

Major Corridor Ordinance Task Force: Text and Map Amendments

Text and Map Amendments

1. Text amendments are needed for certain non-residential districts that allow residential and other uses that are lower in intensity than their base district in said districts as a conditional use. This will allow for the mixed use provisions in the corridor ordinance district. Recommended text should add uses allowed by right or as a conditional use in any residential district to the O&I and B-1 zoning districts as conditional uses.

3. The new definitions created for the corridor overlay district should be incorporated into Section 7.2 of the Zoning Ordinance. They include the following:

Arterial—see “Rural Road” in Subdivision Ordinance

Articulation—(also building articulation) the three dimensional modeling of a building and its surfaces, giving emphasis to architectural elements (windows, balconies, porches, entries, etc.) that create a complementary pattern or rhythm, dividing large buildings into smaller identifiable pieces. Horizontal articulation might step sections of a building back from the wall plane of a building, vertical articulation would similarly break up the roof line.

Balustrade-- handrail supported by balusters; any of the small posts that support the upper rail of a railing, as in a staircase or porch rail.

Bay--any number of similar vertical divisions of a large wall (usually 24 feet in increments of 8 beyond that).

Branded Structure—the characteristics of the building used to house a retail sales establishment which, along with eleven or more other retail sales establishments located in the United States, maintains two or more of the following features: a standardized array of merchandise, a standardized façade, recognizable building detail, or building type; a standardized décor and color scheme; standardized signage, and either a trademark or a servicemark.

Branded Architecture—see Branded Structure

Buffer (Vegetative Buffer): A protected area of shade trees and under-story trees and shrubs, which serves as a physical and visual barrier to preserve or create privacy, abate sound and light pollution, separate distinct uses of the land, and protect the rural character of Chatham County.

Caliper: The American Association of Nurserymen (AAN) standard for trunk diameter measurement for nursery stock. Caliper is measured six inches (6”) above grade for trees up to 4” caliper, and 12” above grade for larger trees.

Deleted: 2. A “Clearing Permit” Process, requirements, and required text amendments need to be created by staff. This process would support the exemption of minor subdivisions from the buffer requirement in the corridors, but could be useful outside the corridors if written well. In the corridors, it should try to retain existing trees in a way that is fair to a small-lot landowner and not require unreasonable replanting, if any.

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Certified Arborist: An individual who has passed an examination administered by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) to certify knowledge in the planting and care of individual trees.

Commercial Node—see node

Critical Root Zone (CRZ): A circular area around an existing tree, with a radius equal to 1.25 feet per inch of mature tree diameter at breast height (dbh), which is to be protected from disturbance.

Cross-access—vehicular and/or pedestrian connections between individual, adjacent properties or development projects.

Crosswalk-- A path marked off on a street or other vehicular way to indicate where pedestrians should cross.

Curb Extension-- (also bulb-out) is a traffic calming measure, intended to slow the speed of traffic and increase driver awareness, particularly in built-up and residential neighborhoods. They also allow pedestrians and vehicle drivers to see each other when vehicles parked in a parking lane would otherwise block visibility.

Detention Pond—(Also Detention Basin) a low lying area that is designed to temporarily hold a set amount of water while slowly draining to another location. This is opposed to a retention pond that holds water for an extended period of time. These ponds are generally a part of a larger engineered floodwater management system.

Development-- Land improvement and/or construction involving land, buildings or infrastructure; A residential development (sometimes simply called a subdivision) is typically a piece of property that is divided into subdivisions with houses constructed on each piece of subdivided land.

Diameter at Breast Height: (also DBH) The diameter of a tree trunk measured four and one-half feet (4 ½') above the soil line.

Differentiated Pavement—Pavement that is patterned in such a way that it is discernibly different from surrounding pavement both visually and tactilely.

Diseased [plant]: A plant or tree that meets one or more of the following conditions:

1. Infested with detrimental insects or disease that cannot reasonably be treated.
2. Greater than 10% of its trunk dies within one calendar year.
3. Greater than 30% of its crown dies or is lost within one calendar year.
4. It no longer screens, filters, or shades the area for which it was installed.

Driveway-- a type of private road for local access to one or a small group of structures, and is owned and maintained by a private corporation, individual, or group.

Elevation—(also elevation drawing) a drawing of the geometrical exterior of a building or other structure as seen from a horizontal view without dimensional perspective.

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Enclosure Ratio-- the ratio of building height to spaces in front of the building.

Envelope— (also building envelope) Outer perimeter of a building footprint.

Façade—any face of a building given special architectural treatment, usually the side(s) of building that is (are) the primary interface(s) with the public street or public area.

Fenestration-- The arrangement of windows, doors, or other openings in a building.

Free Right Turn—A free-flowing right hand turn lane without a need to yield the right-of-way.

Front—see façade.

Glazing-- the act of installing glass into windows or doors. It can also refer to the glass window itself.

Internal Main Street—where the primary entrance to a commercial or mixed-use development becomes a linear place that is the focus of building massing and enclosure, with on-street parking, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and streetscapes that include sidewalk seating and windows to the street.

Major Corridor—One of the major thoroughfares in Chatham County designated by the County Commissioners for application of the corridor overlay district.

Massing (also architectural massing)-- the act of composing and manipulating three-dimensional forms into unified coherent architectural configuration. During this process, the relations among massing elements are studied; this includes the relations of the building with its surrounding context and of the building with its subparts. Massing comprises all decisions affecting the external architectural form. It is a crucial component of design because it is the phase where a designer defines her building's identity as well as the impact of her building within its urban environment.¹

Mixed Use--A project that combines several different functions, such as residential space above a commercial establishment or an entire development combining commercial, residential and public accommodations.

Node—an area designated in the Chatham County Land Use Plan for economic development, intense mixed-use, or commercial activity.

Outdoor Café-- a use of public sidewalk or private open area that fronts a public space by a food service establishment for the serving of food and beverages. The use will be characterized by the outdoor use of tables, chairs and umbrellas.

¹ Omer Akin & Hoda Moustapha, Strategic Use of Representation in Architectural Massing, available at <http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/oa04/Papers/Massing.pdf>

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Parking Area—the land or floor space (in a parking garage) used for vehicle storage.

Parking Bay—a space marked for the storage of a motor vehicle or vehicles, usually by paint.

Parking Garage—(also Parking Deck) a building (or part thereof), which is designed specifically to be for automobile parking and where there are a number of floors or levels on which parking takes place. It is essentially a stacked parking lot.

Parking Lot-- a cleared area that is more or less level and is intended for parking vehicles, usually treated with some kind of hard surface such as concrete or asphalt.

Parking Surface—the flat plane occupied by bays of parking and associated travel lanes.

Planning Director—the Planning Director of the Chatham County Planning Department.

Pedestrian Stub-out—A sidewalk or other pedestrian improvement that terminates at the property line, in anticipation of future connection when the adjacent property develops (or other entity retrofits existing development).

Rendering—(also architectural drawing, architectural rendering) A three-dimensional drawing with perspective of an architectural design as plan and/or elevation views of a building or structure.

Residential Development—see development

Residential Unit—see “dwelling unit” in the zoning ordinance

Retention Pond-- A retention pond is designed to hold a specific amount of water indefinitely. Usually the pond is designed to have drainage leading to another location when the water level gets above the pond capacity, but still maintains a certain capacity.

Rural Character—land having a low density of development and relative absence of man-made features, such as signs and buildings. Visible manifestations of human activity should be primarily related to agriculture, such as crops, pastures, farm buildings, farm services such as feed stores, sawmills, et cetera. Large lot residential and crossroads retail are not inappropriate at small scales and small numbers.

Scenic Corridor-- A the viewshed from a road within which natural scenic resources and aesthetic values are evident.

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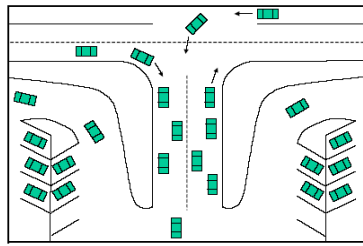
Sign Field—the area of the sign that is **not** lettered; the background on which the lettering is placed.

Site design—the layout of potential development including access, parking, buildings, landscaping, et cetera.

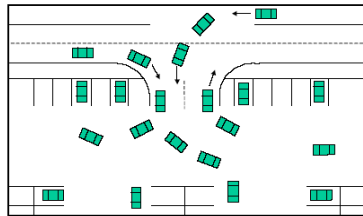
Shade Tree: An evergreen or deciduous tree that will attain a mature height 35 feet or greater, with an expected crown spread of 30 feet or more, as determined by the latest edition of "American Standards for Nursery Stock".

Stub-out—see stub street in the subdivision ordinance

Subdivision (covered in subdivision ordinance)



Adequate throat length allows stacking, or queuing, to occur on site. This reduces driver confusion, traffic problems, and unsafe conditions.



Insufficient throat length and poor site planning can cause unsafe conditions and result in vehicles backing out onto the arterial, interrupting traffic flow.

Figure 1: Driveway Throat Length Illustration

(Source: Iowa State Center for Transportation Research & Education)

Throat Length-- the distance from the street to the first point of conflict in the driveway.

Unbroken Mass—continuous massing of a building with no articulation or fenestration. A flat, blank wall without doors or windows is the most extreme form of this.

Understory-- The layer of plants that grow in the shade of the canopy of a forest.

Understory Tree: An evergreen or deciduous tree that will attain a mature height between 15 and 35 feet, with an expected crown spread between 15 and 30 feet, as determined by the latest edition of "American Standards for Nursery Stock".

Undisturbed Vegetative Buffer—the area adjacent to some other feature (road, stream, et cetera) at some set distance where protection of existing vegetation is required for development.

Understory Shrub: An ornamental evergreen or deciduous plant that will attain a mature height of four to ten feet (4 - 10'), as determined by the latest edition of "American Standards for Nursery Stock".

Undisturbed Area: An area free of tree-disturbing activities, except for supplemental plantings as provided for herein.

Unsuitable Vegetation: Vines, scrub, weed plants and the like, which are unsightly, or growing on or around a shade tree or under-story tree, and compromising the tree's growth rate, or having a deleterious effect on the overall health of the tree.

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Urban Forestry: The management of wooded areas for the benefits they provide, including physiological, sociological, aesthetic, environmental, economic and overall well-being of an urban or suburban society. Vegetative Buffer— the area adjacent to some other feature (road, stream, et cetera) at some set distance where vegetation, either existing or landscaped and planted is required for development.

View Corridor-- a plane that extends from a defined view point or points to some other point—Fayetteville street from the Performing Arts Center to the Old Capitol in Raleigh or East Street in Pittsboro from Town Hall to the Courthouse are examples of this.

Viewshed-- an area of land, water, and other environmental elements that is visible from a fixed vantage point.

5. A text amendment section 9 of the Zoning Ordinance should be drafted by staff so that non-conformities created by the new overlay district can be allowed to expand without counting toward the size cap of a particular node. Other performance standards should still apply to the expansion but not the existing structures (without a variance). This would not include existing non-conformities prior to the effective date of the overlay district. Properties/uses in the newly-zoned areas made non-conforming under RA-40 should have an opportunity request that their base zoning be changed under the county-sponsored process used to adopt the overlay district. (at no cost to the property owner/applicant).

Deleted: 4. A stormwater process needs to be put in place to support item 10.9.7.1.1 (last paragraph of section). An interim measure that uses the same process as the Watershed Ordinance could be put in place as policy while the new language is developed.

6. Jordan Lake should be zoned R-5, and the full 1500' corridor added back to the maps.

Major Corridor Ordinance Task Force: Other Recommendations

1. Additional corridors would benefit from being in the overlay district, notably Old Fearington Road and NC 902.

Old Fearington Road is a key connection to NC 54 and Interstate 40 to the north in Durham County and services large populations at Governors Club and Carolina Meadows. It has zoning in place and could be added at this time.

NC ~~9023~~ is a Scenic Corridor designated by NCDOT. Though it does not have significant development pressures at this time, it's length, location, and scenic designation make it a candidate for the overlay district should zoning ever be in place in this area.

2. Countywide Zoning should be pursued. With the additional standards in the corridors, key secondary roads will feel additional development pressure. Where no land use controls are in place, inappropriate development will be allowable and could easily overwhelm the secondary roads they are located on. The lake should be included so that the entire county jurisdiction is zoned; Falls Lake in Wake and Durham Counties is zoned in both jurisdictions as an example. It will also mean that controls are in place should the boundaries of the Corps of Engineer property change.

3. There should be consideration of a node on US 421 north of Siler City's ETJ based on findings of EDC study. If a node is added to the Plan, then staff should study whether a proactive rezoning to the overlay district is merited.

4. Staffing and workflow issues are likely to ensue from the additional workload generated by these requirements. The conditional use process means ~~much~~ more staff review than a by-right process; often negotiations over the finer points of the multi-level site plan are time consuming, and the additional agenda preparation will add to this. It is important the staff review ways to make these new processes work well for the applicant, the staff, and the appointed and elected bodies that will review and approve the new developments. Where there is a demonstrated need in terms of the sheer volume of staff hours or gaps in the expertise (such as a licensed landscape architect), there should be a plan to address these gaps. This could be through new hires, contractual arrangements, or change in the process that enhances productivity.