

PLANNING AND ZONING CODE UPDATE

Code Diagnosis and Proposed Outline | December 20, 2021

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this diagnosis is to provide a detailed documentation of the strengths and weaknesses of the current City of Fairfield Planning and Zoning Code. This report intends to identify potential approaches to the existing deficiencies in the current regulations, and to provide a proposed outline for the new code's structure. This diagnosis and outline are based on discussions with city staff, leadership, boards and commission members, the project advisory committee, and our review of the existing regulations.

It is important to keep in mind that this diagnosis does not necessarily identify every issue or individual problem with the existing code but tries to focus on the broader issues that will need direction from the city prior to our drafting of the updated planning and zoning code.

The document is organized into three main sections:

✧ **Part One:** Goals for the Update

Summarizes the clear themes or goals for the update process and provides an overview of each goal, including recommendations for how to address that item.

✧ **Part Two:** Analysis of the Current Regulations

A section-by-section review of the current code with a summary of the proposed changes to either the organization or the substance of that section.

✧ **Part Three: Proposed Code Outline and Template**

An outline of the proposed organization of the updated planning and zoning code and sample pages of the new code's design template.

PART ONE: GOALS FOR THE UPDATE

Three clear themes or goals for the update process emerged after discussions with city staff, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Advisory Committee. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of each goal and include options or recommendations for how to address that item. The major themes include:

- ✧ **Goal 1: Reorganize and Reformat the Code**
- ✧ **Goal 2: Modernize and Improve Development Regulations**
- ✧ **Goal 3: Implement the Fairfield Forward Comprehensive Plan**

Goal 1: Reorganize and Reformat the Code

The format of the code is very typical of the those written in the early 1980's. Like many other codes from that time, the Fairfield Planning and Zoning Code still contains language from its original iteration. However, as we progress and codes are modernized, both the content and their formats are too. Fairfield should consider the following changes to make it easier to find standards, procedures, and generally improve the ease of use of the code.

Modernize Format

To improve the overall usability and organization of the code, we recommend utilizing a more modern zoning code format that focuses on the use of headers and footers, page numbers, clear organization, tables, cross-references, and hyperlink buttons in the footers. These organizational strategies will assist users in finding the specific information that they are looking for without having to search page by page. We will also provide an editable word document of the updated code at the end of the process to allow for easy amendment and changes by city staff.

In addition to improving the format of the code, we will reorganize the sections and content within the code to ensure that the document is organized in a logical order.

Usability is improved when the sections are ordered so that the most used chapters are at the front of the code (i.e., zoning districts and use standards) and lesser used chapters are at the end of it (administration and definitions). The proposed outline of the updated code is located in Part Three of this document. Additionally, example pages of the proposed code template are also provided to provide a preview of what the new code will look like.

Illustrating Key Concepts

Modern codes explain and summarize development standards, permitted uses, and procedures using tables, illustrations, and flow charts where possible. There are several regulations such as lot components, parking, fencing, and signage that will benefit from the inclusion of graphics. Illustrations and photos can often describe the required or desired relationship among development standards, adjacent uses, or dimensions much quicker than words alone. The city's existing regulations do not use the illustrations or photos, so it is our proposal to add graphics and embed them directly into the ordinance so they can be referenced appropriately.

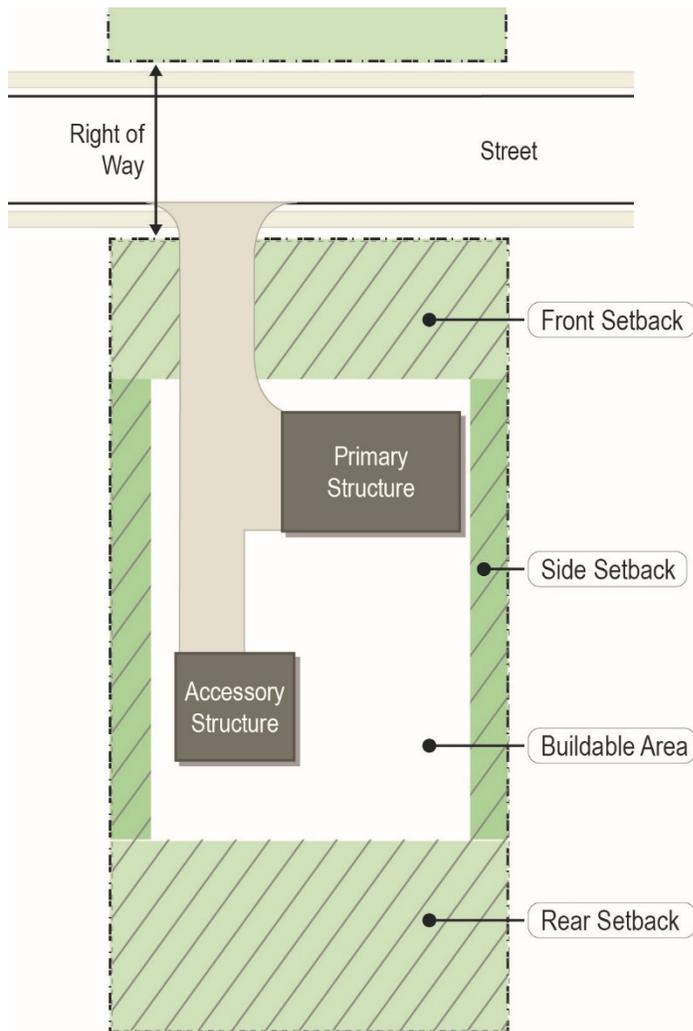


Figure 1: Graphic Example
Sample graphic illustrating dimensional standards for a single family property.

Formatting and Capitalization Styles

We recommend following the Chicago Manual of Style for formatting and capitalizations in the updated code. For this style, we capitalize proper nouns and names, formal titles, and formal document names, such as the City of Fairfield Planning and Zoning Code and City of Fairfield Planning Commission. We will not capitalize names and titles that are not coupled with a proper name or title, such as planning commission, city council, zoning code, and city.

For numbering, we will write out all numbers zero to nine and use numerical numbers for 10 and above. This will be true for all text. In tables, graphics, or images, numerical numbers will be used throughout regardless of quantity.

Goal 2: Modernize and Improve Development Regulations

A priority of the code update is to maintain and improve the quality of development, while making standards easier to understand. This can be done by upgrading the existing development standards and integrating new standards as needed. Specific recommendations follow:

Signage

The signage regulations in the code will be updated to conform to recent legal court cases in addition to enhancing the regulations for signs. The 2015 court case *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* and a United States Supreme Court ruling have restricted the ability for local governments to regulate the content of signs. The size, height, and location may be regulated, but a local government cannot have different regulations based on what the sign says or the purpose of the sign. In short, if a sign needs to be read in order to determine what regulations apply, then the regulation is based on the content of the sign and may violate first amendment rights. The city's current sign regulations include content-based restrictions including construction signs and real estate signs. We are proposing to remove the content-based sign regulations from the code, while also enhancing existing regulations by instituting material standards, landscaping requirements, reducing sign types, updating lighting standards, and other similar elements.

We recommend that the city consider prohibiting or significantly reducing the allowance for new pole signs (as illustrated in the left picture of Figure 2). Frequent pole signs along commercial corridors lead to increased visual clutter, making it harder for travelers along the road to see specific signs. This is partly due to pole signs being at a higher height, similar to parking lot lights, traffic poles and lights, and utility poles. By bringing signs lower the ground (as illustrated in the right picture of Figure 2), signs can still provide the advertisement and visibility that businesses are looking for, without contributing to the visual clutter of the corridor.



Figure 2. The sign on the right is a low-profile ground sign that is located in a landscape bed and uses a mix of modern materials. The picture on the left is of a multitude of pole signs without landscaping.

The size, design, and scale of signs can also be determined by the size of a development or property. It makes sense for a larger, multi-tenant development to be allowed to have a larger sign that would accommodate advertising for all, or a majority, of the tenants in the development. These types of signs are typically referred to as multi-tenant development signs and examples are provided below. These types of signs would be appropriate along Route 4 and in other areas of the city that have a concentration of commercial uses. The city can also require a level of design of these signs to ensure that they are attractive by requiring them to be constructed out of quality building materials and located in landscaping.



Figure 3. Examples of multi-tenant development signs

If the city chooses to change these sign regulations as discussed, the existing pole signs within the city would be permitted to remain for as long as the property owner desires. The regulations would apply, though, if an existing sign is taken down. At that point then, a new pole sign would not be allowed, or would have to comply with the updated pole sign regulations.

Digital signs and electronic message signs are another topic that will be addressed in the updated regulations. These types of signs are very valuable and desirable for business owners as they can advertise specials, deals, or events without purchasing banners or other temporary signs that can clutter a property. Digital signs, though, can be overwhelming and distracting to travelers along a road. Due to all of this, we will continue to work with the city on the most appropriate electronic sign regulations for Fairfield. We are anticipating at this time that we will expand the current digital sign regulations, but only for portions of a sign and only in certain areas. The details of these regulations will be thoroughly fleshed out during the drafting of Module 2.

Additionally, in order to allow for the businesses in Fairfield to have the same opportunities as neighboring jurisdictions, we have compiled a summary of the digital sign regulations from Fairfield’s adjacent cities and townships. This is intended to be a reference as we continue to review and evaluate this topic.

Summary of Digital Sign Regulations	
Fairfield Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No flashing, intermittent, rotating or moving light or lights.
Forest Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require Planning Commission approval. The Planning Commission may modify the size and/or location, or deny the sign based upon considerations such as traffic safety, compatibility with other signs, or whether it is viewable from any residence.
Forest Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed only on permitted multi-family uses and non-residential uses in Residential zoning districts, and on all uses in the Business, Industrial, Downtown, Main Street, and Commerce Park Districts. Area bonuses up to 25% for incorporating a changeable copy sign into a freestanding or wall sign.
Hamilton Township	

- Electronic message signs are permitted on ground and pole signs for public and institutional uses.
- Not permitted on wall, projecting, or plaque signs.
- The dynamic portion of an electronic message sign may not exceed more than 40 percent of the permitted sign area.
- One electronic sign per parcel.
- No flashing, intermittent, rotating, or moving light or lights.
- No sign shall be placed so as to cause glare or reflection that may constitute a traffic hazard or nuisance.

Liberty Township

- Digital reader signs may be permitted in the B-2 zoning districts.
- Digital reader signs shall be limited to ground signs only and shall not exceed 25 percent of the square footage of the sign area.
- Sign changes no more than every 10 seconds.
- There shall be no effects of movement, flashing, scintillation, or similar effects in the individual images.
- Video technology in signs shall use automatic level controls at reduce light levels at night and under cloudy or other darkened conditions.

Ross Township

- Currently working on regulations, using Butler County Regulations as of now.
- Same regulations as a ground sign.
- Electronic message and reader boards are considered as part of the permitted display area of a sign.
- Sign changes no more than every five seconds.

Sharonville

- Electronic signs are conditionally permitted in business, industrial and public facilities districts. Requires a Conditional Use Permit.
- No animated, revolving, or moving signs.
- No temporary signs can include electronic message

West Chester Township

- Signs which employ electronic message changes are prohibited.
- Manual message changes and repositioning of panels are permitted and do not require a Zoning Certificate for manual or electronic changeable copy signs or sign areas such as reader boards, menu boards, bulletin boards, and marquees.
- Reader boards and electronic message boards are considered as part of the permitted display area of a sign.

- Sign changes no more than every five seconds.
- The business name must be prominently displayed at all times and in the same location on either the reader board or permanent sign.

Parking and Loading Standards

The updated code will include a modernized off-street parking and loading section that will address parking requirements, paving standards, cross-parking agreements, bicycle parking, and other circulation and loading issues appropriate for Fairfield.

Parking demand has evolved over the recent decades, as well as the way communities regulate parking requirements. We anticipate providing both minimum and maximum parking space requirements for allowed uses within the code. This could be supplemented with the ability for administrative waivers of minor parking adjustments, providing for shared parking situations, electric vehicle parking requirements, and other similar strategies to accommodate the vast array of parking demands from different users across the city.

Goal 3: Implement the Comprehensive Plan

The city's recently adopted comprehensive plan includes several goals, policies, and implementation strategies that can be implemented through regulations contained within the planning and zoning code. These goals, policies, and strategies are categorized under Land Use and Zoning (LUZ), Small Area Plan (RC, TC, JGP, SGM), Appearance and Visual Character (VC), Housing and Neighborhoods (HN), Transportation (T), Economic Development (ED), Public Services (PS), Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PRO), Intergovernmental Coordination (IC), and Sustainability (S).

Below are sample goals, policies, and strategies, this list is not inclusive of all the policies within the plan that relate to planning and zoning.

1. **Goal VC 1:** Enhance the city's appearance and visual character through effective urban design improvements.
 - a. **Policy 1.1** – Require utility lines be located underground when new development or large-scale redevelopment occurs.
 - b. **Policy 1.3** – Establish and promote a uniform streetscape program to include plantings, sidewalk treatment, lighting and coordinated public signage.
 - c. **Policy 1.6** – Promote high visual quality by requiring quality standards in urban design, construction, public infrastructure, and appearance.

These goals and policies can be implemented through the subdivision standards, landscaping regulations, and building design regulations.

2. **Goal VC 2:** Enhance the city's appearance and visual character through the reduction of improved off-street parking areas and supporting interior landscaping requirements.
 - a. **Policy 2.1:** Explore revising the off-street parking standards in the zoning code to identify the appropriate number of spaces for uses to prevent excessive and unnecessary parking spaces and, as a result, excessive lot coverage.
 - b. **Policy 2.2:** Explore enhancing the requirements for interior and exterior landscaping and screening for off-street parking areas.

These goals and policies can be implemented through updates to the code's parking and loading regulations for new development and redevelopment projects.

3. **Strategy VC-1:** Develop a design guidelines manual or establish requirements in the city's zoning code that require specific design regulations for private property structures and signage.

This strategy can be implemented by including design standards in the zoning code to give a land developers design options for their buildings while complying with architectural details that the city accepts.

4. **Goal HN 1:** Protect and preserve existing residential neighborhoods.
 - a. **Policy 1.2:** Ensure that adequate buffering is established to protect neighborhoods from incompatible land uses and development.

This goal and policy can be implemented by requiring non-residential developments and uses that are proposed adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods to screen and buffer adequately.

5. **Goal HN 2:** Encourage a range of housing choices and types that satisfy market demand and let residents continue to live in Fairfield across different life cycle stages for current and future residents.
 - a. **Policy 2.2:** Allow opportunities for residents to live and work within close proximity.
 - b. **Policy 2.3:** Encourage walkable neighborhoods, with appropriate levels of sustainable density, close to centers of activity (schools, retail, service, etc.) in appropriate areas.

This goal and these policies can be implemented within the zoning and subdivision codes by permitting different housing types throughout the zoning code. Including sidewalk requirements and street connection points into the subdivision requirements can help with walkability in neighborhoods.

6. **Goal T-4:** Provide for safe non-motorized routes to schools and other activity centers.
 - a. **Policy 4.1:** Establish a pedestrian system that reduces conflicts between students walking and bicycling, and motor vehicles.

This goal and policy can be introduced into the subdivision code to require the inclusion of sidewalks and multi-use trails, when new development occurs, that can connect places where people live and places where people go.

7. **Strategy ED-6:** Revise existing zoning regulations for areas close to centers of activity to permit higher densities, allow for a mixture of uses, and establish design guidelines for all major commercial areas in the city.

This strategy can be implemented by including specific housing types in commercial zoning districts to allow for mixed use or residential developments to complement existing commercial uses.

8. **Strategy S-3:** Revise the zoning code, as applicable, to require landscaping and trees on private property as part of development/redevelopment approval.

This strategy can be implemented in the zoning code with the implementation of a landscaping chapter to require trees along the public right-of-way and other parts of private property, including parking lots and buffer areas.

There are other plan goals, policies, and strategies that can be accomplished with the help of having a code that is up to date and in alignment with the plan, where feasible. In addition to these, the plan indicates special details regarding development, redevelopment, and other opportunities in four small areas of the city, the Route 4 Corridor, the Town Center, John Gray/Pleasant, and South Gilmore/Mack. The recommendations for these areas will be reviewed and implemented into the zoning requirements where applicable and feasible.



Figure 4: Key Recommendations of the Town Center Small Area. Illustration identifies potential land use redevelopment in the Fairfield Town Center.

PART TWO: ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT REGULATIONS

Part Two of this document sets forth a section-by-section review of the current city planning and zoning code and proposes changes to either the organization or the substance of the section. These proposals are based on our assessment of the code and discussions with city staff, the advisory committee, and city board and commission members. The intent of this section is not to provide line-by-line edits, but rather to identify key issues that may need to be addressed in the update process. Due to the organization of the existing code, multiple chapters have been grouped under overarching themes such as administration, subdivision, and zoning districts/uses.

General

The chapters that are included here are:

- Chap. 1131. Title; Scope; Purpose.

This section includes the introductory and general purpose language for the code. This information will be re-located from its current location in the code (after the subdivision regulations) to the beginning of the document. The content will also be expanded to include additional language about conformance to the code regulations, severability language, transition rules for moving from the existing code to the updated code, how to interpret graphics and illustrations, and an overview of how the code is organized and set up. The new language is intended to clarify how the code should be used, implemented, and interpreted.

Definitions

The chapter that is included here is:

- Chap. 1133. Definitions.

This section includes the planning and zoning code's definitions. The definitions will be reviewed and updated to align with the code's updated content and terminology, new definitions will be added as needed, and obsolete definitions will be removed. We will add specificity to existing terms as needed to reduce vagueness. We also propose relocating the definitions to the end of the code, similar to a glossary in a book. As mentioned in Part One of this document, it is more user-friendly to locate the most used

chapters at the front of the code (i.e., zoning districts and use standards) and lesser used chapters at the end of it (subdivision, administration, and definitions).

To address the different categories of definitions, we could add sections within the definitions chapter to group like definitions. For instance, the subdivision, source water protection, storm drainage, wireless and cellular communications, and airport definitions could have separate sections to make finding and referencing topic-specific definitions easier.

Zoning Districts and Uses

The chapters that are included here are:

- Chap. 1141. Districts and Boundaries.
- Chap. 1143. Effects of Districting; General Regulations.
- Chap. 1144. Wireless and Cellular Telecommunications Towers and Facilities.
- Chap. 1145. A-1 Agricultural and Estate Residence District.
- Chap. 1147. R-0 One-Family Residence District.
- Chap. 1149. R-1 One-Family Residence District.
- Chap. 1151. R-2 One to Four Family Residence District.
- Chap. 1153. R-3 Multi-Family Residence District.
- Chap. 1155. R-4 Low Density Multi-Family Residence District.
- Chap. 1157. C-1 Neighborhood Business District.
- Chap. 1159. C-2 Central Business District.
- Chap. 1165. C-3 General Business District.
- Chap. 1167. C-3A General Business District Modified.
- Chap. 1168. D-1 Downtown District.
- Chap. 1169. M-1 Industrial Park District.
- Chap. 1171. SE Suburban Entertainment District.
- Chap. 1172. Service Transition Commercial/Industrial District.
- Chap. 1173. M-2 General Industrial District.
- Chap. 1174. D-1A Downtown District Modified.
- Chap. 1177. B-1 Institutions and Office District.
- Chap. 1179. C-4 Commercial Transition District.
- Chap. 1180. Exceptions and Modifications.
- Chap. 1181. Performance Standards.
- Chap. 1185. Trailer and Trailer Parks; Motels; Motor Hotels.
- Chap. 1186. Yard Sales.
- Chap. 1189. Motor Vehicle Service Stations; Garages; Parking Areas.

- Chap. 1193. Swimming Pools.
- Chap. 1195. Extraction of Minerals.
- Chap. 1196. Excavating and Filling of Land.
- Chap. 1197. Conversion of Dwellings.

This section includes the establishment of the city’s zoning districts, the general zoning regulations, and the district-specific regulations. We propose to completely reorganize these chapters to establish better document flow and organization as well as make sure similar district regulations are located next to each other, rather than multiple chapters apart such as the M-1 and M-2 Industrial Districts. The changes proposed include updating and modernizing the list of permitted uses along with in what district(s) they are permitted, permitted with standards, or conditionally permitted.

Some aspects from the existing zoning district standards, such as buffering and screening requirements, will be re-located to proposed Title Five of the new code, which will include the development standards, parking and loading, landscaping, and buffering, signage, and lighting. Additionally, each zoning district will get a dedicated spread in the updated code that addresses that district’s purpose, uses, and dimensional standards. We will also include graphic illustrations that depict typical development scenarios for each zoning district. This is illustrated in the code template in Part Three of this document.

Districts and Use Updates

The names of the zoning districts will likely remain the same, however the number of districts may be changed to reflect the combination of some districts. For example, there are three zoning districts related to the “Downtown” or the “Central Business District” which we propose to be referred to as “Town Center” in the updated code to align with the city’s comprehensive plan. We will continue to work with city staff during this process to determine the appropriate terminology and number of districts.

The uses and standards applicable to the districts will be reviewed and updated, as currently there is a significant amount of specific and outdated land uses. For example, in the industrial districts the following uses are currently permitted or conditionally permitted: ammonia, chlorine, or bleaching powder manufacturing; celluloid or pyroxyline manufacturing; and cement, lime, gypsum, or plaster of Paris manufacturing. A comprehensive permitted use table will be crafted in order to easily understand what land uses are allowed in each zoning district, and what is required in order to develop something to a quality that Fairfield is expecting.

Accessory Uses and Structures

Based on conversations with city staff, planning commission, and the board of zoning appeals, there are currently challenges with the fence and accessory building regulations. The top two variances requested in the city are for fences and accessory buildings. The fence standards are very particular, restrictive, and challenging to understand. Additionally, the section is found in the Exceptions and Modifications chapter, which makes the regulations difficult to find. Accessory buildings currently have a maximum allowed size of 500 square feet, regardless of the size of the lot or rear yard. This has shown to be an issue for property owners in Fairfield. We are proposing to update the size allowance and number of accessory structures to account for different sized lots, rear yards, and zoning districts. These regulations will be located in the “Use Regulations” chapter as part of the “Accessory Uses and Structures” section.

Use Specific Standards

We are proposing to develop use-specific standards for certain permitted uses that have unique aspects or require different review criteria. This could allow changing some conditionally permitted uses to permitted uses with standards, thus allowing the city to apply good design and development practices to uses, while making the development approval process simpler. There are very few conditions placed upon the conditional uses within this code, so we would recommend the city evaluate the permitted and conditional uses to determine which uses could be changed from conditionally permitted to permitted with standards.

Mixed Uses

In addition, the code update should address mixed use developments. The code could establish “Mixed Use” as a permitted, permitted with standards, or conditionally permitted use in certain zoning districts. Use-specific standards may be needed for certain zoning districts or locations, such as the Town Center, to limit the size and scale of mixed use projects. This could allow for the redevelopment of existing commercial centers to include residential uses that previously would not have been allowed.

Supplementary and Special Uses

The code’s supplementary and special uses will be reviewed and updated. These include, but are not limited to, the city’s wireless and cellular telecommunications towers and facilities, trailer and trailer parks, extraction of minerals, and excavating and filling of land. The motor vehicle service stations, garages, and parking area regulations will be relocated to the use-specific standards. We will work with the city’s legal counsel to ensure that the standards associated with these uses are modernized, while still meeting all applicable state and federal laws.

Development and Design Standards

The chapters that are included here are:

- Chap. 1182. Stormwater Management Requirements.
- Chap. 1183. Off-Street Loading and Parking.
- Chap. 1184. Sidewalks.
- Chap. 1187. Signs.

Parking

As discussed in Part One of this document, the parking section of the code will be updated, modernized, and right sized. The parking table will include minimums and maximum parking space allowances. An updated parking requirement table will be created to ensure that the uses align with the permitted use table and that the parking standards are appropriately established.

Loading, access, parking space size, pavement types, etc. will also be reviewed and updated to reflect modern standards and make sure best practices are reflected.

Signage

Part One of this document discussed how the regulation of signage has been significantly affected by recent court decisions such as *Reed v. Gilbert*. We will update the signage regulations so that they conform with all legal requirements from state and federal laws. Additionally, the sign section will be re-organized to make regulations easier to understand and use. This will include creating a table of permitted sign types, which shows where they are allowed, and what the size and location requirements are. This table will incorporate illustrations of different sign types as well as modernize the design and size standards.

Landscaping

The current code has minimal landscaping regulations and relies heavily on the prospect of applicants submitting planned unit development applications in order to achieve a certain standard of landscaping. We are proposing to add a separate landscaping section to the code in order to have established standards for any new applications or redevelopment projects. Landscape standards both add to the aesthetic visual qualities of a site and positively impact environmental concerns onsite by including stormwater permeation and avoiding heat islands. The landscaping regulations will also provide buffering and screening requirements for non-compatible adjacent land uses, along with parking lot perimeter landscaping, right-of-way screening, foundation plantings, and other similar standards. These sections will be

carefully crafted with city staff and community stakeholders to create appropriate regulations that enhance developments without burdening property owners.

Lighting

There is currently very little regulation for lighting in the code when it comes to private property. There are regulations for the lighting of signs and swimming pools, however commercial lighting standards are very simple. We recommend expanding on the city's current lighting standards to address permitted fixture types, height limitations, dark sky/light trespass requirements. Different areas of the city such as commercial areas, industrial parks, corridors, and mixed use developments can have varying standards in order to complement different development patterns and intensities throughout the city.

Special Districts/Overlays

The chapters that are included here are:

- Chap. 1191. Planned Unit Developments.
- Chap. 1192. Source Water Protection Program.
- Chap. 1194. Airport Zoning.
- Chap. 1199. Flood Damage Reduction.

This section includes various special districts and the zoning overlays within the city. We are proposing to update the language and standards in the existing overlays while also creating new overlays for some specific areas of the city. Based on the recommendations of the Fairfield Forward Comprehensive Plan, overlay districts are recommended for the four study areas in the plan (Route 4 Corridor, Town Center, John Gray/Pleasant, and South Gilmore/Mack). These overlay districts will be customized for the unique characteristics of each area, and may include building design, building materials, massing, building and parking location, enhanced landscaping and screening requirements, and other similar standards that reflect the goals for that district.

Additionally, we will update the PUD Chapter to include clear requirements in terms of usable open space areas for a variety of uses, and clear direction for the quality and types of developments that are appropriate as PUDs. The Source Water Protection Program, Airport Zoning, and Flood Damage Reduction Chapters will be reviewed and updated based on further discussions with staff and applicable stakeholders. We will attempt to streamline procedures or processes where possible and clarify standards where needed.

Subdivision Regulations

The chapters that are included here are:

- Chap. 1101. Introduction and General Interpretation.
- Chap. 1105. Requirements for Subdivision Approval.
- Chap. 1109. Improvement Plan.
- Chap. 1113. Construction Requirements.
- Chap. 1117. Storm Drainage and Sediment Control.
- Chap. 1121. Sanitary Sewers and Water Supply.
- Chap. 1125. Electric and Communication Utilities.
- Chap. 1129. Street Trees.

This section deals with the city's subdivision requirements that are coupled with the zoning district standards that are located within that section of the planning and zoning code. As previously mentioned, the zoning district area requirements will be reviewed and discussed prior to updating the subdivision regulations. As subdivision requests are generally applied for less often than a zoning request, we are proposing that this section gets moved from the beginning of the code to the proposed Title Seven towards the back of the code.

The subdivision part of the code currently lists out all the required plat notes in the text, which not only takes up space, but is not particularly easy to find and even change if necessary. We recommend taking the required notes out of the planning and zoning code so that making any change to the notes does not always require changing the zoning code, but simply can be maintained over time as living notes for all future subdivisions. These can be available on the city's website and as handouts, which could be provided for all those applying for subdivision. The subdivision section will be discussed with legal counsel to ensure the compliance of all subdivision standards granted from the State of Ohio to the city.

Administrative and Process

The chapters that are included here are:

- Chap. 1135. Enforcement and Penalty.
- Chap. 1137. Board of Zoning Appeals.
- Chap. 1139. Amendments.
- Chap. 1198. Nonconforming Uses.

This section includes the chapters related to the administration of the city's planning and zoning code and the city's review and approval bodies. We propose to re-organize

these existing chapters to streamline and make this information easier to understand. This section will include specific processes such as conditional uses, variances, site plans, etc. as well as the procedures that follow after submittal of an application. We will create a summary table that identifies the planning processes in the city (site plans, conditional uses, zone changes, variances, etc.) and the hearing and approval bodies (design review committee, planning commission, city council, board of zoning appeals, staff) and identifies for each process who reviews that application, who approves it, and where an appeal would go.

Additionally, we will work with staff and the city’s legal counsel to streamline application and approval processes where feasible. This may include reducing the number of conditional uses in order to allow uses to develop without going through the public hearing process. Our work will include evaluating the review, approval, and appeal bodies for different application types, the application process, and other such items. We will continue to ensure that the city’s application processes conform to all mandated state and local regulations.

Lastly, we propose to add flowcharts, or something of the like, to the code that illustrate the review and approval processes. This can be a very effective and helpful way for applicants and residents to quickly understand what process applies to them and how many steps are involved. Timelines for the various steps can also be added to the flowchart to provide applicants an idea of how long the process takes for the various application types.



Figure 5: Example Flow Chart. Flow chart example for a site plan review process from another jurisdiction.

PART THREE: PROPOSED CODE OUTLINE AND TEMPLATE

Part Three of this document establishes the proposed outline for the updated Fairfield Planning and Zoning Code along with example pages from the new code to illustrate the proposed look and design of the updated code.

Code Outline

The following outline is intended to allow the city an opportunity to review the overall structure of the proposed planning and zoning code before drafting begins. The code has been divided into five titles (one, three, five, seven, and nine) and 15 chapters. The titles are organized by overall topic. Each chapter is a sub-topic and contains a series of sections as identified in the summary of content column. These chapter and section names may change as the code is drafted, but this outline provides the general concept for how the updated code will function and flow.

Proposed Code Outline		
TITLE ONE		
1110	General Provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title Purpose Scope Interpretation Validity Conformance Severability Transition Rules Graphics, Illustrations, Figures, and Cross-References Alignment with Fairfield Forward CP. How to Use the Code
TITLE THREE		
1130	Zoning Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoning Districts and Map Annexations Conformance Required

1131	Zoning Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-1 • R-O • R-1 • R-2 • R-3 • R-4 • C-1 • C-2 (no longer named Central Business Dist.) • C-3 (include C-3A) • C-4 (further C-Districts can be the transition districts) • SE • O-1 (Institutions and Office District formerly B -1) • TC-1 (Previously D-1/D-1A) • M-1 • M-2 • M-3 (new mixed use industrial district)
1132	Use Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Table • General Use Regulations • Residential Use Standards • Commercial and Mixed Use Standards • Industrial Use Standards • Accessory Uses • Temporary Uses • Special Uses
1133	Overlays and Special Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned Unit Developments (PUD) • Airport Overlay • Source Water Protection Program • Flood Damage Reduction • Route 4 Corridor (RCO) • Town Center (TCO) • John Gray/Pleasant (JGPO) • South Gilmore/Mack (SGMO)
TITLE FIVE		
1150	Development Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dimensional and Design Standards • Supplementary Regulations

1151	Parking and Loading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Applicability • Maintenance • Parking Administration • Parking Requirements • Loading Requirements
1152	Landscaping and Buffering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Applicability • Landscape Plan • Street Trees • Parking Lot Landscaping • Screening and Buffering Requirements • Maintenance • Modifications
1153	Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Applicability • General Sign Provisions • Prohibited Signs • Permitted Signs • Sign Measurements
1154	Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Applicability • Prohibited Lights • Lighting Regulations
TITLE SEVEN		
1170	Subdivision Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Applicability • General Provisions • Design Standards • Utilities and Underground Facilities • Green Infrastructure
1171	Subdivision Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor Subdivision • Major Subdivisions • Lot Splits

1172	Subdivision Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures • Drawing Specifications • Plat Requirements
TITLE NINE		
1190	Administration and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary Table of Procedures • Common Review Requirements • Specific Procedures • Review and Decision Making Bodies • Pre-Existing Development and Nonconformities • Enforcement and Penalties
1191	Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undefined Words • Defined Words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General ○ Airport ○ Excavating and Filling of Land ○ Flood Damage Reduction ○ Signs ○ Source Water Protection ○ Storm Drainage and Sediment Control ○ Subdivisions ○ Wireless and Cellular Telecommunications

Code Template

The following pages include several example pages of the proposed code template. The content contained on these pages is reflective of existing code regulations and should not be reviewed under that lens. These template pages are intended to provide a preview of the look of the code to ensure that the city is satisfied with the overall design before it is finalized and drafting begins.