
REQUEST	Text Amendment to Sections 6.201, Table 9.101, 9.601 through 9.607, 11.701 through 11.709, 12.106, 12.202, 12.212, 12.213, 12.218, 12.301, Table 12.302(a) 12.413, 12.415, 12.417, 12.502, 12.532, 12.534, and 12.538, and the Table of Contents of the Zoning Ordinance.
SUMMARY OF PETITION	The petition proposes changes to the research districts (RE-1, RE-2, and RE-3): 1) modify the uses allowed by right, and with prescribed conditions; 2) modify the development standards; 3) add design standards; 4) add an administrative approval process; and 5) add an optional process for the RE-3 zoning district.
STAFF RECOMMENDATION	Staff recommends approval of this petition. The petition is consistent with the <i>University Research Park Area Plan</i> .
PETITIONER AGENT/REPRESENTATIVE	University City Partners Rhett Crocker, Land Design Inc.
COMMUNITY MEETING	Meeting is not required.

PLANNING STAFF REVIEW

Background

- The RE-1 and RE-2 zoning districts are conventional zoning districts originally designed to provide areas for research, development, and high technology manufacturing operations and similar uses. The RE-3 zoning district is a conditional district with the same purpose as the RE-1 and RE-2 districts. Current standards for RE-3 allow the same uses as RE-1 and RE-2, but also permit additional uses oriented toward distribution and service activities.
- Most of the land area zoned RE-1, RE-2, and RE-3 is located in the University Research Park area, generally bounded by Interstate I-85, Mallard Creek Church, Mallard Creek Road, and IBM Drive. Bartlett Tree Farm, located in the southwest portion of Mecklenburg County in the area bounded by Hamilton Road, Youngblood Road, and Zoar Road is also zoned RE-1(CD).
- The *University Research Park Area Plan* was adopted June 28, 2010. The plan area is envisioned to become a diverse district with an expanded range of uses, attractive amenities, and improvements to the transportation network, including pedestrian walkability.
- The *University Research Park Area Plan* includes an "implementation guide" that identifies strategies to achieve the vision and facilitate a sustainable growth and development pattern to make this area a desirable place to work, live, and play. This text amendment to update the three research zoning districts is one of the strategies listed in the implementation guide.
- The plan recommends modifying the uses and standards in the research districts. The recommendation focuses on promoting a broader mix of uses and a more urban and pedestrian-friendly form of development, especially in the RE-3 district.

Proposed Request Details

The text amendment contains the following provisions:

Highlights of RE-1, RE-2, and RE-3 modifications:

Adds new uses: veterinary clinics, on-site land clearing and inert debris landfills, repair of articles sold within the district, utility and related facilities, mobile food vending service, security gates, transit stations, and structured parking decks (as a permitted accessory structure).

Modifies the prescribed conditions for the following uses:

Vehicle leasing offices and associated parking, satellite dishes and towers, drive in windows and service lanes.

Accessory uses: Restricts any outdoor storage.

Allows abutting, on-street parking spaces to count toward the minimum number of parking spaces required.

Adds new design standards for connectivity and circulation, outdoor lighting, building entrances and orientation, street walls, and streetscape, and signs.
Adds a new administrative approval process allowing the Planning Director flexibility to make minor alterations to development and design standards.

Highlights of RE-1 and RE-2 additional modifications:

Adds new uses: telecommunications and telephone switching facilities, and vehicle leasing offices and associated parking.

Deletes subdivision sales offices, homeless shelters, telephone booths, and demolition landfills from the list of uses permitted.

Modifies the buffer requirements. Instead of requiring the buffer area to be one-half of the setback, side, and rear yard requirement, a Class B or C buffer is required when a proposed research use will abut an existing single family use or district, a multi-family use or district, a low intensity institutional use or zoning district, or a park or greenway.

Requires 20 percent open space for new development in excess of four acres.

Highlights of RE-3 additional modifications:

Allows all uses in RE-1 and RE-2 except for the following: pharmaceutical preparations and production facilities, printing and publishing establishments, prototype production facilities and pilot plants, and telecommunications and telephone switching, and vehicle leasing offices.

Adds additional uses not allowed in the RE-1 and RE-2 districts: art galleries, athletic and sports facilities, barber and beauty shops, conference centers, dry cleaning establishments, dwelling units (attached, mixed-use, multi-family, planned multi-family), family childcare homes, florists, health institutions, childcare centers in a residence, nursing homes/rest homes/homes for the aged/elderly and disabled housing, religious institutions, studios for artists or designers, theaters, transit stations and associated parking facilities, universities/colleges/vocational schools, nightclubs/bars/lounges, retail sales, and structured parking decks as a principal use.

Allows outdoor sales as an accessory use to a retail establishment, and limited helistops as an accessory use.

Deletes the maximum floor area ratio requirement and maximum dwelling units per acre.

Reduces the minimum lot area required from 4 acres to 10,000 square feet.

Reduces the minimum lot width from 200 and 400 feet to 25 feet for residential lots and 100 feet for all other lots.

Modifies the minimum setback requirements (ranging from 0-150 feet, based on the lot size) to that specified in an approved City Council adopted streetscape plan.

Modifies the minimum side yard requirements (ranging from 0 to 100 feet, based on lot size) and the rear yard requirements (ranging from 0-50 feet, based on the lot size), to zero, except where a lot abuts a residential use not zoned RE-3, or a residential zoning district, then the side and rear yards shall be a minimum of 35 feet each.

Modifies the maximum height of buildings and structures from 40 feet to 90 feet. However, if a building abuts a residential district or a residential use that is not zoned RE-3, it shall not be erected to a height in excess of 40 feet unless the side and/or rear yard which adjoins the residential use or district is increased one foot for every foot of building height in excess of 40 feet.

Modifies the buffer requirements. Instead of preserving all required setbacks, side yards, and rear yards with natural vegetation, a Class B or C buffer is required along all property boundaries that abut property not zoned RE-1, RE-2, or RE-3, and along property lines abutting alleys. Multi-family development zoned RE-3 is exempt where the use abuts another multi-family use or undeveloped multi-family zoning districts.

Replaces the internal landscaping requirements with new screening requirements for parking lots, service entrances and utilities, loading docks or spaces, dumpsters, recycling containers, compactors and solid waste handling areas, and a new requirement for urban open space to be provided for all new development on lots greater than 20,000 square feet in size.

Adds new design standards for base of high rise buildings, top of buildings, canopies and structured parking facilities.

Adds an optional process to allow flexibility.

Adds a requirement for a preliminary review meeting between City staff and the applicant at two points in the design process.

Public Plans and Policies

The *University Research Park Area Plan* recommends modifying the RE-1, RE-2, and RE-3 zoning district regulations to assist with implementing the plan vision. The petition is consistent with the *University Research Park Area Plan*.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS (see full department reports online)

Charlotte Area Transit System: No issues.

Charlotte Department of Neighborhood & Business Services: No issues.

Charlotte Department of Transportation: No comments received.

Vehicle Trip Generation: Not applicable.

Connectivity: Not applicable.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services: No issues.

Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency: No issues.

Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department: No comments received.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE SITE DESIGN (see full department reports online)

Site Design: There is no site plan associated with this text amendment.

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

No issues.

Attachments Online at www.rezoning.org

Application

Charlotte Area Transit System Review

Charlotte Department of Neighborhood & Business Services Review

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services Review

Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency Review

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