
CITY OF SPRINGFIELD DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING AND PLANNING

PLANNING DIVISION

TO: CITY PLANNING BOARD, CEDA, CITY COMMISSION
FROM: HEATHER WHITMORE, PLANNING AND ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
SUBJECT: UPDATED CN-2
DATE: MARCH 8, 2007

Why Update CN-2?

In May 2006 the City Planning Board created the Smart Growth mixed-use zoning type of CN-2. Although the City Zoning Code provides a number of commercial zoning types, the Code lacks a commercial zoning type that mixes small-scale retail with neighborhood-oriented uses such as a restaurant, office, civic, and residential uses. This type of combination of uses is an ideal mix for infill lots not suitable for traditional residential or commercial redevelopment. Springfield's urban environment needs to provide for redevelopment options that are pedestrian accessible. Therefore, staff proposes the CN-2 zoning district to meet this need.

In order to fulfill the goals of the Unified Plan, staff has created an all inclusive zoning for the transitional downtown areas. This zoning provides for not commercial, office and residential, but accounts for industrial and single-family development. The updated CN-2 district serves as a mixed-use transitional area between high intensity central business district uses and residential uses. Light production, manufacturing, and assembly uses are permitted at appropriate transitional areas as conditional uses. Civic and neighborhood-oriented uses, as well as some residential, should be secondary functions of buildings in this district. All uses should be relatively nuisance-free to surrounding residents and not detract from the residential purpose and character of the surrounding neighborhood. Access to this district should be directly from an arterial or collector street.

Why "Smart Growth"?

About Smart Growth

According to the American Planning Association, in communities across the nation, there is a growing concern that current development patterns -- dominated by what some call "sprawl" -- are no longer in the long-term interest of our cities, existing suburbs, small towns, rural communities, or wilderness areas. Though supportive of growth, communities are questioning the economic costs of abandoning infrastructure in the city, only to rebuild it further out.

Spurring the smart growth movement are demographic shifts, a strong environmental ethic, increased fiscal concerns, and more nuanced views of

growth. The result is both a new demand and a new opportunity for smart growth.

The features that distinguish smart growth in a community vary from place to place. In general, smart growth invests time, attention, and resources in restoring community and vitality to center cities and older suburbs. New smart growth is more town-centered, is transit and pedestrian oriented, and has a greater mix of housing, commercial and retail uses. It also preserves open space and many other environmental amenities.

How does CN-2 differ from other commercial zoning districts?

It's totally mixed use! It allows the market to dictate uses, not the zoning. CN-2 offers general light production and assembly. CN-2 offers a small-scale mix of retail, restaurant, office, and residential not available in other zoning types. The zoning code presently offers the following commercial zoning types: CN-1 (Neighborhood Commercial), CO-1 (Commercial Office), CC-2 (Community Commercial), CI-1 (Commercial Intensive), and CH-1 (Commercial Highway). A quick comparison of these zoning types and CN-2 demonstrates why a CN-2 zoning district is necessary. CN-1 allows from grocery stores and some limited retail, such a bakery or gift store, but does not allow general retail and only very limited office. Restaurant uses in the CN-1 require a conditional use permit. CO-1 does not allow retail unless it is associated with an office and again requires a conditional use permit to open a restaurant. Both CN-1 and CO-1 allow residential on the top floor. CC-2 is an intense commercial zoning, allowing automotive uses and large-scale retail development. CC-2 does not allow the development of supportive civic spaces or residential. CI-1 and CH-1 are both designed for high intensity commercial and pseudo-industrial development. CN-2 allows general small-scale retail, office, and restaurant uses without requiring a conditional use permit. Residences are provisional uses as second story units. Other neighborhood uses, such as a Laundromat day-care center are conditional uses. The attached highlighted CN-2 zoning text shows how the uses are a combination taken from other zoning types.

Will CN-2 downzone or out zone properties?

The only prohibited uses in CN-2 are high intensity uses that would be in the M-2 district and high intensity automobile oriented uses. These uses are not appropriate for a "smart growth" environment. We do not want nuisance uses next to neighborhood commercial or mixed use uses.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) Approval of Updated CN-2, Commercial Neighborhood District 2
- 2) Approval of Case #07-Z-11 – Request for a change in zoning for certain parcels generally bound by Cedar and North (between the two) on the north and W. Columbia Street on the north, Jefferson Street and Mulberry Street on the south, Spring Street on the east, and Wittenberg and Race Street; also certain parcels bound by Park Rd/Buck Creek on the north, Grant Street on the east and south (where Grant St. and Yellow Springs connect at the Y inter-section), and Yellow Springs Street on the west (again where Grant and Yellow Springs connect at the Y intersection) to CN-2, Neighborhood Commercial District and UPOD, Unified Plan Overlay District.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Unified Plan
2. Updated CN-2
3. Unified Plan Zoning Map