

Future Land Use

Westside Residential

Purpose

The Westside Residential District is a mix of neighborhoods and commercial corridors, with clear lines separating the two. The protection of neighborhoods from further encroachment of businesses is critical to maintaining livability, long term security for residential investment, and historic character. At the same time, commercial corridors such as Western Avenue, Capitol Street, portions of State Street, and Mount Vernon Avenue are important places of commerce. These corridors should be limited in depth generally to one or two lots back from the main corridors.

The area encompasses many of Augusta’s traditional neighborhoods. This plan calls for preserving and protecting these neighborhoods, allowing for residential growth by building on vacant lots and on neighboring open spaces, creating pedestrian connections to trails and parks and the riverfront, and supporting services and small businesses that enhance the residential environment.

Within these neighborhoods there are key artery streets. These perform both commercial and through-traffic functions, and also serve as gateways to the city center. Design and landscape standards will ensure that development along these streets will be done in a way that maintains the attractiveness of the City.

Clusters of residences that form traditional neighborhoods are designated on the Future Land-Use Details map. They receive varying levels of protection dependent on the existing level of current non-residential encroachment. Over time, some of these neighborhoods may need to be re-evaluated regarding their continued existence as residential areas, particularly those very close to existing major non-residential development.

Carefully crafted design criteria, addressing both the building and the site, will ensure that non-residential uses allowed in residential areas will have little or no impact on the neighboring residences or neighborhood environment.

Design Criteria

This is a moderately dense development area and maintaining that density, while enhancing its functionality and appearance, are the goals of the design criteria for this district.

 On-site parking should be sufficient to accommodate on-site uses.

 Parking areas should be landscaped both internally and at the edges to screen and soften the effect of this “hardscape.”

 Landscaping is important in the district, and where possible must be incorporated throughout a site.

 Sidewalks and pedestrian connections are critical. Sidewalks, trails, and bikeways must connect to the City’s network.

 Setbacks should be minimal in the residential subdistricts to maximize the use of the available public utilities and create a pedestrian scale environment. Setbacks and screening should be utilized on the edges of commercial and residential subdistricts, and the Planning Board should also have flexibility to require the placement of landscaping between commercial uses when it makes sense to improve the appearance of the area.

 Lot sizes should require residential densities of 4 to 10 units per acre where public utilities are available, and 2 to 4 residential units per acre where they are not.

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 Building height should be limited to about 40 feet, except for steeples, clock towers, and similar architectural features that are typically associated with particular uses.

 Lighting should be pedestrian scale first and auto scale second, except along arterial and major collector roads. Lighting should be full cutoff and designed to eliminate as much light pollution and glare as possible. Accent lighting should be directed such that it is non-intrusive.

 Signage should be pedestrian-oriented and not be high on buildings. Sign size and number should be regulated to limit sign clutter. Sign material or design should be considered only to the extent that a sign should not be distracting to drivers by flashing, being overly bright, having or mimicking movement, or being otherwise obtrusive on the landscape.

 Form-based zoning (which focuses on building design and scale, rather than immediate use) should be explored in this area. As a building typically outlasts its initial use, it is important that the building is compatible with the surrounding area and easily adapted to other uses.

Uses

Subdistricts, design criteria, and possibly form-based zoning in this area will play a vital role in helping to control the effects of incompatible uses. The following uses are expected in the district: in primarily residential subdistricts, non-residential uses will be strictly limited and/or controlled by design standards.

 Retail, with very limited opportunity for auto sales and other similar retail uses dependent on outdoor storage and the display of large goods.

 Services  Restaurants

 Offices  Government

 Institutional, such as churches and schools

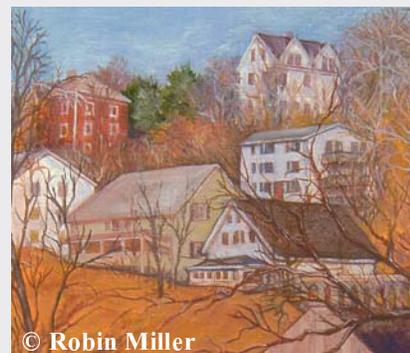
 Recreational, especially park and playground areas

 Single-family, duplex, and multi-family residential

Subdistricts

The Augusta Future Land-Use map depicts generalized districts within which subdistricts are expected to be created. The Westside Residential district is broken into a number of distinct subdistricts that are either primarily non-residential or primarily residential.

The interface of these subdistricts is a place for careful compromise where existing residential uses may be converted to commercial, but only if care is taken that other adjacent residential uses are minimally impacted. For example, existing residences directly on Western Avenue should be allowed to convert to commercial uses, provided that adequate mitigation of the impacts of the new commercial use is ensured for adjacent residential uses. As another example, Winthrop Street has a number of offices on its lower section. These offices should not be allowed to convert to a more intense non-residential use, but may be converted to a residential use if desired. Each case will need careful consideration of specific surrounding conditions.



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