

**North Linden Area Commission**

% Department of Neighborhoods  
1410 Cleveland Ave, 2nd Floor  
Columbus, OH 43211

November 20, 2024



**Zone In Team**

Department of Development Administration  
111 N. Front Street, 8th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

To the Zone In team:

The North Linden Area Commission is the representative advisory area commission established under Title 31 of the Columbus City Codes in order to, among other purposes, “Bring the problems and needs of the area to the attention of appropriate government agencies....”

We write to you to express our general support for the Columbus Growth Strategy and the planned “Economic and Housing Opportunity” land use map. Attached to this letter you will find a list of recommended edits which will improve clarity, strengthen positive outcomes from certain regulations, and encourage growth in specific areas.

We thank you for the additional time granted to provide feedback on this proposal. The initial feedback deadline announced on Wednesday, October 15 was November 9, which aligned poorly with our third-Thursday monthly meeting schedule. Our only meeting before November 9 was October 16. Our Zoning Committee has a second-Thursday schedule, and its next meeting was November 12. Had the original deadline been kept, we would have had no time to review or comment on the proposal. The deadline was extended to November 30, and this has given us time to review the proposal and prepare this feedback. We ask that future comment periods be at least one month plus one week long, and take into account that most Area Commissions do not meet in August or December.

However, we are concerned by Columbus Growth Strategy's lack of consideration for neighborhood input on significant new construction. We understand that the City is trying to remove obstacles to growth, including points in the decisionmaking process which have historically been used by neighborhood groups to stall and deny otherwise-beneficial development projects. Zone In Phase 1, and the proposed ADU policy, would do much to focus the variance process on important matters, and we hope to see that focus improve as the Zone In process considers more of the City. The Columbus Growth Strategy could aid this by explicitly calling for neighborhood consultation on larger developments, and on developments where differing uses abut. A time-limited review period, similar to Columbus' automatic 60-day pause for demolition permits, would provide necessary time for neighborhood groups to provide input to developers on proposals. This review period would help developers by connecting them to neighborhood residents' knowledge of local conditions. This review period would also help the City by providing a channel for feedback on potential negative outcomes of proposed developments, in a structured way that the City can use to guide revisions to the development at question, and to guide future revisions of the zoning code, graphics code, and building code. Finally, it would help residents by giving them an opportunity to identify changes to developments that would improve their quality of life, without obstructing the development process.

While reviewing the proposed Columbus Growth Strategy, we also reviewed the proposed Land Use Map, which encompassed the existing corridors from Zone In Phase One, plus certain industrial, mixed-use, business, institutional, and warehouse properties. In the area around North Linden, we found little to comment on. The proposed inclusion of MU1 properties along Hudson Street, Weber Road, and MU2 along Cleveland Avenue, are agreeable. We are pleased to see that Columbus chose to change the recommendation for the future Columbus Police Department call center near Carolyn Avenue from its earlier designation to the less-intense MU1. Similarly, we are encouraged to see recommendations for mixed-use

developments near the railroad tracks just west of I-71 at Weber Road and Hudson Street.

However, we are concerned by the recommendation for MU2 along 11th Avenue and Clara Street near the Ohio Expo Center and State Fair. These properties are optimally positioned for dense hotel and event-support venues, as they are located along a high-frequency bus route, with easy access to I-71 and many other nearby bus routes and greenways. Intense development of these properties, surrounded as they are by railroad tracks, highways, and the State Fair grounds, will have little impact on nearby neighborhoods, while providing a source of jobs for the community. MU3 is better suited to this area.

With these recommended changes, we endorse the proposed Columbus Growth Strategy and Land Use Map.

Carol Perkins  
Chair  
North Linden Area Commission

Adopted by the North Linden Area Commission on November 20, 2025,  
by a unanimous 7-0 vote (1 absent).

# Recommended revisions and additions

This addendum to NLAC’s letter is organized using the same headings as the Public Review Draft of the Columbus Growth Strategy. Specific passages quoted from the draft are displayed as indented text.

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## Vision for Growth

Columbus will embrace and guide growth to build a future that provides opportunities for all residents.

NLAC specifically endorses this vision for growth.

## Guiding Principles

### Healthy and Complete Communities

The creation and preservation of a variety of housing types to support mixed-income communities is a priority and is encouraged based on needs identified by the Columbus Housing Strategy and related efforts. This includes support for housing that is affordable to low- and middle-income families, permanent supportive housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), age-friendly housing, missing middle housing, and universally designed housing.

It is good to see the prioritization of universal design and mixed-income development. However, universally-designed properties are not accessible from the start; they are merely *adaptable* to meet ADA standards. It would be good to see explicit support for inclusion of properties that are built from the start to be accessible for persons with disabilities, including vision and hearing disabilities.

Enhanced public transit that provides frequent reliable access to jobs, housing, education and healthcare should be pursued.

As written, this statement recommends the pursuit of transit, but has no theory for how a *land use* document would allow a *zoning* program to provide transportation services.

This statement should be reworded to emphasize the role of the land use plan in the development of transit: “Education, jobs, and healthcare should

be preferentially positioned along transit corridors, to encourage and facilitate the development of frequent, reliable public transit.”

Walkable communities whereby residents can meet all of their daily needs within a reasonable distance, should be pursued.

We endorse this goal, but we request that the plan define “reasonable distance.” Is this two miles? One mile? 15 minutes? 5?

## Guided Growth and Sustainable Development

We would encourage the addition of another statement: “Alternative building methods should be allowed and encouraged.”

The city’s growth pattern should be economically and environmentally sustainable.

This statement should be split into two separate bullets, because each invites significant exploration.

Priority should be placed on the revitalization of Columbus’ older neighborhoods through infill development in order to provide economic opportunities and an improved quality of life for all residents.

“Older” does describe many of Columbus’ densest and most-walkable neighborhoods, but these neighborhoods should not be redeveloped solely because they are *old*.

This statement should be changed to emphasize neighborhoods’ walkability and transit connections as the key reason for their revitalization. Doing so will direct attention to the reasons *why* these neighborhoods are best positioned for development, not their surface characteristics.

Development that utilizes existing infrastructure within urban and established suburban neighborhoods is a priority.

This is perhaps too broad. Even established suburban neighborhoods have high costs of infrastructure maintenance due to their remoteness.

Instead, consider limiting this statement to established urban neighborhoods.

Aging commercial developments with lower rents are recognized as providing opportunities for new businesses, particularly for New Americans. As such, careful consideration should be provided when redevelopment scenarios are explored for said sites.

Many old commercial structures are no longer usable. Where old structures are redeveloped, care should be taken to ensure that new construction continues to provide small and affordable commercial spaces suited to business start-ups. Many rehabilitation projects merge several small commercial spaces into a single larger commercial space, which is less affordable and less flexible.

Strategic land acquisition in support of transit-oriented development (TOD), housing that is affordable to low- and middle-income families, and small businesses is encouraged and supported.

If the City wishes to support this, that is to be commended. Whether these new developments are operated by the City or by private developers, these developments must be managed responsibly. Affordability cannot be used as an excuse for neglect of a property or its occupants.

The adaptive reuse or conversion of buildings/sites for housing, such as faith-based buildings, schools, hotels, and offices is encouraged.

Are we converting housing into churches, or churches into housing? This statement should be reworded to clarify which direction the redevelopment is supposed to go in: "The adaptive reuse or conversion of existing buildings/sites into housing is encouraged. Examples of buildings and sites where this may be considered include faith-based buildings, schools, hotels, and offices."

Annexation is supported for sites facing public health concerns, such as homes that need water and sewer.

The cost of expansion of utilities and services should be weighed against future benefits of that expansion.

## High Quality Design and Neighborhood Vitality

Higher intensity uses should incorporate design elements to minimize impacts on adjacent lower intensity uses.

The sentiment behind this statement feels inadequately addressed in the Land Use Standards later in this plan.

Innovative methods should be used to preserve place while accommodating intensity and the creation of new housing.

What is “place”? How is “place” preserved?

## Land Use Policies

### General

No comments.

### Mixed Use

The numbering of these uses is logical, but not easily understood by someone who is not intimately familiar with the full range of allowed mixed uses. The numbers have no meaning when considered independent of that scale. Consider renaming the uses as follows:

<b>Draft proposal</b>	<b>Recommended change</b>
Mixed Use 1	Mixed Use Small
Mixed Use 2	Mixed Use Medium
Mixed Use 3	Mixed Use Intense

The use of a separate chapter for each Mixed Use intensity is logical, but the chapters are very similar, and it is hard to spot the differences between them. Instead, consider condensing these three chapters to one “Mixed Use” chapter, with common elements listed in one section, and the differences laid out in a table for the “small”, “medium”, and “intense” levels:

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>MU Small</b>	<b>MU Medium</b>	<b>MU Intense</b>
Density Guideline	24 unit/ac OR 72 BR/ac	48 unit/ac OR 144 BR/ac	Unlimited
Height Guideline	3-4 stories	5-7 stories	8+ stories
Building Scale	Medium	Block	Block
Commercial use flexibility	Some	Flexible	Greatest
Single-use residential	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Single-use commercial	Not recommended except as reuse of an existing building	Allowed	Allowed
Neighborhood context	Secondary corridors, commercial areas	Primary corridors, major commercial areas	Downtown, regional centers with highway access
Map color	FFCADC	F1A095	D26D85

Using a table to organize the differences between the levels of Mixed Use would facilitate comparison to the recommendations made by the Business/Institutional and Industrial land use policies.

### Industrial and Warehouse

Some areas of the city may have industrial uses with historic or ongoing negative impacts on adjacent neighborhoods. These areas typically have existing zoning permissions that allow them to continue to operate. The Columbus Land Use Plan recommends that many of these locations transition, over time, to Mixed Use, which may include less intense industrial uses.

We support this gradual reduction of industrial industrial uses in areas with negative impacts on existing residential uses.

Loading, storage, and other external activities that generate noise and other impacts should not face public rights-of-way or residential or institutional uses. In the event that this is not possible, such areas should be fully screened.

We specifically applaud the recommendation for screening and noise reduction in areas facing residential or institutional uses. We note that this

may require significant adjustment in site plans, or extensive new plantings of evergreen trees, in commercial areas along I-71 that face North Linden or Clintonville.

## Business and Institutional Campus

No comment.

## Design Guidelines

There are several common design guidelines which should be pulled out of the various sections and added to a single “General Design Guidelines” section, including sections for lighting, parking, and connectivity. Use-specific guidelines should be tailored to how those uses differ from the general guidelines.

## Residential

### General Residential

Building materials should be of high quality and durability, such as traditional masonry, stone, stucco, wood, glass, etc.

Does this include vinyl siding, or asphalt roof shingles? This list should provide stronger advice on what is allowed or disallowed.

Building owners/developers are encouraged to conserve and rehabilitate contributing and/or historic buildings and architectural elements, and to consult the Historic Preservation Office regarding best practices in maintaining and rehabilitating historic structures.

This is good to see.

Sensitive site design, cluster development and other design approaches should be used to preserve open space, natural resources, and other ecologically sensitive areas.

Lights should have fully shielded, recessed lamps directed downward to prevent glare and shine above the horizontal plan.

Building owners/developers are encouraged to conserve and rehabilitate contributing and/or historic buildings and architectural

elements, and to consult the Historic Preservation Office regarding best practices in maintaining and rehabilitating historic structures.

These guidelines are very good, but they should be applied to all developments, not just residential uses. Properties with non-residential uses abutting residential uses should not be exempted from these requirements solely because those properties do not have a residential use.

### Single and Two Unit

Garages should be located and accessed from the rear of the property for those sites with alley access. In such cases, the garages should be located as close to the alley as practicable. For additional parking, pull-through garages may be supportable, with consideration for pervious paving or decorative brick for spaces located between the garage and the primary structure.

The requirement that garages be located as close to the alley as possible, to prevent parking between the garage and alley, may force properties with garages to use those garages for vehicle storage, instead of allowing parking on a short driveway between the garage and alley, thereby freeing the garage for storage of tools and lawnmowers. Pull-through garage design effectively prohibits the use of the garage for storage of large items such as lawnmowers or workbenches, because those would obstruct the passage of a vehicle through the garage on its way to pass-through parking.

On the other hand, those storage uses may be better served with sheds.

Accessory buildings (including, but not limited to, detached garages) should be located to the rear of the principal building.

This statement should mention ADUs.

### Multiunit

The primary facade on the ground level of multiunit buildings should include entrances, stoops, porches, balconies or other features to contribute to street activity.

Multiunit development should face public streets and open space.

These design guidelines seem to prevent the development of courtyard apartments and similar developments, like those which exist in many areas of Old North and Weinland Park.

For multiunit buildings with integrated garages, such as townhome units, where garages and driveways can dominate a frontage, techniques such as dark colored garage doors, garage doors with windows, paver driveways, and pergola structures are encouraged in order to improve the pedestrian experience.

We're glad to see consideration of the pedestrian experience in this context, and we look forward to Columbus becoming the pergola capital of the Midwest.

### Open Space

This section omits consideration of light pollution. Lighting in open areas should be subject to the same requirements as in the Residential design guidelines: "Lights should have fully shielded, recessed lamps directed downward to prevent glare and shine above the horizontal plane."

Open space should be integrated into new development, serving in one or more of the following ways: an organizational element, a central green space, connection to adjacent open space, protection of natural areas, and/or as a buffer along scenic roadways.

Beyond encouraging simple open space, this statement should encourage *usable* open space, such as playgrounds, patios, and multi-purpose flat grass areas..

Development proposals should clearly delineate areas set aside for stormwater management.

Consideration should be made for the safety of stormwater management areas, to prevent drownings, entrapment, falls, and other injuries.

### Parking

In general, this section should take care to distinguish between "parking", "bicycle parking", and "vehicle parking". Failure to use the term "vehicle parking" for

parking of vehicles creates ambiguities as to whether any given statement about “parking” should be applied to bicycle parking. Columbus’ existing zoning and building code require that bicycle parking (including parking for scooters) be placed near the main entrances to buildings, in visible, accessible locations. These land use guidelines state that “parking” should be placed to the rear and be screened, and it’s not clear whether that applies to bicycle parking.

Bicycle parking should be incorporated into developments. Additional consideration should also be given to including supporting facilities in multiunit, office, and mixed-use developments.

Define “supporting facilities”. Does this include changing rooms with lockers and showers, secure indoor bicycle storage, repair stations, or other such things?

### Connectivity

Connectivity between developments via public streets is encouraged. In the case connectivity via public streets is not feasible, pedestrian connections should be considered.

Not “should be considered.” This statement should use “must be considered.”

Traditional suburban curvilinear block and street design should be avoided unless it facilitates preservation of natural features.

Please define this design pattern with more specificity, to make clearer what is and is not encouraged.

Maintenance of existing street and alley grids is encouraged.

Should this use plan explicitly encourage the adoption of alley and grid development for new large developments, instead of the “traditional” curvilinear block and cul-de-sac pattern in vogue from the 1950s onwards?

### Landscaping, Buffering, and Screening

No comment.

### Natural Resources

No comment.

## Public and Private Art

No comment.

## Mixed Use

This chapter is missing any guidance on noise sources other than parking and loading. Examples of noise sources not considered include: ventilation, air conditioning, outdoor speakers, public address systems, patios at bars and restaurants, and commercial and industrial machinery.

This chapter is also missing a “Lighting” section.

## General Mixed Use Design Guidelines

No comment.

## Facades

No comment.

## Setbacks

No comment.

## Height

In some locations, a taller building’s visual impact may be beneficial, such as to help demarcate or establish a boundary at the edge of a neighborhood, or to anchor a neighborhood center.

## Open Space

This section omits consideration of light pollution. Lighting in open areas should be subject to the same requirements as in the Residential design guidelines: “Lights should have fully shielded, recessed lamps directed downward to prevent glare and shine above the horizontal plane.”

## Parking

See comment in the Residential Design Guidelines.

## Connectivity

See comment in the Residential Design Guidelines.

## Landscaping, Buffering, and Screening

No comment.

## Natural Resources

No comment.

## Public and Private Art

No comment.

## Graphics

Buildings should not be dominated by graphics. Crowded or cluttered graphics arrangements should be avoided.

Does this prohibit billboards, or whole-building wall art? Many buildings in Columbus have artworks covering an entire wall, and we find that that artwork contributes beneficially to neighborhood character in a way that billboards or advertisements of a similar scale do not.

## Industrial

This section is missing any guidance on noise sources other than parking and loading. Examples of noise sources not considered include: ventilation, air conditioning, outdoor speakers, public address systems, patios at bars and restaurants, and commercial and industrial machinery.

## General

No comment.

## Site Organization & Orientation

No comment.

## Frontage & Streetscape

This section's provision for pedestrian improvements is good.

## Landscaping, Buffering, and Screening

Buffer industrial sites from adjacent residential uses with a combination of existing vegetation, planted buffers, visual screens (continuous hedge, mounding, masonry, or screened fencing), and appropriate setbacks.

Where industrial uses are active year-round, screening vegetation should also be chosen to provide screening year-round. Evergreen species are preferred.

#### Fencing

No comment.

#### Service, Loading, and Outdoor Storage

No comment.

#### Parking and Circulation

No comment.

#### Lighting

All exterior lighting must be fully shielded and directed downward to avoid off-site glare. Uplighting should be avoided.

The Residential design guidelines prohibit both off-site glare and off-site shine. Why do the Industrial design guidelines allow off-site shine, even unto adjacent Residential uses? Why is uplighting only prohibited for Industrial use, and not for Mixed Use or Residential uses? The inconsistency between these sections supports creation of a “General Design Guidelines” section with uniform lighting standards for all uses.

For security lighting, fixtures with timers/motion sensors are preferred so as to avoid constant high-intensity night lighting where not operationally necessary.

This is a good restriction, but it must be made clear that the requirements for shielding and avoiding off-site glare and shine also apply to motion-triggered security lighting.

#### Public and Private Art

No comment.

# Typos

Generally: Do you want to use “&” or “and” for heading? Pick one and stick with it.

nearby contributing building’s roof pitch.

Fix the plurals: “nearby contributing buildings’ roof pitches.” More than one nearby building exists and contributes.