

Generalized Future Land Use Map Frequently Asked Questions

June 2023



The City of Madison is currently working on an Interim Update of its 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The Interim Update generally makes minor changes to the 2018 plan. The Generalized Future Land Use (GFLU) map is the most substantial part of the Interim Update. City staff is integrating future land use recommendations from neighborhood, area, and neighborhood development plans adopted between summer 2018 and summer 2023 into the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Interim Update. In addition to staff's administrative updates, the public will have opportunity to propose GFLU map edits. The following are some frequently asked questions relating to the GFLU map:

1. What is the Generalized Future Land Use (GFLU) map?

The GFLU map makes recommendations for future land uses and development intensities to guide the physical development of Madison. The future land use categories guide what types of zoning can be applied, and ultimately what can be built in different parts of the City. The GFLU map is one of the most-used sections of the Comprehensive Plan because state law (Wis. Stats. Sec. 66.1001) specifies that many aspects of proposed development, such as land division and rezoning requests, must be found consistent with the Plan. The GFLU map is used to analyze rezoning requests – rezoning needs to be consistent with the specified future land use, as defined in the Growth Framework chapter of the Plan and shown on the GFLU map. For example, a parcel of land specified for future “Medium Residential” land use could not be rezoned to allow for industrial uses, but could be rezoned to allow for a multifamily residential building.

2. What is the process for updating the Generalized Future Land Use map?

The Planning Division is soliciting Future Land Use Map amendment requests from the public beginning in June 2023. Staff will post analysis of all GFLU map amendment proposals on the Comprehensive Plan webpage. The Plan Commission will review the GFLU map amendment requests and provide direction to staff about whether each amendment request should be approved. This is anticipated to take place during September 2023. Afterward, City staff will draft the final Comprehensive Plan amendment based on Plan Commission feedback and officially introduce the amendment ordinance. The Plan Commission will review it at a public hearing. Finally, the Common Council will review and consider adoption of the Comprehensive Plan amendment ordinance.

3. Future land use categories and zoning districts – are those the same thing?

No. The Comprehensive Plan establishes broad future land use categories, such as “Neighborhood Mixed Use” (NMU), “Low Residential” (LR), or “Employment” (E). The GFLU categories require zoning to be implemented. For example, a zoning district such as TSS (“Traditional Shopping Street”) is used to *implement* a Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU) GFLU designation. The zoning code and zoning map are more *specific* tools to implement the *general* future land use recommendations within the Comprehensive Plan. Please see the [chart towards the end of this document](#) for a summary of which zoning districts are used to implement GFLU categories.

Proposed development must be allowed by a property's zoning to proceed. A property owner or developer may request rezoning of a property if a proposed development does not conform to zoning. The Plan Commission refers to the GFLU map when considering rezoning requests. Rezoning requests that the Plan Commission finds to be consistent with the GFLU map may be approved, and requests that are not found to be consistent cannot be approved. For example, the Knickerbocker Place development at 2701 Monroe Street is within a NMU area on the future land use map and is zoned “Traditional Shopping Street” (TSS). If a developer wanted to redevelop the site as a warehouse they would need to request rezoning to the “Commercial Center” (CC) zoning district because a warehouse is not allowed under TSS zoning. However, the Plan Commission would refer to the GFLU map, see that the area is mapped NMU, and find that a rezoning to CC is inconsistent with the NMU future land use designation and deny the request.

4. Why do GFLU categories emphasize building height and form, rather than only density?

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. Two buildings with the same number of units could also have very different densities if one has underground parking on a small lot and the other has a large lot with surface

parking. A three-story building in a certain neighborhood could be appropriate because it fits within the context and fabric of the neighborhood regardless if it is 10 dwelling units per acre or 30 dwelling units per acre. The height and form of the development better dictates how it will interact with its surroundings.

5. What does each of the land use categories mean?

- **Low Residential (LR)** - Predominantly single-family and two-unit housing types (1-2 stories; ≤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 (2-12 stories)
- **Downtown Mixed-Use (DMU)** – Downtown areas that are appropriate for intensive mixed-use development, but generally focused on residential, retail and services uses
- **Downtown Core (DC)** – The nucleus of downtown, accommodating a mix of uses in large scale buildings that comprise the most intensely developed part of the city
- **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 after 2040

6. What can be built in the residential and mixed-use categories?

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	2-12*
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.

7. What zoning districts will be used to implement the GFLU map categories?		LR	LMR	MR	HR	NMU	CMU	RMU	DMU	DC	GC	E	I	P	SI	A	NPA†
Zoning District		Low Residential	Low-Medium Residential	Medium Residential	High Residential	Neighborhood Mixed Use	Community Mixed Use	Regional Mixed Use	Downtown Mixed Use	Downtown Core	General Commercial	Employment	Industrial	Parks & Open Space	Special Institutional	Airport	N-hood Planning Area
SR-C1	Suburban Residential - Consistent District 1	●												○	○		
SR-C2	Suburban Residential - Consistent District 2	●												○	○		
SR-C3	Suburban Residential - Consistent District 3	●	●											○	○		
SR-V1	Suburban Residential - Varied District 1	●	●											○	○		
SR-V2	Suburban Residential - Varied District 2	●	●	●										○	○		
TR-C1	Traditional Residential - Consistent District 1	●												○	○		
TR-C2	Traditional Residential - Consistent District 2	●												○	○		
TR-C3	Traditional Residential - Consistent District 3	●	●											○	○		
TR-C4	Traditional Residential - Consistent District 4	●	●											○	○		
TR-V1	Traditional Residential - Varied District 1	●	●											○	○		
TR-V2	Traditional Residential - Varied District 2	●	●	●										○	○		
TR-U1	Traditional Residential - Urban District 1	●	●	●	●									○	○		
TR-U2	Traditional Residential - Urban District 2	●	●	●	●									○	○		
TR-R	Traditional Residential - Rustic District	●												○	○		
TR-P	Traditional Residential - Planned District	●	●	●	●									○	○		
LMX	Limited Mixed-Use.					●					●				○		
NMX	Neighborhood Mixed-Use District					●	●								○		
TSS	Traditional Shopping Street District					●	●	○							○		
MXC	Mixed-Use Center District					○	●	●			●				○		
CC-T	Commercial Corridor - Transitional District					○	●	●			●	○			○		
CC	Commercial Center District						○	○			●	○			○		
TE	Traditional Employment District			○	○	○	○	○				●			○		
SE	Suburban Employment District											●	○		○		
SEC	Suburban Employment Center District											●			○		
EC	Employment Campus District											●			○		
IL	Industrial - Limited District											○	●				
IG	Industrial - General District												●				
DC	Downtown Core								●	●					○		
UOR	Urban Office Residential								○	○					○		
UMX	Urban Mixed-Use								●	●					○		
DR1	Downtown Residential 1			○	○				○	○					○		
DR2	Downtown Residential 2			○	○				○	○					○		
A	Agricultural District													○	○		
UA	Urban Agricultural District													○	○		
CN	Conservancy District													●	○		
PR	Parks and Recreation													●	○		
AP	Airport District															●	
CI	Campus Institutional District														●		
PD ‡	Planned Development District																
PMHP	Planned Mobile Home Park District	●	●												○		
ME	Nonmetallic Mineral Extraction District											●					

● Primary zoning districts most appropriate within this future land use district.

○ Secondary zoning districts somewhat appropriate within this future land use district, zoning changes may require further review.

† NPAs are potential, but currently unplanned, long-term future growth areas. Appropriate zoning districts would be identified after these areas are planned.

‡ Planned Development Districts could allow most, if not all of the listed land uses.