

Potential Modifications: New Housing Types

Zoning is typically overhauled every 30-50 years. Addressing the goals of the Strategic Plan, and considering indicators of future trends, these potential new housing types seek to position Decatur for healthy growth over the next 3-5 decades.

Use your Worksheet to indicate whether or not you support each as a future development option (keeping in mind that any future rezoning of actual property would require a public process):

**THESE ARE HOUSING CATEGORIES FOR CONSIDERATION.
NO REZONING OF ANY LAND IS SUGGESTED OR PROPOSED.**

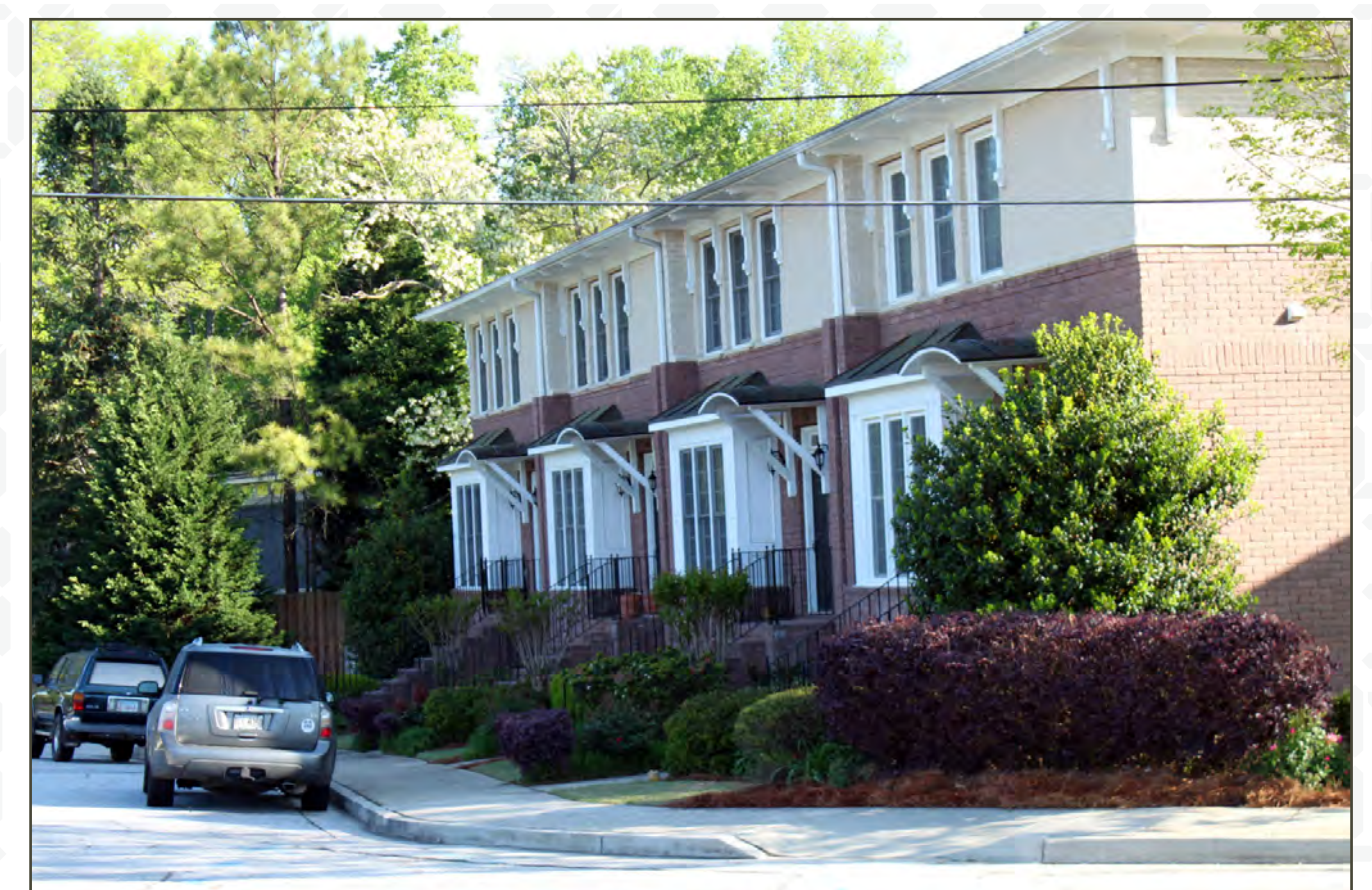
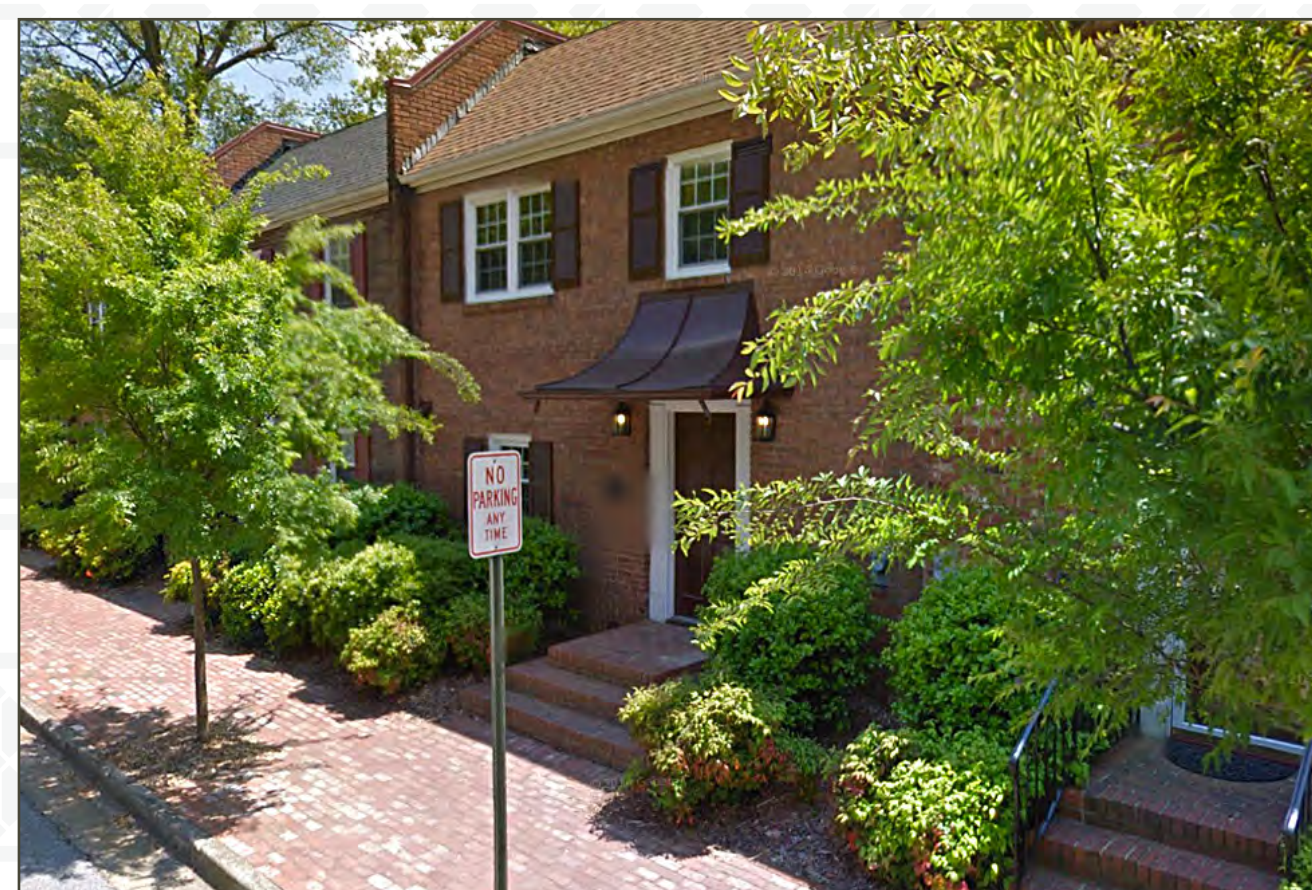
Neighborhood-scaled apartment buildings

The traditional neighborhood 4-pack apartment building brings context-sensitive housing — often ideal for empty-nesters or those just starting out — into or along the edges of neighborhoods. This particular building is on Howard Ave. and is next door to a 1.5 story bungalow.



Townhouses suited to a downtown context

Our current code does not allow for what many envision as the typical downtown townhouse, where there is a close relationship between the house and the sidewalk. Such placement contributes to the character of our downtown and neighborhood villages, keeping them distinct from that of a typical residential street.



Duplexes or triplexes

At an even more modest sizing than the neighborhood-scaled apartment building are duplexes and triplexes, which are typically identical to, and often indistinguishable from, their neighboring homes.



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Cottage Courts

The cottage court, a small scale development approach gaining traction nationwide, is typified in the work of architect Ross Chapin, who wrote the book **Pocket Neighborhoods**. Factoring in the price of land in Decatur, it provides a tool whereby a builder/developer can **opt** to build a larger number of small houses (say 800 to 1,200 or 1,500 square feet), grouped around a shared green space, as an alternative to what is allowed by-right today:



a smaller number of large houses. This not only addresses concerns that our entry-level housing stock is disappearing, it expands the ability for developers to meet all levels of market demand and provides an option for empty nesters who would like to downsize but do not want to leave their neighborhood.

Shared homes (the Golden Girls scenario)

An increasing number of seniors, or near-seniors, in the Decatur community, including the Lifelong Community Advisory Board, have expressed an interest in living together with other seniors as a mutually-reliant household, perhaps as a collection of singles (think Golden Girls) or couples.



Today, the restrictive and ambiguous nature of our existing ordinance prevents many of these common scenarios (including the Golden Girls themselves!). Should it be modified to make this living arrangement more accessible?

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Potential Modifications: Zoning District Revisions

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Neighborhood mixed-use

Some of our neighborhoods are strictly residential and work just fine. But perhaps some, a decade or two down the line, might want to add some very small-scale neighborhood commercial amenities for convenience and gathering.



Currently, should a rezoning take place to allow for commercial uses, it would open the door to multiple types of development (like a CVS, for instance) that are not compatible with this intent. This proposed designation provides a commercial option that is truly neighborhood scale.



Making C-1 mixed-use

Most people think our C-1 zoning classification (commonly referred to as neighborhood commercial) already encourages mixed-uses. But the reality is, for example, that if the parking lot of the Family Dollar in Oakhurst were to redevelop, it could not legally include mixed-use buildings or other residential uses by right. Amending the code would fix that, and open the door to more neighborhood-friendly combinations, from live/work units to dwelling units over small stores.



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R-50

First, some history on what this is all about: In 2006 and 2007, responding to concerns raised in the community, an appointed resident and local business task force (the Infill Task Force) was assembled to consider the impact of house size vs. lot size. They met monthly for a year and concluded with a majority report that resulted in height reductions and the currently-used **sliding scale for lot coverage** that allows smaller R-60 lots a variable amount of increased coverage to compensate for their reduced size. The infill task force also considered a sliding scale for **floor area** during this time, but rejected that proposal and kept a common limit of 40% for all lots. There was also a minority report with stricter zoning recommendations but these were not implemented.



The UDO process affords the opportunity to assess this process and determine whether or not to create a new zoning category — R-50 — that is written specifically around the challenges of a smaller, 50 foot wide lot.

Options under consideration

Option A: R-50 is not necessary. The existing R-60 rules with sliding scale is working just fine.

Option B: Create an R-50 category, largely comparable to present regulations, but include a sliding scale for FAR as well.

Option C: Create an R-50 category, comparable to present regulations and keeping the FAR set at 40%, but establish more flexible setbacks, which makes it easier to deal with the tighter constraints of a smaller lot.

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