

CHAPTER TWENTY (B)

MASTER PLANNED DISTRICT

ARTICLE I, PURPOSE AND INTENT:

20B-1.1 **Purpose and Intent.** The Master Planned District is intended to provide for mixed-use development. Uses must complement and be compatible with the orderly development of the project as well as surrounding land uses. The Master Planned District may be developed in distinct pods or can be integrated with a mix of uses being interspersed with one another, including multiple uses within the same structure. The density of residential development and intensity of nonresidential development should be consistent with the recommendations of the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan.

The provisions of this chapter are intended to establish a zoning district that will:

- (A) Provide a mechanism to incorporate and implement the goals and intent of the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan in a manner that is not possible in conventional zoning classifications;
- (B) Allow for a mixture of complementary land uses based upon the existing and planned road networks in order to assure safe and efficient transportation patterns;
- (C) Provide for an orderly and creative arrangement of land uses in relation to each other and to the surrounding community;
- (D) Provide for the mobility of all inhabitants by walking, biking, or other means of transportation with diminished emphasis on the automobile;
- (E) Maintain mobility along traffic corridors and state highways;
- (F) Provide transitions between high traffic corridors and low density residential development;
- (G) Create a development of the highest architectural and aesthetic quality by demonstrating such standards via an approval process that is more rigorous than the requirements for rezoning to other zoning districts but no more onerous than is necessary to enable thorough analysis;
- (H) Minimize the environmental impacts of new development;
- (I) Promote the efficient use of land resulting in networks of utilities, streets, and other infrastructure features that maximize the allocation of fiscal and natural resources;
- (J) Stage development of this type in a manner which can be accommodated by the timely provision of public utilities, public facilities, public services, and public road improvements; and
- (K) Encourage the creation of new employment opportunities.

ARTICLE II, USES PERMITTED:

20B-2.1 **General.** Uses shall provide an orderly relation and function to other uses in the development and to existing land uses, as well as with due regard to the Comprehensive Plan of Forsyth County. Development within the district shall be limited to those uses specifically requested as part of the Master Development Plan and approved by the Board of Commissioners, unless otherwise specifically noted in the approval of the Master Planned District.

20B-2.2 **Commercial and Office Uses.** A minimum of twenty-five (25) percent of the Master Planned District shall consist of commercial and office land uses. Land use calculations shall be calculated by gross floor area for Master Planned Districts that contain a vertical mixture of uses and shall be calculated by total project land area for Master Planned Districts that contain a horizontal mixture of uses.

20B-2.3 **Residential Uses.** A minimum of twenty-five (25) percent the Master Planned District shall consist of residential uses. Land use calculations shall be calculated by gross floor area for Master Planned Districts that contain a vertical mixture of uses and shall be calculated by total project land area for Master Planned Districts that contain a horizontal mixture of uses.

20B-2.4 **Open Space.** The Master Planned District shall require open space be provided on a per unit calculation with a minimum of twenty (20) percent of the gross acreage in open space. For the purposes of this chapter, open space shall include areas within the Master Planned District designed and intended for the active and passive recreational needs of the residential and employment based population of the Master Planned District or for the public in general. Open space shall be owned by a homeowners association or similar body and shall not be part of individual residential lots. Table 20B-1 provides a summary of the per unit calculation.

TABLE 20B.1 PER UNIT OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS	
Lot Size	Open space required per residential unit
Over 18,000 sq. ft.	0 sq. ft.
12,000sq. ft. to 18,000 sq. ft.	1500 sq. ft.
6,000 sq. ft. to 11,999 sq. ft.	2000 sq. ft.
Under 6,000 sq. ft.	2500 sq. ft.
Any residential unit not located on a individual lot	2500 sq. ft.

Note: A minimum of 20% open space is required for all Master Planned Districts.

ARTICLE III, GENERAL CONDITIONS:

20B-3.1 **Traffic Study.** A traffic study shall be required, unless waived by the Director of Engineering. If required, information on internal capture rates may be required as part of the traffic study.

20B-3.2 **Code Provisions.** Whenever there is a conflict or difference between the provisions of this chapter and those of other chapters of the Unified Development Code, the provisions of this chapter shall prevail. Subjects not covered by this chapter shall be governed by the respective provisions found elsewhere in the Unified Development Code.

20B-3.3 **Water and Sewer.** Public water shall be required for all Master Planned Districts. Public Sewer or an Existing Private Sewage Treatment Plant with Sufficient Capacity shall be required for all Master Planned Districts.

20B-3.4 **Variance Requests.** Applications requesting rezoning to the Master Planned District must identify all variance requests in the rezoning application and represent such requests in the Master Development Plan. Variances shall be limited to the requirements of the Unified Development Code and shall follow the requirements of Chapter 8.

20B-3.5 **Residential Density.** The residential density of a Master Planned District shall be limited to six (6) dwelling units per acre. To determine the maximum number of residential dwelling units, six (6) dwelling units per acre shall be multiplied by:

- (A) One hundred (100) percent of the land identified as residential land uses, open space, and vertical mixed use areas; and
- (B) One hundred (100) percent of the land area identified as horizontally separated (i.e. no vertical mixed use) commercial and office uses, up to a maximum of twenty-five (25) percent of the total area involved in the Master Planned District.

**TABLE 20B.2
CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLES FOR CALCULATING RESIDENTIAL DENSITY**

Example 1 – 100-acre horizontally separated MPD:
 Res (55) + Open Space (20) + Com (25) x 6 = **600 units**

Residential 55 acres	
Open Space 20 acres	Commercial 25 acres

Example 2 – 100-acre horizontally separated MPD:
 Res (25) + Open Space (20) + Com (25) x 6 = **420 units**

Residential 25 acres	Open Space 20 acres
Commercial 55 acres	

Example 3 – 100-acres with Vertical Mixed Use Areas:
 Vert. MU (25) + Res (25) + Open Space (20) + Com (25) x 6 = **570 units**

Vert. Mixed Use 25 acres	Residential 25 acres
Open Space 20 acres	Commercial 30 acres

ARTICLE IV, PROCEDURES:

20B-4.1 **Pre-Application Meeting.** Before submitting an application for rezoning to Master Planned District, the applicant shall confer with the director to determine the feasibility for the proposed plan and its relationship to the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan and the Unified Development Code.

20B-4.2 **Master Development Plan.** To enable a thorough analysis of an application for the Master Planned District, the application requirements exceed those of other zoning districts. In addition to the standard requirements, applications for the Master Planned District shall include a Master Development Plan. To avoid duplication, the information required for the Master Development Plan can be combined with the standard requirements to amend the official zoning map. The Master Development Plan shall include:

(A) **The Uniform Plan.** A plan of the project showing the location of proposed zones and the general trajectories of the various thoroughfares. At a minimum, the Uniform Plan shall differentiate between the following zones:

- (1) Residential Zones
- (2) Shopping, Business, or Trade Zones
- (3) Civic and Institutional Zones
- (4) Open Space Zones
- (5) Vertical Mixed Use Zones

The applicant may develop more specific zones and or modify the name of the zones to better represent the theme of the proposed Master Planned District. An application is not required to include each of the zones listed above, see Article II of this Chapter for requirements related to permitted uses.

(B) **Land Use Standards.** A matrix of text and or diagrams that regulate the permitted uses and performance standards for each zone identified in the Uniform Plan. Regulations of the Unified Development Code that are not listed in the Land Use Standards shall default to the standards identified in other chapters, which will be determined by the director in any case in which applying the regulations of other chapters would be unclear. At a minimum, the following shall be established for each zone identified in the Uniform Plan:

- (1) Permitted uses
- (2) Minimum lot size
- (3) Minimum lot width
- (4) Minimum setbacks
- (5) Minimum building separation
- (6) Buffers and impervious surface setbacks
- (7) Maximum height
- (8) Maximum building coverage
- (9) Parking and loading requirements

(C) **Community Standards.** The community standards are a written code that will be utilized by the developer to ensure continuity throughout the life of the project. All Master Planned Districts shall require the establishment of a board responsible for the enforcement of the community standards. The community standards are intended to produce visual compatibility among various building types and shall be required prior to the issuance of a building permit. At a minimum, the Community Standards shall address lighting, signage, fences, landscaping, building materials, building colors, and other architectural features.

(D) **Additional Requirements.** Text and or diagrams providing the following information:

- (1) A construction phasing schedule for phased projects;
- (2) Method of water and sewer service, including verification of capacity;
- (3) A summary of the anticipated maintenance and ownership of streets and open spaces;
- (4) Proposed amount and general location of open space;
- (5) Proposed maximum number of residential dwelling units by type and minimum lot size. Examples include, but are not limited to: single family detached, single family attached, townhomes, and apartments. Information on lot size shall be classified by the following:
 - (a) Lots over 18,000 sq. ft.
 - (b) Lots 12,000 to 18,000 sq. ft.
 - (c) Lots 6,000 to 11,999 sq. ft.
 - (d) Lots under 6,000 sq. ft.
 - (e) Any unit not located on a individual lot

- (6) Proposed maximum gross floor area devoted to non-residential uses;
- (7) Typical information on landscape features in relation to streets, parking areas, sidewalks, building footprints, and utilities;
- (8) A plan identifying the existing tree canopy. Information available from the County's GIS data is acceptable for the rezoning stage;
- (9) Existing topography with contour intervals no greater than 4 feet. Information available from the County's GIS data is acceptable for the rezoning stage;
- (10) State waters, wetlands, and floodplains. Information available from the County's GIS data is acceptable for the rezoning stage; and
- (11) A summary of issues related to connectivity. The information should include available information on private and public streets; significant vehicular parking and loading areas; the provision of bicycle parking areas, paths, sidewalks, and other similar features; and interconnections to adjoining property.

ARTICLE V, CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL:

20B-5.1 **Standard Criteria.** In considering and acting upon applications for rezoning to the Master Planned District, the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners shall consider and base their recommendation and decision, respectively, on the general considerations and special considerations described in Chapter 8, Article V of this Code; provided, however, that the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners will additionally consider the extent to which the proposal follows the recommendations and requirements of this chapter.

20B-5.2 **Design Criteria.** In addition to the standard criteria, the following design criteria will be used to evaluate the rezoning application's conformity with the purpose and intent of this Chapter. Appropriate criteria that have not been incorporated into the Master Development Plan will be utilized to develop recommended zoning conditions as part of the review process.

(A) General Site Design

- (1) The minimum size for a Master Planned District should not be less than twenty (20) acres.
- (2) A functional town center, community green, park, or other focal point should be included to create character and identity.
- (3) Perimeter setbacks and buffers should protect the privacy and amenity of adjoining uses both existing and anticipated.
- (4) The Master Planned District should incorporate multi-modal transportation elements in the development, depending on the foreseeable needs of future residents and users of the site, and the relationship of the project site to the community at large. Such multi-modal elements may include provisions for mass transit stops or stations, car pooling lots, pedestrian and bicycle paths and lanes, bicycle parking areas, and other similar provisions.
- (5) A grid system of streets is preferred over cul-de-sac designs. Block length should be conducive to pedestrian traffic.
- (6) Interconnections to adjoining property, whether developed or undeveloped, should be included and incorporated into the design where appropriate. Proposed parcels should be arranged and designed so as to allow for the opening of future streets and provide access to those areas not presently served by streets.

(B) Aesthetic Quality

- (1) When appropriate, streets should terminate at a focal point, which may be a civic building, principal use, church, bell tower, gazebo, or other similar feature.
- (2) The location and width of residential garage doors should be designed so as to not dominate the streetscape. Standards on garage width and garage setbacks should be used to ensure that garage doors do not dominate the streetscape.
- (3) Attached housing should be designed to reduce the monolithic nature of the structure.
- (4) Fences, walls, and berms should be designed and maintained in relationship with the character of the surrounding land uses and structures. Retaining walls should be constructed of architectural masonry or faced with rock, brick, and/or constructed to blend with adjacent surroundings.
- (5) Detention and retention structures are discouraged in areas subject to view from a public street if not used both for aesthetic purposes and designed so as to not require a fenced enclosure.

- (6) Master Planned Districts are encouraged to utilize creative methods for stormwater management, when such methods provide additional open space opportunities.
 - (7) Service and loading zones should be located to minimize visibility from public streets and neighboring properties.
- (C) Site Development
- (1) Transitions at property edges should seem natural for the surrounding terrain.
 - (2) Cut and fill slopes should be rounded where they meet natural grade so that they blend with the natural slope.
- (D) Parking
- (1) Decorative fences or walls, plantings, berms, or other similar features should be used to screen surface parking lots from public view or soften their visual impact.
 - (2) The location and design of parking structures should minimize their visibility from the street or other public areas.
 - (3) Surface parking lots should be oriented behind or to the side of a building when possible. Surface parking lots should not be located on street corners.
- (E) Pedestrian Scale
- (1) For predominantly nonresidential areas, activities such as shops, offices or other commercial space should be located along the ground level of street frontage.
 - (2) For nonresidential uses, corner buildings should make a strong tie to the building lines of each street. However, this does not preclude angled or sculpted building corners or an open plaza at the corner. Vertical focal points to visually “anchor” corners are encouraged.
 - (3) Comfortable and attractive street furniture should be provided in public spaces for public enjoyment, comfort, and convenience. These may include seats and benches, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, information kiosks, directories, or other similar features.
 - (4) Nonresidential building entrances should be visible from the street, well-lit, and easily accessible. Articulation such as canopies and roof forms should be used to further identify entrances.
 - (5) Nonresidential uses that face a street or pedestrian area should have transparent windows along each first floor wall.
 - (6) Nonresidential buildings should have at least one entrance facing every abutting street.
 - (7) Clear pedestrian and visual paths should be established using a combination of covered arcades, covered walkways, courtyards, landscape patterns, consistent paving materials, minimal interruption of pedestrian paths, and other similar features.
 - (8) Sidewalks should be present in all residential areas. In nonresidential areas, sidewalks should be present along both sides of all streets.
- (F) Landscape and Natural Environment
- (1) Specific emphasis should be placed on the preservation or planting of trees between buildings and the street.
 - (2) Existing topography, significant tree cover, state waters and other natural features should be considered and incorporated into the project design whenever possible.
 - (3) Required open space should be distributed throughout the project.
- (G) Built Environment
- (1) The height of any structure should be compatible with the existing buildings in the area, and proposed structures within the project site.
 - (2) Limitations on the height, size, and type of exterior signage should produce an overall theme that is compatible with proposed buildings and surrounding property.

ARTICLE VI, AMENDMENTS:

20B-6.1 **Conformance to Approved Master Development Plan.** All further development of the property shall conform to the approved Master Development Plan, regardless of any change in ownership, unless the County approves minor or major amendments.

20B-6.2 **Minor Amendments.** The director may approve minor amendments to the approved Master Development Plan, which are in compliance with the provisions and intent of this chapter, and do not depart from the principal concept of the approved Master Development Plan. Minor amendments are those determined by the director of the department to meet the purpose and intent of the Master Planned District, which would not affect adjacent properties. Minor amendments shall be approved as part of the land disturbance permitting process. The

director of the department may require the applicant to provide written justification for the minor amendment if such justification is not evident within the land disturbance permit itself.

20B-6.3 **Major Amendments.** Should the director determine that a requested change or deviation from the approved Master Development Plan departs from the principles of the Master Development Plan and would affect adjacent properties, the proposed modification will be classified as a major amendment. The applicant may apply for approval of a major amendment to the Board of Commissioners as an application for modification of conditions of zoning, as established in Chapter 8 Article IX of this Code.