

Memo

To: City Council
From: Bryan Myrkle, Community Development Director
Date: February 19, 2016
Re: MX-1 Zoning Classification

Back in the fall of 2014, the City created a new zoning classification – MX-1. The intent of this zoning classification is to allow for more modern, mixed-use developments in places where appropriate. It is also intended to aid in the redevelopment of older or historic properties.

MX-1 specifically encourages a now-popular type of development, with commercial spaces on the ground floor and residential spaces above, which is becoming more common, for both new developments and redevelopments of older buildings.

The language we adopted for our local ordinance acknowledged some of the uncertainties we would face as we worked to implement it. For example, it mentions that it would largely be applied to redevelopment projects for older buildings and it may be necessary to amend the ordinance from time to time to accommodate that need.

The ordinance also allows for single-use developments in the MX-1 zone to accommodate market conditions – essentially creating mixed-use neighborhoods, rather than simply mixed-use buildings.

The City was recently requested to rezone the property at 218 N. Cochran Avenue – the former Baughman Manor Bed & Breakfast – to MX-1 to allow that building to be repurposed as a dedicated office building for a single business. Because MX-1 is an overlay district that does not change the underlying zoning classification, this was viewed as preferable to rezoning the single parcel as OS-1 Office and Service

District, which is a primary zoning classification (not overlay) and which would create an 'island' of incompatible zoning.

However, while most of the ordinance would apply to this project and function as we intended it, *it is not currently applicable in residential districts.*

The Planning Commission discussed this general issue, and this specific request, at its February meeting, and would like the opportunity to see this ordinance applied more widely. Members of the public and Planning Commission talked about its potential application in multi-family residential districts, and the assistance it could provide for very large older homes that often languish on the market for months or years before finding a buyer. They also discussed the relative desirability of certain office uses for these older structures vs. seeing them divided into apartments.

Local Realtor and former Planning Commission member Eric Crandall offered some particularly useful insight and compelling reasoning for why MX-1 should be applicable in multi-family zones. He was kind enough to provide me a copy of his remarks to the Planning Commission and I have included them here for your reference.

As a result of this Planning Commission discussion and recommendation, I am asking the City Council to approve the first reading, and to set a public hearing before the Planning Commission and City Council, that potentially would allow for the use of MX-1 zoning in multi-family residential districts. If approved, the prohibition on using MX-1 would remain for R-1 and R-2 Single Family Residential districts.