, signage, etc.).

Project specific design criteria must also focus on bulk and height requirements normally regulated more strictly in the zoning ordinance but granted some degree of regulatory flexibility in the Urban Mixed Use District (building heights, setbacks, densities, etc.). The criteria can also address other project details including building materials, pedestrian pathways, etc.

Project specific design criteria provide an opportunity to address historic sites and areas of cultural and/or historic significance to the County. Development occurring in close proximity to these locations should use appropriate design to protect and enhance their significance.

Economic Impact

Fiscally responsible development is important to the County's long term financial health. An urban mixed use development must provide a positive contribution to the County's tax base. As established in the Balanced Growth section of the County's Comprehensive Plan, business development in urban mixed use projects should compensate for the expense of residential development by contributing a certain percentage of tax revenues. Therefore, an appropriate amount of commercial and office development must be included in a mixed use development. To remain consistent with the County's existing policies, urban mixed use development should generate at least 30% of tax revenue from business taxes and comply with fiscal objectives as set forth by the Director of Finance.

Conversely, higher densities of development are envisioned and residential densities in an urban mixed use project should be sufficient to support neighborhood businesses.

The proper combination of uses is critical to achieve a financially successful long-term project. A well crafted urban mixed use development will ensure that fiscally prudent development occurs as the project builds out.

Future Opportunities for Urban Mixed Use Development

Urban mixed use projects provide a development alternative encouraging more efficient utilization of the County's land resources and utilities, greater opportunities for useable public open space, and reduced dependency on automobile travel by locating retail and employment centers closer to housing.

The success of urban mixed use development projects depends on their high quality urban design requirements, the appeal and convenience of innovative land use combinations, and the special amenities these communities offer. Homeowners and the business community will appreciate their community's unique identity, neighborhood amenities, and high quality design features.

This land use plan designation, which corresponds to the Urban Mixed Use Development zoning district, is intended to provide a development option unattainable within other zoning districts. This designation is also intended to support the goals of the County's comprehensive plan by encouraging high quality development and redevelopment, stimulating investment, generating jobs, increasing available housing options, and expanding the County's tax base. Where these guidelines and Urban Mixed Use District regulations are complied with, the County encourages this form of development.