

ADA COUNTY, ID ZONING ANALYSIS REPORT

**WHITE &
SMITH, LLC**
PLANNING AND
LAW GROUP



LOGANSIMPSON
GUIDING RESPONSIBLE CHANGE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ada County adopted the Ada County Comprehensive Plan in 2016 and is updating its Zoning Ordinance to implement those long-range planning policies, modernize its zoning regulations, and to improve its usability and workability for the general public, applicants, and decision-makers. The County has retained a consultant team led by White and Smith, LLC to assist the County's staff in updating their zoning regulations.

To start the Zoning Ordinance update, the County gathers public input, reviews existing zoning regulations, and receives commentary from key stakeholders. This is incorporated into a zoning analysis report. The analysis report:

- Introduces Big Ideas that guides the Zoning Ordinance process;
- Discusses the County's adopted policies;
- Assesses the Zoning Ordinance's format;
- Provides seven (7) general recommendations to improve organization, readability, and usability;
 1. Relocate all definitions to a new definitions article at the end of the Zoning Ordinance;
 2. Consolidate existing zoning districts that are similar in function to reduce the number of zoning districts;
 3. Create a use matrix that aligns with standards from the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and Land Based Classification Standards (LBCS);
 4. Consolidate the zoning review procedures and relocate technical information to the back of the Zoning Ordinance;
 5. Continue to codify supplemental use standards in a single chapter;
 6. Add illustrations, tables, and flowcharts; and
 7. Use clear and concise language and well-defined terms.
- Reviews and analyzes the Zoning Ordinance's zoning districts and development regulations;
- Provides recommendations for specific areas of the Zoning Ordinance (recommendations are in each section subheader with additional advantages and disadvantages of each recommendation in Appendix B);
- Summarizes key points; and
- Provides appendices that address public outreach results, recommendation best practices, Areas of City Impact (ACIs), regional planning, and military impact.

This analysis report provides an initial framework for the County to develop a modern zoning ordinance that responds best to Ada County's needs. Going forward, this project will update the County's zoning and subdivision regulations consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Action Plan, and other County policies. Following this analysis, the Consultant Team will prepare an Annotated Outline. The outline will explore a zoning approach that streamlines processes, improves readability and usability, and reduces interpretation inconsistencies. Zoning Ordinance drafting will occur after the outline is complete.

INTRODUCTION

With the adoption of the Ada County 2025 Comprehensive Plan in 2016, following a multi-year planning process, the County seeks a state of the art, user-friendly, and comprehensive update of its zoning regulations to guide future development and redevelopment per the community’s vision.

How this Report is Written

This report assesses the existing Zoning Ordinance and provides a blueprint for revising those documents, based on the policy guidance offered by the Ada County 2025 Comprehensive Plan. Each section discusses the “big picture” issues, along with our findings and alternatives or recommendations for change.

The Consultant Team kicked-off this project with a series of meetings with County staff on April 5, 2020. County staff offered several comments and suggestions about specific changes to the Zoning Ordinance. Also, the Ada County 2025 Comprehensive Plan includes implementation recommendations that detail specific areas of the ordinance in need of reform. Based on input received during the kick-off meetings, the key zoning implementation elements of the Comprehensive Plan are further summarized and discussed on page 4 of this report.

This report allows the County and Consultant Team to focus their efforts on the specific issues identified during Task 1 of the project, based on feedback from the County. This report provides an opportunity for the County to verify the approach the consultant team is taking. We encourage County stakeholders to carefully review this assessment, provide comments and suggestions, and stay involved in this vitally important process.

Big Ideas

The Ada County 2025 Comprehensive Plan signals a commitment to protecting the integrity of neighborhoods, enhancing the County with more efficient development patterns, preserving agricultural lands, developing in a fiscally responsible way, promoting housing variety and affordability, and improving community image. These “big ideas” will guide the Zoning Ordinance revision process.

Table 1. Big Ideas for Zoning Ordinance Revision

Ada County 2025 Comprehensive Plan	The zoning districts, development standards, and procedures should further the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies.
User-Friendly	The Zoning Ordinance should be easy to read and well organized. A readable zoning ordinance is accessible to all stakeholders, from interested citizens to applicants and professional planners. Information should be logically arranged, easy to find, and with language and graphics that are attractive and clear.
Make the Right Things Easy	Development that reflects the County’s long-term planning policies should have a clear approval process. Standards that pose a barrier to accomplishing the County’s plan policies should be revised or eliminated.

<p>Realistic Standards & Procedures</p>	<p>The Zoning Ordinance should not over- or under-deliver. The zoning standards should ensure development reflects the County’s expectations and should reflect the needs and market conditions of Ada County and southwest Idaho rather than national trends. The revised Zoning Ordinance should incorporate new concepts where appropriate, where needed to implement a plan policy, or to fix a shortcoming in the existing regulations.</p>
<p>Market-Friendly</p>	<p>The Zoning Ordinance should incorporate standards that work in the marketplace. This does not necessarily mean to relax standards. The revised Zoning Ordinance may include new or stricter standards in some areas where needed to implement the <i>Ada County 2025 Comprehensive Plan</i>. However, the Zoning Ordinance should strive to balance the needs of all stakeholders, including the regulated community.</p>
<p>Strong Neighborhoods</p>	<p>Neighborhoods should provide opportunities for affordable housing through all phases of a person's life. The standards should accommodate the County's changing demographics and development patterns, while also protecting neighborhoods from incompatible uses.</p>
<p>Protection of Economic Anchors & Investment Areas</p>	<p>Ada County’s key economic assets need protection from incompatible development. Particular attention should focus on the Areas of City Impact, surrounding unincorporated areas, and other corridors and nodes where base industries are prominent.</p>
<p>Community Aesthetics & Image</p>	<p>The Zoning Ordinance should encourage a higher degree of design quality in appropriate areas to encourage development and reinvestment by incorporating character-related standards.</p>
<p>Open & Civic Spaces</p>	<p>The Zoning Ordinance should require and encourage development to provide a variety of spaces that are appropriate to their context. In greenfield areas, new development should provide passive open spaces that preserve trees, use natural solutions for stormwater management, and retain natural resources. In more densely populated areas, smaller civic spaces can provide both an economic and a community asset. The Zoning Ordinance should recognize screening and buffering between different land use types and intensities as a key contribution and design consideration for neighborhoods and parks.</p>
<p>Housing Affordability through Variety</p>	<p>The Zoning Ordinance should provide a variety of housing options to account for the County’s expected growth. Variety creates more units to meet market demand for housing and allows for non-traditional residences in underutilized, conventionally zoned residential areas.</p>

Land Preservation	The Zoning Ordinance should address the impacts of growth on the County’s existing resources. Ada County has a significant amount of agricultural land that is important to the local economy, so effective land resource allocation is critical.
Fiscally Responsible Development	Ada County has concerns about development costs and the level of service for infrastructure to support new development. The timing, location, density, and intensity of development should not create unreasonable infrastructure burdens on the County and its residents. The Zoning Ordinance should enable a system that ties the intensity of development of infrastructure level of service consistent with state law.

Zoning Districts and Use Regulations

In the United States, zoning is historically the principal regulatory mechanism to implement a comprehensive plan. Zoning directly controls the use and development potential of land. In most counties with zoning regulations, zoning has the following elements:

1. Zoning Districts. Zoning divides counties into districts where various regulations apply. These can include conventional districts, overlay districts, special use districts, floating zones, composite zoning, design-based districts, and performance-based zoning, among others. Table 3 summarizes approaches to structuring zoning regulations.
2. Planned Development. Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are typically stand-alone districts where an applicant can deviate from the normal district standards, in exchange for providing a higher level of design, amenities, or other community benefits.
3. Density & Intensity. Zoning districts control the density and intensity of development by prescribing minimum lot area and dimensional requirements. Some communities also specify the minimum or maximum number of dwelling units allowed per acre of land.
4. Bulk & Setbacks (Dimensional Regulations). Zoning districts regulate the size or “bulk” of structures through the application of minimum or maximum setbacks (from property lines, streets, or other structures), height, floor area ratio, and lot coverage requirements.
5. Uses. In each district, some uses are permitted, some are prohibited, and others are regulated through discretionary review (i.e., conditional use permit approval by the County Planning and Zoning Commission). Many uses have conditions or standards that apply whether the use is permitted or requires conditional use permit approval. Some communities categorize these types of uses separately – like a “limited” use category. A less confusing practice is to note whether the use is subject to additional regulations and to point the reader to them.

Ada County uses a mix of conventional, overlay zoning districts and PUDs. These districts are accounted for in chapters 2 and 3, respectively. Zoning districts are classified into the following base districts: rural, residential, commercial, industrial, and planned community. Out of the straight zoning districts, there are 2 rural, 11 residential, 4 commercial, and 4 industrial. The County has approximately 560,470 acres of zoned land. Most of the zoned land (~91%) is a rural base zoning district. Residential base zoning districts comprise of about 7% of the zoned land within Ada County, while commercial, industrial, and planned community base districts make up the remaining 2% of zoned land. Other types of districts could be used to implement Comprehensive Plan policies related to residential and commercial uses, neighborhood planning, land preservation, and protection of investment areas. However, the zoning districts are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Ada County's Zoning Districts

Zoning districts are classified into the following base districts: rural, residential, commercial, industrial, and planned community. The top 5 zoning districts by land acreage are:

1. Rural Preservation (RP) - 464,963 acres
2. Rural Residential (RR) - 47,440 acres
3. Rural-Urban Transition (RUT) - 32,140 acres
4. Planned Communities (PC) - 4,781 acres
5. Estate Residential (R1) - 3,228 acres

The smallest 5 zoning districts by land acreage are:

1. C3 - 0 acres
1. TI - 0 acres
2. R1M - 0.1 acres
3. R8M - 3.4 acres
4. LO - 25 acres

Table 4 and Figure 19 communicate how dominant rural zoning is in the County. Roughly 91% of land is zoned for rural uses (RP - Rural Preservation and RR - Rural Residential) while the remaining land (9%) is zoned for residential (7%), commercial (< 1%), industrial (< 1%), and planned communities (< 1%).

Zoning Analysis				
Zoning Base	Zoning District	Acreage	Acreage Total	Percentage
Rural	RP	464,963	512,403	91%
	RR	47,440		
Residential	RUT	32,140	41,700	7%
	RSW	1,551		
	R1	3,228		
	R2	1,588		
	R4	725		
	R6	1,561		
	R8	799		
	R12	71		
	R20	33		
	R1M	0.1		
	R8M	3.4		
Commercial	LO	25	161	< 1%
	C1	27		
	C2	109		
	C3	0		
Industrial	T1	0	1,425	< 1%
	M1	103		
	M2	202		
	M3	1,120		
Planned	PC	4,781	4,781	< 1%
Total	22	560,470	560,470	100%

Table 2. Zoning Data Analysis

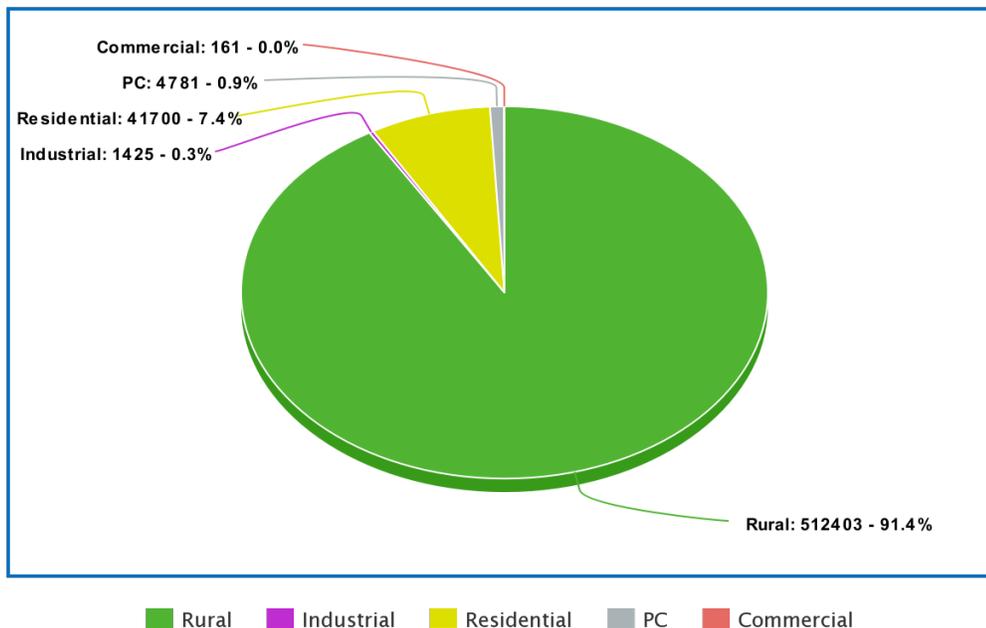


Figure 1. Zoning Analysis Pie Chart

Rural Base Districts (8-2A)

The County has two rural base districts – Rural Preservation (RP) and Rural Residential (RR) that help define and protect agricultural operations and native landscapes. These two districts are the predominant zoning districts, totaling to 512,403 acres of the 560,470 total zoned acres in Ada County. Rural base districts are located on the peripheries of the ACIs moving outward toward the County’s borders. The current rural zoning districts allow for specific commercial uses by-right or through the conditional use process, which can detract from the rural character of these districts if not properly controlled. The Ada County 2025 *Comprehensive Plan* recommends preservation of land and controlled growth, so modifications to these zoning districts are critical for development near agricultural areas.

Table 3. Rural Zoning Summaries and Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

Zoning District	Summary	Comp. Goal #	Recommendation(s)
Rural Preservation (RP)	The RP district encourages the protection of prime agricultural lands and promoting opportunities for agricultural activity. This district allows for the development of agricultural industries and agriculture service establishments while stabilizing rangeland uses and wildlife management areas from undue adverse impacts from non-rural development. The RP district limits development of hazardous areas and permits a limited number of uses with excessive space requirements or buffering needs on nonprime agricultural lands.	1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen rural base districts by incorporating stricter open space requirements, landscape buffers, conservation easements to preserve agricultural operations and land resources. Buffers and easements provide multiple environmental benefits critical for new, responsible development. Buffers are small areas within agricultural land designed to manage environmental concerns like pollution. Strategically placed buffers and easements in the RP and RR districts can effectively mitigate the movement of sediment, nutrients, and pesticides from property to property. This should help improve agricultural operations while also enhancing wildlife and protecting biodiversity.
		1.7	
		2.1	
		2.3	
		2.4	
		2.5	
Rural Residential (RR)	The RR district promotes agricultural activities that fit an agricultural lifestyle in rural areas of the County. This district permits for the development of schools, churches, and other public and quasi-public uses in rural areas. Also, the district allows for low density residential uses that align with a rural lifestyle. Development in the RR district does not require excessive expansion of public services.	2.7	
		2.8	
		3.3	
		5.2	

Residential Base Districts (8-2B)

Ada County has eleven residential base zoning districts that vary in density and function. Residential base districts occupy the second highest land area in the County, or 41,700 of the 560,470 total zoned acres. RUT comprises the overwhelming share (77%) of the residential zoning. Most of the residential districts are in the central portion of the County south of Boise’s ACI and east of Kuna’s ACI. However, there are scattered residential districts west of Kuna and south of Meridian. The current residential zoning districts allow for certain institutional uses through the conditional use process, which helps protect the character of these districts. However, the County could consolidate and rename several of these districts to simplify the ordinance and improve administration. For instance, some of the residential districts (such as the “medium and high density” categories) have minute distinctions that do not justify their own zoning classification.

Zoning Analysis				
Zoning Base	Zoning District	Acreage	Acreage Total	Percentage
Residential	RUT	32,140	41,700	7%
	RSW	1,551		
	R1	3,228		
	R2	1,588		
	R4	725		
	R6	1,561		
	R8	799		
	R12	71		
	R20	33		
	R1M	0.1		
	R8M	3.4		

Table 4. Residential Zoning District Analysis

Certain residential districts, like RUT, have important development implications for residential construction near ACIs. The most critical implications are connectivity and infrastructure costs. For instance, RUT zones are subdivided into 5-acre lots, but ACIs (Meridian and Eagle) want to accommodate redevelopment at higher densities with an easement on private roads that allow new residents to use the roads. Compact development options in RUT, such as cluster or conservation development, could accommodate density and connectivity while preserving open space and rural character. The County previously allowed clustering through a “non-farm subdivision,” which allowed one-half (½) to three-quarter (¾) acre lots with deed restrictions on the balance of the property. This was repealed in 2008. Developments in RUT and other low-density districts should connect to subdivision clusters as much as possible to avoid increasing infrastructure demand.

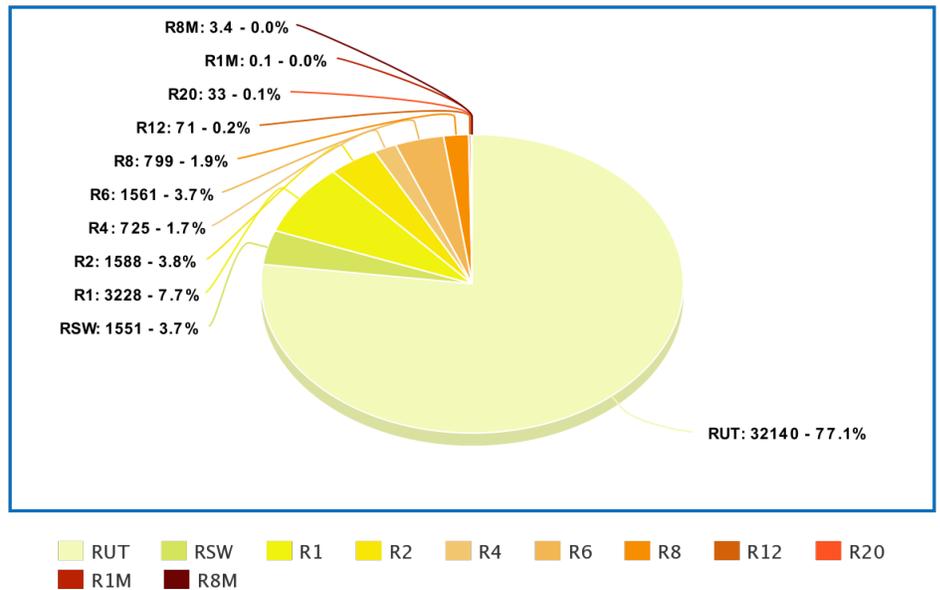


Figure 2. Residential Zoning Analysis Pie Chart

Table 5. Residential Zoning Summaries and Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

Zoning District	Summary	Comp. Goal #	Recommendation(s)
Rural-Urban Transition (RUT)	The RUT district provides regulations for the development of property within areas of city impact. Agriculture and rural residential uses are allowed to continue within areas of city impact until urban public facilities are extended. This district allows for property redevelopment to higher densities when urban public facilities are extended. This district limits new agricultural uses within the areas of city impact to those that do not significantly impact nearby urbanizing areas with noise, odor, dust, or other nuisances.	2.1	1. Consolidate existing residential districts with new dimensional standards. Minimum lot area, lot dimensions, and setbacks are similar in most residential districts. There are opportunities to consolidate or recalibrate these districts to provide for more diverse housing options, including small-lot detached single-family uses and accessory dwelling units. R4 and R6 zones are medium density districts that are relatively indistinguishable from one another. The new Zoning Ordinance could merge these districts where dimensional and density standards are similar.
Southwest Community Residential (RSW)	The RSW district implements the Boise City comprehensive plan specifically for the southwest planning area. Agriculture and rural residential uses are allowed within areas of city impact until urban public facilities are extended.		
Estate Residential (R1)	The R1 district provides regulations for development where urban public facilities exist. This district is the lowest density residential district with a maximum of 1 dwelling unit per acre. The development pattern consists of scattered, large lot single family residences.	2.2	2. Add regulations to low density residential districts that accommodate adequate public infrastructure requirements, preserve rural character, and create cohesion. The low-density districts could limit infrastructure demand by tying new subdivisions to facility levels of service, and rural design standards such as limits on impervious surface, cluster and conservation options, and revised dimensional standards.
Low Density Residential (R2)	The R2 district provides regulations for development where urban public facilities exist. This district is a low-density district that allows a maximum density of 2 dwelling units per acre. The development pattern consists of large lot single family residences.		
Medium Low Density Residential (R4)	The R4 district provides regulations for development where urban public facilities exist. This district is a lower density district that allows a maximum of 4 dwelling units per acre. The development pattern consists of medium lot sized single family residences.	2.3	
Medium Density Residential (R6)	The R6 district provides regulations for medium density development where urban public facilities exist. The maximum allowed density is 6 dwelling units per acre. The development pattern consists of medium lot sized single family residences.		
Medium High Density Residential (R8)	The R8 district is another medium density district that provides regulations for development with urban public facilities. This district allows 8 dwelling units per acre.	2.7	
High Density Residential (R12)	The R12 district a high-density district that provides regulations for development where urban public facilities exist. The district allows a maximum of 12 dwelling units per acre. Housing development differs from the lower density residential districts in that the R12 district accommodates multiple-family dwellings like, townhouses and apartments. The R12 district also accounts for zero lot line residential developments.		
Very High Density Residential (R20)	The R20 district is the highest density residential district which allows 20 dwelling units per acre. Like the R12 district, the R20 district accommodates multiple-family dwellings like townhouses and apartments; and zero lot line residential development.	2.8	
Estate Residential – Manufactured Home (R1M)	The R1M district accommodates existing M base districts and establishes regulations to protect property rights to enhance property values. This district allows for a maximum of 1 dwelling unit per acre.		
Medium High Density Residential – Manufactured Home (R8M)	The R8M district accommodates existing M base districts and establishes regulations to protect property rights to enhance property values This district allows for more density with a maximum of 8 dwelling units per acre.	5.5	

Commercial Base Districts (8-2C)

The County divides commercial activity into four districts. There are three distinct commercial zones based on intensity. These districts and their arrangement are common throughout the jurisdictions across the nation. Although these districts are frequent, traditional zoning districts, they make up a small percent of zoned land within Ada County. Only 161 acres of commercially zoned land (less than 1%) is zoned commercial.

Zoning Analysis				
Zoning Base	Zoning District	Acreage	Acreage Total	Percentage
Commercial	LO	25	161	< 1%
	C1	27		
	C2	109		
	C3	0		

Table 6. Commercial Zoning Analysis

The County currently uses three out of the four commercial zoning districts primarily for less intense commercial activity. For instance, the County’s most intensive commercial district (C3) is not mapped while the less intense districts (C1 and C2) have 136 zoned acres. Approximately 68% of the total commercial base districts are zoned for C2 activity, while the remaining 32% is zoned LO and C1. Ada County also has one office zone that allows office type uses near residential base districts. Only 25 acres is zoned LO. Although Ada County’s commercial zoning districts make up a small percentage of zoned land in the County, the commercial districts are do not appear to require significant changes to comply with the County's planning policies.

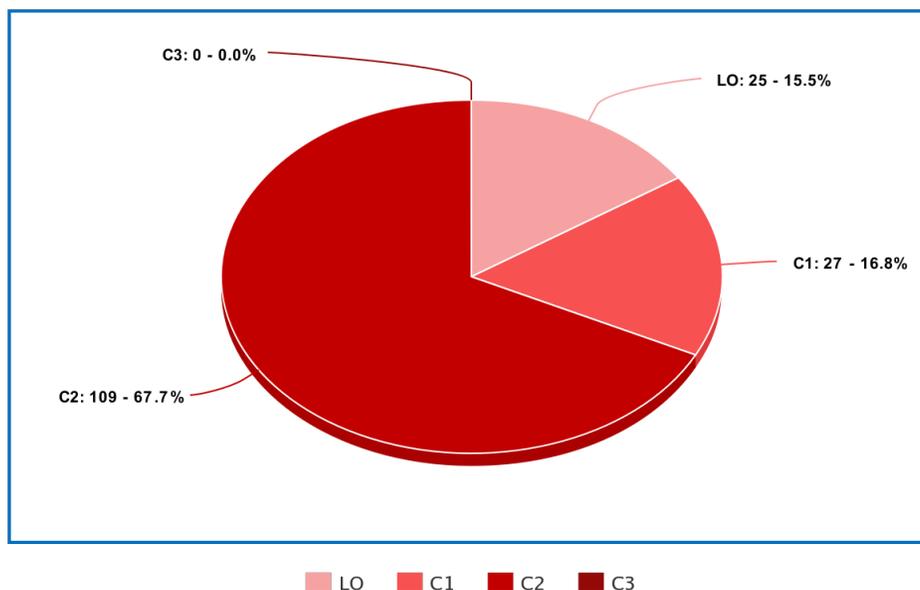


Figure 3. Commercial Zoning Analysis Pie Chart

Table 7. Commercial zoning summaries and relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

Zoning District	Summary	Comp. Goal #	Recommendation(s)
Limited Office (LO)	The LO district provides administrative, professional, and business office uses near residential base districts with available urban facilities.	2.1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate the 4 commercial districts into 3 zoning categories. The C3 district has not been used. If not consolidating, the Zoning Ordinance could recalibrate standards that are more suitable and practical to C3 development. These options should allow commercial development outcomes that are compliant with County planning policy. Remove antiquated commercial/office uses from commercial base districts. Instead implement modern commercial/office uses in commercial districts and provide standards that accommodate for contemporary commercial/office development. The Zoning Ordinance should implement site layout standards that encourage a variety of commercial developments.
		2.2	
Neighborhood Commercial (C1)	The C1 district establishes commercial areas near residential areas that provide for the sale of limited merchandise and services for residents living within the immediate area. Commercial activity is light in the C1 district.	2.3	
		2.8	
Community Commercial (C2)	The C2 district establishes areas for community shopping and clustered commercial activities along arterial streets that provide for the sale of a full range of merchandise and services required for residents living within several neighborhood service areas. This district also services rural trade areas. Commercial activity in the C2 district is more intense than that of the C1 district.	3.1	
		3.2	
Regional Commercial (C3)	The C3 district establishes areas for large scale commercial structures located near interstate or principal arterial roadways that serve the Treasure Valley region. Out of the other commercial zoning districts, the C3 district has the most intense commercial activity patterns.	5.3	

Industrial Base Districts (8-2D)

The County allocates industrial activity into four districts (Technological Industrial, Limited Industrial, General Industrial, and Airport Industrial) based on intensity, character, and function. These industrial zoning districts make up less than 1% of zoned properties in Ada County. Every industrial zoning district is in use except for the Technological Industrial (TI) district. The TI district is not mapped.

Zoning Analysis				
Zoning Base	Zoning District	Acreage	Acreage Total	Percentage
Industrial	T1	0	1,425	< 1%
	M1	103		
	M2	202		
	M3	1,120		

Table 8. Industrial Zoning Analysis

The Airport Industrial (M3) district is unique in that it is specific to one area of the County. It includes a mix of uses that are not common in the other industrial districts. For instance, the M3 district is intended for non-noise sensitive manufacturing, industrial, and commercial uses that are conducive for development in an airport context. Overall, the County’s industrial districts are straightforward, but could be revised and streamlined to reduce the number of industrial zoning districts. For example, the County could remove the TI district and incorporate it into the Limited Industrial (M1) district because there is little need for underutilized zoning districts.

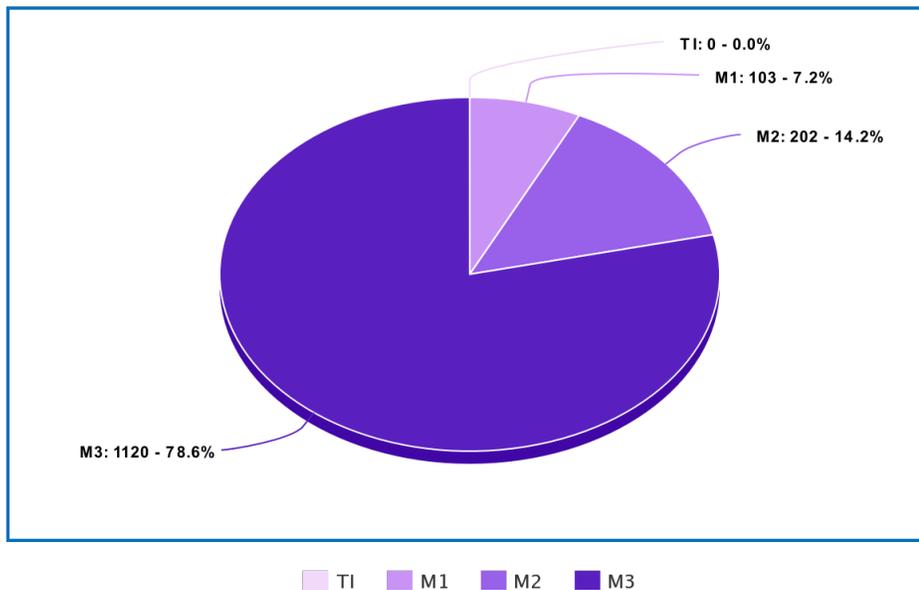


Figure 4. Industrial Zoning Analysis Pie Chart

Table 9. Industrial zoning summaries and relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

Zoning District	Summary	Comp. Goal #	Recommendation(s)
Technological Industrial (TI)	The TI district provides an environment for the development of technological industrial parks. These industrial parks support administrative facilities, research institutions and specialized manufacturing organizations. Auxiliary uses like professional offices, financial institutions, and other similar uses may be appropriate if services are provided to technological industrial park users.	2.1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the TI district by consolidating industrial base districts. The TI district has not been utilized, so flexible, technologically based industrial parks could fit into a revised M1 district. Low intensity industrial development should include technological industrial parks. Rename the industrial base districts to better align with the district’s intent. Instead of “limited” and “general” industrial, the industrial districts could read as light and heavy industrial districts. The terms “limited” and “general” does not tell the reader about the intensity of the industrial development. Update permitted uses with the newly consolidated and revised industrial districts. The County should ensure all industrial uses fit appropriately with the district’s intent. This will help avoid land use conflict and unnecessary staff interpretations.
		2.3	
Limited Industrial (M1)	The M1 district encourages light industrial development by providing and protecting an environment exclusively for industrial development. Nearby residential, commercial, agricultural, and public uses are accounted for in the M1 district to ensure that industrial development does not create hazards, noise, or other disturbances. Supplemental uses like professional offices, financial institutions, and other similar uses may be appropriate if services are provided to the neighboring limited industrial businesses or users.	2.6	
		2.7	
		2.8	
General Industrial (M2)	The M2 district encourages heavy industrial development by providing and protecting an environment for high intensity industrial development.	3.1	
		3.2	
		5.1	
Airport Industrial (M3)	The M3 district provides property for industrial uses that are compatible with Gowen field. This district fosters a development environment for non-noise sensitive manufacturing, industrial, and commercial uses.	5.2	
		5.3	

ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICIES

Comprehensive Plan

Ada County adopted its current comprehensive plan in November 2016 (recently updated in December 2019) but has implemented few of the plan’s zoning-related policies. The current effort to update the Zoning Ordinance will implement many of the Comprehensive Plan’s Action Strategies, and address new land use issues that have emerged since the Plan’s adoption.

The Ada County 2025 *Comprehensive Plan* is organized into eight chapters, including introductory and implementation chapters. The remaining chapters focus on six specific elements called focus areas:

- County Resources & Amenities
- Coordinated Growth
- Economic Capacity
- Community Connections
- Sustainable Practices & Resiliency
- Organizational Effectiveness

Each of these six chapters identify key planning themes that emerged during the comprehensive planning process. These themes provide broad policy guidance and inform the specific strategies recommended for each focus area. This list of strategies forms the County’s Action Plan, which the Zoning Ordinance can implement. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance also can support some of the non-regulatory strategies in the Action Plan.

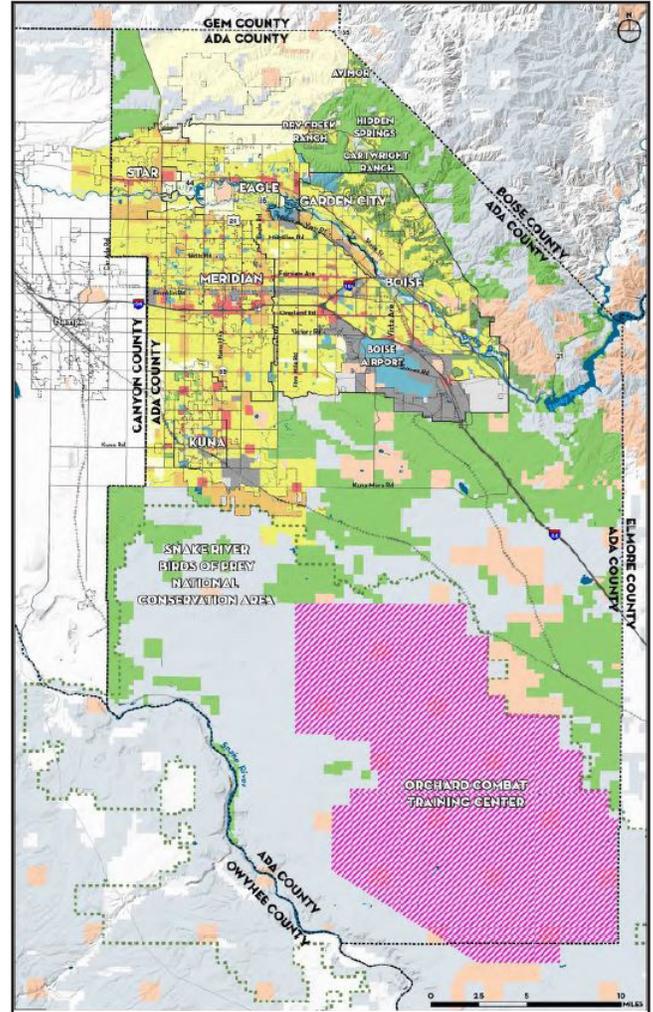


Figure 1. Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map

Table 10. Comprehensive Plan Focus Areas and Goals

Focus Area	What is it?	Goals
County Resources & Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural environment and habitats • Open Space, parks, and recreation • Historic and cultural assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect, manage, and enhance Ada County’s diverse natural resources, including vegetative, fish, and wildlife habitats. • Protect and enhance Ada County’s culturally and historically significant resources. • Identify, protect, and use Ada County’s sand and gravel resources while mitigating impacts to adjacent residential uses, minimizing long-term negative environmental impacts, and protecting or enhancing natural resources.

Focus Area	What is it?	Goals
Coordinated Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth areas and land uses • Housing choices • Community design principles • Special planning areas • Property rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a coordinated and efficient pattern of development county-wide. • Direct urban development to incorporated cities, Areas of City Impact (ACIs), and Planned Communities where investments in urban services have already been made or are planned and programmed in a CIP or work program. • Provide opportunities for limited residential and non-residential development in unincorporated areas outside ACIs. • Protect the character and functions of distinct uses in rural, unincorporated parts of Ada County. • Continue to support the agricultural industry and preserve agricultural land in rural, unincorporated parts of Ada County. • Protect the health, safety, and welfare of the general public and mitigate encroachment and compatibility issues in airport and military influence areas. • Each property owner is responsible, as a steward of the land, to use his/her property wisely, maintain it in good condition, and preserve it for future generations. • Ensure that all planning decisions and implementing ordinances pursuant to this Plan balance the interests of the community with the protection of private property rights.
Economic Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional economic leadership • Business attraction and job growth • Agricultural production • Food security and local farming • Sand and gravel resource management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify targeted areas for industry and employment in unincorporated Ada County. • Maintain Ada County's strong agricultural industry.
Community Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated transportation and transit system • Mobility options • Access to key activities, schools, and natural amenities • Walkability and connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with Ada County Highway District (ACHD), Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), Valley Regional Transit (VRT), and Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) and others in planning for, designing, developing, and permitting new and/or expanded transportation facilities. • Help coordinate and integrate land use and transportation planning and development to ensure that they mutually support overall community goals and make efficient and cost-effective use of resources. • Support a comprehensive transportation network that provides mobility and choices for all segments of the community.
Sustainable Practices & Resiliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental quality • Conservation principles • Drainage and stormwater design • Natural hazards risk management • Public safety • Utilities and infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote clean air and lower greenhouse gas emissions. • Conserve and protect the County's groundwater and surface waters. • Enhance community resiliency. • Assist in coordinating the provision of wastewater treatment and collection services and facilities in a cost-effective, efficient, and environmentally sound manner.

Focus Area	What is it?	Goals
Organizational Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County services Financial and administrative systems Interdepartmental coordination Interagency coordination Community engagement Regional collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide public services and facilities for which the County is responsible in a fair, efficient, and professional manner. Provide accurate information and administer development application processes in an efficient manner.

The Coordinated Growth chapter includes the most specific zoning-related Action Strategies. This chapter establishes and discusses:

1. Growth direction
2. The distinction between rural and urban development
3. Protection of agricultural land in unincorporated areas outside of ACI's
4. Addressing compatibility issues with the airport and military installations
5. Safeguarding individual property rights and balancing it with the community's best interests

The Coordinated Growth chapter includes the Future Land Use Plan. This plan differs from the current land use map as the County intends for more growth throughout the region. The County anticipates most development on the peripheries of ACI's with more residential development in the northern parts of the County (north of Eagle and Star).

The existing land use plan mostly shows a dispersed development pattern with limited commercial activity and scattered residential developments. Throughout the Ada County 2025 Comprehensive Plan, most of the land in unincorporated County areas are agricultural.

The Ada County 2025 Comprehensive Plan identifies four specific areas of the County - outside of public lands - where development could occur.

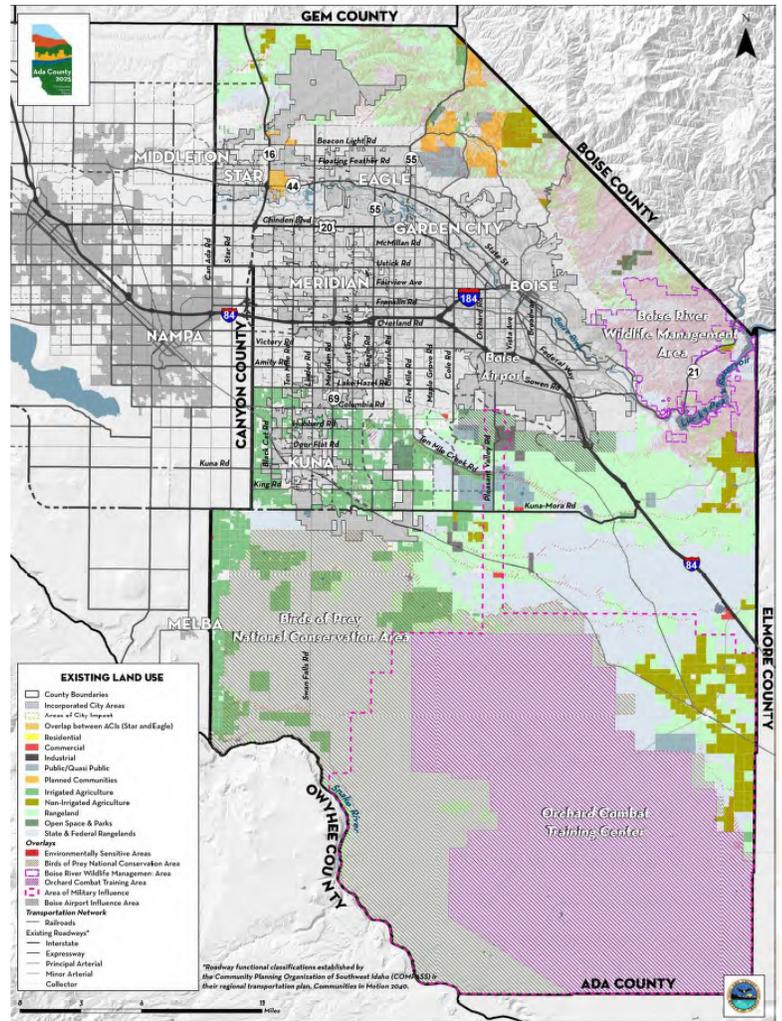


Figure 2. Existing Land Use Map (2025 Comprehensive Plan)

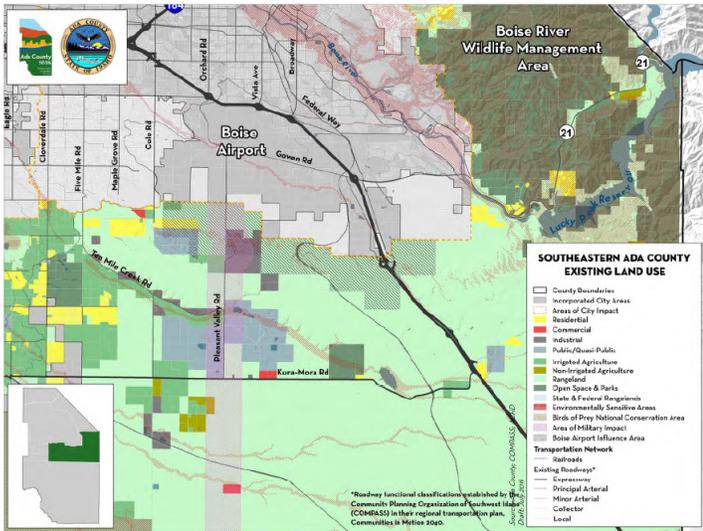


Figure 3. Southeastern Ada County

1. Southeastern Ada County is mostly open space and agricultural land with intermingled pockets of public, residential, and commercial development. This area of the County is predominantly zoned for agricultural purposes and aligns with the Comprehensive Plan's vision of preserving agricultural operations and protecting rural character. As more people move to the region, this development pattern may change.

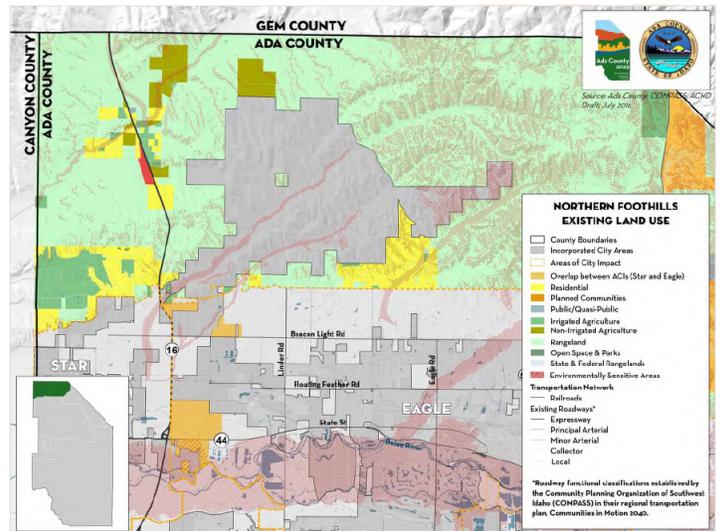


Figure 4. Northern Foothills

2. The Northern Foothills of Ada County is mostly open space and agricultural land with scattered residential developments. This region of the County is primarily zoned for agricultural purposes and meets the Comprehensive Plan's vision to maintain the County's rural character. Although this area is mostly agriculturally zoned land, the scattered residential developments could encourage development in the northern perimeter of Star and Eagle.

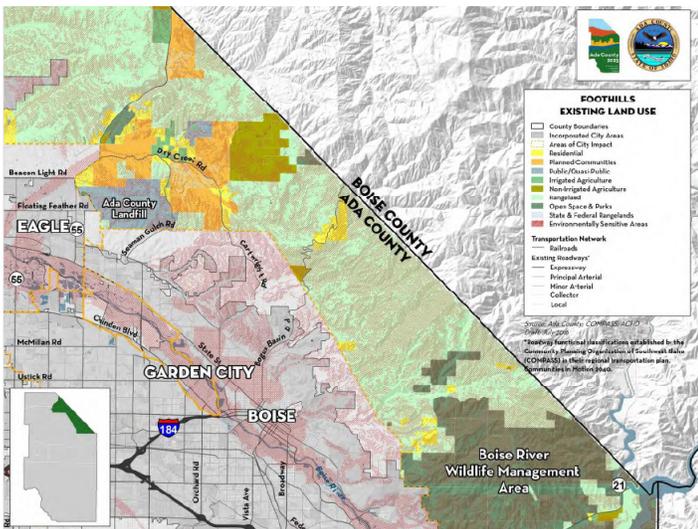


Figure 5. Foothills

3. The Foothills in the northeastern part of the County is home to the Boise River Wildlife Management Area, the Ada County Landfill, planned communities, and agricultural lands. Growth may not change the development pattern as much given the area's challenging terrain and proximity to the Boise City border, Boise River Wildlife Management Area, landfill, and existing planned communities.

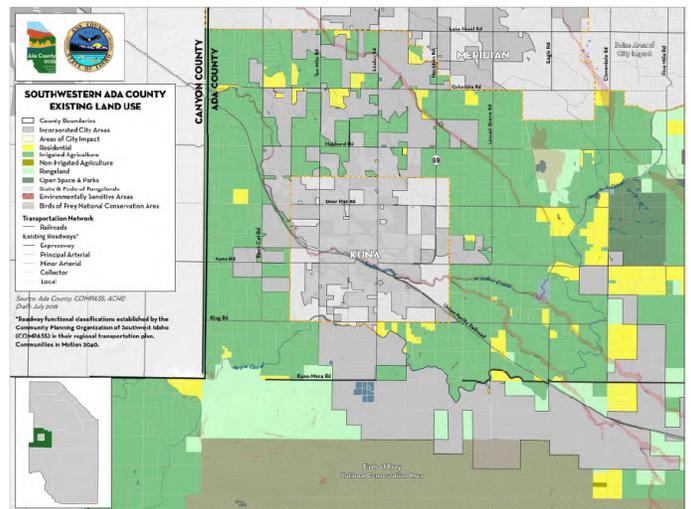


Figure 6. Southwestern Ada County

4. The Southwestern part of Ada County is mostly agricultural land interspersed with residential developments. This area of the County is predominantly zoned for agricultural uses and aligns with the Comprehensive Plan's vision of preserving the agricultural lifestyle. Although this area is mostly agricultural land, this region is prime to growth pressures as people migrate to the Kuna and Meridian areas. Vast agricultural lands in the current development pattern may erode as the County populates.

The Community Connections chapter discusses the need for full coordination between County personnel and other regional and state agencies to provide crucial transportation connections for residents to goods and services. The Comprehensive Plan calls for:

1. Improved multi-modal transportation
2. Well-connected roadways
3. Promote various transportation options to residents
4. Expanding transportation facilities.

These policies will guide Zoning Ordinance regulations and standards that address adequate public facilities, influence well-integrated development patterns, and promote more inclusive communities. Policy implementation could include development fees and context-based zoning and development approaches.

The County Resources and Amenities chapter discusses the need for:

1. Open space as tools for development mitigation (such as stormwater runoff management), wildlife habitat, and ecosystem management
2. Ample open space for residents to enjoy scenic Ada County
3. Preserving historic and cultural resources

This will guide land preservation or open space standards through zoning as the County faces imminent growth pressures.

Additional Plans

Additionally, Ada County uses specific plans for planned developments within the County. These documents work separately from the County’s recently adopted comprehensive plan. Most of the specific plans are found in the northern part of Ada County for specialized planned communities. Cartwright Ranch, Hidden Springs, and Avimor are some of the specific area comprehensive plans that the County has adopted. During the Zoning Ordinance rewrite process, it is essential to understand how the Zoning Ordinance can guide change to these communities, as requested by the property owners, to accommodate future development.

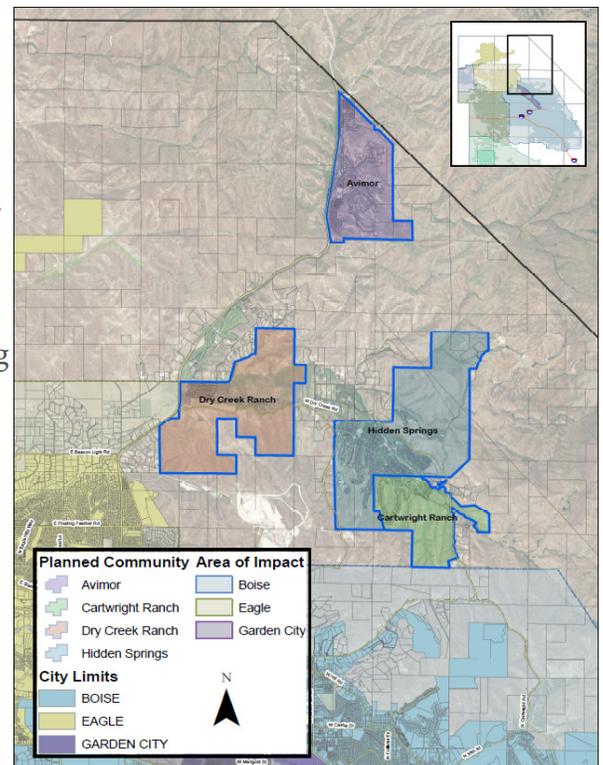


Figure 7. Planned Communities Map

REVIEW OF EXISTING REGULATIONS

Zoning Ordinance Format

Background

A well-organized zoning ordinance benefits the public, planning staff, and applicants. It makes information easier to find and understand, avoids confusion at the permit counter, and facilitates the long-term process of maintaining and amending the code over time. Improving the format and structure of the Zoning Ordinance will:

- Increase readability;
- Improve administration by making information easier to find and understand;
- Enhance public input by making complex, technical information accessible to casual users; and
- Further the County's business-friendly objectives by making development standards and procedures clearer to applicants.

While the County has made some targeted changes over the years, it has not comprehensively updated the ordinance since 2000. Issues and recommendations based on our current direction are discussed.

Organization

The Zoning Ordinance is currently organized into 8 chapters, excluding Chapter 21: Planned Community Districts. These chapters have sections and articles that detail different development, use, zoning, and procedural regulations.

Chapter 1: General Regulations

This chapter has 10 sections and 2 articles, establishing zoning definitions and protecting and regulating nonconformities. Chapter 1 establishes the Zoning Ordinance per state law and identifies its purpose, function, and application.

Chapter 2: Base District Regulations

This chapter has 2 sections and 5 articles. This establishes the County's rural, residential, commercial, industrial, and planned community base districts. The base districts include use and dimensional standards for the major categories of development in the County's unincorporated areas.

Chapter 3: Overlay Districts

This chapter has 4 sections and 11 articles. This establishes overlay districts with standards for development in the Boise Air Terminal Airport Influence Areas, wildland-urban fire interface, Southwest planning area, Area of Military Influence, flood hazard overlay, Boise River greenway, hillsides, and planned communities.

Chapter 4: Regulations Applying to All Districts

This chapter has 2 sections and 12 articles. These establish a variety of general standards for development, regulate property division, infrastructure, site planning, landscaping and screening, parking, lighting signs, open space, and temporary uses. This chapter generally applies to all development in base zoning districts and overlays.

Chapter 5: Specific Use Standards

This chapter has 120 sections and 2 articles. This Chapter provides specific development standards for 120 uses, from accessory structures and adult entertainment to wineries. Separate articles address accessory uses and establish standards and procedures for conditional uses.

Chapter 6: Subdivision Regulations

This chapter has 6 sections and 2 articles. This establishes procedures and standards for the divisions of raw land into subdivisions. Standards include lots, blocks, easements, infrastructure, and flood protection.

Chapter 7: Administration

This chapter has 8 sections and 5 articles. This establishes procedures for zoning applications and approvals, including rezonings, development agreements, and historic preservation, along with general process for public hearings and applications. The chapter also establishes the Planning and Zoning Commission

Chapter 8: Planned Community Subarea Development Regulations

This chapter has no articles, but 9 sections. Chapter 8 provides processes and development standards for planned community development in unincorporated areas of the County.

The current Zoning Ordinance's organizational structure has room for improvement. The Zoning Ordinance lacks a concise, informative introduction, and includes over 12 single-spaced pages of definitions at the front of the document (8-1A-1). Also, illustrations are detached from the text (8-1A-2), so readers must flip back and forth to see what is illustrated. The technical and legalistic parts of the ordinance (such as penalties, severability, ordinance amendment, and appeal procedures) are in the front (8-1) and back (8-7) of the Zoning Ordinance. These components belong in the back of the Zoning Ordinance because the most important parts – zoning districts, uses, development standards – garners the reader's attention the most. General definitions appear in the first article (8-1A-2), while there are further specifications for specific uses in Chapter 5. Aside from zoning district organization in Chapters 2 and 3, the remaining parts of the Zoning Ordinance – landscaping, parking, lighting, signs, and other standard development regulations – are included in Chapter 4 (Regulations Applying to All Districts).

The entire County Code, including the Zoning Ordinance, is available online through American Legal Publishing Corporation at <https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/adacountyid/latest/overview>. This makes the code easy to navigate, search, and download, but there are drawbacks with this platform. For instance, it is a difficult platform to incorporate graphics, color, and modern features, whereas other code platforms include cross-referenced hyperlink features, calculators, and integrated graphics. A drawback to online codification is that there is some delay between the final reading of an ordinance and updates to the online code. Maintaining a version of the Zoning Ordinance in Microsoft Word or similar software allows the County to update the online code soon after an amendment is adopted. However, this requires additional staff time and necessitates maintenance of a backup system for the digital files.

While section 8-1A-2 of the Zoning Ordinance provides several illustrations related to lot dimensions, signs, and parking, there are few graphics in the body of the Zoning Ordinance. Also, the limited illustrations in this chapter are antiquated, highly pixelated, and challenging to read. The largely text-only format of the code does not give readers much of an idea of what the County requires without diving into the details and carefully reading the text.

Modern development codes typically include graphics and tables to help explain or simplify material that is sometimes difficult for casual or non-technical users to understand. The Zoning Ordinance includes several tables, including the parking schedule, which improves readability and makes information easier to find. Standards and regulations in lengthy lists that are difficult to read would benefit from a table format or communicative graphic, particularly land uses, dimensional standards, and parking requirements.

Recommendations

The new Zoning Ordinance should pursue specific organizational improvements. The goal of the new organization is to place frequently used information in easily referenced areas and to remove some of the current repetition by consolidating related information and standards. An improved organizational structure should help ensure that code users can quickly find the information they need – particularly those who do not use the code on a frequent and regular basis. Also, the new organization will make it easier to see the overlap between related sections and should make future amendments simpler and more consistent.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS to improve the Zoning Ordinance's organization, readability, and user-friendliness include:

- 1. Relocate all definitions to a new definitions article at the end of the Zoning Ordinance. Most code users expect to find definitions at the end of the document, not the beginning. A front definitions section distracts readers and users from the most pertinent sections of the Zoning Ordinance, which are the zoning districts, use regulations, and development standards.*
- 2. Consolidate existing zoning districts that are similar in function to reduce the number of zoning districts. All zoning districts differ to some degree, but some more than others. Zoning districts that are underutilized or separated by minute details like lot size or a particular use should collapse into a similar district to improve the Zoning Ordinance's functionality. These minor separations and characteristics can provide meaningless and unnecessary zoning district regulations.*
- 3. Create a use matrix that aligns with standards from the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and Land Based Classification Standards (LBCS). Consolidating all uses into a single matrix that reference the NAICS and LBCS will minimize the reader's need to flip back and forth between*

4. *Consolidate the zoning review procedures and relocate technical information to the back of the Zoning Ordinance. Revise the procedures (currently in Chapter 7) to include an article for common procedures that apply to all processes (such as notice, public hearings, and pre-application neighborhood outreach) and do not need to be listed more than once. For each individual process, such as rezonings, create a common workflow beginning with applicability (i.e., what situations trigger the process?) and continuing to initiation, notice, decision-making, reapplication, and the scope of the approval (i.e., what the decision authorizes). Move technical application requirements to a later chapter of the ordinance, or to an appendix. This avoids cluttering the standards and processes with technical information that are usually important only to the applicant and zoning administrator.*
5. *Continue to codify supplemental use standards in a single chapter. Keeping specific standards all uses to one chapter of the Zoning Ordinance will make it easier for the reader by eliminating the need to flip back and forth between different sections that discuss use regulations.*
6. *Add illustrations, tables, and flowcharts. Modern zoning ordinances typically include graphics and tables to help explain or simplify material that is sometimes hard to understand. These graphics should not have their own miscellaneous section, but should be carefully integrated into the zoning ordinance to applicable regulations to increase readability, usability, and comprehension.*
7. *Use clear and concise language and well-defined terms. The Zoning Ordinance often establishes general admonitions, unclear standards, poorly defined terms, or unlimited delegations to staff. This can confuse applicants, staff, and the public which results in inconsistent interpretations and applications of the Zoning Ordinance. There are some situations where flexible language or broad delegations of authority are unavoidable or even beneficial. For example, certain uses that require conditional approvals, require case by case review to customize conditions of approval to a specific location.*

Planned Unit Developments (8-3D), Overlays (8-3), and Planned Communities (8-2E)

Ada County allows for Planned Unit Developments and controlled, organized development through Planned Community regulations. PUDs allow flexibility in site design and dimensional standards to develop residential, commercial, and industrial uses not permitted individually within specific zoning districts. This additional flexibility is crucial for potential unique development that is restricted by strict standards. PUDs allow an applicant to negotiate deviations from otherwise applicable code standards.

The PUD standards are a valuable flexibility tool for new developments. However, emphasis on negotiated, case-by-case PUD approvals does not necessarily result in better quality but demonstrates the inability of the current regulations to accommodate desired projects and promotes code modernization.

PUDs are not applicable throughout Ada County since there is a 5-acre minimum requirement. Compared to other jurisdictions, the County uses PUDs sparingly. PUDs should remain in the updated Zoning Ordinance, but effective zoning districts and development standards need emphasis. PUDs should be reserved for developments that are unusual, or that offer exceptional community benefits or design, in a way that the base districts cannot accommodate.

PUDs (8-3D) are an integral zoning component that can provide unique developments throughout Ada County. PUDs are beneficial because they allow for clustering, but they are mostly applicable to higher density developments. The County has not allowed PUDs outside of ACIs as an effort to protect rural character and to prevent unnecessary infrastructure extensions. This is particularly prevalent for development near the Foothills where infrastructure is limited, and development costs are higher.

In addition to PUDs, the County has Planned Community Base Districts. These districts are distinct zoning classifications that apply when development patterns have been negotiated and approved by the Board of County Commissioners. All development within these districts must align with a Planned Community Subarea comprehensive plan and Planned Community Overlay District. Planned Community Base districts are not as common as the other base districts in the County but are mostly in the northern portion of the County. Approximately 4,781 acres of zoned land in Ada County are PC districts. Within this acreage, the Zoning Ordinance regulations do not apply to these areas as the Planned Community regulations supersede them. The Planned Community regulations are their own regulations inside the Zoning Ordinance, thus increasing the length of the Zoning Ordinance.

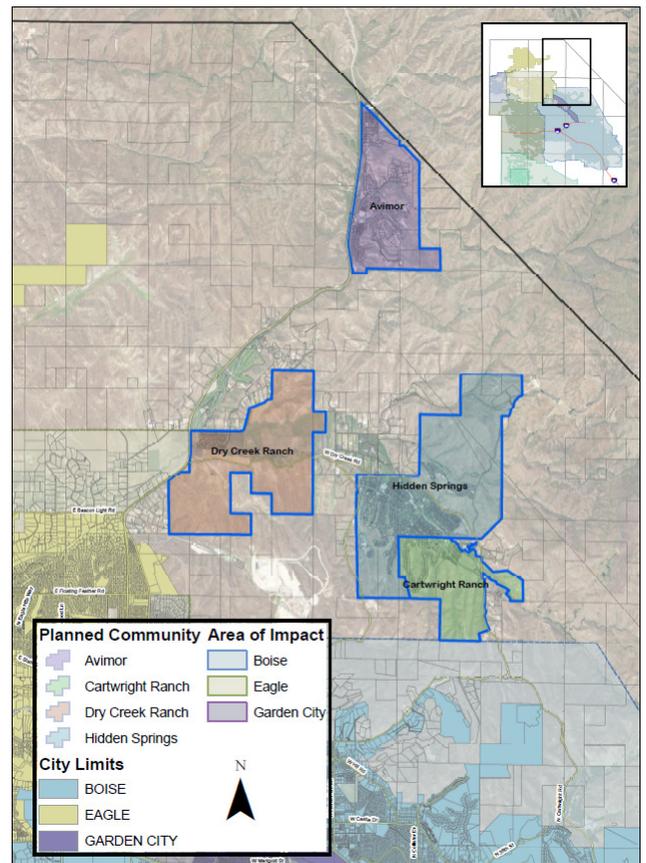


Figure 8. Planned Communities Map

Also, the County has 8 overlay districts (excluding planned communities) that provide for unique development opportunities. An overlay serves as a specialized zoning tool placed over a base, underlying zoning district with additional restrictions and regulations. Some overlays act as true overlays where base zoning districts are supplemented by an additional layer of regulations, whereas other overlays act as de facto zoning ordinances.

The Hillside Overlay (8-3H) is one that has received recent attention from staff. Development that severely impacts slopes has critical implications on the natural landscape because it can lead to land scarring and degradation. There has been acknowledgement that more is needed to improve hillside development projects. Internal drafts consider a tier system to assess development risk level and to direct reasonable requirements to a project. Level 1 is defined as areas 15% to 25% of slope and Level 2 as areas of over 25% of slope. Projects in Level 1 provide a site plan with drainage and stormwater details while projects in Level 2 have more robust requirements. These projects must provide a site plan, slope stabilization report, grading plan, hydrology report, soil data, visual impact assessment, and geology report for development to occur. This Hillside Overlay revision could improve development impacting steep slopes but could also catalyze similar changes in other overlays, particularly for development in the Boise River Greenway Overlay (8-3G). Recently, there have been variances to the Overlay's regulations for structures that do not meet the 100' floodway boundary setback. These variance requests generate questions about the effectiveness of the overlay, administrative roles, and the certain uses and structures to the floodway boundary.

Table 11. Overlay, PUD, and Planned Community Zoning Summaries

Overlay	Summary	Recommendation(s)
Boise Air Terminal Airport Influence Areas Overlay	<p>The Boise Air Terminal Airport Influence Areas Overlay establishes the boundaries of the Boise air terminal airport influence areas. This overlay restricts land use activities within the Boise air terminal in accordance to the federal aviation regulations part 150 noise compatibility study for Boise air terminal. There are 4 influence areas (A, B-1, B, and C) that regulate development by noise levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence Area A: noise levels of up to 65 dNL. • Influence Area B-1: noise levels of up to 70 dNL, while acknowledging existing residential uses. • Influence Area B: noise levels of up to seventy 70 dNL. • Influence Area C: noise levels of up to 75 dNL or greater. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create new and improved regulations that encourage innovative projects. Updating and modernizing the current lineup of zoning districts can help accommodate straightforward, ordinance-based development. 2. The County must clearly articulate the standards it wants in all new development, rather than negotiating over compatibility issues as part of each PUD application. The County should provide clear and objective standards in the revised Zoning Ordinance that anticipate the problems and concerns Ada County is currently negotiating on a case-by-case basis.
Wildland-Urban Fire Interface Overlay	<p>The Wildland-Urban Fire Interface Overlay establishes special standards to development to reduce destruction from fire. This overlay requires vehicle turnouts on new private roads to provide better emergency access to remote areas. New subdivisions and PUDs provide water supply systems and suitable access for firefighting personnel to increase available resources and minimize the spread of fire.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Revise the Hillside Overlay to improve development along steep geography. A drafted revised Hillside Overlay uses a tier system to determine regulations for new development. The tier system categorizes regulations according to slope ranges. Incorporating higher standards and detailed geotechnical reports for new developments on steep slopes will ensure that structures are safe and do not provide adverse or severe impact on the landscape.
Southwest Planning Area Overlay	<p>This Overlay establishes standards to accommodate urban development in the southwest planning area of the Boise City comprehensive plan. Development is compatible with high ground water and drainage conditions to the area.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Revise the Boise River Greenway and Flood Hazard Overlays to include more flexibility related to setbacks and uses. Adding common-sense setback and use flexibility to these overlays will reduce variance requests for structures that do not meet the 100' floodway boundary setback. Light structures like livestock fences pose little to no threat to floodway boundary setbacks, so prolonging the development process with these types of variances makes little sense.
Planned Unit Development	<p>This district allows site design flexibility and customized standards to develop residential, commercial and/or industrial uses not allowed within the base zoning districts. PUDs create desirable open spaces and recreational amenities, provide density and land use compatibility, and integrate public facilities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Clarify the distinctions between PUD, PC Regulations, and Overlay districts. All three items do not act as true overlays. Also, the Zoning Ordinance can confuse the reader because the distinctions between the three are not clear. The Zoning Ordinance should better emphasize the functional differences between PUDs, PCs, and overlays to avoid confusion.
Area of Military Influence Overlay	<p>This Overlay provides regulated development that complies with the Military's activities. The Military is notified of land use applications within this overlay. Boundaries are established by: a ¼ mile buffer around the Military Tank Trail from Gowen Field to the Orchard Combat Training center, and a buffer surrounding the Orchard Combat Training Center.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Keep the PC regulations (i.e. Avimor, Dry Creek Ranch, Cartwright Ranch, etc.), but remove them from the zoning districts section, and relocate them to an appendix. These specific regulations increase the length of the zoning ordinance and create unwarranted code clutter. The current arrangement of these regulations appear as random code parts, which directs the reader's attention away from the main zoning district regulations.
Flood Hazard Overlay	<p>This Overlay ensures that new development in special flood hazard areas do not aggravate existing flooding conditions, that structures within special flood hazard areas are designed and constructed to resist flood damages, and that regulations prohibit activities that violate the national flood insurance program.</p>	
Boise River Greenway Overlay	<p>This Overlay protects and enhances Boise River's environmental features.</p>	
Hillside Overlay	<p>This Overlay preserves and enhances the hillside landscape by encouraging the maximum retention of natural features, like drainage swales, streams, slopes, ridgelines, crests of hills, rock outcroppings, vistas, and natural formations. Development in this overlay provide safe ingress and egress for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic to and within the hillside areas, while minimizing the scarring effects of hillside development.</p>	
Planned Community		
Avimor Planned Community	<p>This district implements the vision, goals and principles of the Avimor Planned Community and the Avimor Specific Plan with a high level of design quality and mixed use development.</p>	
Cartwright Ranch Planned Community	<p>This district implements the vision, goals and principles of the Cartwright Planned Community and the Cartwright Specific Plan with a high level of design quality and mixed use development.</p>	
Dry Creek Ranch Planned Community	<p>This district implements the vision, goals and principles of the Dry Creek Ranch Planned Community and the Dry Creek Ranch Specific Plan.</p>	
Hidden Springs Planned Community	<p>This district implements the vision, goals and principles of the Hidden Springs Planned Community and the Hidden Springs Specific Plan.</p>	

Density & Intensity

Dimensional requirements, such as lot area, width, depth, and coverage are regulated by zoning district as well as by the type of use (i.e., single-family detached, duplex, apartments). Maximum density gradually increases in the residential base zoning districts from 1 to 20 dwelling units per acre. However, different lot size requirements apply to different residential uses. For example, single-family residences in R6 require a lot minimum of 6,000 square feet while duplexes require 9,000 square feet.

The intensity of non-residential uses in the commercial and industrial districts are primarily regulated through bulk standards, including lot coverage and building height. Lighter development intensity occurs in LO, C1, and C2 districts, whereas higher intensity occurs in the C3 district. This is the case because LO, C1, and C2 districts have 6,000 square foot lot size minimum, while the C3 district has a 100,000 square foot lot size minimum. The difference between 6,000 and 100,000 square feet incentivizes a substantial development intensity increase from C2 and C3 development.

Alternatives & Recommendations

1. *Provide a calculation and explanation that explains how density works and details its significance. This explanation will indicate why certain residential districts require less or more density. Additionally, the density calculation explanation can include graphics to depict preferential development densities for the layperson.*
2. *Provide densities within different residential districts that provide a range of housing options to address housing affordability.*
3. *Recalibrate densities within newly revised and defined residential districts to provide for more diverse housing options. Densities that include small-lot detached single-family uses and accessory dwelling units for most residential districts should aid the County’s need for housing in an affordable manner.*

Table 12. Density by Zoning District

Zoning District	Minimum Property Size	Density (Dwelling Unit per Acre)
RP	40 acres	N/a
RR	10 acres	N/a
RUT	5 acres	N/a
RUT Existing	N/a	N/a
RSW	2.5 acres	N/a
RSW Existing	N/a	N/a
R1/R1M	1 acre	1
R2	16,000 square feet	2
R4	8,000 square feet	4
R6	6,000 square feet	6
R8/R8M	5,000 square feet	8
R12	3,500 square feet	12
R20	2,000 square feet	20
LO	6,000 square feet	N/a
C1	6,000 square feet	N/a
C2	6,000 square feet	N/a
C3	100,000 square feet	N/a
TI	N/a	N/a
M1	N/a	N/a
M2	N/a	N/a
M3	N/a	N/a

Bulk & Setbacks

Provisions for certain residential districts – RUT, RSW, and R1 need reassessment. For example, subsection 8-6A-3b increases the minimum property size of corner lots in residential zoning districts by five percent (5%) above the minimum property size of the applicable base district to permit appropriate front and street side setbacks. This does not make sense for low-density residential districts since they are big enough on their own to always meet front and street side setbacks. This provision should apply to the higher density residential districts. Also, the dimensional requirements of corner lots play a significant role for vehicular access and general development consistency. Front yard setbacks are required for corner lots along the property line where the driveway enters the property and the side yard setback applies to the side street property line as applicable to the roadway classification. This creates issues on corner lots that front one street and take access from another by affecting driveway access and connectivity.

Every district does not have maximum lot coverage requirements. C2, R2, R4, R6, R8, R8M, R12, and R20 districts do not have coverage requirements, thus enabling sites to be fully covered by structures and pavement. Many communities include impervious surfaces in lot coverage calculation, with the primary goals of limiting stormwater runoff and maintaining sufficient open space on a lot.

Another metric often used to control bulk is floor area ratio (FAR). FAR is the ratio of gross floor area of all structures on a lot to the total lot area. It controls the overall size or volume of a building, but not its height or exterior appearance. The County has FAR regulations in the planned community districts, but not elsewhere in the Zoning Ordinance.

Non-Residential Dimensional Standards						Minimum setback (in feet) from:			Yard Setbacks							
	Property size (in acres)	Minimum street frontage (in feet)	Maximum coverage (in percent)	Maximum height (in feet)	Minimum property width and depth (in feet)	Arterial, collector, or section line street	Other roadway	Property line not fronting a roadway	Front		Side street		Interior Side		Rear	
									Standard	Abutting Residential	Standard	Abutting Residential	Standard	Abutting Residential	Standard	Abutting Residential
RP	40 min.	100	5	35	100	50	30	25	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
RR	10 min.	100	5	35	100	50	30	25	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
LO	6,000 sf	30	50	35	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	varies	20	varies	10	10	10	20
C1	6,000 sf	30	50	35	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	20	20	20	0	10	0	20
C2	6,000 sf	30	n/a	50	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	20	20	20	0	20	0	20
C3	100,000 sf	600	50	50	200	n/a	n/a	n/a	35	50	35	50	35	50	35	50
TI	n/a	30	35	45	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	60	100	60	100	60	100	60	100
M1	n/a	30	80	50	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	20	15	20	0	15	0	15
M2	n/a	30	80	50	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	20	15	20	0	15	0	15
M3	n/a	30	80	50	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	20	15	20	0	15	0	15

Table 13. Non-Residential Dimensional Standards

Residential Dimensional Standards				Setbacks: Minimum setback (in feet) from...									
	Property size (in acres)			Street frontage (in feet)	Maximum coverage (in percent)	Maximum height (in feet)	Any property line on an arterial or collector	Front property line on a local street or private road	Front property line where alley provides access to garage or where the garage is side loaded or located behind the front plane of the house	Interior side property line	Side property line on local street or private road	Rear property line	Side or rear property line on an alley
	Single-family detached	Single-family attached	Duplex										
RUT	5 acres	n/a	n/a	250	5	35	30	25	25	25	20	25	0
RUT Existing	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	35	30	25	20	10	20	25	0
RSW	2.5 acres	n/a	n/a	250	10	35	30	25	25	25	20	25	0
RSW Existing	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	35	30	25	20	10	20	25	0
R1/R1M	1 acre	n/a	n/a	100	20	35	30	25	20	10	20	20	0
R2	16,000 SF	n/a	n/a	85	n/a	35	30	25	20	5/story	20	20	0
R4	8,000 SF	8,000 SF	8,000 SF	60	n/a	35	25	20	15	5	20	15	0
R6	6,000 SF	6,000 SF	9,000 SF	60	n/a	35	25	20	15	5	20	15	0
R8/R8M	5,000 SF	5,000 SF	7,500 SF	50	n/a	35	25	20	15	5	20	15	0
R12	3,500 SF	3,500 SF	5,000 SF	45	n/a	40	25	20	15	5	20	15	0
R20	2,000 SF	2,000 SF	4,000 SF	45	n/a	40	20	20	15	5	20	15	0

Table 14. Residential Dimensional Standards

Recommendations

1. Implement maximum impervious surface coverage requirements in all districts. Impervious cover is a surface that does not absorb rain effectively. There is currently a provision that requires a drainage study if there is “an increase in impervious surface area of 1,000 square feet or 10% of the property area”. Replacing this provision with maximum impervious surface coverage requirements will provide clear rules to the game for developers while minimizing land development impact from large areas of concrete and asphalt. This will also ensure that the County has adequate infrastructure for new development by reducing a site’s drainage demands.
2. Provide clear dimensional tables, measurements, and graphics. The current code provides dimensional tables, but they are rudimentary and could better communicate material to the reader. The tables can take a reader a while to digest so providing the reader with graphics that relate the different dimensional standards in 2D or 3D form will improve readability and usability.
3. Use floor area ratios to limit bulk in commercial and industrial districts. FAR is used in planned community districts but are not used in commercial and industrial districts where bulk regulations are typically needed. Bulk is often regulated in modern codes to ensure land use compatibility is maintained by controlling development intensity to a particular zoning district. FAR should apply to lower intensity industrial districts and all commercial zones to reduce development impact in Ada County.

4. *Provide flexible setbacks within different residential districts that provide a range of housing options to address housing affordability. Flexible or reduced setbacks allow primary dwelling owners with more usable land, thus permitting more development flexibility. For each new residential development that wants to provide an ADU, a setback encroachment zone could be applied to make an ADU addition fit appropriately on site. This approach could incentivize housing development because dimensional requirements are not as stringent as the standard residential setbacks.*
5. *Provide consistent terminology in tables and figures. Setback terminology varies in tables and figures particularly with commercial and industrial districts. Commercial districts have interior side yard and side street setbacks while industrial districts have side yard and flanking street setbacks. These terms create inconsistency and confuses the reader when it comes to applying setbacks to different zoning districts. The new Zoning Ordinance will also define the revised setbacks to increase readability.*

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

The Comprehensive Plan encourages housing affordability and an expanded supply and range of housing in the unincorporated County. Those policies were reaffirmed by staff and the public through stakeholder outreach. Most of the County is agricultural or residential zoning restricted to agricultural uses and single-family residences with accessory structures like smaller additional dwelling units (in-law suites). The County allows ADUs, but it is a complicated and nuanced process to add ADUs to existing single-family residences. Particularly, the public and planning department find specific ADU requirements confusing. The size and architectural style of the primary dwelling dictates ADU size and design. Also, residence requirements are restrictive because only the immediate family can occupy an ADU. This has caused enforcement issues and complicates the housing problem in Ada County.

Peculiar locational requirements and standards for ADUs also increase public confusion. Certain provisions (such as § 8-5-3-1C (Accessory Structures)) requires that accessory structures in the front yard shall not exceed 50% of the square footage of the footprint of the principal permitted dwelling or 1,500 square feet, whichever is less. Clarifying and adding language that exempts properties in the RP, RR, and RUT Districts that exceed 1 acre could be a helpful development option. On larger rural properties it is common for people to build towards the back of the parcel to take advantage of views. The current ordinance only allows for two-story ADUs to have living quarters upstairs. This is problematic for property owners who want to build an ADU for elderly family members who need accommodations on the first floor. It is not always clear why some ADUs are allowed in one location but not another.

Ada County could implement the concept of missing middle housing throughout the County to accommodate a variety of residential units in a cost-effective manner. Missing middle housing (MMH) is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units that are compatible with single-family residences (Parolek, *Missing Middle Housing: Thinking Big and Building Small to Respond to Today's Housing Crisis* (Island Press 2020)). MMH includes housing types like duplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, multiplexes, courtyard buildings, and townhomes that are compatible in scale with single-family residential units. MMH promotes affordability by increasing the supply of housing and providing ways to build efficiently by clustering units. Although MMH is common in urban contexts, Ada County could explore MMH options in rural areas as well. For instance, the new zoning regulations could allow for attached and detached accessory dwelling units on all single-family lots with size requirements based on the primary residence size or lot size. In addition, the residential districts could allow some MMH types as transitional uses from more to less intense or exclusively single-family neighborhoods. Revised use regulations with flexible zoning metrics and context-specific standards could accommodate ADUs or other MMH types to a variety of neighborhood contexts.



Figure 9. Missing Middle Housing (Source: Opticos Design)

Recommendations

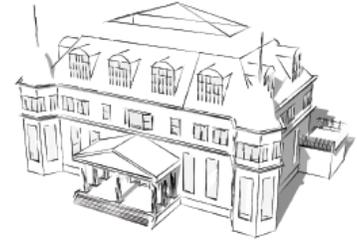
1. Update housing uses and definitions, and consider implementing MMH concepts. Create districts or development options that describe a variety of housing types between single- and two-family dwellings such as apartment courts, apartment houses, stacked flats, live-work units, townhouses, and cottage or common green (or bungalow court) options. These provide a variety of “missing middle” housing options that can accommodate needed housing types at a scale that is potentially appropriate to existing, single-family neighborhoods.

2. Provide clear regulations and dimensional standards for ADUs in applicable zoning districts. Once the range of housing types is defined, the new Zoning Ordinance can define specific standards for them such as building orientation, location, entryway spacing, access, and size. This could also provide an opportunity to omit inconsistent and unnecessary location and design requirements like those requiring 2-story ADUs to only have upstairs living quarters.

3. Remove stipulations that require ADU dwellers to be directly related to the primary dwelling owners. This will increase flexibility for primary dwelling owners to maximize their property while providing critical housing stock to Ada County.

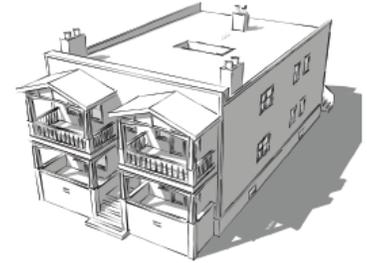
Apartment House (or “Big House”)

A converted single-family detached dwelling, or new building with architectural features and massing that are compatible with single-family dwellings, that consists of at least three (3) separate dwelling units. This use type is different from a boarding house in that the units are intended for occupancy as permanent residences, and each unit may have separate kitchens and bathroom facilities.



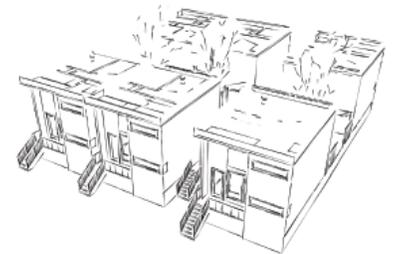
Fourplexes

Apartments with 4 residential units – typically two (2) on the ground floor and two (2) above, with a shared entry.



Multiplexes

Apartments with 5-10 side-by-side or stacked units, with either shared or individual entries.



Courtyard Apartments

Side-by-side or stacked apartments that open to a shared courtyard.

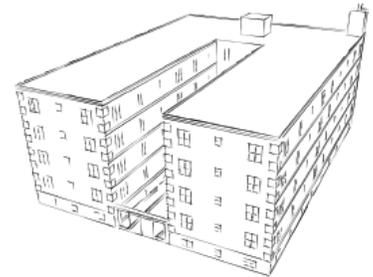


Figure 10. Missing Middle Housing examples

Agricultural Land Preservation

To encourage the preservation of agricultural land, zoning and subdivision regulations need to:

- Ensure that the baseline uses, density and intensity does not facilitate uses and development that displace agricultural resources;
- Create market-based inducements that encourage farmers to retain their land and agricultural use, and that discourage them from converting their land to uses or development that supplant agriculture; and
- Ideally, encourage new development to preserve agricultural resources as it occurs.

Traditional regulatory tools to preserve agricultural land include large lot zoning, exclusive farm use zones, and cluster or conservation subdivisions. The first two techniques actually mandate (rather than encourage) agricultural land preservation, and large lot zoning can actually encourage the conversion of agricultural land at a higher rate by increasing the footprint of suburban development. The County already uses large minimum lot sizes in its Rural Preservation (RP) and Rural Residential (RR) districts, with minimum lot sizes of 40 and 10 acres respectively. Exclusive farm use zones would allow only agricultural uses, and could provide a baseline regulatory tool with some allowance for suburban type residential development and limited commercial or mixed-use zones.

Cluster or conservation development allows residential development on agricultural lands to occur on smaller lots if a given percentage of the development is preserved for agricultural use. For example, a development in RR on 10-acre lots would yield 10 lots on a 100 acre parcel (excluding infrastructure, for sake of simplicity). By contrast, a cluster or conservation subdivision option could drop minimum lot size to 5 acres if the development preserves 40 percent of the tract as open space (such as agricultural land). The same 100 acre tract could yield 12 lots (or a 20 percent increase in density) while preserving 40 acres for agricultural land. The County formerly had ordinances in place for nonfarm subdivisions in RR, and for cluster subdivisions in the Rural-Urban Transition (RUT) and Southwest Community Residential (RSW). These ordinances were repealed. However, the County could revisit these concepts with updated metrics, improved certainty for development, and clear standards for open space preservation.

Some communities have improved on the cluster and conservation subdivision concept by building in opportunities for lower scale commercial or mixed uses in the form of “agrihoods.” These developments use preserved agricultural land as a project amenity, providing access to locally grown food sources and amenities such as community gardens. The Hidden Springs planned development in Ada County has been cited as an example of this concept (Sisson, “Welcome to the agrihood,” *Curbed* (March 12, 2020) at <https://www.curbed.com/2020/3/12/21175314/palm-beach-county-agrihood-living>). The County could facilitate this concept by building and by-right opportunities for lower scale commercial or middle housing uses for communities that incorporate viable agricultural land.

A more sophisticated technique is the transfer development rights (TDR). This technique would allow farmers to sell unused development rights for developers in locations that are suitable for higher density or intensity development. The County would need to identify “sending” areas slated for agricultural preservation, along with “receiving” areas where developers could purchase development rights from property owners in the sending areas, and in exchange receive increased density or intensity. These programs can become complicated, and require the county to track the origin and destination of development rights. In practice, they are not as staff intensive as perceived by some in the planning profession. The County can also take a proactive approach, in

tandem with public-private partnerships or land trust, to provide seed money for development rights purchases.

In addition to exclusive farm uses, communities around the country are starting to incorporate regional entertainment or “agritainment” uses into agricultural preservation zoning. These uses can range from corn mazes that are seasonal in nature, to breweries or wineries that are open to the public year-round. These offer potentially high economic returns to farm owners with uses that are consistent with agricultural resources. However, they can generate traffic, noise or other issues that require some accommodation of surrounding residential neighborhoods. The County could also tie rezonings or other actions that would convert agricultural land to other uses to site evaluation systems, such as the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system (see https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/landuse/?cid=nrcs143_008438).

The following is a description of regulatory tools to encourage agricultural and rural area preservation, along with their advantages and disadvantages:

Strategy	Description	Strengths	Limitations
Rural Area Zoning	Rural zoning restricts the density of non-AG uses and preserves land parcel sizes to provide for efficient agricultural operations and to discourage residential development. Various zoning techniques can be employed to increase the viability of AG operations and preserve land resources, including, but not limited to: parcel split limitations, minimum lot sizes and density/intensity limitations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively in-expensive to implement; • Applicable to a large area; Familiar to the public; • Various zoning techniques; • Establishes a ceiling of development potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to changing political and regulatory climate; • May cause excessive land fragmentation if lot sizes are not large enough; • Reduces land value
Transfer of Development Rights	TDR programs allow developers to buy the development rights from rural land to increase development in urbanizing areas. A community identifies an area it wants to preserve “a sending area”, and an area that receives the increased development is called a “receiving area”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market based approach; • Targets development; • Adjustable standards and incentives; • Perpetual preservation of land resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs sufficient development activity be effective; • Initial funding of a “Development Rights Bank” may be necessary; • Requires staff monitoring and maintenance of program; • Subject to changing political and regulatory climate
Cluster or Conservation Subdivision Design	Rural design standards that require houses be located on adjacent modest acreage lots with the remainder of the property being subdivided held in agriculture and other open space uses. The number of dwelling lots is determined by the zoning district (either agricultural or rural residential) and site design standards adopted to alleviate land use conflicts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost to implement; • More efficient use of land and infrastructure resources; • Lower land cost per house; • Preserves housing option and rural character; • Can serve as a transition between urban and rural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can create “clustered sprawl” if open space and lot design is not properly managed; • Developers, lenders and public not familiar; • On-site water and wastewater limitations; • Fragmentation of land resources; • Agriculture nuisances; • Retained open space is only temporary; • Lack of contiguous open-space

Adequate Public Facilities

The County is undergoing a growth coordination effort to preserve agricultural land and reduce strain on public facilities. The County can accomplish these goals by assessing and implementing adequate public facility (APF) regulations. An APF (also known as a concurrency management system) can provide a valuable framework for guiding fiscally efficient growth patterns, especially when applied in combination with other planning tools, and in the context of a broader, comprehensive growth management program that includes:

- Level of service (LOS) standards that vary by context, with higher LOS in areas that are permanently low intensity and lower LOS in areas designated for higher intensity development;
- Zoning and subdivision regulations and capital improvements policies that direct growth into areas with existing infrastructure capacity and designated growth areas;
- Standards that account for development efficiencies, such as internal trip capture for mixed use development or reduced water impacts from sustainable landscaping practices; and
- Conservation of rural areas for agricultural use and natural resource protection.

The level of service (LOS) concept is a key component of planning and plan implementation in Florida. An example is provided by the Florida Growth Management Act, which defines “level of service” as – *an indicator of the extent or degree of service provided by, or proposed to be provided by, a facility based on and related to the operational characteristics of the facility. Level of service shall indicate the capacity per unit of demand for each public facility.*

LOS dictates development capacity, mitigation and public capital investments. Because new development cannot cause the LOS to fall below the adopted standard, it affects how much development is permitted at any given time. In turn, the capital improvements element (CIE) of the Comprehensive Plan requires the County to identify improvements that will maintain the adopted LOS. This, in turn, affects the County’s financial obligations for capital expenditures.

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Examples of County-level APFO programs include:

- Hillsborough County, Florida Adequate Public Facilities regulations (https://library.municode.com/fl/hillsborough_county/codes/land_development_code?nodeId=ARTIVNAREADPUFA_PT4.02.00ADPUFA_S4.02.01GEPR)
- Prince George’s County, Maryland Adequate Public Facilities regulations (<http://pgparks.com/1673/Adequate-Public-Facilities> and https://library.municode.com/md/prince_george's_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIITI17PULOLAPRGECOMA_SUBTITLE_24SU_DIV3REPLDEPUFA_S24-122PUFARE)
- New Castle County, Delaware concurrency regulations (see Site Capacity and Concurrency calculations at <http://czo.nccde.org/> and Level Of Service White Paper at <http://web.dsc.com/External/WCPages/WCWebContent/WebContentPage.aspx?ContentID=3051>)
- See also Minnesota Model Ordinances for Sustainable Development, Adequate Public Facilities at https://www.crplanning.com/_ordinances/adpubfac.pdf.

Recommendations

1. *Consider adequate public facilities regulations to control new development in unincorporated Ada County.*
2. *Establish LOS standards for new development that vary by location in the County based on growth policy and the availability of public facilities and services. For instance, more stringent APF regulations could apply to areas planned for agricultural preservation or rural development, or where terrain may pose more development risk. In addition, build assumptions as to development efficiencies into impact analysis requirements.*
3. *Integrate land use assumptions, level of service standards, and mitigation requirements with any impact fee ordinances. (Note: the County is currently preparing impact fee ordinances as a separate project).*
4. *To implement an APFO, the County should establish an APF information database to monitor development. The County could include basic information like: existing dwelling units and nonresidential development, committed development, the capacity of existing public facilities provided by the County based on LOS, the capacity created by the completion of public facilities to be provided by the County and that are included in the capital improvements program. The County could require developers to provide the following information during the development process:*
 - *The number of residential dwelling units proposed by the applicant, by type, and the resulting number of residential dwelling units served by each public facility;*
 - *The timing and phasing of the proposed development;*
 - *The specific public facilities impacted by the proposed development;*
 - *The extent of the impact of the proposed development in the applicable impact areas;*
 - *The capacity of existing public facilities in the impact areas which will be impacted by the proposed development, based on adopted level of service;*
 - *The demand on existing public facilities in the impact areas from all existing and approved development;*
 - *The availability of existing capacity to accommodate the proposed development; and*
 - *If existing capacity is not available, planned capacity and the year in which planned capacity is projected to be available to serve the proposed development.*

Uses & Use Regulations

The Zoning Ordinance includes multiple use tables in various locations instead of one use table in one place. Each base district includes separate use tables are in (i.e., commercial in § 8-2C-3 and residential in § 8-2B-3, etc.). These tables list zoning districts across the top and land uses along the side. Land uses are not grouped by category like most modern codes. Each district indicates whether a use is permitted by-right, requires a conditional use permit, or is prohibited. Also, every use table includes accessory uses. As currently written, some uses are not defined. In addition, some uses are very specific while others are very general. This can create confusion and internal inconsistencies.

A clean, clear, and concise use table is important for everyone involved in the development process. Readers can quickly scan categories of uses to determine where a particular use is allowed. The use table facilitates the process of maintaining and updating the list of uses. Visual aids can also facilitate reading and understanding of the use table. For example, a color-coded use table that aligns with the zoning map could further increase readability and understanding.

The current use tables list more than 140 uses. While this appears to be a long list, the use regulations do not reflect the broad range of contemporary uses that are likely to occur in the community. The use table will need to classify most of these in broader use categories, but should ensure there is a place for all businesses, service agencies, and residential uses that the community needs. Additionally, many of the uses are outdated and out of place. Repealing, revising, and adding uses that are specific to development in Ada County should increase readability and ensure interpretation consistency.

The revised use table will also provide critical clarity for some of the County's most contested and nuanced land uses, like social halls, event centers, special events, home occupations, riding arenas, contractor's yards, mines, quarries, cell towers, community swimming pools, and barns. For instance, mines and quarries are an accessory or conditional use in the use table, but they are temporary uses in the Specific Use Standards. Additionally, clear use regulations will minimize the need for interpretation and misunderstandings with applicants, staff, and the public.

Furthermore, use standards will benefit from revisions because certain uses are more intricate than others. For example, wineries have sparked discussion with County staff and the development community (staff proposed revised winery regulations in 2019). The County was seeking an adequate way to allow tasting rooms without the condition of a winery on site. The proposal has revised definitions, size provisions, planting requirements, operational limits, and other performance standards to reduce the impact of winery and similar uses on rural land. For instance, the proposal allows wineries with tasting rooms a maximum of 4,000 square feet. If the property has a wine producing facility and a tasting room, the combined uses cannot exceed 12,000 square feet, except with Conditional Use Permit (CUP) approval. This stipulation provides commercial activity associated with the winery, while minimizing the scale of the activity on agricultural property. These types of uses and activities are linked to agritourism/agritainment (a form of commercial activity that marries agricultural production, processing, and living with tourism to attract visitors to the agricultural site for entertainment or educational purposes). The revised Zoning Ordinance should expand on these types of requirements through applicable methods from two common approaches discussed below.

There are two approaches that could help the County with special uses in rural locations. A comprehensive approach makes regulations applicable throughout different zoning districts that allow agricultural tourism

businesses as subordinate uses with the intent to preserve farmland and agricultural operations. This approach can create a framework that permits value-added processing and participating of agricultural products as accessory uses on agricultural properties. Counties in Maryland and Virginia provide examples of a regulations that follow a comprehensive approach. For example, Howard County (MD) permits agritourism businesses if located on more than 100 acres of land, or if any property provides a preservation easement. However, agritourism cannot be the main function of the property. Performance standards are required in the Howard County code for agritourism uses. Montgomery County (VA) applies a similar practice to Howard County's in that it permits agritourism uses by-right if they are subordinate to the primary agricultural operation. This is consistent with Loudoun County's (VA) approach to agritourism. Loudoun County allows an array of agritourism uses (like agri-education, wineries, and retreats) in rural zoning districts with additional regulations for each agritourism use. These regulations include owner occupation requirements (the operator of the use must own, occupy, or operate the use), minimum acreage standards, and a scale system (three scale measurements: small, medium, and large) to mitigate lots size, setbacks, bulk, and parking. Although these counties take a comprehensive approach to special uses in rural districts, other counties take an incremental approach.

An incremental approach is one that controls special rural uses on a case-by-case basis. Regulations vary depending on the community's agricultural practices and the context of the community's tourism and entertainment environment. This approach is more nuanced and leaves more room for error if uses are not carefully reviewed and addressed. For instance, winery regulations could prohibit food sales which can accidentally ban cheese and other food items that are associated with wineries. Napa County (CA) successfully uses an incremental approach for wineries and other agritourism uses through specialized use permits. Napa allows wine bottling and storage if the use is tied to a winery. Additionally, Napa County permits wine marketing and retail sales if the uses are subordinate to the winery's primary operation. This approach is similar to Ada County's since special rural uses (i.e. wineries, tasting rooms, riding arenas) are linked to conditional use permits where uses are negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

In addition to the new use matrix, reclassified uses, and improved use regulations, the County could improve upon the winery draft proposal and other related uses. The new Zoning Ordinance should follow best practices from other jurisdictions to help define uses, provide clear standards, and complete regulations.

Recommendations

- 1. Ensure the list of permitted uses is as complete as possible in one use matrix. While this may make the list of permitted uses longer, it also minimizes the need for formal interpretations. The goal is to capture all uses without having an exhaustive use list.*
- 2. Review permitted and conditional uses in all districts, especially for frequent conditional use applications. Conditional uses that are commonly discussed at public meetings could be revised to incorporate conditions that are commonly negotiated, rather than negotiating them on a case-by-case basis.*
- 3. Ensure all permitted uses are consistent with each district's purpose. It is imperative that the use list aligns with each district's intent to provide land use compatibility. A permitted use that does not fit the district's characteristics can create an erratic built environment.*
- 4. Revise the specific use standards to avoid miscommunication with staff and the development community. Certain specific use standards (i.e. wineries) are more nuanced than others. More specialized, but straightforward specific use standards can benefit all users by alleviating interpretation inconsistencies.*
- 5. Review use definitions and amend appropriately by providing simple and clear definitions that fully encompass a particular use. This will clarify staff interpretation misnomers and enable greater usability for all users.*

6. Add an agritourism or agritainment use to capture special uses (wineries, riding arenas, wedding/event centers) associated with rural context. This added use and its associated regulations can effectively regulate agricultural properties in a way that protects agricultural operations while providing clear standards to promote rural tourism.

P = Permitted by right; C = Conditional Use; * = Use regulations apply; AR = Administrative Review; L = Locationally Restricted in the "I" District		A-	A-	SF-	SF-	SF-	SF-	SF-	SF-	MF-	MF-	MF-	MF-	MU-	MU-	DT/	SRN	C1	C2	TC	PO	I
Use Category	Use Type	40	5	40	20	15	9	7	6	2	3	4	5	C								
Residential																						
Residences:	Dwelling, single-family detached	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	C	C										
	Dwelling, two-family (duplex)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
	Multi-family Building ≤ 110 units	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
	Multi-family Building > 110 units										C	C	C	P	P	P	P	P	C	C	C	
	Live/work dwelling													P	P	P	P	C				
Manufactured home park	Home Occupation	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Group Living:	Boarding / rooming house										C	C	C	P	P	P	P					
	Group home	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P					
	Life care or continuing care services										C	C	C	C	C	C	C	P	P	P	P	
	Halfway house										*	*	*	*	*	*	*					
Lodging / Short-Term Rental																						
	Bed and breakfast	C	C											P	P	P	C					
	Hotel / Motel (<20 units)	*	*											P	C	P						
	Hotel / Motel (>20 units)													C	C							
	Recreational vehicle park																					
	Resort, dude/guest ranch	C	C																			
Commercial / Mixed Use																						
Animal Services*:	Animal services, indoor	C	C											P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	L
		*	*											*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Animal services, overnight (whether indoor or outdoor)	C	C											C								
		*	*											*								*

Figure 11. Sample Use Matrix (Sparks, NV)

Development Standards

Conventional zoning regulations establish site development standards appropriate to the purposes and permitted uses in each zoning district. These regulations can apply to any kind of development, including single-family, multifamily, commercial, or industrial uses. Zoning regulations also typically include parking requirements. Codes usually set requirements for a minimum number of parking spaces based on the land use the spaces serve. Most codes also establish parking lot design requirements, including parking space size, drive aisle width, and landscaping.

Another common development standard is landscaping. Modern codes usually include requirements for perimeter, site, and building foundation landscaping. Perimeter landscaping primarily serves to buffer a site from adjacent uses, while site and foundation landscaping enhance a site's appearance.

Landscaping adds to both upfront development costs and over time, through maintenance and irrigation. However, long-term savings from stormwater management and energy savings through shading of buildings and parking areas can offset some of these costs. Landscaping can provide environmental benefits by filtering stormwater, improving air quality, and providing wildlife habitat.

Screening requirements, like walls and fences, are often combined with landscaping requirements. Tree preservation requirements are often a component of landscaping regulations or have a connection to landscaping requirements. For example, preservation of existing trees or vegetation on a site may count towards required landscaping.

Many modern codes establish open space requirements. Open space requirements typically apply to new subdivisions or large non-residential developments but differ in context. For example, open space requirements are common and more stringent in suburban neighborhoods where the needs for public spaces are different than that of a small-scale development in a rural context.

Access management and driveway regulation is a vital development standard, as the location of vehicular access points affects traffic flow and vehicular and pedestrian safety along adjacent streets. State and local transportation departments like the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and ACHD typically regulate driveway spacing along streets under their jurisdiction. For consistency, local governments often match these requirements for local streets with similar volumes or speed limits.

Parking (Zoning Ordinance § 8-4G)

Zoning Ordinance Chapter 4, Article G (Off-Street Parking and Loading Facilities) establishes the County’s minimum parking requirements. The County requires a parking and loading plan for all non-residential site plans while residential construction parking is reviewed during the building permitting stages.

Article G also includes parking design standards. All parking spaces must be located on the same property the use for which the parking is required, except if utilizing a joint parking agreement. The regulations establish and illustration parking space and drive aisle dimensions (Table 15 and Figure 12).

A	B	C	D	E	F
Parking Angle	Stall Width	Curb Length	Stall Depth	One-Way Driving Aisle	Two-Way Driving Aisle
0°	9'0"	23'0"	9'0"	12'0"	25'0"
30°	9'0"	18'0"	17'8"	11'0"	25'0"
45°	9'0"	12'9"	20'5"	13'0"	25'0"
60°	9'0"	10'5"	21'10"	16'0"	25'0"
90°	9'0"	9'0"	20'0"	22'0"	25'0"

Table 15. Current parking space dimensions (Zoning Ordinance § 8-4G-5)

The parking regulations include bicycle facilities. Uses within an Area of City Impact require bicycle facilities. The County could expand on this requirement to promote and increase connectivity with open spaces, trails, and Areas of City Impact.

The Ada County Zoning Ordinance allocates parking through ratios to land use. For instance, industrial, institutional, office, commercial, and residential uses determine parking ratios (see Figure 13).

- LEGEND**
- A Parking angle
 - B Space width
 - C Curb length
 - D Stall depth
 - E One-way driving aisle
 - F Two-way driving aisle

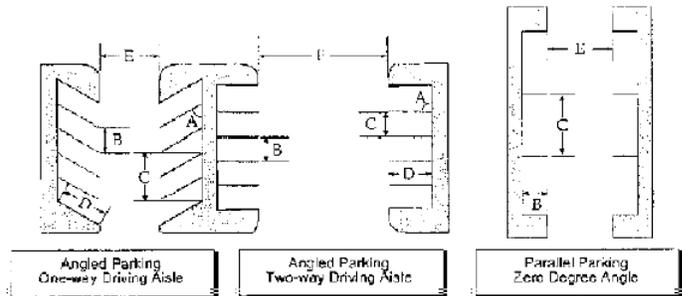


Figure 12. Parking Arrangement (Zoning Ordinance § 8-1A-2)

Some communities have revisited the need for minimum parking ratios, and have either right-sized or eliminated them. Minimum parking requirements increase construction and development costs, driving up housing prices and rental rates. They potentially produce an oversupply of parking. Unused parking lots generate little in the way of tax revenue and community benefits and are not the highest and best use of land.

A common concern with reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements is that it will result in an insufficient supply of spaces. However, the market is effective in ensuring this is not the case. Developers and business owners understand that provision of adequate parking is often critical to project success.

Industrial:	
Contractor's yard or shop	1 per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area plus 1 per employee
Manufacturing, processing (product, chemical, agricultural), research and development, brewery or distillery, winery, recycling, or centralized power facility	1 per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area
Storage, agricultural uses, landfill, railroad, remediation, pit, mine, quarry, or landing field	1 per 2 employees
Storage facility, self-service	1 per entrance to the site
Vehicle impound yard	1 per 2 employees, plus 1 per 4 acres
Warehouse	1 per 4,000 square feet of gross floor area
Institutional:	
Cemetery	1 per 2 employees
Church	2 per 8 seats in main sanctuary
Hospital	1 per bed, plus 2 per 2 employees
Public owned buildings	1 per 500 square feet of gross floor area
Public utility and infrastructure facility, excluding substations	1 per 2 employees
School, public or private:	
Elementary	1 per 2 employees, plus 1 per 12 students
Middle, junior high, and senior high	1 per employee, plus 1 per 6 students
School, vocational or trade	1 per 4 students
Office and business services:	
Animal clinic, animal hospital or veterinary office	1 per 500 square feet of gross floor area
Auction establishment, outdoor	1 per 2 attendees
Business, personal services or professional office	1 per 500 square feet of gross floor area
Clinic, medical (excluding animal or veterinary)	2 per 500 square feet of gross floor area

Figure 13. Parking Ratios (Zoning Ordinance § 8-4G-6)

The County could reduce the current parking minimums where needed to encourage compact development patterns or to preserve open or natural space. Reduced parking minimums could provide business owners and developers with additional development flexibility.

In any case, the Zoning Ordinance could include an administrative process for minor adjustments to parking requirements on a project-specific basis. This will provide developers with more flexibility than a stringent, one-size-fits-all parking approach by ensuring better land use efficiency.

Recommendations

- 1. Establish an administrative process for determining parking for new and unlisted uses. This process should link parking uses and the general use table for consistency purposes. Align with the process for determining where new or unlisted land use is allowed.*
- 2. Reduce or right-size minimum parking requirements. Parking minimums may facilitate unnecessary parking spaces for new development. For instance, medical offices parked at 2 spaces for every 500 square feet could necessitate unwarranted parking for medical developments. A minimum parking reduction to 1 space for every 400 square feet could save a 20,000 square foot medical facility 30 parking spaces (80 spaces required at current parking ratio; 50 spaces required at 1:400 ratio).*
- 3. Add an administrative process for minor adjustments to parking standards on a project-specific basis. The strict, one-size-fits-all approach to parking can hinder development and prolong the development approval process. A simple, administrative process that provides development tradeoffs – like additional, enhanced landscaping for a 10% parking reduction - can provide staff and the development community with additional flexibility to right-size parking ratios. This process could prevent development delays and encourage preferential development patterns.*
- 4. Create new graphics that better communicate parking regulations to the reader. The current graphics and illustrations are difficult to read, so improved graphics that depict parking arrangements, dimensional requirements, and other information could benefit all users of the Zoning Ordinance.*
- 5. Clarify parking measurement metrics (i.e. by floor area, seats, employees) to reduce reader confusion and improve usability. Parking is measured with an array of metrics, which can cause reader disorientation over what parking regulations apply to a specific use. For instance, some parking requirements are determined by building square footage, while others by employee count. This inconsistency is problematic but using consistent metrics for all uses will make parking ratios easier to communicate to applicants, staff, and the public.*

Landscaping and Screening (Zoning Ordinance § 8-4F)

The Zoning Ordinance requires landscaping for uses in all districts that require master site plans except for principally permitted and accessory uses in the rural base districts. New development within an ACI is required to provide a landscape and screening plan that shows the proposed location, size, and type of landscaping and screening materials. The plan also requires landscape preservation and protection methods. Landscaped areas incorporate a hierarchy of plantings from ground covers to shrubs to trees. Landscaping must consider the microclimate of the site and surrounding properties by addressing sun, shade, and wind for increased energy efficiency.

The County maintains minimum plant size standards for new developments. The property owner is responsible for installing and maintaining all required landscaping as specified in the landscaping and screening plan. Figure 14 notes minimum planting standards.

Landscape Element (Plants)	Minimum Size At Planting
Shade tree	2 inch caliper
Ornamental tree	2 inch caliper
Evergreen tree	7.5 feet in height
Shrub	5 gallon container
Parking lot shrub	5 gallon container
Perennial or ornamental grass	1 gallon container
Note: Caliper shall refer to the trunk diameter as measured 6 inches above ground level.	

Figure 14. Plant Standards

The County also uses a point system to determine perimeter landscaping and screening for new development. These points are allocated by measurements along property lines that may or may not abut roadways. Each landscape element leads to a given point value. Table 17 notes landscape point values.

Table 16. Landscaping Point System

Classification of Street Abutting Subject Property	Minimum Depth Of Landscaped Area	Minimum Points Required Per Ten Linear Feet
Entryway corridor	30 ft	12
Interstate abutting residential district	50 ft	22
Interstate abutting rural, commercial or industrial district	25 ft	18
Arterial, collector, or local street abutting rural or residential district	20 ft	12
Arterial, collector, or local street abutting commercial or industrial district	10 ft	10
Private road	5 ft	4

Table 17. Landscape Point Values

Landscape Element	Unit	Point Value
Shade Tree (drought tolerant or native)	Per tree	10
Shade Tree (other)	Per tree	9
Ornamental Tree (drought tolerant or native)	Per tree	7
Ornamental Tree (other)	Per tree	6
Evergreen Tree	Per tree	5
Shrub (drought tolerant or native)	Per shrub	3
Shrub (other)	Per shrub	1
Flowering plants	Per 5 plants	1
Ground cover (drought tolerant or native)	Per 100 square feet	3
Ground cover (other)	Per 100 square feet	1
Turf (drought tolerant or native)	Per 100 square feet	1
Turf (other)	Per 100 square feet	0.5
Berm	Per 10 linear feet	4
Fence	Per 10 linear feet	4
Wall	Per 10 linear feet	4
Sound Wall	Per 10 linear feet	6
Boulder with 6' or greater circumference	Per boulder	1

The point value system can be simplified and better communicated to the reader through graphics and illustrations. There is a need for more cohesion with emphasis on a more coherent flow to help increase readability. Additionally, landscape regulations should implement the *Comprehensive Plan's* goals to protect the County's water systems, provide sustainability, and enhance community resiliency. Intensive landscaping requirements in poorly irrigated areas creates long-term maintenance issues. Revised landscaping regulations are needed for properties that do not have irrigation rights. These properties should have landscaping options that do not have to utilize irrigation features. Xeriscaping uses little to no irrigation to provide substantial landscaping effects. Incorporating xeriscape requirements could improve development potential throughout the County. This section also lacks definitive screening requirements.

Recommendations

1. *Simplify the point system and landscaping requirements by using effective graphics. Dense information in this section can overwhelm the reader, so implementing clean and impactful graphics can provide relief to the reader and help improve comprehension. Color coding tables and illustrating landscaping options will catch the user's eye, which can relate critical context needed to understand landscape regulations.*
2. *Consider an alternative to the point system where required landscaping is more predictable. Removing the point system by using stricter, baseline standards can improve predictability. For instance, the Zoning Ordinance could require all new development in commercial and industrial zoning districts to provide a shade tree for every 50 linear feet with an ornamental tree for every 25 feet along street frontage. This could increase landscaping standardization for new development.*
3. *Further regulate the placement of landscaping on a site while establishing more context-sensitive landscaping regulations. The point system provides flexibility for the developer, but this flexibility does not*

guarantee consistent development. Providing more consistent on-site landscaping requirements like the location of street frontage trees and parking lot shrubs could improve predictability and uniformity, thus fostering better development cohesion.

4. Implement xeriscape landscaping options for non-irrigated developments. Not all areas within the County are irrigated. Xeriscaping provisions could replace conventional landscaping regulations for new development where irrigation is not feasible. This would include using native plants, soils, and rocks as landscape elements to provide similar conventional landscaping effects.
5. Strengthen screening requirements for non-residential development. Landscape screening typically uses landscape elements to serve a similar function as a wall. The intent is to restrict viewing capabilities and shield neighboring properties with a set of landscaped screening features. Stipulations to provide a landscape screening device that functions as a wall and buffers non-residential development from residential uses could benefit development aesthetically and physically. For instance, implementing a regulation like “every non-residential development shall provide landscape screening that abuts residential uses with a continuous row of 6 foot tall evergreen shrubs” could strengthen landscape screening. Instead of a porous screening look, a perpetual wall of shrubs would act as true screening device like a masonry wall.



Figure 15. Landscaped Screening (Source: Albuquerque, NM Zoning Ordinance)

Signs (Zoning Ordinance § 8-4I)

Sign regulations are an essential component of a county’s zoning code because signs are a vital instrument of communication. Signs convey important information to the public and can add life to a building or site. Although signs can have positive effects, they can also have negative effects on affect aesthetics and traffic safety. Large, obtrusive, and bright signs can distract vehicle operators and pedestrians, thus taking their attention from the road or sidewalk in front of them. Additionally, a sign’s size, colors, and location can enhance or diminish a development’s aesthetic.

Ada County identifies signs in numerous ways. Signs consist of two major categories: nonaccessory (off-premises) signs and on-premises signs. Nonaccessory, off-premises signs are defined as those that "direct attention to the use, name, business, commodity, service or entertainment conducted, sold, or offered elsewhere than in the premises and only incidentally on the premises if at all." On-premises signs are not defined. While it is uncertain why there is not a definition for on-premises signs, the Zoning Ordinance implies that that includes any signs that are not off-premise signs.

In addition, while this distinction is traditionally used by local governments and state highway departments, it has little relationship a sign's physical characteristics. Non-accessory/ off-premise signs are traditionally associated with "billboards" - or large, freestanding, signs mounted on poster panels. However, they could technically include any sign (such as a wall sign) that speaks to activity off the premises.

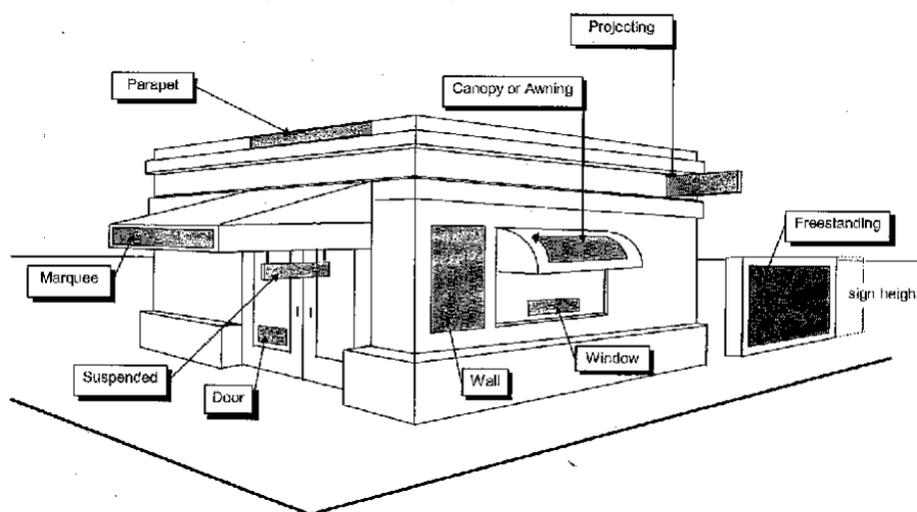


Figure 16. Current Sign Types

Although on-premises signs are not formally defined, they are classified according to display characteristics. For instance, on-premises signs such as projecting, wall, roof, and freestanding signs are all allowed, but they are not defined in the definitions section of the sign regulations. These sign types are defined in the general definitions section at the beginning of the Zoning Ordinance. Users have to check in multiple places of the Zoning Ordinance to familiarize themselves with sign regulations. Sign definitions should be in one location instead of two to improve readability. As an alternative, the Zoning Ordinance could place the sign definitions with the applicable sign regulations and graphics. In addition to the missing on-premises signs definition and the multiple placement of definitions, the sign regulations are dense and text heavy with few graphics. Improved graphics and illustrations will clarify the text. Dimensional requirements, location specifications, and sign typology should be expressed in matrixes to improve readability.

Sign regulations must comply with First Amendment (free speech) principles, such as content neutrality. Content neutrality means that signs must be defined on their physical characteristics (i.e. size, location, height, design) instead of the sign’s message or user. Ada County should revise the sign categories to make sure they are based on their time, place, and manner instead of what they say.

Recommendations

1. Revise the sign regulations and create regulations that meet content neutrality standards. This includes reclassifying sign typologies explicitly by physical characteristics instead of by use. For instance, collapsing “business signs” and “home signs” into revised sign categories like wall, roof, projecting, and monument signs will promote content neutrality.
2. Include matrixes and graphics to communicate new sign types and dimensional requirements. The Zoning Ordinance is text heavy and matrixes that condense this information can improve readability. The matrix includes physical characteristics like size, colors, setbacks, and location. Other graphics illustrating sign, lettering, and font types will add to sign regulation clarity.
3. Improve sign definitions and locate them to one place, preferably with a definition section in the back of the Zoning Ordinance. There are inconsistencies with sign definitions because they are in two sections of the Zoning Ordinance and do not fully capture all pertinent terms. For example, on-premises signs needs a definition and that definition should fit into the same section with the other sign definitions. Also, improved sign definitions will omit message regulations and emphasize physical characteristics.
4. Assess development impact from billboards and consider regulations that sufficiently mitigate excessive light pollution, visual clutter, and driver distraction. Instead of regulating “off-premise” signs, establish a physical definition of billboards and control their aesthetic and traffic safety impacts. Regulations that control spacing, dimensions, location, electronic displays, and animation of billboards can protect the County’s scenic areas and promote traffic safety. Placing spacing requirements between billboards (i.e. spacing billboards 1,500 feet from one another on either side of a roadway), limiting placement within zoning districts (i.e. prohibiting new billboards in residential and commercial districts), and reducing size (i.e. 650 square feet to 325 square feet) are common practices that reduce billboard impacts.

Table VIII-11-7 Wall Sign Standards								
"Yes" = the sign type or characteristic is permitted; "No" = the sign type or characteristic is not permitted; "R" = the sign type or characteristic is required; "NR" = the sign type is permitted for non-residential uses only; "--" the standard does not apply; "Z" = as established for the principal building by the applicable zoning district								
↓ Requirements	Zoning Districts / TND T-Zone →	A-G, R, R-1, R-1(B), R-2, R-2(B), TND T-1, T-2, T-3, CS	R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-M, TND T-4	C-O	C-1, TND T-5	C-D, TND T-6	C-2, C-3, M-1, B-P, TND D	M-2, M-3
1. Permitted?		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Permit required?		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Number per street frontage (max.)		--	--	--	--	--	--	--
4. Number per each business or institution (occupying a multi-tenant building) which has its own ground floor entryway or storefront (max.)		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5. Number-total per single-tenant building or multi-tenant building with a single entry (max.)		1	1	3	2	3	3	3
6. Number-total (max.)		--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Dimensions								
7. Sign area (maximum-sf)		50	50	80	150	150	300	300
8. Height (maximum-feet)		4	4	4	--	--	--	--
Location								
9. Property Line Setback (minimum-feet)		Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z
10. Spacing between other signs (minimum-feet)		--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Design Characteristics								
11. Digital		No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
12. Illumination, Internal		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
13. Illumination, External		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
14. Illumination, Halo Lit		NR	NR	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
15. Channel Letters		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
16. Changeable copy		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Figure 17. Wall Sign Matrix (Unified Government of Wyandotte County-Kansas City, KS)

Procedures & Administration

Development processes should be streamlined, avoiding wasteful and time-consuming processes, but should include meaningful public input. While streamlining is critical, it is essential to allow citizens to voice input on projects that affect them. The modern best practice is to assign as many processes as possible to administrative staff when public hearings are not necessary.

Public hearings are not necessary when a use is subject to very clear regulations defined in the ordinance (leaving no room for interpretation or discretion), or where the application is the final step in multi-step approval processes where discretionary decisions are already made. Where development has unique impacts, or impacts that are incapable of resolving completely through development standards, public hearings may be needed to give neighborhoods an opportunity to weigh in on applications that affect them.

For the casual reader of the Ada County Zoning Ordinance, it is difficult to determine where an individual procedure fits into the overall process workflow, who the procedure applies to, or what an approval authorizes. The workflow is a sequence of processes through which development application goes through initiation to completion. Submittal requirements - requirements that inform an applicant about what is necessary to initiate a development plan workflow - are scattered throughout the Zoning Ordinance instead of with the procedural requirements. For example, there are submittal and application requirements in Chapter 4 (which establishes development regulations) for master site plan applications, but those are procedural matters and not standards. The current arrangement results in repetition of requirements, lengthening the overall code, and leaving room for conflicts and inconsistencies because there is a need to flip back and forth between sections. Additionally, processes are text-heavy, which makes them harder to read. Incorporating graphics to depict content saturated processes could improve readability and usability.

The agencies and official involved in zoning processes include County planning staff, Planning and Zoning Commission (which usually submits recommendations), and the Board of County Commissioners (which usually approves the applications). The zoning process includes, but is not limited to, rezonings, conditional use permits, ordinance amendments, zoning certificates, variances, plat requests, development agreements, and amendments to the comprehensive plan.

Chapter 7 of the Zoning Ordinance specifies who acts on particular development applications. This section grants the Director of Development Services with authority to act on various development applications (refer to Table 18). The Planning and Zoning Commission plays a critical role in the development process but does not make many decisions on development applications. The Commission mostly serves as a recommendation agency for the Board of County Commissioners. The Commission has three items that they act on: conditional uses, certain joint applications, and sketch plats (refer to Table 18). The Board of County Commissioners is the final authority for development applications that are not acted on by the Director or the Planning and Zoning Commission. This body mostly acts on legislative development applications but does act on other applications (refer to Table 18).

Table 18 shows application types and each agency or official's role in the development process. Most development approvals occur at the Director's discretion, while the least number of approvals happen under Planning and Zoning Commission supervision. Items are color coordinated to indicate each authority body's function to application types. Final decisions are colored in red while authority body recommendations are colored in yellow. Pink and orange shading indicate public hearing and noticing requirements, respectively.

There are additional processes that need revision and clarity to improve readability and usability. For instance, the County has inadequate verbiage for boundary adjustments and minor plat changes.

This creates a clunky process that adds time and expense to development. A

more straightforward process is needed to provide minor plat modifications. A robust plat modification process will save property owners money and avoid unnecessary public review.

This process will also mitigate for the Zoning Ordinance’s “substantial conformance” clause (buried in the zoning definitions in § 8-1A-1). After a preliminary plat is approved, the County must approve a final plat for recording. Final plats must "substantially conform" to the preliminary plat. As defined, "substantial conformance" limits deviations from dimensional standards shown on the preliminary plat to 10%. If a plat does not substantially conform, the developer must start the process over. Increasing flexibility for substantial conformance would save applicants time and money, and avoid spending County resources on redundant hearings.

Recommendations

1. Consolidate all procedures into a single chapter. This chapter should be organized around the overall process "workflow," beginning with rezoning, master site plan approval, and administrative processes like building permits, certificates of occupancy, zoning certificates, and similar actions. The Zoning Ordinance can include administrative agencies and enforcement in separate articles towards the rear of the document.
2. Summarize the development approval processes in a table like Table 18. The process table is a useful tool, showing clear lines of authority, notice requirements, and decision-making authority.
3. Map each process with a common workflow, beginning with applicability, and continuing to initiation and completeness, decision making appeals, and the scope of approval. By following a uniform layout for each process, the flow will become easier to follow. Each section relating to a specific process would have the following subsections:

Application Type	Authority			Public Hearing	Noticing
	Director	Planning & Zoning Commission	Board of Commissioners		
Accessory use					
Amendment to Area of City Impact agreement					
Amendment to the comprehensive plan					
Amendment to the zoning ordinance					
Appeal					
Conditional use					
Development agreement					
Expansion or extension of nonconforming use or structure					
Farm development right					
Final plat					
Financing Verification					
Floodplain permit					
Landscape and screening plan					
Lighting plan					
Master site plan					
Modification/expansion of a conditional use					
Modification/expansion of a master site plan					
One-time division of property					
Planned community implementation plan					
Planned community landscape plan					
Planned community periodic review					
Preliminary plat					
Private road					
Property boundary adjustment					
Sign plan					
Sketch plat					
Temporary use					
Time extension					
Variance					
Zoning certificate					

KEY
 Red = Recommendation | Yellow = Decision | Pink = Hearing Required | Orange = Written Notice Required

Table 18. Summary of Development Review Processes

- *Applicability* – who needs to go through this process?
 - *Initiation* – how is an application filed, and to whom?
 - *Completeness* – what is needed to have an application that is ready to process?
 - *Notice* – how do interested parties find out about the application?
 - *Approval process* – who makes the decision, and how? Is a hearing required? How is the decision rendered?
 - *Criteria* – what specific standards apply to the application?
 - *Reapplication* – if an applicant withdraws or is denied, can they file a new application, and when?
 - *Scope of approval* – what does this approval allow the applicant to do? What is the next step in the process?
4. *Consolidate the submittal requirements. If they are codified at all, include them in an Appendix. Otherwise, authorize Development Services to prescribe the formats and submittal requirements for application intake and completeness review.*
 5. *Create a process for plat modifications. This process would amend the substantial conformance clause and provide additional flexibility for staff and the development community to alter previously approved plats without adding burdensome delays. Other platting concerns with vacations and boundary adjustments processes could facilitate improved communication with applicants, staff and the public.*
 6. *Create a specific, streamlined process for ADUs. ADUs can add to the County’s housing stock, but there is not a clear, sensible process for their construction. This process could detail ADU initiation, describe plan requirements, and illustrate the various steps to receive approval.*

Rezone Procedure



Figure 18. Process Flowchart from Boise Development Code

CONCLUSION

This project represents the first comprehensive update of the Ada County land use regulations in decades. Several major themes and goals for the project emerged from the team's interviews and review of Ada County's existing plans and ordinances. Though these themes often overlap, we have summarized them into general areas/topics.

- Improve the Code's organization & user-friendliness
- Provide opportunity for housing diversity
- Review & streamline development process & procedures
- Provide a complete land use table with modernized uses
- Update the zoning districts as needed
- Protect agricultural land from new non-agricultural development
- Encourage effective & efficient use of public facilities

In addition to the issues discussed above, we can provide additional analyses of other County priorities in future reports and presentations. These include recent discussion items with the Board of County Commissioners that could further improve the Zoning Ordinance including:

- Trail connectivity
- Standards for water analysis
- Stronger natural features regulations
- Enhanced foothill protection standards
- Private road regulations
- Time extension processes
- RUT District regulations

These discussion points will be fleshed out in engagement between the Consultant Team, County staff, Citizens Advisory Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Board of County Commissioners. This engagement will help influence additional recommendations to improve the Zoning Ordinance.

The Zoning Ordinance is a key tool for implementing the Ada County 2025 Comprehensive Plan. While the existing code has some excellent and effective provisions, it requires significant updates to realize the County's planning goals and objectives thoroughly. Further reorganizing, rewriting, and illustrating existing and revised zoning requirements will make the document easier to read, and potentially create a higher quality of public discourse and design quality.

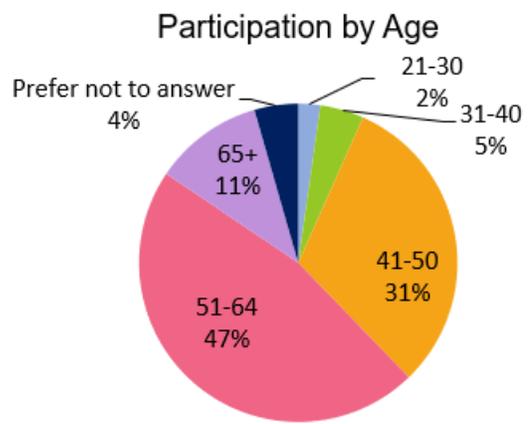
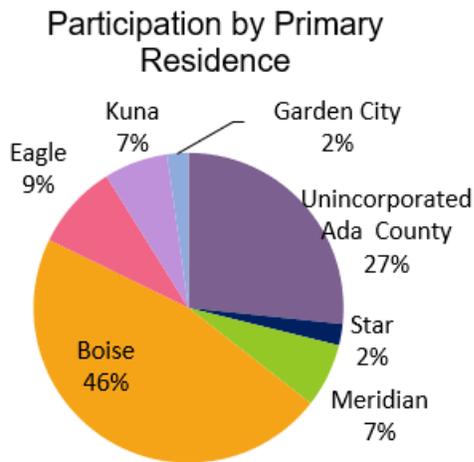
This report is one step in a lengthy process. The County will hold public workshops and input sessions throughout the project, take public comments on proposed Zoning Ordinance revisions, assess the County's existing and potential strategies for regulating development, and address key neighborhood compatibility and economic development goals. We look forward to working with Ada County on this important process.

APPENDIX A: OUTREACH RESULTS

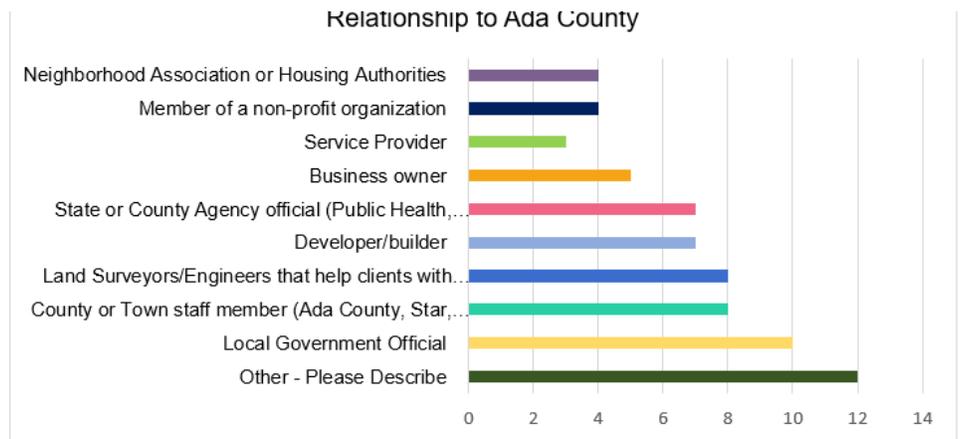
Outreach and communication platforms to engage the public have expanded due to the global pandemic. The County went live with social media accounts in February. The public has been responsive and active through those outlets.

Who We Heard From

There was significant engagement from community members that live in Boise and in unincorporated Ada County but very little representation from other municipalities in the county. Looking at participation by age, there was very little representation of residents under the age of 40 and strong representation from residents age 41-50 and 51-64.



There was a fairly even distribution of respondents with various relationships to Ada County, and out of the twelve respondents who listed their relationship as “other”, five were Land Use Planners, Landscape Architects, or consultants; two were realtors/Property Investors, and two can be classified as local business owners.



These results reflect community stakeholder responses to the Consultant Team 's online questionnaire. The Consultant Team and County Staff identified stakeholders and emailed the survey to the various stakeholders. The Consultant Team obtained 43 total responses beginning from May 7th and ending on June 5th. While this is not much input, there is an ongoing survey documenting additional stakeholder input.

Ease of Use and Development Review Process

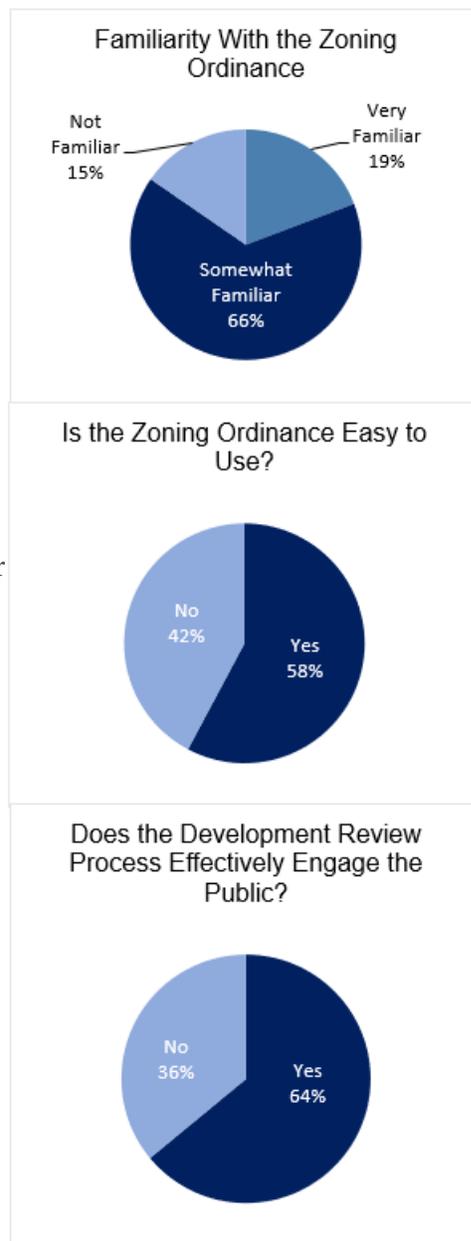
Respondents were generally familiar with the Ordinance, as shown in the pie chart on the right, and many stakeholder responses indicated that the zoning ordinance is easy to use overall. Still, there are potential changes that could make the ordinance more user-friendly. The suggestions to improve the ease of use of the Ordinance fall into three categories: formatting changes, content updates, and policy changes.

- Formatting changes consist of reorganizing the Ordinance, reducing redundancy within and between sections, and adding hyperlinks and references within the Ordinance to other sections of the Ordinance.
- Content changes are suggestions to simplify Planned Unit Development (PUD) requirements, and clarifying uses and standards, and standardizing the language and processes in the Ordinance.
- Policy changes are suggestions to add flexibility in the Ordinance, provide more consideration for developers, and limit County Commissioner approval of minor modifications.

Respondents had mixed feelings about what works well with the current Ordinance. Still, many respondents are pleased that the Ordinance is available online and that the Ada County staff are knowledgeable. Respondents also noted that the zoning chapter and the use tables are clear and easy to use.

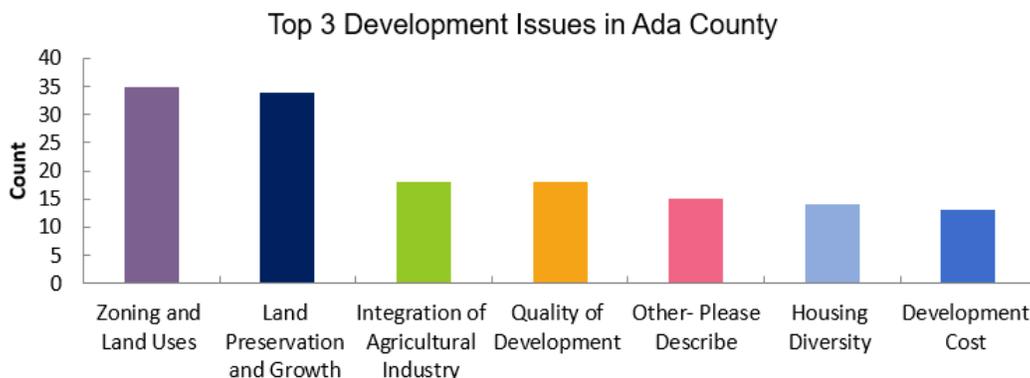
When asked if the County’s processes were transparent, communicative, and effective, respondents generally stated that they were. However, many respondents would like to see simplified approval timelines, broader notification buffers, and use of online meetings and application tracking to further improve transparency, communication, and effectiveness. The Ordinance could also benefit from more coordination of land uses and requirements with the other municipalities within Ada County.

Respondents also identified how the regulations could better respond to the needs of the general public and the building and development community. Many creative ideas were noted, but the most common requests to meet the needs of the public were preservation of prime agricultural land, simplify, clarify, and increase the flexibility of the requirements, and educating the public about the benefits of the zoning ordinance and how they can be involved in the process. The requests from the building and development community are similar to the requests from the public: simplify, clarify, and increase the flexibility of the requirements and streamline the approval process.

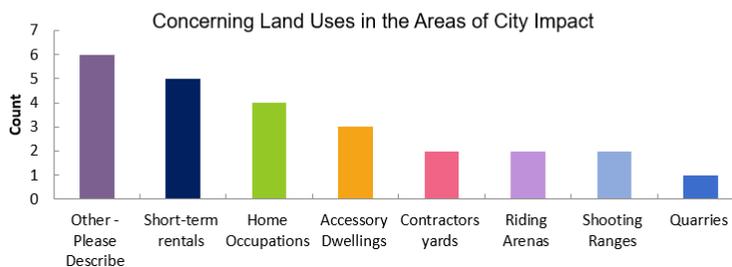
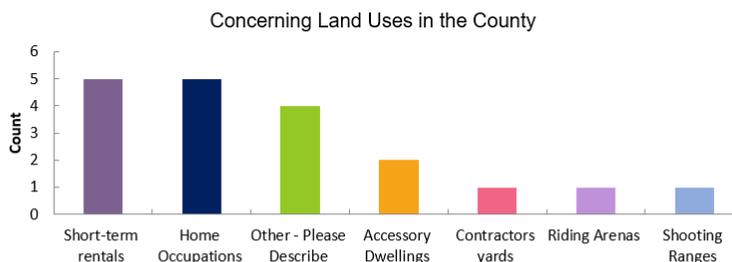


Development Issues

Respondents identified the top three development issues in the county. The top two were Zoning & Land Uses and Land Preservation & Growth, followed by Integration of Agricultural Industry. The other four options were of about equal concern to respondents, and the most common answers listed under “other” were traffic, infrastructure, and development timelines.



The land use concerns in the County and in the Areas of City Impact are similar, with short-term rentals, home occupations, and “other” being the top three responses in both areas. The most common responses in the “other” for both the County and Areas of City Impact were lack of affordable housing and public utilities and infrastructure.

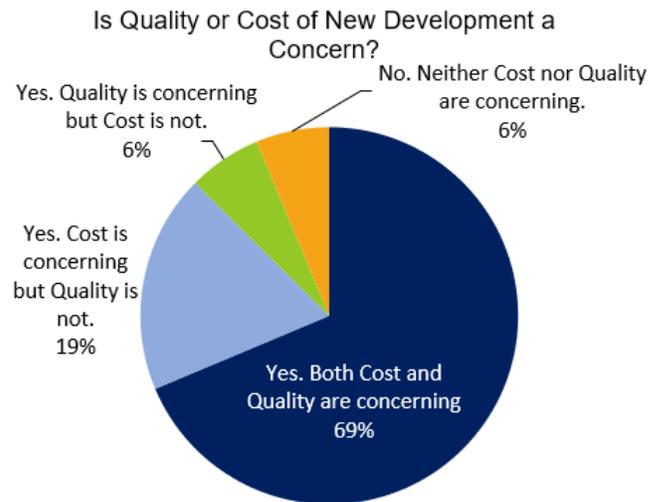


According to respondents, both the cost and quality of new development are concerning, and cost appears to be a more considerable concern than the quality of development. Respondents also stated that the current Ordinance precludes the development of affordable housing and discourages development in the county overall.

Key Takeaways

The following priorities and opportunities emerged through this first stage of stakeholder engagement:

1. Simplify, clarify, and increase the flexibility of the requirements.
2. Streamline the approval process.
3. Implement broader notification buffers and use online meetings and application tracking to further improve transparency, communication, and effectiveness.
4. Increase coordination of land uses and requirements with the other municipalities.
5. Zoning & Land Uses and Land Preservation & Growth, and Integration of Agricultural Industry are the top three development concerns.
6. Short-term rentals, home occupations, lack of affordable housing, and public utilities and infrastructure are concerns both in the County and in the Areas of City Impact.



APPENDIX B: RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

This Appendix serves as a reference guide that links best practices from other zoning ordinances to potential alternatives and recommendations. Links are provided to the best practice ordinances in Appendix C.

Recommendation by Category	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Page #	Best Practice
Zoning Ordinance Format				
Relocate all definitions to a new definitions article at the end of the Zoning Ordinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easier for the user to follow No need to flip back and forth between chapters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constant flipping to the definitions chapter to understand terms in other chapters of the Code 	page 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wyandotte County, KS Albuquerque, NM Raleigh, NC
Consolidate existing zoning districts that are similar in function to reduce the number of zoning districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces repetitiveness Streamlines important characteristics of a district Promotes development flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts are too broad District regulations are not tailored enough 	page 20	
Create a use matrix that aligns with standards from the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and Land Based Classification Standards (LBCS).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporates most modern uses Uses are already defined and recognized by 2 major classification systems Potential for highly specialized uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many uses to choose from Highly specialized uses can create administrative issues if new uses are not defined tightly 	page 20	
Consolidate the zoning review procedures and relocate them towards the back of the Zoning Ordinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces repetitiveness Streamlines important characteristics of a district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 21	
Relocate all the use standards to a single chapter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes only the uses and applicable regulations Reduces need to flip back and forth to other chapters and limits cross referencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some uses (i.e. temporary uses, accessory, etc.) may fit more appropriately into another chapter 	page 21	
Add illustrations, tables, and flowcharts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves readability Difficult and excessive text is easily understandable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many graphics can overwhelm the user Poorly explained graphics can fail to communicate the point of the graphic 	page 21	
Use clear and concise language and well-defined terms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves readability Difficult and excessive text is easily understandable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 21	

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Recommendation by Category	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Page #	Best Practice
Rural Districts				
Strengthen rural base districts by incorporating stricter open space requirements, landscape buffers, conservation easements to preserve agricultural operations and land resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added development barriers Limits usable land development area Protects rural activity while potentially beautifying development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added and stringent regulations Limits usable land development area 	page 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boone County, IL Calaveras County, CA
Residential Districts				
Consider consolidation of existing residential districts with new definitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces repetitiveness Streamlines important characteristics of a district Limits the need for districts solely identified by density 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts are too broad District regulations are not tailored enough 	page 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raleigh, NC Montgomery County, MD
Add regulations to low density residential districts that accommodate adequate public infrastructure requirements, preserve rural character, and create cohesion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limits residential sprawl Protects from unreasonable infrastructure extensions Promotes better, well-planned residential development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added regulations can stifle development Increased barriers to development entry 	page 17	
Commercial Districts				
Consider consolidating the 4 commercial districts into 3 zoning categories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces repetitiveness Streamlines important characteristics of a district Simplifies district intent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts are too broad High intensity uses may develop easier if there are less commercial zoning categories 	page 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montgomery County, MD Spokane County, WA
Consider removing antiquated commercial/office uses from commercial base districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes unnecessary language and outdated uses from the Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 20	
Industrial Districts				
Consider removing the TI district by consolidating industrial base districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlines important characteristics of a district Simplifies district intent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts are too broad High intensity uses may develop easier if there are less industrial zoning categories 	page 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raleigh, NC Montgomery County, MD Spokane County, WA
Consider renaming the industrial base districts to better align with the district's intent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlines important characteristics of a district Simplifies district intent Improves user understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 21	

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Recommendation by Category	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Page #	Best Practice
Overlays, PUDs, and Planned Communities				
Create new and improved regulations that not only accommodate, but also encourage, innovative and creative projects that respond to the comprehensive plan, rather than restricting or prohibiting those projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces PUD, Overlay, PC need • Clarifies intent of special zoning regulations • Improved reliance on base zoning districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much development flexibility can challenge staff's administrative ability • An increase in lower quality projects 	page 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montgomery County, MD • Montgomery County, VA • Raleigh, NC • Nashville - Davidson County, TN • Austin, TX
The County must clearly articulate the standards it wants in all new development, rather than negotiating over compatibility issues as part of each PUD application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces administrative functions • Limits development delays • Clear, recognizable development standards need less interpretation 	• N/a	page 36	
Revise the Hillside Overlay to improve development along steep geography.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects physical landscape • Stricter standards can reduce potential life/safety hazards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over regulation can stifle development • Increased development costs due to additional reports and studies 	page 36	
Revise the Boise River Greenway and Flood Hazard Overlays to include more flexibility related to setbacks and uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits variance requests • Prevents development delays • More commonsensical standards can improve development potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations can increase development demand in flood prone areas 	page 36	
Clarify the distinctions between Planned Unit Development, Planned Community Regulations, and Overlay districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces repetitiveness • Streamlines important characteristics of a district 	• N/a	page 36	
Keep the Planned Community regulations (i.e. Avimor, Dry Creek Ranch, Cartwright Ranch, etc.), but remove them from the zoning districts section, and relocate them to an appendix section.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlines important characteristics of a district • Reduce unwarranted material from the critical parts of the Code • Limits need to flip back and forth between the Code and PC regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can create user confusion because there might be a need to refer to the Code and flip back to the appendix 	page 24	

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Recommendation by Category	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Page #	Best Practice
Dimensional Regulations (Density, Intensity, Bulk, Setbacks)				
Provide a density calculation explanation that details the significance of density.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves readability Difficult and excessive text is easily understandable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too much information can overwhelm the user 	page 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> King County, WA Durham City-County, NC Montgomery County, MD Raleigh, NC Nashville - Davidson County, TN
Provide densities within different residential districts that provide a range of housing options to address housing affordability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases housing stock More housing options for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintended increased density More potential for “Not in my backyard” mentaltiy 	page 25	
Recalibrate densities within newly revised and defined residential districts to provide for more diverse housing options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases housing stock More housing options for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintended increased density More potential for “Not in my backyard” mentaltiy 	page 25	
Consider implementing maximum impervious surface coverage requirements to all districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces demand on the County’s drainage system Incentivizes more on-site landscaping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased development barriers Limits the development footprint 	page 27	
Provide clear dimensional tables, measurements, and graphics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 27	
Consider using floor area ratio to limit bulk in commercial and industrial districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformally limits size of development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased development barriers Reduces development footprint 	page 27	
Provide flexible setbacks within different residential districts that provide a range of housing options to address housing affordability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases housing stock More housing options for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintended increased density More potential for “Not in my backyard” mentaltiy 	page 28	
Provide consistent terminology in tables and figures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 28	

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Recommendation by Category	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Page #	Best Practice
Accessory Dwelling Units				
Update housing uses and definitions, and consider implementing MMH concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Increases housing stock More housing options for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintended increased density More potential for “Not in my backyard” mentaltiy 	page 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bentonville, AR Auburn, WA Auburn, AL Bloomington, MN Grand County, UT
Provide clear regulations and dimensional standards for ADUs in applicable zoning districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases housing stock More housing options for residents that are context-sensitive to a particular zoning district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintended increased density More potential for “Not in my backyard” mentaltiy 	page 30	
Remove stipulations that require ADU dwellers to be directly related to the primary dwelling owners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases housing stock More housing options for residents Limits the County’s need to regulate ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintended increased density More potential for “Not in my backyard” mentaltiy 	page 30	
Adequate Public Facilities and Impact Fees				
Create adequate public facilities regulations to control new development in unincorporated Ada County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces taxpayer burden Adequate facilities are programmed or provided Can direct growth into certain areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased development delays Added regulations can reduce development potential 	page 33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hillsborough County, FL Prince George’s County, MD New Castle County, DE

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Recommendation by Category	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Page #	Best Practice
Use and Use Regulations				
Ensure the list of permitted uses is as complete as possible in one use matrix.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Reduces need for staff interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrowly tailored uses can increase administrative tension because new uses may not fit strictly defined uses 	page 36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sparks, Nevada Mobile, AL Napa County, CA Howard County, MD Montgomery County, VA Loudoun County, VA Wyandotte County, KS
Review permitted and conditional uses in all districts, especially for frequent conditional use applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Reduces need for staff interpretations Can limit need for public hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can grant too much authority to staff 	page 36	
Ensure all permitted uses are consistent with each district's purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Reduces need for staff interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 36	
Revise the specific use standards to avoid miscommunication with staff and the development community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Reduces need for staff interpretations Can reduce development delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 36	
Review use definitions and amend appropriately by providing simple and clear definitions that fully encompass a particular use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces need for staff interpretations Can reduce development delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 36	
Add an agritourism or agritainment use to capture special uses (wineries, riding arenas, wedding/event centers) associated with rural context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces need for staff interpretations Can limit needs for public hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural properties with an abundance of uses 	page 37	

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Recommendation by Category	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Page #	Best Practice
Parking				
Establish an administrative process for determining parking for new and unlisted uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative flexibility • Reduce development delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much authority to staff 	page 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montgomery County, MD • King County, WA • Portland, OR
Reduce minimum parking requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases development potential by not requiring an excessive amount of parking • Less financial burden for the developer • Potential for increased landscaping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough parking • Developers can take advantage of decreased parking requirements and overbuild lots 	page 40	
Add an administrative process for minor adjustments to parking standards on a project-specific basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative flexibility • Reduce variance requests • Reduce development delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much authority to staff 	page 40	
Create new graphics that better communicate parking regulations to the reader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves user readability • Reduces need for staff interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/a 	page 40	
Clarify parking measurement metrics (i.e. by floor area, seats, employees) to reduce reader confusion and to improve usability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves user readability • Reduces need for staff interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/a 	page 40	

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Recommendation by Category	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Page #	Best Practice
Landscaping and Screening				
Simplify the point system and landscaping requirements by using effective graphics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Reduces need for staff interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graphics can overcommunicate the point system 	page 42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Durham City – County, NC Albuquerque, NM Montgomery County, MD Portland, OR
Consider an alternative to the point system where required landscaping is more predictable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear landscaping standards applicable to all development Increased development predictability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less flexibility Increase in variance requests 	page 42	
Consider further regulating the placement of landscaping on a site and establish more context-sensitive landscaping regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased development predictability Context-based standards for different developments in different areas of the County Certain areas may require less landscaping, thus reducing development cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over-regulation can reduce flexibility Added development costs with more stringent regulations 	page 42	
Implement xeriscape landscaping options for non-irrigated developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save on development costs because irrigation is not needed More commonsensical standards for different developments in different areas of the County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for developers to take advantage of non-irrigated landscaping to save money 	page 43	
Strengthen screening requirements for non-residential development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides adequate buffers between uses Ensures screening will act effectively while looking visually appealing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added development costs with more stringent regulations 	page 43	
Performance Standards				
Consider placing all performance standards in one location in the Zoning Ordinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easier for the user to follow No need to flip back and forth between chapters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in cross-references 	page 44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nashville - Davidson County, TN Wyandotte County, KS
Consider strengthening lighting standards to reduce unwarranted light pollution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces glare and trespass on adjacent properties Potential to increase safety in areas Provide effective lighting that is also visually appealing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added development costs with more stringent regulations Lighting measurements can burden staff resources 	page 44	
Provide graphics and clear illustrations for performance standards to improve clarity for the reader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Reduces need for staff interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 44	

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Recommendation by Category	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Page #	Best Practice
Signs				
Revise the sign regulations and create regulations that meet content neutrality standards of Reed v. Gilbert.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces litigation concerns • Emphasizes physical sign characteristics • Allows a variety of signs without regulating the message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/a 	page 45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wyandotte County, KS • Albuquerque, NM
Include matrixes and graphics to communicate new sign types and dimensional requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves user readability • Reduces need for staff interpretations • Limits text rich content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive or poorly explained graphics can confuse the user 	page 45	
Improve sign definitions and locate them to one place, preferably with the definition section in the back of the Zoning Ordinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier for the user to follow • No need to flip back and forth between chapters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in cross-references 	page 45	
Assess development impact from billboards and consider regulations that sufficiently mitigate excessive light pollution, visual clutter, and driver distraction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve traffic safety • Reduces billboard size • Establishes billboard locational requirements • Increases billboard standards • Protects scenic views and the natural landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces advertising ability • Potential to regulate billboards out of the Code 	page 45	

Recommendation by Category	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)	Page #	Best Practice
Procedures and Administration				
Consolidate all procedures into a single chapter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easier for the user to follow No need to flip back and forth between chapters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in cross-references 	page 47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olathe, KS Wyandotte County, KS
Summarize the development approval processes in a table like Table 18.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Reduces need for staff interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 47	
Map each process with a common workflow, beginning with applicability, and continuing to initiation and completeness, decision making appeals, and the scope of approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Reduces need for staff interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 47	
Consolidate the submittal requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easier for the user to follow No need to flip back and forth between chapters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in cross-references 	page 48	
Create a process for plat modifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Reduces need for staff interpretations Reduces development delays because the platting process does not need restarting Limits variance requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear processes can confuse users 	page 48	
Create a specific, streamlined process for ADUs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves user readability Reduces need for staff interpretations Incentive to increase housing stock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear processes can confuse users 	page 48	
Consider reducing the abandonment period, which will allow the County to eliminate nonconformities more quickly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gets nonconformities addressed and compliant with standards quickly Reduces unsightly abandoned properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affected operations may fight back legally or politically 	page 62	
Consider grace periods for bringing properties into compliance with new regulations without forfeiting their former uses or nonconformities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gets nonconformities addressed and compliant with standards quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a 	page 62	

APPENDIX C: AREAS OF CITY IMPACT

Six cities lie within Ada County. These cities are growing and may create additional growth demands in the Areas of City Impact and unincorporated areas. A healthy relationship between the County and its Areas of City Impact will enable controlled and fiscally responsible development. The Zoning Ordinance must respond to trends in development practices as the area increases in population. Utilities, infrastructure, and housing are priorities for the County as it continues to grow.

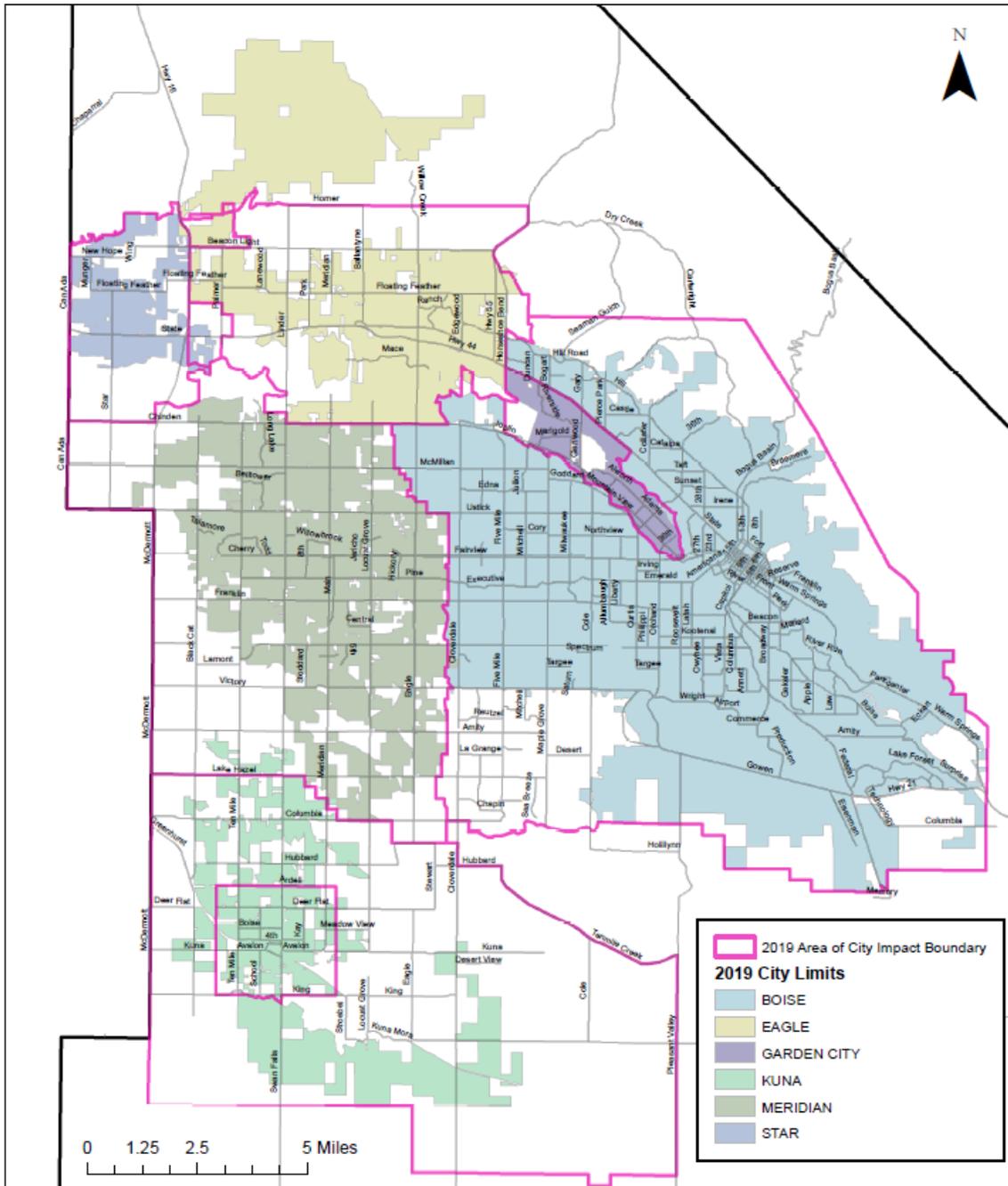


Figure 19. Area of City Impact Boundary Map (2019)

Kuna

The City of Kuna is in the southwestern portion of Ada County. Unlike the other cities, Kuna has two designated areas of city impact. The City has an estimated 24,000 residents and predicts an additional 14,000 residents by 2030 (*City of Kuna Comprehensive Plan 2015*, at 27). Although Kuna predicts growth, the City wants to maintain its small-town feel but embrace development strategies that will create a strong economic system and increase vibrancy.

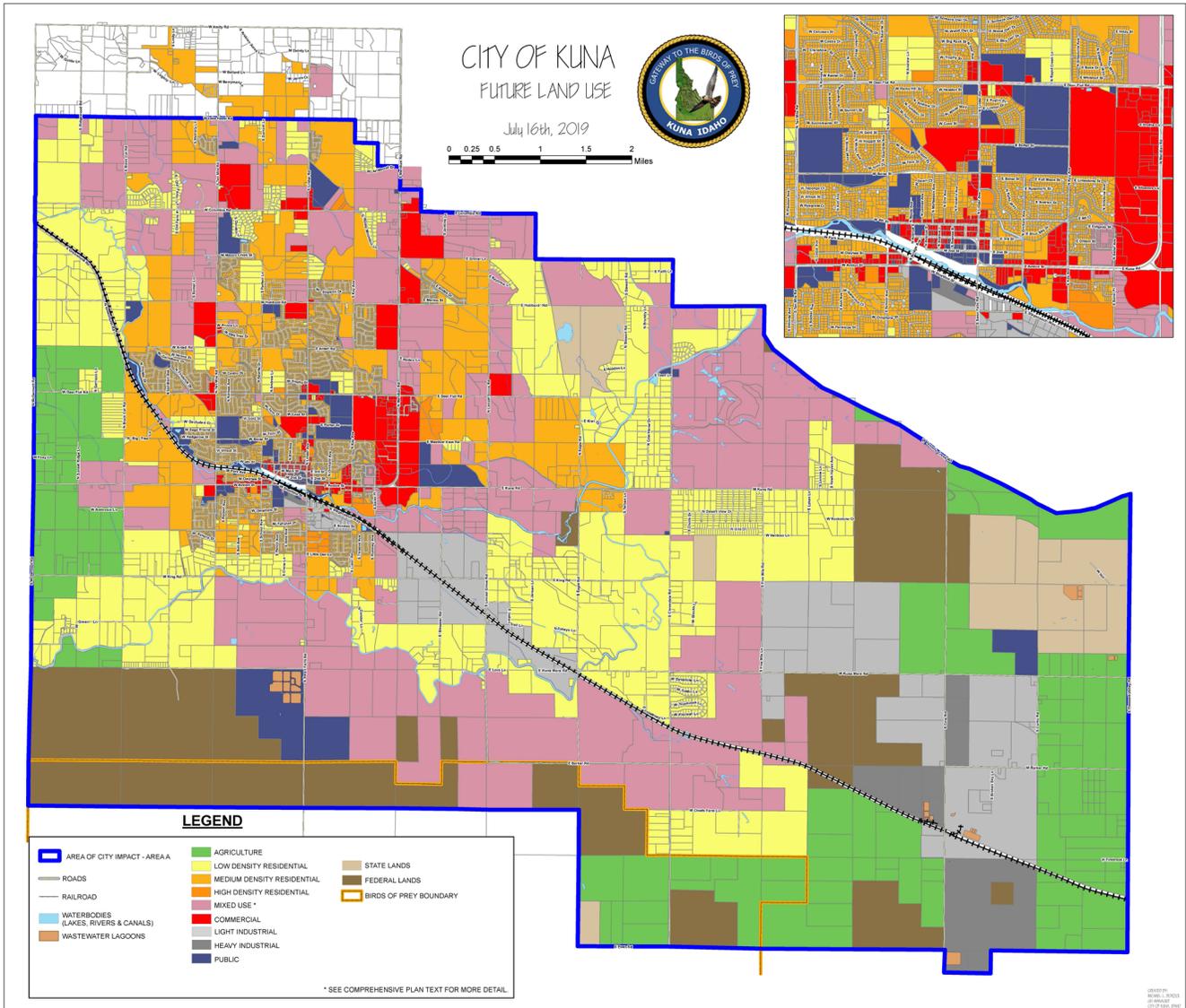


Figure 20. Kuna Future Land Use Map

Eagle

The City of Eagle is in the northwestern part of the County. Eagle is growing quickly from a small bedroom community to a larger, more active one. The City grew by approximately 10,000 persons over the past decade (*City of Eagle Comprehensive Plan (2017)*). Eagle understands that growth is inevitable and has taken aggressive approaches to account for that by altering the City’s planning area boundaries. The City anticipates a more intensified land use pattern as more people populate the region. Eagle seeks a highly livable city that balances new growth with the rural landscape while providing a diverse and strong economic base.

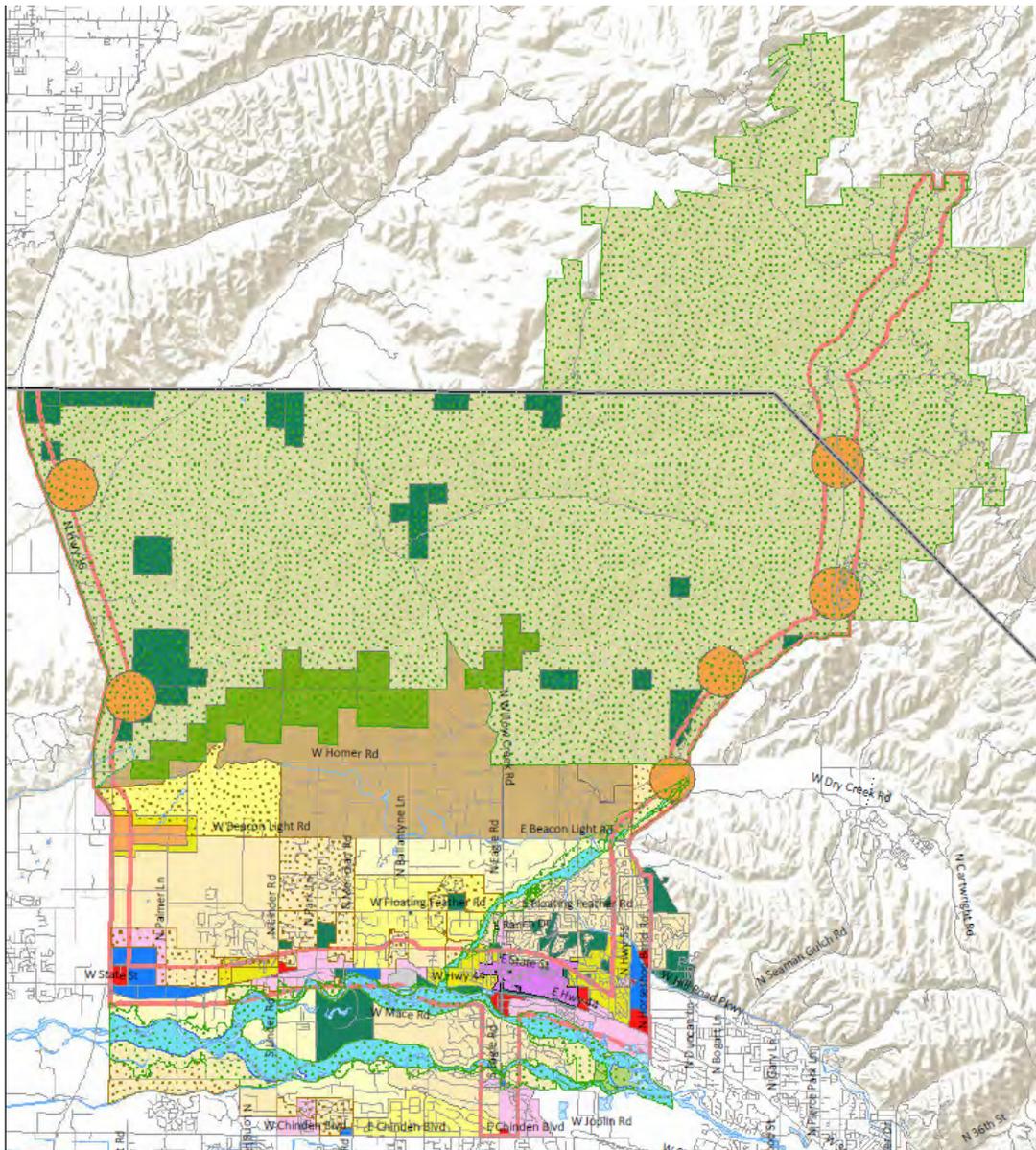


Figure 21. Eagle Land Use Map

Boise

The City of Boise is the state capital and is the state's most populous city with over 200,000 residents. The City recently adopted a new comprehensive plan that emphasizes placemaking, land use efficiency, and resource protection. Boise is currently in the process of updating its zoning regulations to implement the comprehensive plan. As the County's largest City and the region's central place, the County's new zoning ordinance can reinforce those development patterns while protecting the County's rural character.

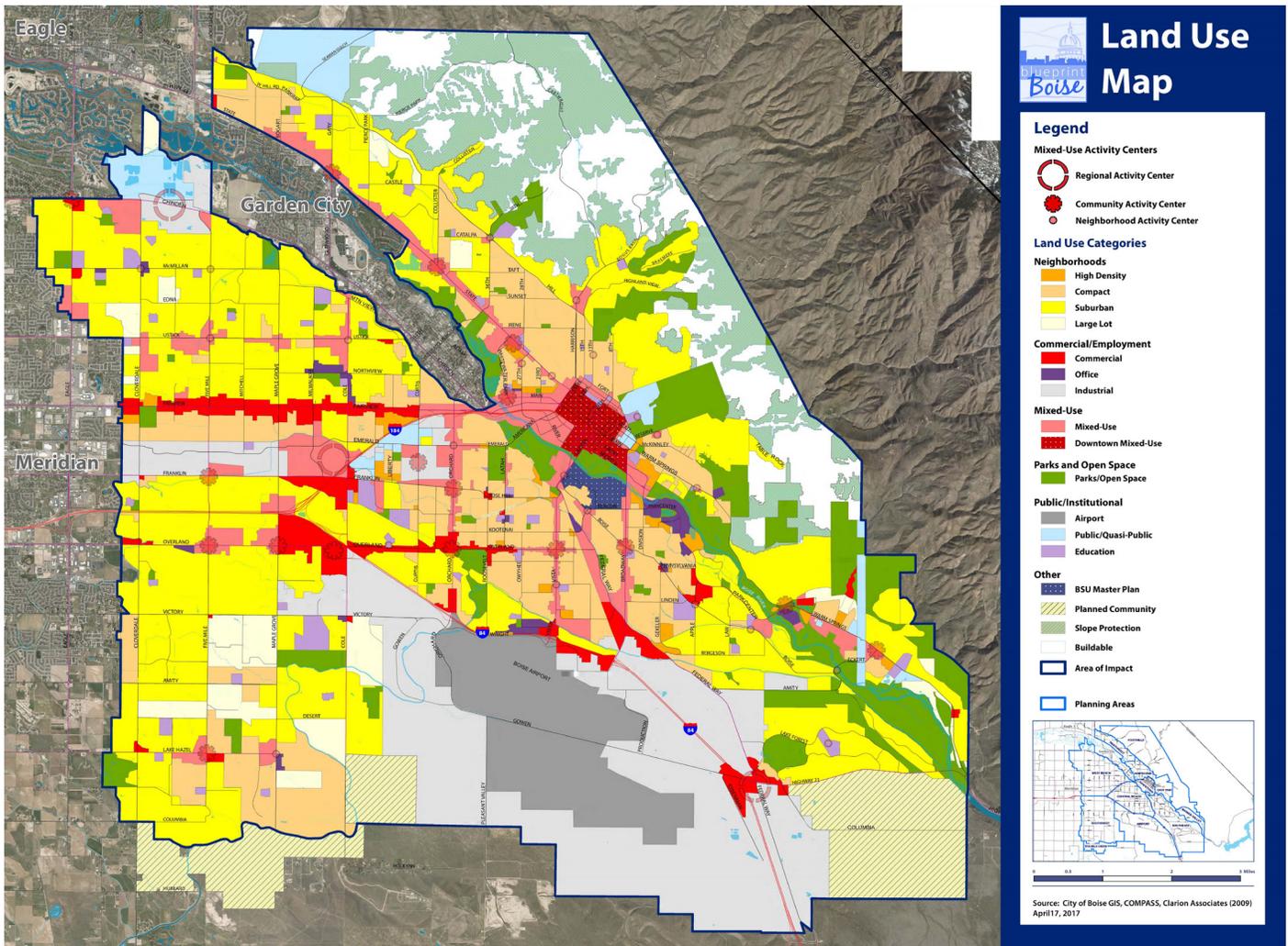


Figure 22. Boise Land Use Map

Meridian

The City of Meridian is a fast-growing city in the northwest part of Ada County. Development patterns in Meridian have a more suburban context than some of the other neighboring cities. The City anticipates significant growth as more people relocate to the region. Meridian wants orderly growth, but not at the expense of the City’s identity and quality of life.

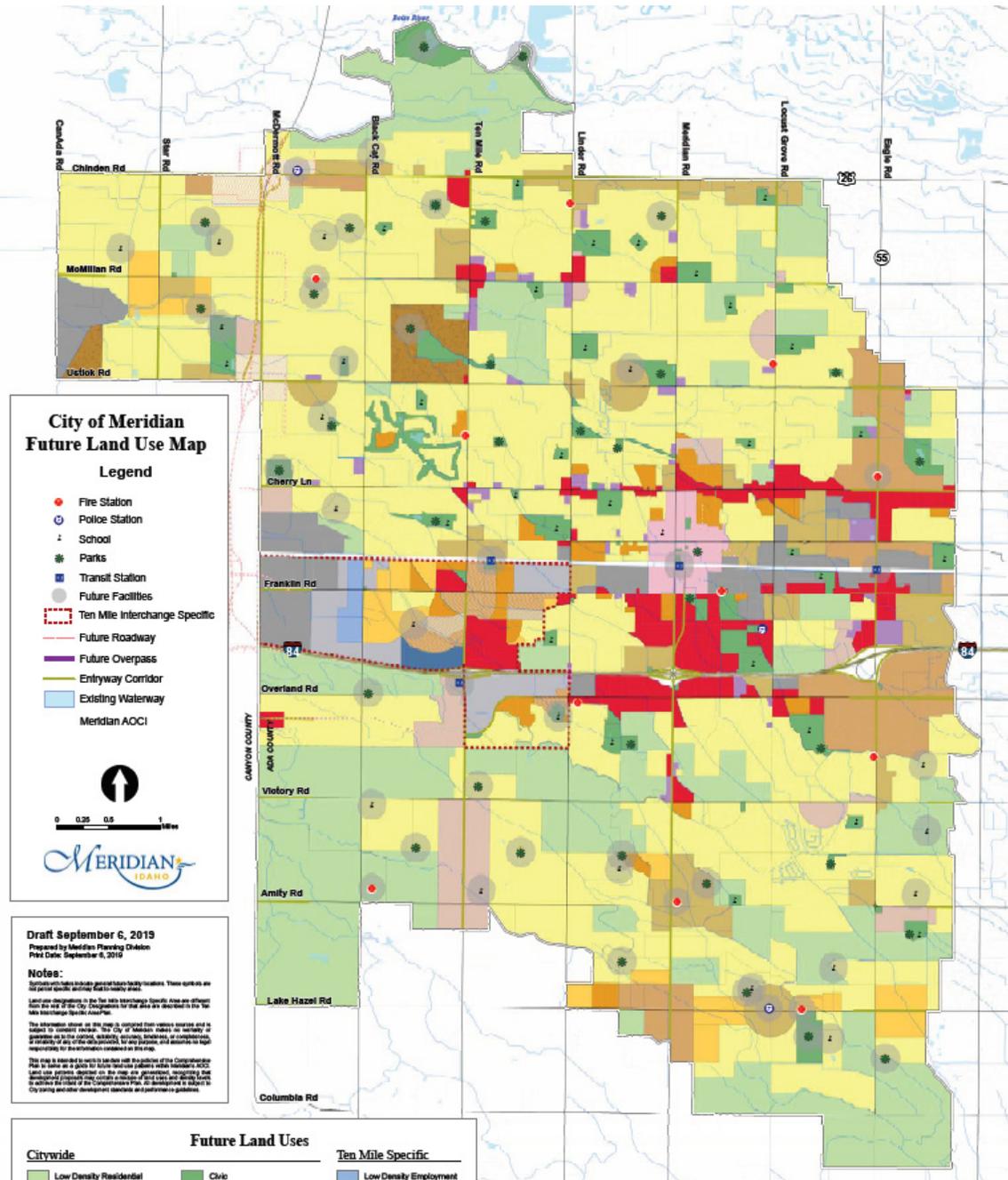


Figure 23. Meridian Future Land Use Map

Garden City

The City of Garden City is a small city in northern Ada County. Boise mostly surrounds Garden City, although the City borders fringe development to the north near the Foothills. The City expects growth but intends to maintain community assets, improve the City’s appearance, and provide amenities to increase development potential.

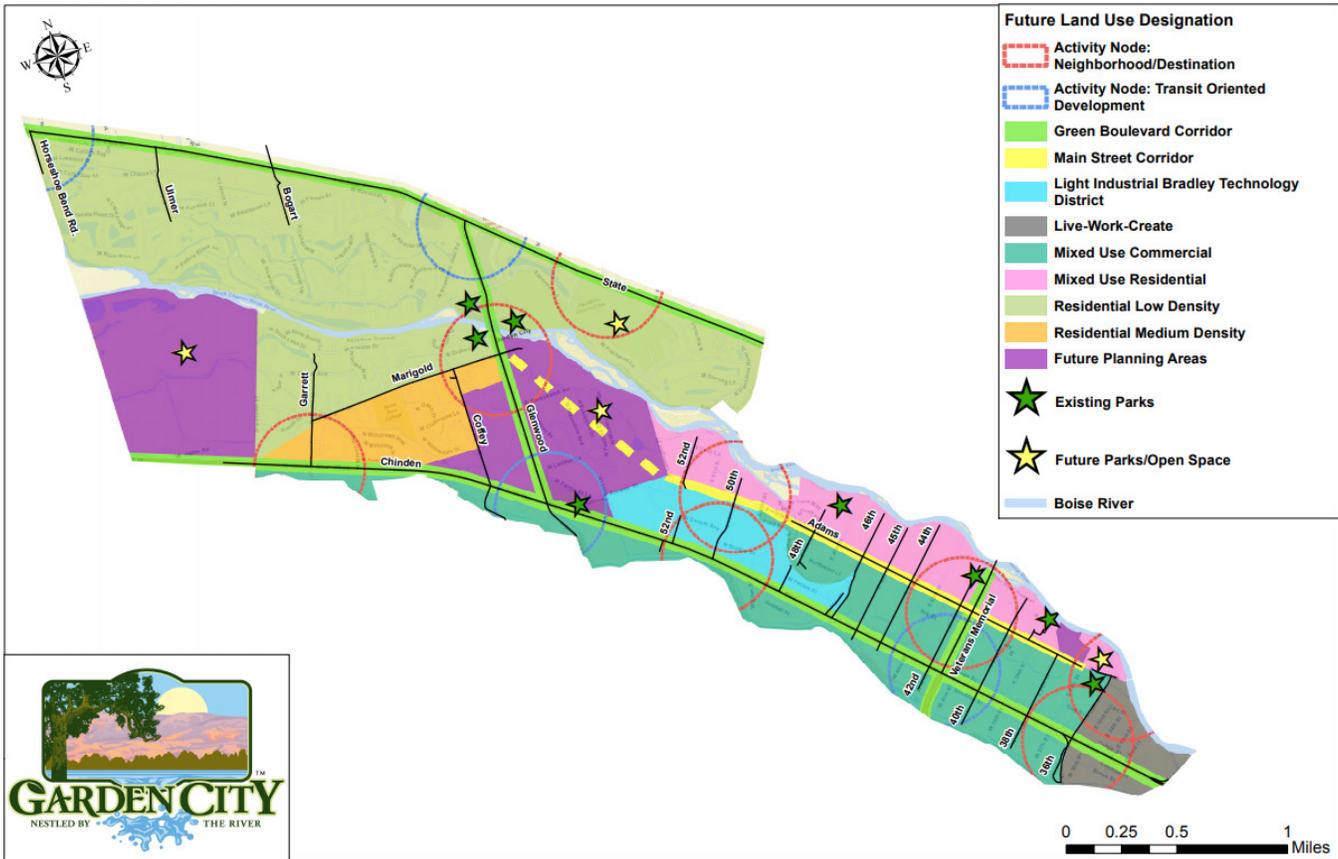


Figure 24. Garden City Land Use Map

Star

The City of Star is a small city in northwest Ada County. Like other cities in the County, Star is planning for significant growth increase. The City recently updated its comprehensive plan and wants to prepare for growth demands. Star seeks to protect and preserve natural resources, retain its small-town character, and strengthen its commercial base.

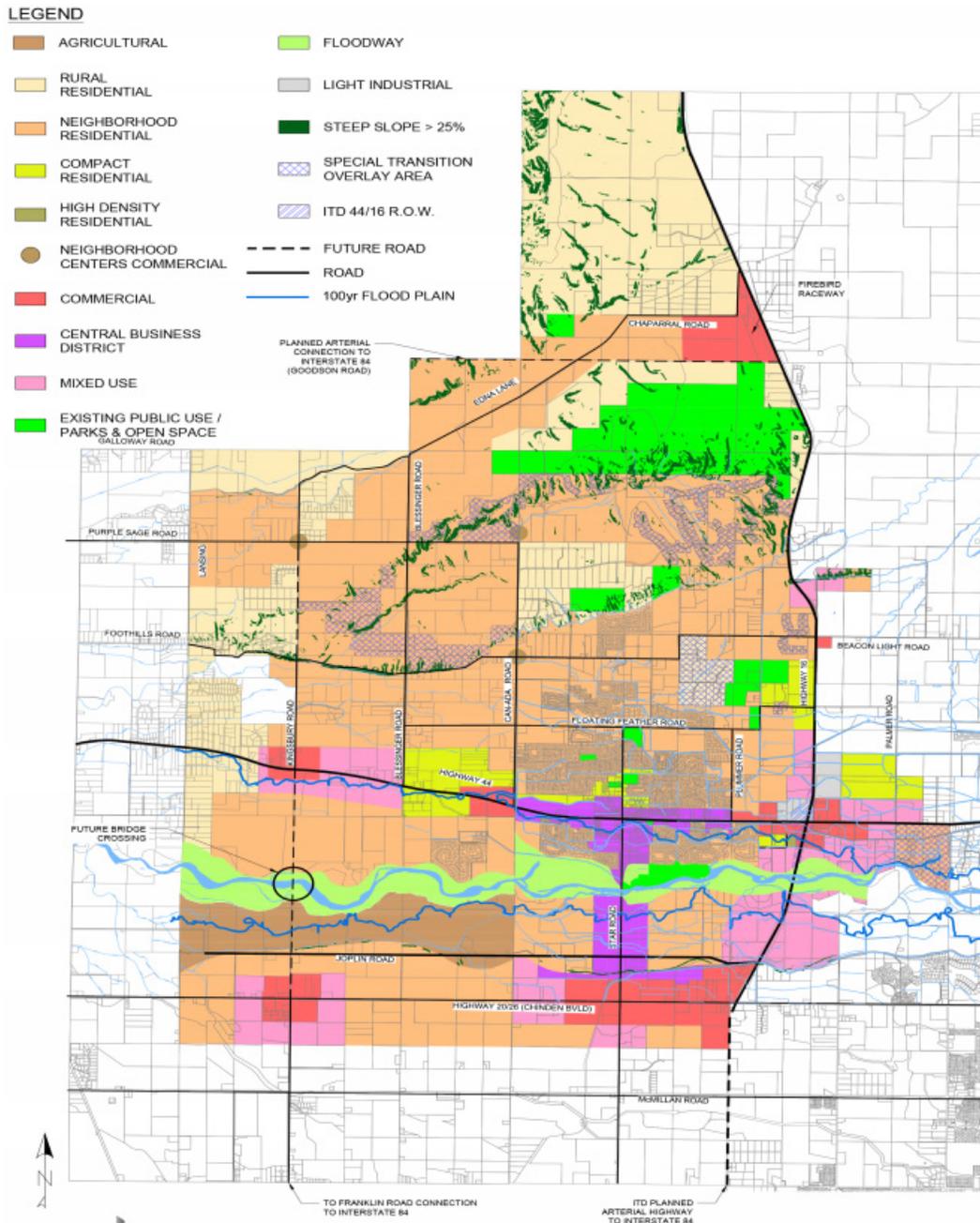


Figure 25. Star Land Use Map

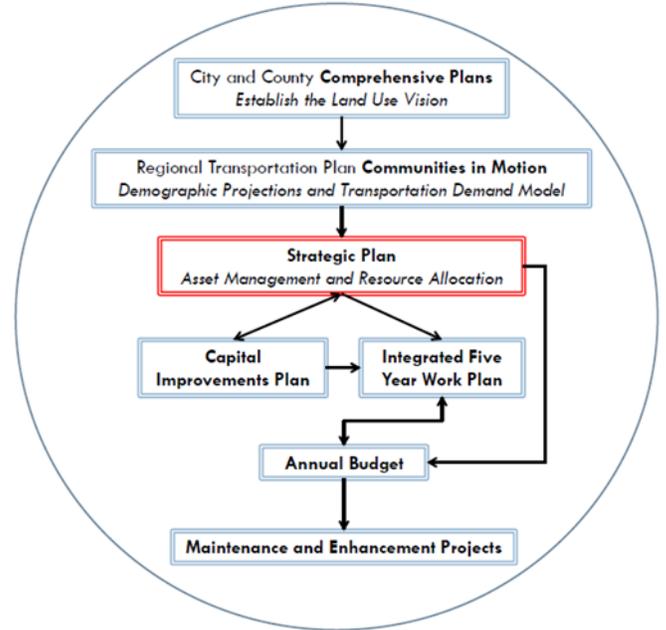
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APPENDIX D: REGIONAL PLANNING

Ada County Highway District

The Ada County Highway District (ACHD) provides critical services for the County as it oversees the County's main roadways. The ACHD is a separate entity from Ada County, but coordinates with Ada County, the six cities, and COMPASS on transportation issues. ACHD offers a variety of programs and services to improve transportation within the County, and proposes and implements strategic transportation plans. This affects the County's land use policies because the location, capacity and design of transportation facilities influences growth patterns. Likewise, zoning in the County's unincorporated areas affects the timing, intensity, and design of development that shapes demand for transportation facilities. An well-coordinated relationship between the ACHD and County can lead to effective and innovative ways to address transportation planning in a high growth county.

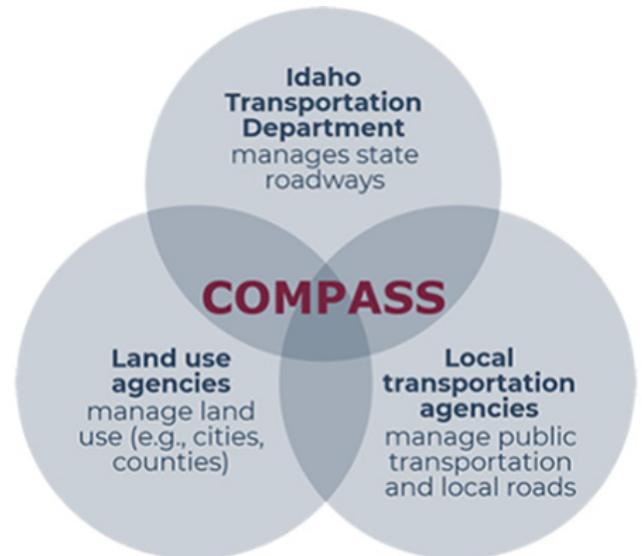
Where does this plan fit?



ACHD's Foundational Planning Documents: Bike Master Plan, Pedestrian Bicycle Transition Plan, Transportation Land Use Integration Plan including the Master Street Map, Livable Streets Design Guide and Complete Streets Policy

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS)

COMPASS, the area's local metropolitan planning organization, provides regional planning functions for Ada County. COMPASS offers planning policy assistance, develops regional transportation plans, facilitates regional cooperation, and handles federal transportation funds for the region. Like the ACHD, a positive relationship with COMPASS could help Ada County's Zoning Ordinance coordinate development practices and growth patterns with other jurisdictions in the region.



APPENDIX E: MILITARY IMPACT

In addition to Areas of City Impact, Ada County houses two military installations that are critical to national security and the State's daily missions. Section 8-3-E of the Zoning Ordinance controls development in Areas of Military Impact (AMI) in the County, but does not regulate military operations. Regulations within AMIs apply to new subdivisions and construction of residential, commercial, and industrial structures.

Gowen Field

Gowen Field is a joint military-civilian airport located in Boise. The County has limited regulatory experiences with Gowen Field as it is privy to Boise's regulations. Gowen Field runs five missions for the Idaho Air National Guard and the 124th Fighter Wing.

- Ground-Support: air support operations mission
- ISR: cyber systems mission
- Flying: fighter mission
- Ground-Support: command and control mission
- Special-Operations: tactical air control party mission

Noise impacts from Gowen Field's flight track patterns pose a significant risk to development patterns in the area. Although Gowen Field is in Boise's jurisdiction, Ada County should ensure that the Zoning Ordinance promotes land use compatibility for new development near Gowen Field. Revisions to the AMI regulations surrounding Gowen Field could address encroachment, dust, traffic, and other development issues.

Orchard Combat Training Center

The Orchard Combat Training Center is a military installation located in the southeastern part of Ada County (approximately 18 miles south of Boise). The Orchard Combat Training Center is home to the Idaho Army National Guard, where the overall mission is to maintain combat readiness and domestic emergency response capability. Ada County does not regulate activity related to the Orchard Combat Training Center operations. Historically, the Combat Training Center has been treated as its own entity and regulates itself as needed. Although the County has refrained from intervening with the Orchard Combat Training Center, there are future development implications in southern Ada County because the AMI overlay can regulate development outside of the Orchard Combat Training Center. Like Gowen Field, land use compatibility is important, and any new development should comply with AMI regulations. Any development that could have an adverse effect on the Orchard Combat Training Center should align with the Comprehensive Plan's policy to discourage development incompatible with the Center. The Zoning Ordinance could implement additional regulations to maintain land use compatibility near the Orchard Combat Training Center.

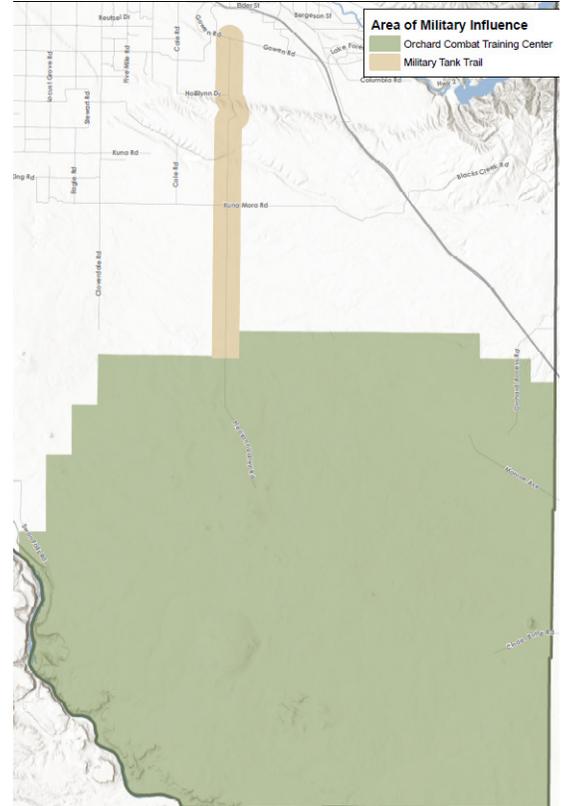


Figure 26. AMI (Orchard Combat Training Center) Map

APPENDIX F: REFERENCES

Best Practice Ordinances

- Wyandotte County, KS
 - <http://online.encodeplus.com/regs/kansascity-ks/>
- Mobile, AL
 - https://library.municode.com/al/mobile/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CICO_CH64ZO&show-Changes=true
- Raleigh, NC
 - <https://user-2081353526.cld.bz/UnifiedDevelopmentOrdinance>
- Boone County, IL
 - https://library.municode.com/il/boone_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CD_ORD_APXAZ-OOR
- Calaveras County, CA
 - https://library.municode.com/ca/calaveras_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CALAVERAS_CO_CALIFORNIA_MUNICIPAL_CODE_TIT17ZO
- Montgomery County, MD
 - http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm&vid=amlegal:montgomery-co_md_mc
- Spokane County, WA
 - <https://www.spokanecounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/19974/Spokane-County-Zoning-Code?bidId=>
- Nashville - Davidson County, TN
 - https://library.municode.com/tn/metro_government_of_nashville_and_davidson_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CD_TIT17ZO
- King County, WA
 - https://kingcounty.gov/council/legislation/kc_code/24_30_Title_21A.aspx
- Durham City-County, NC
 - <https://durham.municipal.codes/>
- Bentonville, AR
 - <http://www.bentonvillear.com/DocumentCenter/View/146/Art-601-Use-Regulations?bidId=>
- Auburn, WA
 - <https://auburn.municipal.codes/ACC/18.31.130>
- Auburn, AL
 - [https://www.auburnalabama.org/planningDocs/Zoning%20Ordinance/March%202016/Article%20IV%20%20\(3-22-2016\).pdf#15](https://www.auburnalabama.org/planningDocs/Zoning%20Ordinance/March%202016/Article%20IV%20%20(3-22-2016).pdf#15)
- Bloomington, MN
 - [http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Minnesota/bloomington_mn/partiicitycode/chapter21zoningandlanddevelopment?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:bloomington_mn\\$anc=-JD_21.302.03](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Minnesota/bloomington_mn/partiicitycode/chapter21zoningandlanddevelopment?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:bloomington_mn$anc=-JD_21.302.03)
- Grand County, UT
 - <https://www.codepublishing.com/UT/GrandCounty/>
- Howard County, MD
 - https://library.municode.com/md/howard_county/codes/zoning?nodeId=ZORECOHOMA
- Frederick, MD
 - http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Maryland/frederickco_md/frederickcountymarylandcodeo-

- fordinances?f=templates\$fn=default.htm\$3.0\$vid=amlegal:frederickco_md
- Sparks, Nevada
 - https://library.municode.com/nv/sparks/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT20ZOCO
- Napa County, CA
 - https://library.municode.com/ca/napa_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT18ZO
- Montgomery County, VA
 - https://montgomery.municipalcodeonline.com/book?type=ordinances#name=10_ZONING
- Loudoun County, VA
 - <https://www.loudoun.gov/DocumentCenter/View/99645/Revised-1993-Zoning-Ordinance?bidId=>
- Albuquerque, NM
 - <http://documents.cabq.gov/planning/IDO/IDO-Effective-2018-05-17.pdf>
- Portland, OR
 - <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/31612>
- Austin, TX
 - https://library.municode.com/tx/austin/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT25LADE_CH25-2ZO_SUBCHAPTER_EDESTMIUS_ART4MIUS
- Olathe, KS
 - <https://olathe.municipal.codes/UDO>
- Hillsborough County, FL
 - https://library.municode.com/fl/hillsborough_county/codes/land_development_code?nodeId=AR-TIVNAREADPUFA_PT4.02.00ADPUFA_S4.02.01GEPR
- Prince George's County, MD
 - <http://pgparks.com/1673/Adequate-Public-Facilities>
 - https://library.municode.com/md/prince_george's_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=P-TIITI17PULOLAPRGECOMA_SUBTITLE_24SU_DIV3REPLDEPUFA_S24-122PUFARE
- New Castle County, DE
 - see Site Capacity and Concurrency calculations at <http://czo.nccde.org/>
 - Level Of Service White Paper at <http://web.dscc.com/External/WCPages/WCWebContent/WebContent-Page.aspx?ContentID=3051>