

O-2025-29

AN ORDINANCE

AMENDING THE LAKEWOOD ZONING CODE BY REPEALING AND REPLACING
ARTICLE 3 OF TITLE 17 OF THE LAKEWOOD MUNICIPAL CODE

WHEREAS, the City of Lakewood (the “City”) is a home rule city of the state of Colorado with full authority to legislate in matters of local concern such as zoning and land use matters;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City recently adopted, and the City Council recently approved, *Envision Lakewood 2040* the City’s Comprehensive Plan, in part to guide development and redevelopment within the City;

WHEREAS, *Envision Lakewood 2040* includes Future Land Use Elements that provide guidance on the desired future land use patterns and building forms for areas of the City;

WHEREAS, at the August 11, 2025, regular meeting of the City Council where this Ordinance was considered at first reading, the City Council amended Ordinance 2025-27 to reflect an intent that the proposed Zoning Code be considered in four sections, rather than one, to allow for a more thorough public review and engagement process of the entire Zoning Code;

WHEREAS, the other three sections of the fully revised Zoning Code shall be considered in three additional ordinances to be identified as:

1. O-2025-27: AMENDING THE LAKEWOOD ZONING CODE BY REPEALING AND REPLACING ARTICLES 6-14 OF TITLE 17 OF THE LAKEWOOD MUNICIPAL CODE
2. O-2025-28: AMENDING THE LAKEWOOD ZONING CODE BY REPEALING AND REPLACING ARTICLES 1, 2, 4 AND 5 OF TITLE 17 OF THE LAKEWOOD MUNICIPAL CODE
3. O-2025-30: AMENDING THE LAKEWOOD ZONING CODE BY REPEALING THE EXISTING ZONING MAP, REPLACING IT WITH THE NEW ZONING MAP, AND REZONING PROPERTIES THEREBY

WHEREAS, the City Council finds and determines that amending Article 3 of Title 17 of the Lakewood Municipal Code (the “Zoning Code”) is a legislative function as recognized by Colorado law and such amendments are therefore not subject to any requirement for individualized notice to specific property owners;

WHEREAS, the City created a robust engagement process to gather public input on the proposed changes to the Zoning Code which included:

- A. The creation of a digital engagement platform on Lakewood Together to track all Zoning Code updates, touchpoints, polling, discussions, questions, and more;
- B. Articles, news stories, reports, and/or write-ups in Looking@Lakewood, Friday Reports, Lakewood Together newsletters, the Jeffco Transcript, registered organizations' newsletters, Nextdoor.com, and the "YourHub" section of the Denver Post;
- C. At least twenty (20) posts on social media (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, YouTube);
- D. Numerous neighborhood and business association meetings, and other in-person community events;
- E. A Planning Commission study session on February 19, 2025;
- F. A City Council study session on March 17, 2025;
- G. An open house on April 3, 2025; and
- H. Three City Council in-person workshops on May 5, 2025, May 19, 2025, and June 2, 2025;

WHEREAS, the electronic tracking of the City's robust engagement process netted at least 227,433 "touchpoints" through all mediums to include printed newsletters, electronic newsletters, registered neighborhood organization newsletters, social media, City websites, and other forums;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted two public hearings on April 23, 2025, and May 21, 2025, and unanimously voted to recommend the adoption of the proposed Zoning Code to City Council;

WHEREAS, as part of a holistic revision to the City's Zoning Ordinance, it is necessary to repeal and replace Article 3 of the Zoning Code to incorporate updates throughout the Article; and

WHEREAS, approval of this Ordinance on first reading does not constitute a representation that the City Council, or any member of the City Council, supports, approves, rejects or denies any particular proposal related to the items identified herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Lakewood, Colorado, that:

SECTION 1. The recitals set forth above are incorporated as if set forth herein.

SECTION 2. The Zoning Code is amended by repealing Article 3 of the existing Zoning Code and replacing it with Article 3 of the new Zoning Code which is attached hereto and made part hereof.

SECTION 3. The proposed legislative amendments to Article 3 promote the purposes of this Zoning Code.

SECTION 4. The proposed legislative amendments to Article 3 promote implementation of the City's new Comprehensive Plan *Envision Lakewood 2040*.

SECTION 5. Article 3 is part of a fully revised Zoning Code and Zoning Map that are being considered for adoption in four parts to allow for a more thorough public review and engagement process. To accommodate this extended process, all four portions of the revised Zoning Code and Zoning Map, including Article 3, will become operative on January 1, 2026 or, at the determination of the Chief of Sustainability & Community Development, up to sixty (60) days subsequent to January 1, 2026 to allow for the entire Zoning Code and Zoning Map to become operative on the same date. If the Chief of Sustainability & Community Development modifies the operational date of Article 3 in conformance with this paragraph, such operational date shall be published on the City's website.

SECTION 6. If any provision of this Ordinance should be found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining portions or applications of this Ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid portion, provided such remaining portions or application of the Ordinance are not determined by the court to be inoperable.

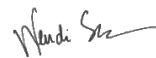
SECTION 7. This Ordinance shall take effect forty-five (45) days after final publication.

I hereby attest and certify that within and foregoing Ordinance was introduced and read on first reading at a hybrid regular meeting of the Lakewood City Council on the 8th day of September, 2025; published by title in the Denver Post and in full on the City of Lakewood's website, www.lakewood.org, on the 11th day of September, 2025; set for public hearing to be held on the 22nd day of September, 2025; read, finally passed and adopted by the City Council on the 22nd day of September, 2025; and signed by the Mayor on the 23rd day of September, 2025.

ATTEST:



Jay Robb, City Clerk



Wendi Strom, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Alison McKenney Brown, City Attorney

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ARTICLE 3: ZONE DISTRICTS

17.3.1: General

17.3.1.1: Purpose and Intent

This Article describes each zone district established within the City of Lakewood (the “City”). The purpose of the various districts is to:

- A. Ensure compatibility of land uses;
- B. Support efficient and economical use and reuse of land;
- C. Provide adequate light and air in development projects;
- D. Encourage development and redevelopment projects and uses of land that are functional and exhibit good design and aesthetics; and
- E. Protect the City’s existing residences, businesses, and infrastructure in a manner that is consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

17.3.2: Districts and Maps

17.3.2.1: Applicability

- A. Any application for an initial zoning, rezoning or legislative zoning of property filed on or after the effective date of this Zoning Code shall be for a zone district created by this Zoning Code. This Zoning Code governs the application and the use of the property proposing to be zoned or rezoned.
- B. Any application for an initial zoning, rezoning or legislative zoning of property filed prior to and pending on the effective date of this Zoning Code shall be amended to propose a zone district created by this Zoning Code and shall otherwise conform to and be governed by this Zoning Code, unless a hearing on the application has been conducted by the Planning Commission. If a hearing has been conducted by the Planning Commission, the application shall be governed by, and the zoning or rezoning shall be approved or disapproved subject to the procedures and standards set forth in Ordinance O-2012-24, as amended.

17.3.2.2: Creation of Districts

To carry out the purposes of this Zoning Code, the City of Lakewood shall be divided into several zone districts as defined in this Article.

17.3.2.3: Zoning District Map

- A. The location of land placed within specified zone districts following the effective date of this Zoning Code is shown on the map entitled Official Zoning District Map of the City of Lakewood, hereby designated as the official City zoning district map. The map is part of this Zoning Code by this reference, and the districts set forth and shown therein are hereby approved. The official map shall be maintained by the Clerk to the Planning Commission.
- B. When land is zoned or rezoned pursuant to this Zoning Code, such changes shall be made on the Official Zoning District Map of the City of Lakewood pursuant to the Lakewood Municipal Code.
- C. The Planning Commission and City Council may, by resolution, authorize staff to correct drafting or other errors or omissions in the Official Zoning District Map of the City of Lakewood, but no such correction shall have the effect of amending the original Zoning Code or any subsequent amendment thereto.

17.3.2.4: Interpretation of District Boundaries

Where uncertainty exists with respect to the boundaries of the various districts as shown on the zoning district maps, the Director shall determine the boundary by applying the following rules:

- A. In subdivided areas, unless otherwise shown on the maps, the district boundary is the centerline of said street, alley or record lot line. Where a district boundary line is approximately along a street, alley or record lot line, the centerline of said street, alley or lot line shall be construed to be the boundary.
- B. In un-subdivided areas, unless otherwise shown on the maps, the district boundary is the centerline of said street, highway or land survey line. Where a district boundary line is not indicated as following a street, alley, or land survey line, the zoning boundary line shall be determined by the scale designated on the zoning map.
- C. In the case of a district boundary that divides property without relying on lot lines, the location of the boundary shall be determined by the scale designated on the zoning map.

17.3.2.5: Lot Line Changes

When lot line boundaries are, or have been, altered through the subdivision process, the Director may determine that the zoning boundaries shift to match the nearest new lot line based on the following criteria:

- A. The determination shall not result in a significant change in the overall land use permissions for the altered property;

- B. The area of change shall not be sufficient, in and of itself, to result in a new building or use that was not previously allowed; and
- C. No change shall be made without the knowledge and permission of the impacted landowner.

17.3.3: Residential Districts

17.3.3.1: Purpose and Intent

The residential zone districts are primarily intended to:

- A. Create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities that meet the diverse economic and social needs of residents;
- B. Maintain and promote the desired physical character of existing and developing neighborhoods;
- C. Protect the scale, character and unique appeal of existing residential neighborhoods; and
- D. Allow for appropriate public and institutional services and facilities, such as schools, parks and recreational uses, religious institutions, and transportation infrastructure.

While the districts primarily accommodate residential use types, some institutional, limited commercial, and home business uses are also allowed.

17.3.3.2: Residential District Descriptions

The general objective of each residential (R) zone district within the City is identified by the descriptions below.

- A. **Low-form Residential – A (R-L-A):** This zone district is intended to support incremental development that aligns with the City’s rural character. Development primarily consists of mostly small residential dwellings on large lots.

Consistent with low-form residential areas, this zone district allows housing options that reinforce the rural landscape while allowing a variety of housing options beyond single-unit homes (See [Figure 1](#)).

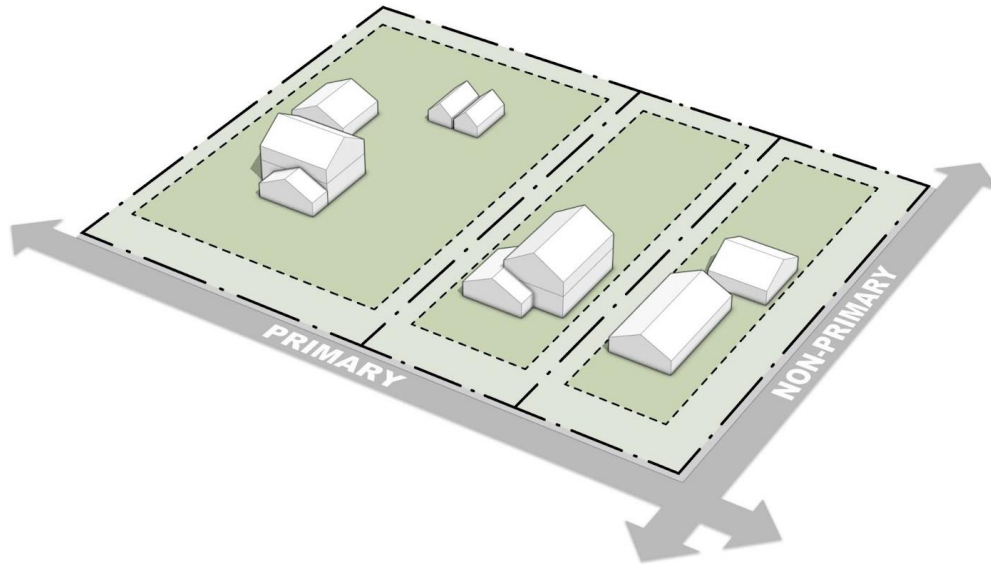


Figure 1: Example of Low-form Residential – A; 17.3.3.2:A

- B. **Low-form Residential – B (R-L-B):** This zone district is intended to maintain the residential character of traditional suburban neighborhoods, while expanding the range of housing options available. Development primarily consists of small residential dwellings on medium to large-sized lots. The shape of a typical lot varies widely and may be square, trapezoidal, rectangular, or irregular.

This zone district allows for multiple units with a single house-scale building, and on larger lots, multiple house-scale buildings on a lot (See [Figure 2](#)).

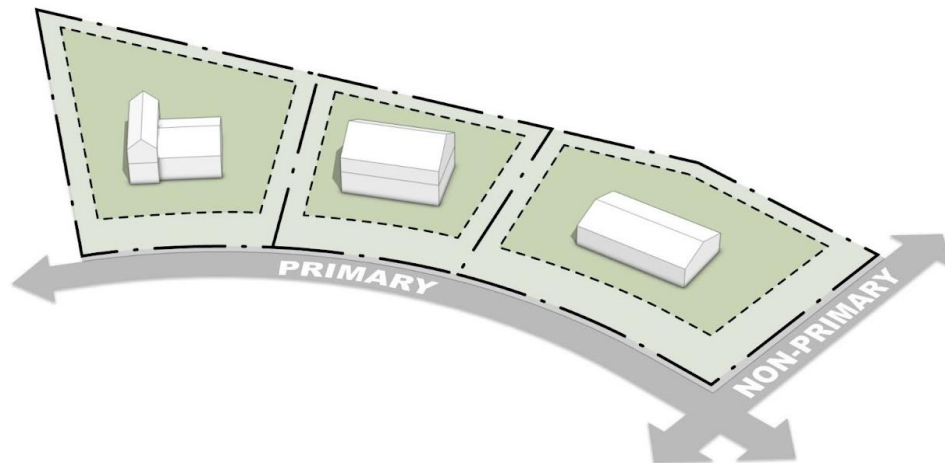


Figure 2: Example of Low-form Residential – B; 17.3.3.2:B

- C. **Low-form Residential – C (R-L-C):** This zone district is intended to support compact, walkable neighborhoods with a range of housing options. Development includes small-scale attached and detached housing, and lots are typically deeper than they are wide.

This zone district controls the building form over the number of units, allowing for gentle density increases without drastic changes to the neighborhood scale (See [Figure 3](#)).

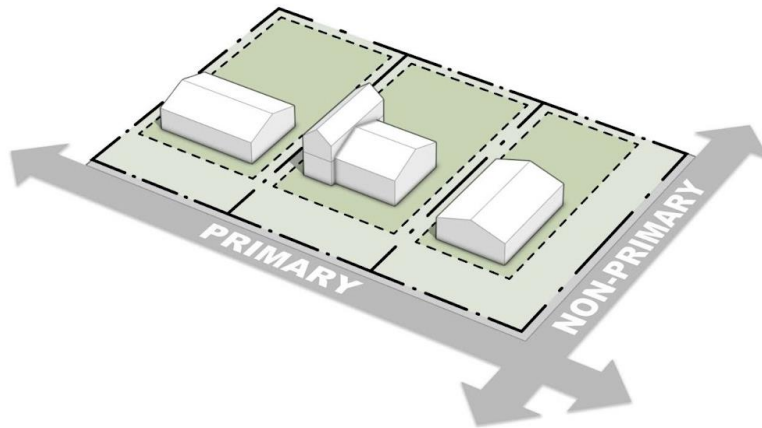


Figure 3: Example of Low-form Residential – C; 17.3.3.2:C

- D. **Low-form Residential - Manufactured Home (R-L-MH):** The R-L-MH district is intended to allow for developments where spaces are either sold or rented for the placement of a mobile home in a park-like setting, where the homes are used as seasonal or permanent residences, or other movable housing types.
- E. **Mid-form Residential (R-M):** The R-M district is intended to provide for a mixture of medium-density housing types including but not limited to attached housing, and multifamily buildings.

17.3.4: Mixed-Use Districts

17.3.4.1: Purpose and Intent

The Mixed-Use (M) zone districts are intended to:

- A. Accommodate and promote a mix of commercial (e.g., retail, service, office) and residential uses;

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- B. Encourage pedestrian-friendly development consisting of business, retail, and residential uses in the same building or on the same site;
- C. Maintain the integrity and viability of the adjacent residential neighborhoods;
- D. Provide areas for public and semi-public uses, such as utilities and telecommunications infrastructure needed to support the community; and
- E. Provide development flexibility, while ensuring that new development and redevelopment interacts appropriately with adjoining land uses.

17.3.4.2: Mixed-Use District Descriptions

Mixed-Use districts are established to allow a range of district types, from the small neighborhood center to regional-level centers. The general objective of each mixed-use (M) zone district within the City is identified by the descriptions below.

- A. **M-N – Mixed-Use-Neighborhood:** The M-N district is intended to allow and accommodate a mix of lower-intensity neighborhood-scale commercial uses and a range of residential uses generally along collector streets and adjacent to light rail stations with walk-up access. Typical non-residential uses include those that provide goods and services to the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. The district is intended to accommodate a high level of pedestrian activity and scale. Mixed-use buildings and projects are encouraged and not required.
- B. **M-G – Mixed-Use-General:** The M-G district is intended to allow for mixed-use and community commercial development generally along arterial streets. Typical non-residential uses include those necessary to support the community. The district is intended to accommodate a higher level of motor vehicle activity, although pedestrian activity will still be accommodated and encouraged.
- C. **M-C – Mixed-Use-Core:** The M-C district is intended to allow and accommodate opportunities for higher density mixed-use development in areas developed or planned with the most intense urban characteristics, such as downtown Lakewood and adjacent to light rail stations with associated parking facilities. Typical non-residential uses include those generally intended to support the entire City. The district is intended to accommodate a high level of pedestrian activity, although motor vehicle activity will still be accommodated. Mixed-use buildings and projects are key components of this district and are required in certain contexts.
- D. **M-R – Mixed-Use-Residential:** The M-R district is intended to allow for compact multifamily residential development with a variety of densities. This district will also allow for office and retail uses that are integrated into residential projects. Minimum residential densities are established as part of the district to maximize the potential number of transit riders and business users within adjacent transit and urban development areas, while limiting the impact on existing surrounding neighborhoods.

17.3.4.3: Mixed-Use District Contexts

Each mixed-use zone district within the City is assigned a context, based on the existing or planned characteristic of the area in which it is located. The zone district contexts address the following:

- A. Indicate the appropriate development pattern for a given area of the City;
- B. Provide for appropriate levels of pedestrian and auto access; and

- C. Establish maximum building heights to reflect the existing or proposed characteristics of the surrounding development.
- D. Assigned mixed-use zone districts descriptions include:
 - 1. **S – Suburban:** The Suburban context reflects a more auto-oriented environment, where the existing surrounding street pattern and access to adjacent residential neighborhoods is not conducive to the highest level of pedestrian connectivity. The context allows for a limited amount of parking to be provided between adjacent public streets and the development. Additionally, auto-oriented design elements, such as drive-through facilities, are permitted (See [Figure 4](#)).

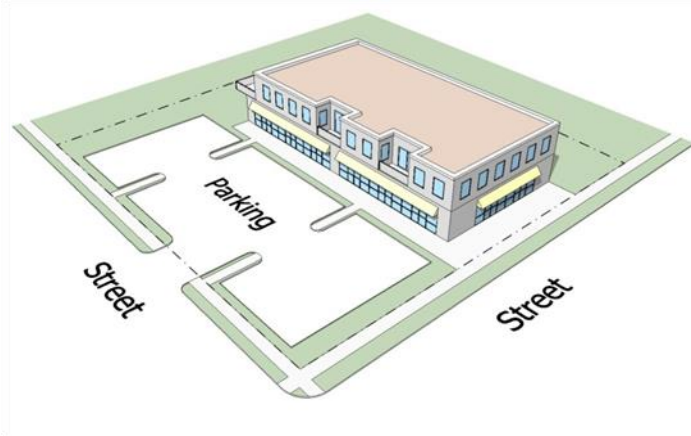


Figure 4: Example of Suburban Context; 17.3.4.3:D.1

2. **U – Urban:** The Urban context reflects a more pedestrian-oriented environment, where the existing surrounding street pattern and access to adjacent residential neighborhoods is more conducive to pedestrian and bicycle access. The context requires that buildings be located within a short distance of adjacent public streets, with parking located behind or to the side of buildings. Auto-oriented design elements, such as drive-through facilities, generally have specific design requirements (See [Figure 5](#)).



Figure 5: Example of Urban Context; 17.3.4.3:D.2

3. **T – Transit:** The Transit context reflects the most pedestrian-oriented environment, where the existing surrounding street pattern, access to adjacent neighborhoods, and access to transit is conducive to pedestrian and bicycle access. The context requires that buildings be located within a short distance of adjacent public streets, with parking located only behind buildings, or in above or below grade structures. Auto-oriented design elements are restricted and have specific design requirements (See [Figure 6](#)).

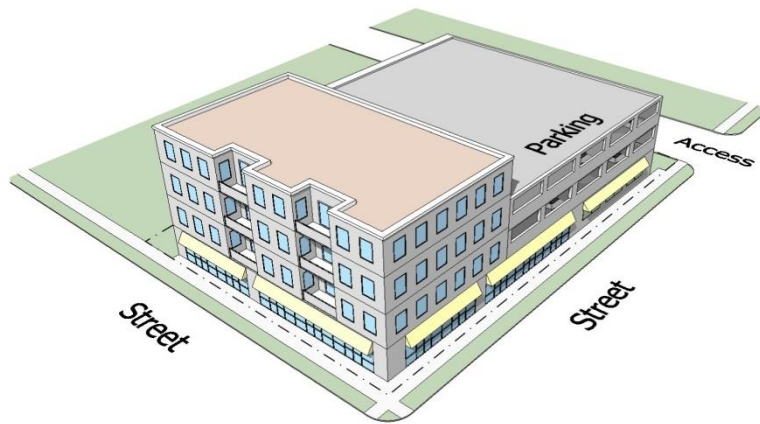


Figure 6: Example of Transit Context; 17.3.4.3:D.3

17.3.5: Commercial and Light Industrial Districts

17.3.5.1: Purpose and Intent

The commercial and light industrial districts are intended to:

- A. Promote and accommodate larger-scale auto-oriented commercial and light industrial uses;
- B. Provide opportunities for single-use commercial and light industrial development; and
- C. Strengthen and diversify the City's economic base and provide basic employment opportunities.

17.3.5.2: Commercial and Light Industrial Descriptions

The general objective of each commercial (C) and light industrial (L-I) zone districts within the City is identified by the descriptions below.

- A. **C-R – Commercial-Regional:** The C-R district is intended to provide for regional commercial development along major street corridors and near highway interchanges. Typical uses include those needed to support the community and

create a regional draw. The district is intended to accommodate the highest levels of motor vehicle activity, although pedestrian activity will still be an important element of design. The district reflects a more suburban character, with parking allowed in front of buildings, and commercial buildings separated from residential uses.

- B. **C-L – Commercial-Limited:** The C-L district is intended to provide a mix of lower-intensity commercial uses along major street corridors and is generally appropriate within commercial corridors and community activity areas. The district will accommodate a balance of motor vehicle and pedestrian related activity. It reflects a suburban character, with parking allowed in front of buildings. Auto-oriented design elements, such as drive-through facilities are also permitted; however, sidewalk connections that support pedestrian circulation patterns from adjacent residential neighborhoods and other pedestrian-oriented facilities are of equal importance.
- C. **LI – Light Industrial:** The LI district is intended to allow for existing and future light industrial uses that provide for the employment needs of the City. Typical uses include facilities producing medical, high technology, and environmentally sustainable products, as well as traditional industrial facilities including warehousing and distribution. Some heavy manufacturing is also allowed. The district allows for a suburban development pattern.

17.3.6: Planned Development District

17.3.6.1: Purpose and Intent

The Planned Development (PD) district is intended to permit the planning and development of substantial parcels of land which are suitable in location and character for the uses proposed and are suitable to be developed as a unified and integrated project in accordance with detailed development plans. The PD zone district is intended to:

- A. Provide for large-scale, unified, and unique development concepts not otherwise permitted within standard zone districts identified in this Article of the Zoning Code;
- B. Promote more efficient use of land and public services, encourage creative and innovative site design, and provide an increased level of amenities and aesthetic enhancement, while meeting the policies and goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan;
- C. Promote development that is individually designed for a specific site in order to more appropriately address the physical context and/or specific features associated with the property;

- D. Encourage innovations in residential, commercial, and industrial development and redevelopment so that the needs of the population may be met by greater variety in the type, design, and layout of buildings, and by the conservation and more efficient use of open space ancillary to buildings;
- E. Encourage a more efficient use of land and of public or private services, and to reflect changes in the technology of land development;
- F. Reduce the burden of traffic associated with a development on streets and highways located in the vicinity of the development; and
- G. Provide a procedure which can better relate the type, design, and layout of residential, commercial, and industrial development to the particular site, thereby encouraging preservation of the natural characteristics of a site.

In return for flexibility in site design and development, PD districts are expected to include exceptional design that preserves critical environmental resources; provide above-average open space and recreational amenities; incorporate creative design in the layout of buildings, open space, and circulation; assure compatibility with surrounding land uses and neighborhood character; and provide greater efficiency in the layout and provision of roads, utilities, and other infrastructure.

17.3.6.2: Applicability

The PD district shall be applied only to sites of five (5) acres or larger, provided that the site may be composed of multiple adjacent properties to be governed by a single Official Development Plan (ODP) and may thereafter be subdivided in compliance with the approved ODP.

17.3.6.3: Official Development Plan

All PD zone districts shall be governed by an ODP. The ODP shall contain written stipulations and, when appropriate, graphic representation generally addressing land use, density, signage, fencing, lighting, access and circulation, architectural and landscape design requirements, and public and private improvements.

17.3.6.4: Allowed uses

A PD district shall include multiple land uses, and define the following:

- A. **Base Zone District:** All PD districts shall allow the uses identified for at least one (1) zone district described in this Zoning Code. The base zone district or districts shall be chosen based upon compatibility with surrounding land uses and most closely relate to the uses proposed as part of the PD. The base zone district or districts shall be specifically identified as part of the PD.

- B. **Additional Uses:** A PD district may include uses not allowed in the base zone district. However, the use or uses added to the based district shall be listed in Table 2, or determined to be permitted, subject to 17.4.3. Addition of uses to the base zone district shall be based on compatibility with the surrounding land uses.

17.3.6.5: Other Standards and Modifications

The standards of the applicable base zone district or districts included in the PD, as identified in this Zoning Code, shall apply to the PD district unless specifically modified as part of the PD. Any modification to the standards shall be identified as part of an ODP.

- A. Redevelopment within a PD district may apply either the standards of the base zone district or the standards of the ODP.
- B. Where an ODP contains specific provisions regarding the ODP modification process, the provisions outlined in the ODP shall be used to modify the ODP.