

The City of Madison is updating the Future Land Use (FLU) Map as a part of the Imagine Madison Comprehensive Plan Update process.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

I'm not familiar with the Future Land Use Map or any of these land use categories. Can you tell me what has changed?

The most impactful changes are the addition of a fourth residential designation (Low-Medium Residential), adjustments to the residential and mixed use districts, and the addition of height and form to describe residential and mixed use district intensities rather than just dwelling unit density.

Planning Division Staff updated the Future Land Use map to reflect land uses identified in recently adopted plans for existing neighborhoods and future growth Neighborhood Development Plans.

Planners also combed through the 2006 map and made several administrative updates, such as standardizing schools as Special Institutional and larger parks as Parks & Open Space, both of which were sometimes identified as Low Density Residential.

Why change the land use designations?

After researching existing conditions in Madison and recent development, planning staff found that the 2006 Future Land Use map residential categories needed more differentiation among less dense residential uses and a higher ceiling for more dense residential uses. The 2017 draft of the Future Land Use map maintains a low-density district of less than 15 dwelling units (DU) per acre while adding a low-medium density district that allows for buildings that are denser than single-family detached houses, but still less dense than most apartment buildings (e.g. townhomes, duplexes, three- and four-unit buildings, etc.). The medium- and high-density residential districts were altered to better fit the pattern of development and to accommodate future growth. The mixed use districts have been similarly adjusted. Within the residential and mixed use designations, height and building form are emphasized over dwelling unit density. See pages two and three of this document for more information.

Why emphasize height and form?

Most people interact with the urban environment based on what buildings look like and how large they are. Dwelling unit density can be very misleading: two identically-sized buildings can have very different densities if one contains 10 three-bedroom units and the other has 30 one-bedroom units. A three-story building in a certain neighborhood could be appropriate because it fits within the context and fabric of the neighborhood whether if it is 10 dwelling units per acre or 30 units. Or two buildings with the same number of units could have very different densities if one has underground parking on a smaller lot and the other has a larger lot with surface parking. The height and form of the development better dictates how it will interact with its surroundings.

I still don't understand density and building form. Can I see examples?

This can be a very confusing subject for many people. To better understand the interplay of height, form, and density, and how residential and mixed use buildings fit into these land use categories, we've created a [Story Map](#) using recent development examples in Madison.

What is the process for updating the Future Land Use Map?

In February and March, the Planning Division solicited initial change requests to the Future Land Use Map from the public. Using those requests and a review of existing conditions and recent development, Planning Division Staff has updated and published the Future Land Use Map seen here. Beginning April 25, the public is invited to comment on the Draft Future Land Use Map and make recommendations and suggestions for changes. After all public comments are received through June 21, Planning Division Staff will develop a final draft of the Future Land

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Use Map. This draft will be reviewed by the Plan Commission in June, July, and August. The Plan Commission will recommend which changes to include in the final draft of the Future Land Use Map.

What changes have been made to the districts?

Residential Land Use Categories

Residential Building Form	Low Residential (LR)	Low-Medium Residential (LMR)	Medium Residential (MR)	High Residential (HR)
Single-Family Detached Building				
Civic/Institutional Building				
Two-Family, Two-Unit				
Two-Family – Twin				
Three-Unit Building	*			
Single-Family Attached	*			
Small Multi-Family Building	*	**		
Large Multi-family Building		**		
Courtyard Multi-Family Building		**		
Podium Building				
Number of Stories	1-2	1-3	2-5	4-12
General Density Range (DU/acre)	≤15	7-30	20-90	70+

* Permitted in select conditions at up to 30 DU/ac and three stories, generally along arterial roads.

** Permitted in select conditions at up to 70 DU/ac and four stories, generally along arterial roads.

Mixed-Use Land Use Categories

Mixed-Use and Commercial Building Form	Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU)	Community Mixed Use (CMU)	Regional Mixed Use (RMU)
Commercial Block Building			
Civic or Institutional Building			
Residential - Commercial Conversion			
Live-Work Building			
Single-Family Attached Building			
Small Multi-Family Building			
Courtyard Multi-Family Building			
Large Multi-Family Building			
Parking / Liner Buildings			
Free-Standing Commercial Building			
Podium Building			
Flex Building			
Number of Stories	2-4	2-6	4-12*
General Residential Density Range	≤70	≤130	--

* Or taller, based on approved plan or PD/MXD zoning approval. One-story anchor retail is allowed as part of a larger, comprehensively planned project or as part of a project transitioning from a suburban car-oriented layout to a more urban, pedestrian-oriented layout.

Notes: Building forms were drawn from the zoning code. All development will be subject to having an appropriate transition to surrounding areas.

What does each of the land use districts mean?

- **Low Residential (LR)** - Predominantly single-family and two-unit housing types (1-2 stories; 0-15 dwelling units (DU) per acre)
- **Low-Medium Residential (LMR)** - Mix of single-family homes, two, three and four-unit buildings, row/townhouses, and small apartment buildings (1-3 stories; 7-30 du/acre)
- **Medium Residential (MR)** - Generally larger multifamily buildings or multifamily complexes, sometimes interspersed with other smaller housing types (2-5 stories; 20-90 du/acre)
- **High Residential (HR)** - Predominantly larger and taller multifamily buildings (4-12 stories; 70+ du/acre)
- **Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU)** - Node or corridor containing housing, shopping, and services that generally serves surrounding neighborhoods (2-4 stories; up to 70 du/acre)
- **Community Mixed-Use (CMU)** - Relatively high-intensity mix of residential, retail, office, institutional, and civic uses, generally located adjacent to a major transportation corridor (2-6 stories; up to 130 du/acre)
- **Regional Mixed-Use (RMU)** - Intensive mix of region-serving retail, office, service, entertainment, civic, institutional, and high density residential uses (4-12 stories)
- **Downtown Mixed-Use (DMU)** - see Downtown Plan
- **Downtown Core (DC)** - see Downtown Plan
- **General Commercial (GC)** - Predominantly retail and service businesses selling a wide range of goods and services
- **Employment (E)** - Predominantly office, research and development, medical, and specialized employment, with some low-impact manufacturing
- **Industrial (I)** - Industrial, manufacturing, storage, distribution, and warehousing uses
- **Park and Open Space (P)** - Parks, recreational facilities, conservation areas, stormwater management facilities, cemeteries, and other open space
- **Special Institutional (SI)** - College campuses, schools, and larger places of assembly and worship
- **Airport (A)** - Airport
- **Neighborhood Planning Areas (NPA)** – Potential, but currently unplanned future neighborhood growth areas that are generally expected to develop beyond 2040