

Frequently Asked Questions about the proposed Upper Peninsula Zoning District

This document is provided as a reference for the Upper Peninsula Zoning District and is not intended to replace the draft ordinance or any possible section of the Zoning Code pertaining to the Upper Peninsula Zoning District.

1. Is this an overlay to the current zoning or a new zoning district?

This is a proposed new zoning district created special for the Upper Peninsula, it is not an overlay.

2. What is the intent of the Upper Peninsula Zoning District?

The intent of the proposed zoning district is to protect the existing neighborhoods, encourage responsible development, and allow for mixed use and greater density as appropriate.

3. What properties are being considered in the rezoning?

A draft map highlighting properties being considered for rezoning into the proposed Upper Peninsula Zoning District is available online at www.charleston-sc.gov/projects

4. Where can I view a copy of the proposed zoning district?

A draft copy of the Upper Peninsula Zoning District is available online at www.charleston-sc.gov/projects

5. Where can I view a map of the current zoning in the Upper Peninsula?

The City of Charleston Interactive Zoning map is available online at <http://gis.charleston-sc.gov/interactive/zoning/>

6. Why change the current zoning?

As areas undergo rapid growth, transformation and development, land use patterns can change significantly and there can be a need to reexamine permitted land uses, density and height regulations. Many properties in the Upper Peninsula are currently zoned Heavy Industrial (HI), Light Industrial (LI) or General Business (GB). The Upper Peninsula Zoning District reexamines the permitted land uses in the area to protect neighborhood areas from the undesirable aspects of heavy industrial development including noise, odor, risk of toxic emissions, appearance and explosion hazards.

7. How will the proposed zoning district be different from the current zoning districts?

The base zoning of the proposed district is very similar to the current zoning. The chart below offers a general overview comparing the current zoning to the proposed zoning. The major difference is the proposed zoning includes an optional incentive program that allows for height and density bonuses in exchange for community benefits.

| | EXISTING ZONING | PROPOSED ZONING | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---------------|
| | | Base Zoning | Incentive |
| Height | 50-55' (about 4 stories) | 4 stories | 5-15 stories |
| Density | 26.4 units/acre | 26.4 units/acre | Not regulated |
| Permitted Land Uses | -Heavy Industrial (HI) -Light Industrial (LI) -General Business (GB) | -No Heavy Industrial -Limited Light Industrial -Majority of General Business | |
| Ground Floor Active Use | N/A | Required on primary streets | |
| Rooftop Uses | Allowed within height limit | Allowed above height limit (no office or residential) | |
| Number of Parking Spaces Required | Follows Table 3.3 Off-Street Parking Requirements | Follows Table 3.3 Off-Street Parking Requirements | |
| Location of Parking | < 400' away | < 1,500' away (safe pedestrian route required) | |

8. How does the incentive part of the proposed zoning district work?

Owners can build, by right, up to 4 stories with a density of 26.4 units per acre. If owners would like the option of building higher and denser, they are to add approved community benefits. If an owner adds at least 5 points worth of community benefits, they can earn the first bonus floor of height, allowing them to build 5 stories tall.

9. What are “community benefits” and how will they help my community?

Community benefits are a mutual way to ensure that local community residents share in the benefits of major developments. Such community amenities could include new publicly accessible parks and plazas, new affordable workforce housing units, new transportation infrastructure, and even a reduction in neighborhood flooding and urban heat island effect. The ordinance is also encouraging clean, renewable energy as well as energy and water efficient buildings for all around healthier communities.

For example, if an owner: 1) allocates a percentage of their housing units to being affordable (per HUD Standards) and 2) creates a new publicly accessible (and privately maintained) park or plaza, that could qualify the owner to receive one bonus floor of development and bonus density. The result benefits the community because it becomes more affordable with a greater diversity of housing options and gains a new green space for the community to share.

10. Has the City received community input for this proposed zoning district?

The City is fortunate the draft ordinance has gone through many draft stages since summer 2014 and has received extensive community and neighborhood input. Over 300 people representing residents, business owners, non-profit organizations, developers and design firms have provided input on the proposed zoning district. Two (2) public meetings were held in the Upper Peninsula in July 2014 and February 2015. There will be three (3) more public meetings and written comments are welcome as well. Everyone is invited and encouraged to be a part of the process.

11. Will I have to sell my property?

This is only a zoning change and does not require anyone to sell their property. If you are concerned about people knocking on your doors, you can hang a “no soliciting” or “no trespassing” sign on your property. Commercial properties and multi-family properties over 8 units may need to gain permission to hang a sign, please call the Zoning Department at 724-3781 to ensure your sign conforms to regulations.

12. What is the Upper Peninsula Initiative and how is it different from the Upper Peninsula Zoning District?

The Upper Peninsula Initiative is a collaborative planning effort that was formed to promote thoughtful growth of the Upper Peninsula. All are welcome and encouraged to participate in the effort. Over 100 people have volunteered to be part of the effort with diverse representation from residents, business owners, non-profit organizations, developers and government all involved. More information is available online at www.CharlestonUP.com. The initiative has 8 task force groups, each with specific goals for the Upper Peninsula, which are led by a Steering Committee. The 8 task force groups are:

1. Equitable Development
2. Urban Form + Pattern
3. Energy
4. Transportation + Mobility
5. Civic Places
6. Water + Ecosystem Function
7. Materials
8. Urban Agriculture

The Upper Peninsula Zoning District is a project of the Upper Peninsula Initiative’s Urban Form + Pattern task force group. Please note, the initiative and the zoning district have their own unique maps associated with them.

13. I have more questions, is there someone I may talk to about how this change may affect my property?

City staff will be available to answer questions and larger maps and drawings explaining these proposed changes will be available at the open house at the Design Division. You may also call the City of Charleston’s Planning, Preservation and Sustainability Department at 843-724-3789.