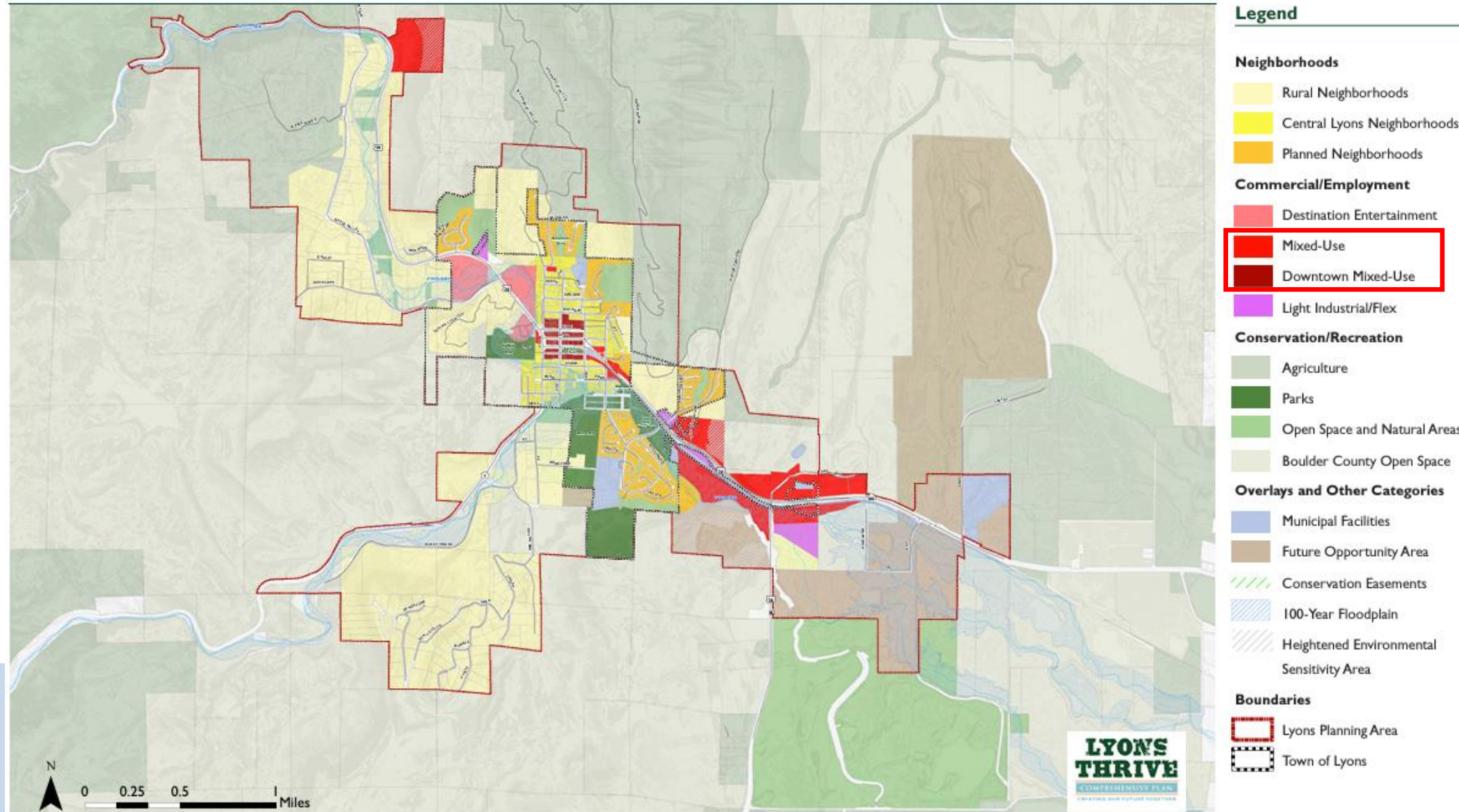


Mixed-use zoning as a tool for commercial redevelopment/infill and housing development

IGA Task Force Regular Meeting on 6.25.24
Presented by: Andrew Bowen

Lyons Thrive (Future Land Use Map)

Future Land Use Plan (Map)



What is Mixed-use Zoning?

If done correctly, a mixed-use and “form-based” district can help to reactivate the redevelopment of commercial areas. Mixed-use districts typically allow far greater flexibility in use and density than traditional commercial zones, while also encouraging housing development close to commercial cores.

The two primary areas called out within the Lyons Thrive Comprehensive Plan to be mixed-use are Downtown and the Eastern Corridor.

Common Mixed-use District Goals

- Maintain a community’s unique character while promoting economic growth.
- Encourage redevelopment in existing commercial areas by allowing for greater flexibility.
- Encourage a broad range of commercial uses and a diverse economy.
- Encourage dense commercial and residential uses to be developed in concert.
- Focus on form, scale, and neighborhood aesthetics, not on use.

Note: Staff and the PCDC are currently working on the creation of these districts/regulations.

What is Form-based Zoning?

While traditional zoning codes focus first on the use of land, form-based codes prioritize the form of buildings, based on the belief that the form of buildings is more important than the use in determining community character. (Planetizen)

The rise of “Gentle Density”

Outside of being wonderful “Planner’s Speak,” the relatively new concept of gentle density has become an important tool to address property redevelopment and workforce housing provision in already developed areas. This concept allows for housing density to be created (within reason) in established commercial areas and surrounding neighborhoods. A common example of gentle density is a code allowing a single-family lot to be redeveloped to accommodate more units. This model also works for commercial redevelopment (see the example from Highlands, NC).

Common concepts supporting Gentle Density

- Where land is expensive, building more homes per parcel increases affordability
- Density supports neighborhood retail

More homes, less yard



One single-family detached
3,000 square feet
2.5 stories



Three townhouses
2,000 sq. ft./house
2.5 stories



Six condominiums
1,200 sq. ft./condo
3 stories

The studied benefits of “loosening up” local zoning laws.

Mixed-use development does not have to occur on a large scale. Local codes can be written to grant entrepreneurs and developers the ability to be creative, which often leads to success.

Below is an example of a gas station in Highlands, NC that was redeveloped to include, a small market (sales most necessities), an office space, and two dwelling units. Both dwelling units are “naturally occurring affordable housing”, due to their size and location.



Examples of Mix use (added by D. Matthews).

Photos of Old Town Bluffton, SC -- a small town, facing similar constraints as Lyons in terms of topographic limitations and little to no available land for expansion. This mixed-use development added significant housing options, and a vibrant commercial community with public open space all while keeping with the look and feel of the historic old town.



Examples of Mix use (added by D. Matthews).

Examples of Mixed-Use Developments around Colorado. Also, look to North Boulder and throughout the front range for examples of effective mixed-used development designed to offer more affordable commercial space along with a wide range of housing options.



Questions, and Closing Discussion

