City of CHAMPAIGN

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

FROM: **Joan Walls, City Manager**

DATE: **April 3, 2026**

SUBJECT: **Incremental Development Zoning Amendments SS 2026-010**

A. Introduction: The purpose of this Study Session is to provide an overview of proposed text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to eliminate minimum parking requirements and implement key components of the Council Goal to "Invest in Economic Opportunity"; specifically, the key project to "Implement policy recommendations regarding incremental development to encourage affordable, sustainable, and neighborhood-scale reinvestment".

B. Recommended Action: Direct staff to initiate a text amendment which eliminates minimum parking requirements and incorporates other changes outlined in Attachment A, incorporating Council feedback. Additionally, direct staff to continue developing Missing Middle Housing amendments after additional public input and return to City Council in Study Session.

C. Prior Council Action:

- On December 17, 2019, City Council approved Council Bill 2019-212 adopting vision and goals for the 2019-2021 City Council Term. Included is the Council Goal *"Our City Expands Economic Opportunity"* with a key project of "supporting incremental development by evaluating and updating city codes and policies to eliminate barriers to affordable housing, sustainable and neighborhood-scale reinvestment."
- On November 24, 2020, City Council conducted Study Session 2020-032 and directed staff to begin implementation of proposed near-term strategies for Incremental Development outlined in the report.
- On April 27, 2021, City Council conducted Study Session 2021-012 and directed staff to continue to work on policies and actions to address the regulatory barriers to Incremental Development, seek out community input on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and to bring proposals back to City Council for further consideration.
- On November 23, 2021, City Council conducted Study Session 2021-035 and directed staff to prepare amendments to the Champaign Zoning Ordinance to allow Accessory Dwelling Units in all residential zoning districts and schedule the amendments on a future City Council agenda for adoption.
- On December 7, 2021, City Council adopted Council Bill 2021-162 which adopted the vision and goals for 2021 to 2023 City Council term. Included is the Council Goal of "*Our City Expands Economic Opportunity*" with a key project of "Support incremental development by evaluating and updating City codes and policies to eliminate barriers to affordable, sustainable, neighborhood-scale reinvestment."

- On June 21, 2022, City Council adopted Council Bill 2022-117 which adopted a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to allow ADUs in all residential Zoning Districts.
- On January 10, 2024, City Council adopted Council Bill 2024-001 which adopted the vision and goals for 2023 to 2025 City Council term. Included is the Council Goal of "*Our City Invests in Economic Opportunity*" with a Key Project of "Revise development and zoning codes consistent with incremental development concepts to increase flexibility and encourage affordable, sustainable, neighborhood-scale reinvestment
- On March 18, 2025, City Council adopted Council Bill 2025-037, which amended various sections of Chapter 37 of the Municipal Code as a Regular Omnibus Text Amendment.
- On June 24, 2025, City Council conducted Study Session 2024-022 and directed staff to prepare amendments to the Champaign Zoning Ordinance to eliminate minimum parking requirements, allow missing middle housing types in all residential zoning districts, and explore building code amendments in coordination with the Building Safety Division, Fire and Engineering.
- On January 6, 2026, City Council adopted Council Bill 2026-001 which adopted the vision and goals for 2025 to 2027 City Council term. Included is the Council Goal of "*Invest in Economic Opportunity*" with a Key Project of "Implement policy recommendations regarding incremental development to encourage affordable, sustainable, and neighborhood-scale reinvestment."

D. Summary:

- Advancing Zoning Ordinance amendments to support Incremental Development is supported by the City council Goal "Invest in Economic Opportunity," and has been a City Council goal since 2019.
- Through a series of Study Sessions in 2020 through 2021, City Council established overarching principles for implementing the incremental development Council Goal. These principles included expanding opportunities for housing choice and affordability within neighborhoods, expanding opportunity for small-scale commercial development, and ensuring the changes to a neighborhood's-built environment are gradual and compatible with existing neighborhood design.
- In June 2025, City Council directed staff to implement a variety of broad principles and strategies for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. These included eliminating minimum parking, allowing Missing Middle Housing in all residential zoning districts, and exploring building code amendments to facilitate smaller multifamily residential development in coordination with Building Safety, Fire, and Engineering.
- In addition, City Council directed staff to make other associated amendments to allow more by-right and administratively reviewed development, set clear standards for building bulk and height in multifamily residential zoning districts, and ensure that parking elimination does not result in new development that is out of scale with existing neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- Staff have prepared a comprehensive list of amendments for City Council consideration that will eliminate minimum parking requirements, set the stage for future Missing Middle Zoning Standards, and reorganize the Zoning Ordinance to make the existing regulations clear and easy to navigate for staff, architects, developers, and residents.

- In addition, staff have included several revisions normally included as part of the annual Zoning Ordinance Omnibus Amendments, intended to correct any errors found in the Ordinance or advance other minor substantive changes.
- Future amendments allowing Missing Middle Housing and Building Code will be undertaken over the next year to allow time for additional community input on proposed standards, and to effectively respond to pending State Legislation that will impact Champaign's ability to regulate Missing Middle Housing through the Zoning Ordinance.

E. Background:

1. City Council Goal on Incremental Development. The proposals presented in this report implement the City Council Goal "*Invest in Economic Opportunity."* This includes a key project of "Implement policy recommendations regarding incremental development to encourage affordable, sustainable, and neighborhood-scale reinvestment." Support for Incremental Development has been an adopted Council Goal since 2019. Incremental development is a nationally recognized concept referring to small-scale, locally driven real estate development. Its focus is promoting development within existing neighborhoods that use existing infrastructure and that is consistent with the existing fabric of a neighborhood. Through several City Council Study Sessions, City Council has provided direction, input and prioritization of Planning and Development Department activities to advance this Council Goal. City Council accepted three over-arching principles for implementing incremental development strategies in Champaign:

a. Expanding opportunities for housing choice and affordability within neighborhoods;
b. Expand opportunity for small-scale commercial development; and
c. Ensure the changes to a neighborhood's-built environment are gradual and compatible with existing neighborhood design.

Additionally, City Council provided prioritization and direction to implement a variety of broad principles and strategies for upcoming amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. These include:

a. Eliminating Minimum Parking Requirements. (Phase 1) City Council also provided direction to make other amendments to the Zoning Ordinance which set clear standards for building height and bulk. These will include eliminating variable height standards and other development standards. These changes will make standards for building size clear based on the underlying Zoning District and mitigate any unusual development scenarios that are made possible by removing minimum parking requirements.

b. Allow Missing Middle Housing in all Residential Zoning Districts (Phase 2). This change would allow duplexes, cottage courts, and other small house-scale multifamily buildings up to eight units throughout the City of Champaign (the City) based on proximity to key community amenities, within proximity to transit, and in walkable neighborhoods. Council also directed staff to explore administrative regulations to facilitate development and a sliding-scale floor area ratio to encourage smaller unit sizes.

c. Explore Building Code Amendments to Promote Smaller Multifamily Development (Phase 3). These included applying the International Residential Code to multifamily

buildings with eight units or less and exploring a single-stair building design with the Champaign Fire Department and Building Safety.

2. Elimination of Minimum Parking Requirements. This amendment would make the provision of parking a market-based decision rather than a regulatory requirement. New development would no longer need to meet the minimum parking space requirements to obtain zoning approval. Developers may choose to build and provide off-street parking for residents and customers. Many developments will continue providing off-street parking based on financing requirements and the needs of residents and individual business. Should a developer choose to provide parking, they would still be required to build off-street parking that meets minimum design standards for construction quality, landscaping, and lighting. In cases where other communities eliminated parking requirements, communities saw reduced housing costs, increased business development and wider diversity of building types that provided creative right-sized solutions to providing off-street parking.

City Council has approved several amendments to the minimum parking standards within the Zoning Ordinance over many years. Each of these amendments have moved in the direction of eliminating these parking requirements altogether. These amendments have included exempting upper story residential units from providing parking in Downtown, eliminating minimum parking in the CB Central Business Districts and MFUniv Multifamily Residential Zoning Districts, reducing parking requirements in the In-Town Zoning Districts, and reducing parking requirements for shopping centers. Since these amendments have been enacted, there has been a positive impact on development within the City. These positive impacts have included improved building design, additional housing units, and amenity space within new construction. Other positive impacts to these parking elimination amendments can be seen in upper-story housing rehabilitation within Downtown, as well as small lot redevelopment in the University District and the In-Town neighborhood. Many of these developments would not have been possible because of the space constraints required to provide off-street parking. Although this change would mean that the Zoning Ordinance would no longer require parking, since removing minimum parking requirements in the University District, parking has still been provided for most new multifamily development. Only five projects of over fifty new apartment developments opted to not provide any on-site parking.

3. Overview of Proposed Changes. Staff have prepared a comprehensive overview of proposed amendments in Attachment A. These changes will impact every Article of the existing Zoning Ordinance text. Staff have highlighted and summarized several proposed amendments below:

a. Eliminate Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements. This amendment implements key components of the Council Goal to "Invest in Economic Opportunity"; specifically, the key project to "Implement policy recommendations regarding incremental development to encourage affordable, sustainable, and neighborhood-scale reinvestment". Other related amendments will include:

- **Revise Maximum Height Requirements.** This change will implement direction from City Council to remove variable building height requirements in the multifamily zoning districts to set clear standards for how tall buildings can be in certain districts. This

amendment will also align zoning height requirements to typical building construction heights. Proposed height changes will include both a building story and foot-height maximum. These rules work together to maintain the existing height intent of each zoning district while recognizing modern construction methods. Revised maximum heights assume a typical story height of twelve feet for frame construction and upper stories in mixed use buildings and eighteen feet ground floor story heights in commercial, mixed use, or podium style buildings.

- **Amending Minimum Lot Area, Lot Width and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in Commercial and Multifamily District.** These standards prescribe minimum lot and development intensities for new lots being created through subdivisions. No changes to these standards are being proposed in the SF1 Single-Family, SF2 Two-Family, or In-Town Zoning Districts.

- **Updating Parking Design Standards.** These standards specify that all parking areas must be paved, landscaped, and meet minimum construction standards. They also specify minimum dimensions for parking spaces, access aisles, build stormwater detention, and lighting. A few modifications are being made to these standards that will require a dedicated pedestrian walkway connection to the public right of way through parking areas, updating access drives aisles to accommodate fire apparatus access, and creating standards for head-in parking off a public alley.

- **Update Parking Lot Landscaping Standards.** Parking lot perimeter and interior landscaping will incorporate existing standards applied in the Curtis Road Interchange Area Overlay District.

b. Setting The Stage for Future Missing Middle Housing Amendments. This category of amendments will help facilitate future Missing Middle Housing zoning amendments previously supported by City Council. Additional community engagement and stakeholder input is needed prior to adopting regulations allowing Missing Middle Housing. Key amendments within this category include:

- **Updating Residential Land Use Definitions.** These definitions will be revised to focus more on the physical design and characteristics of the dwelling unit type and to align these dwelling unit types with their respective Building Code terminology where possible. These definitions will also align with State Law. New definitions, such as multiplex residential and cottage court development will also be included to help facilitate future discussion about Missing Middle Housing development standards.

- **Consolidating Site and Building Design Standards.** This will consolidate design and development standards from various parts of the Zoning Ordinance that deal with development of property. These include special requirements for development along a floodplain, site lighting, and building design standards within the In Town, University Neighborhood, and Central Business Zones. Currently, these standards are found in several sections of the Zoning Ordinance such as Article V Provisional and Special Uses and Article XI Supplemental Regulations. These different standards will be consolidated into a single location within the Zoning Ordinance within Article IV. This will facilitate

future amendments for Missing Middle Design Standards being easily inserted into the Zoning Ordinance.

- **Amendments to Create Administrative Review Processes for Non-Conforming Uses.** These amendments make amendments to existing processes, or create new ones, that facilitate more by-right development reviews. Examples include modifying the Mitigation Plan process to review and allow investment in non-conforming residential and commercial land uses without the need for a Special Use Permit. Another is the Administrative Planned Development that will help facilitate creative site design and limited waivers to zoning standards for missing middle housing types like cottage courts and townhomes.

c. Zoning Ordinance Refresh. These amendments are intended to reorganize and simplify the Zoning Ordinance to make the existing regulations clear and easy to navigate for staff, architects, developers, and residents. These changes are focused on improving the functionality of the Zoning Ordinance and creating a more user-friendly experience for our customers. The Zoning Ordinance will continue to be hosted on Municode. Proposed formatting changes are able to be accommodated by the web-service and are utilized in other communities. Examples of these types of changes include:

- **Renumbering The Ordinance.** All sections will be renumbered to relate to the Article. For example, all sections found in Article I will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-100 followed by Article II, which will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-200, etc.

- **Consolidate Definitions in Article II.** Other Articles of the Zoning Ordinance, such as Historic Preservation, Signs, and Planned Developments among others, include definitions within their respective Articles in addition to the definitions found in Article II. These definitions will be consolidated into Article II rather than maintaining separate definitions in multiple places in the Zoning Ordinance.

- **Direct Links for Definitions.** Each definition will be individually numbered to allow for direct links whenever defined terms are utilized elsewhere in the Zoning Ordinance.

- **Permitted Use Table.** Currently, all listings of permitted, provisional and special uses in the zoning ordinance are organized into lists within the code. This change would consolidate the lists of permitted, provisional, and special uses into a single table. Uses would be identified with links to relevant definitions and design standards for specific uses – if applicable.

- **Combined Table IV-A and Table IV-B.** These tables implement the various development standards of the individual zoning districts – things such as setbacks, maximum height, floor area ratio, building footprint and lot coverage. Currently there are two tables – one for most zoning districts and then a separate table for the In Town Zoning Districts.

d. Zoning Ordinance Omnibus Amendments. Staff is including a number of amendments that would typically be brought as part of the Omnibus Text Amendment in order to efficiently amend the ordinance in a single amendment. Every year, Planning and Development Staff bring forward a text amendment to make corrections to the Zoning Ordinance. A regular omnibus text amendment is a periodic case that amends many otherwise unconnected sections of the Zoning Ordinance in the same case. Amendments included in a regular omnibus text amendment are either non-substantive in nature or make only minor substantive changes to the code. Omnibus amendments included in the proposed Incremental Development zoning amendments include:

- **Group and Supportive Residential Use Definition Amendments.** Group residential uses and supportive living facilities are institutional uses that include residential units and often include other services like assisted care, social services, food preparation, or medical care. Examples include community living facilities, recovery home, residential care facilities, assisted/independent living facility, dormitory, rooming house, transitional housing, and emergency shelter. Currently, there is significant overlap between some of these uses based on their definitions, which makes it unclear what uses are permitted in which zoning districts. It is also important to make sure that these definitions do not conflict with other civil rights protections for people utilizing these housing types under the Fair Housing Act. These use definitions will be amended to provide clear distinctions between use types, ensure compliance with all applicable State and Federal Law, and provide clarity where these uses will be permitted.

- **Creating a Research Park Zoning District**. This would establish a new Research Park zoning district to allow for the development of limited industrial uses along with other institutional, research, bioprocessing, and technology uses. Commercial uses and some multifamily uses will also be allowed. Staff have coordinated closely with the Illinois Research Park in development of the list of permitted and provisional uses allowed. Areas currently zoned CO Commercial Office and I1 Light Industrial will be rezoned to this new proposed Zoning District in a separate City Council zoning map amendment should this district be adopted by City Council.

- **Creating an Additional MFUniv Multifamily University Neighborhood Zoning District.** This new zoning district would allow for increased heights in key locations adjacent to commercial areas, along high-frequency transit routes, and adjacent to public open space. This district height increase will support the construction of twelve story residential buildings that utilize a light-frame steel construction type. This change will increase the potential for additional housing units within the University Neighborhood.

- **Ground Floor Commercial Standards.** These changes will amend requirements for ground floor commercial spaces along key commercial frontages and nodes in the Central Business Districts (Downtown, Midtown and Campustown). The goal is to provide clear separation from commercial tenant spaces intended for lease and areas of ground floor mixed use buildings used as residential amenity spaces for building tenants. Ground floors will continue to be required to provide minimum glazing intended to activate the street and create a pedestrian-friendly urban environment.

- **Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for Window and Door Replacement.** A COA is a process required for Local Landmarks that are making exterior alterations or additions. A recent International Building Code and International Residential Code change now requires that replacement of doors and windows receive a building permit, which is the trigger for review of the permit by the Historic Preservation Commission. Previously, these alterations to historic landmarks were reviewed by Planning and Development staff through an Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). This amendment would re-establish an administrative review of these permits by staff.

- **Create a Landmark Designation Removal Process.** A recent case where an applicant sought local landmark designation removal required a significant amount of staff interpretation regarding the process to follow and standards for review. The existing code section states that removal of a landmark designation should only occur after following the same procedure as landmark designation. This lack of clarity does not provide guidance on how to process or standards for review of these cases. As a result, a proposed amendment would establish a formal process for an applicant to remove a landmark designation and specify findings and criteria for such a removal.

- **Application Requirements for Local Landmarks.** This amendment would limit applicants for landmark designation to be residents of Champaign County. This change would limit the ability for non-local residents from submitting nominations for Local Landmark designation. Non-resident applicants would need to collaborate with the property owner, local preservation organization or interested resident in order to apply to nominate a Local Landmark.

- **Amending Lighting Standards.** These changes will incorporate many existing requirements within the Curtis Road Overlay District and apply them across the City. These include lowering maximum heights for lights, requiring fully-shielded dark-sky compliant lighting, and requiring LED or energy-efficient lighting. In addition, lighting plans will be required for any parking lots with at least thirty six spaces and for Gas Station, Truck Stops, Vehicle Sales Lots, or Hotels – uses that commonly are particularly highly lighting intensive.

- **Amending Landscaping Buffer Standards.** These changes will update the list of uses and their various intensities to correspond to defined uses with the Zoning Ordinance. These standards are used to apply buffer yard required between different uses.

- **Extending Development Timelines.** Currently, nonconforming properties lose their legal protections after six months. This timeline is often not enough for a property owner to explore options to either bring the property into compliance or reinvest in the property that would require any permit review and inspection. Staff is proposing to extend this timeline to one year, with an additional year available to a property owner with Planning Director approval.

- **Separate Sign Regulations from Outdoor Advertising Sign Structure (OASS) Regulations.** This change will separate On-premise sign regulations from the regulations for OASS, commonly called billboards. This will help to provide clarity between the sign regulations OASS regulations and will assist with future amendments in response to a recent appeal considered by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

- **Adding a Severability Section.** This is a new section being added to Article I. This section establishes a rule that, if a court invalidates a provision of the zoning ordinance, then that invalidation is limited in scope and does not invalidate the entire ordinance. This is a common rule in most Illinois municipal zoning ordinances but is not currently part of Champaign's Zoning Ordinance.

4. Next Steps and Future Amendments. These proposed amendments will not include standards to allow Missing Middle Housing in all residential districts or make amendments to the Building Code. These amendments will be brought forward in late fall or winter to allow for additional community input on proposed development standards and building design. This additional time will also allow coordination with Building Safety, Fire, and Engineering on Building and Fire Code amendments that advance City Councils incremental Development goals with necessary life safety codes. Staff anticipate advancing Building Code-related amendments next year.

In addition, waiting to advance Missing Middle Housing will allow time for Staff to respond to pending State Legislation. The Illinois General Assembly is currently considering several bills related to Missing Middle housing, minimum parking requirements, building code, and other requirements that impact municipalities across Illinois. The BUILD (Building Up Illinois Developments) Plan includes five bills (SB4060-SB4064) that include home rule preemptions and would establish parameters for regulating key components of the Incremental Development Zoning Amendments previously supported by City Council. Waiting to advance Missing Middle Housing and Building Code amendments until after the current legislative session allows staff to respond to these potential legislative changes and draft future Zoning Ordinance amendments that advance the vision of City Council while being compliant with new legal requirements. A summary of each Senate Bill is included below:

a. SB4060 Missing Middle Housing
- Requires missing middle housing in all residential zoning districts.
- Limits the ability to require parking for a variety of housing types.
- Establishes minimum setbacks, lot dimension, FAR and other development requirements for residential zoning districts.

b. SB4061 Single Stair Buildings
- Requires that all municipalities must allow single-stair building construction.
- Establishes safety and design standards for single-stair building construction.

c. SB4062 Development Impact Fee Reform
- Establishes maximum impact fees that municipalities may impose on new development.
- Maintains the ability for municipalities to charge for connections to infrastructure.

d. SB4063 Plan Review

- Requires that municipalities complete an initial review of building plans in fifteen business days. Champaign is already compliant with this standard.
- Allows for third-party plan review and inspections if reviews are not completed in a timely manner.

e. SB4064 Parking Reform

- No parking required for single-family homes or dwellings less than 1,500 square feet.
- No parking required for any affordable housing project or for ground floor commercial uses.
- Limits multifamily parking requirements for units larger than 1,500 square feet to .5 spaces per unit.

E. Alternatives:

1. Direct Staff to initiate a text amendment which eliminates minimum parking requirements and includes other changes outlined in Attachment A, after incorporating input from the City Council.

2. Do not direct staff to continue implementing the recommended actions and provide alternative directions.

F. Discussion of Alternatives:

Alternative 1 directs staff to initiate a text amendment which eliminates minimum parking requirements and incorporates other changes outlined in Attachment A, after incorporating input from City Council and continue developing Missing Middle Housing amendments after additional public input and return to City Council in Study Session.

a. Advantages

- Advances the Council Goal "*Invest in Economic Opportunity"* and the key project "Implement policy recommendations regarding incremental development to encourage affordable, sustainable, and neighborhood-scale reinvestment".
- Consistent with other incremental reductions or eliminations to the minimum parking requirements adopted by City Council over many years.
- Facilitates future amendments that support small scale multi-family developments making it easier to design them to be consistent with the fabric of the neighborhood.

b. Disadvantages

- Minimum parking is a long-standing practice of the City and removing this requirement may generate negative feedback.
- Eliminating the minimum parking requirement may result in new congestion in streets and neighborhoods.

Alternative 2 would provide alternative direction to staff.

a. Advantages

- Allows for the City Council to consider other actions staff could take to implement Council Goals and key projects.
- Specific advantages will depend on the direction provided by City Council.

b. Disadvantages

- Delays the implementation of potential actions that may address the Council's desire to address housing needs throughout the City.

G. Community Input: On March 26, 2026, staff conducted a study session with the Plan Commission (Commission) to provide an opportunity for input from Plan Commissioners (Commissioners). The Commission was supportive of the proposed amendments and discussed a number of proposed provisions, including administrative procedures for legalizing non-conforming uses and revisions to the Historic Preservation ordinance. Commissioners also highlighted the recent Champaign Housing Needs Analysis, and that proposed changes would support efforts to build more housing units throughout the community. This study session also provided an opportunity for community engagement from the public during audience participation. Public comments were supportive of eliminating minimum parking requirements and supportive of other proposed amendments. Public comment also requested that amendments allowing missing middle housing advance with the parking amendments.

H. Budget Impact: There are no anticipated direct budget impacts for this project. Generally, new development and redevelopment in the City positively supports the property tax base of the City.

I. Staffing Impact: Staff time will be spent preparing ordinance amendments and code revisions sheets for upcoming text amendments, including community engagement materials. To date, staff spent approximately 280 hours developing the recommendations, text amendments, and this report.

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Attachment A: Incremental Development Zoning Amendments

INCREMENTAL DEVELOPMENT ZONING AMENDEMNTS

Phase 1 Revision Summary

Introduction

This summary document outlines proposed changes to the Champaign Zoning Ordinance to continue implementing City Council's Incremental Development Council Goal. In April 2025, (Study Session 2025-000) City Council directed staff continue implementing the Incremental Development Council Goal by:

- Eliminating the minimum parking requirements,
- Allow Missing Middle Housing in all residential zoning districts, and
- Explore administrative amendments to the International Building Code (IBC) and International Residential Code (IRC) to support new housing construction.

These changes will not be implemented in a single zoning text amendment. Several amendments will be needed over the next year to fully implement the direction from City Council. In addition, public input, and opportunities to provide comments on any proposed changes will be necessary. As a result, Planning and Development Staff has decided to break these amendments into several phases.

The first phase of amendments will accomplish the following:

- Modernize the Zoning Ordinance to make it clear and readable to the public.
- Eliminate minimum off-street parking requirements.
- Revises development and design standards to set clear expectations about the size and bulk of new development that may be possible without minimum parking regulations.
- Enacts the annual Zoning Ordinance omnibus amendments to correct existing errors or codify interpretations made over the previous year by the Zoning Administrator.

Relationship to Pending State Legislation

The Illinois General Assembly is currently considering several bills related to Missing Middle housing, minimum parking requirements, building code, and other requirements that impact municipalities across Illinois. The BUILD (Building Up Illinois Developments) Plan includes five bills (SB4060-SB4064) that include home rule preemptions and would establish parameters for regulating key components of the Incremental Development Zoning Amendments previously supported by City Council. Waiting to advance Missing Middle Housing and Building Code amendments until after the current legislative session allows staff to respond to these potential legislative changes and draft future Zoning Ordinance amendments that advance the vision of City Council while being compliant with new legal requirements. A summary of each Senate Bill is included below:

SB4060 Missing Middle Housing

- Requires missing middle housing in all residential zoning districts.
- Limits the ability to require parking for a variety of housing types.
- Establishes minimum setbacks, lot dimension, Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and other development requirements for residential zoning districts.

SB4061 Single Stair Buildings

- Requires that all municipalities must allow single-stair building construction.
- Establishes safety and design standards for single-stair building construction.

SB4062 Development Impact Fee Reform

- Establishes maximum impact fees that municipalities may impose on new development.
- Maintains the ability for municipalities to charge for connections to infrastructure.

SB4063 Plan Review

- Requires that municipalities complete an initial review of building plans in fifteen business days.
- Allows for third-party plan review and inspections if reviews are not completed in a timely manner.

SB4064 Parking Reform

- No parking required for single-family homes or dwellings less than 1,500 square feet.
- No parking required for any affordable housing project or for ground floor commercial uses.
- Limits multifamily parking requirements for units larger than 1,500 square feet to .5 spaces per unit.

Purpose

This summary document outlines proposed changes to the Champaign Zoning Ordinance to continue implementing City Council's Incremental Development Council Goal. It is organized to provide a high-level summary of each section of the Zoning Ordinance revision. A detailed redline and clean copy of the zoning ordinance language will be posted once the text amendment is advertised for public hearing at the Plan Commission. Planning and Development staff anticipate making a full copy of the changes publicly available in late March of 2026.

Each section provides an overview of each Article of the Zoning Ordinance, provides a summary of why the Article is part of the ordinance, and summarizes the proposed revisions being made. Additional explanation may also be provided where an ordinance revision helps to implement the Incremental Development Council Goal. In some cases, future changes may be highlighted to show where those revisions may eventually live within the Ordinance.

Chapter 37 Zoning – Summary of Changes

Article I – General Provisions

This section of the Zoning Ordinance establishes the general purpose, intent, and scope of the entire ordinance. This section also specifies how the ordinance is applied to properties and structures through the text and the Official Zoning Map.

The ordinance changes being made in this section include:

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered and order to begin with Sec. 37-100 through Sec. 37-199, in reference to Article I.

2. Adds an Applicability + Authority Section. Makes reference that these rules are adopted pursuant to the City of Champaign's Home Rule Authority and applies to all properties within the municipal limits. In some limited cases, such as annexation agreements, rules may also apply to properties outside the municipal limits but within the 1.5-mile Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).

3. Revised Purpose Statements. Simplifies the existing list of purpose statements by eliminating non-relevant or duplicative statements.

4. Scope and Construction Regulations. Consolidates several sections into a single listing of regulations.

5. Official Zoning Map. Consolidates all regulatory information about the Official Zoning Map into a single listing of regulations.

6. Severability. This is a new section being added to Article 1. This section establishes a rule that, if a court invalidates a provision of the zoning ordinance, then that invalidation is limited in scope and does not invalidate the entire ordinance. This is a common rule in most Illinois municipal zoning ordinances but is not currently part of ours.

Article II – Definitions

This section of the Zoning Ordinance defines specific terms and wording within the Zoning Ordinance. There are also definitions within other Articles of the Zoning Ordinance – in some cases these are duplicitous and in other they may contradict or provide differing definitions.

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered beginning with Sec. 37-200 through Sec. 37-299, in reference to Article II.

2. Individual Definitions Numbered. All definitions are organized alphabetically, with each section being a new letter of the alphabet. Within each section, individual definitions will have their own individual sub-section to provide a direct link to defined land uses and terminology elsewhere in the Zoning Ordinance wherever possible. This will allow someone who is looking up rules permitted uses or rules for development standards within a zoning district to link directly to important definitions that help explain the regulation clearly and succinctly.

3. Group Residential and Supportive Living Definition Amendments. Group residential uses and supportive living facilities are institutional uses that include residential units and often include other services like assisted care, social services, food preparation, or medical care. Examples include community living facilities, recovery home, residential care facilities, assisted/independent living facility, dormitory, rooming house, transitional housing, and emergency shelter. Currently, there is significant overlap between some of these uses based on their definitions, which makes it unclear what uses are permitted in which zoning districts. It is also important to make sure that these definitions do not conflict with other civil rights protections for people utilizing these housing types under the Fair Housing Act. These use definitions will be amended to provide clear distinctions between use types, ensure compliance with all applicable State and Federal Law, and provide clarity where these uses will be permitted.

Group Residential definitions being amended include:

- Dormitory

- Group Housing, University
- Rooming House

Supportive Living definitions being amended include:

- Assisted/Independent Living
- Community Living Facility
- Emergency Shelter
- Recovery Home
- Residential Care Facility
- Transitional Housing

4. Residential Land Use Definition Amendments. Private residential uses include definitions for things like single-family homes, duplexes, and multifamily residential uses that are privately owned. These use definitions are being amended to focus more on the physical design and characteristics of the dwelling unit type, update existing language to match building code definitions wherever possible, and be consistent with State law. Additional definitions are being included, such as Multiplex Residential, to facilitate future zoning amendments to facilitate Missing Middle housing types within Champaign. Wherever possible, these definitions match proposed State legislation to comply with potential state-wide missing middle housing standards.

Private Residential definitions being amended include:

- Single Family Dwelling
- Attached Dwelling
- Common Lot Line Attached Dwelling (Townhouse Dwelling)
- Duplex Dwelling
- Guest Residence
- Manufactured Dwelling
- Multifamily Dwelling (Apartment Dwelling)
- Manufactured Housing Community
- Residential Conversion

New private residential definitions being added include:

- Cottage Court Development
- Multiplex Development
- Ground Floor Dwelling Unit
- Upper Story Dwelling Unit

5. Definition Consolidation from Other Articles. Other Articles of the Zoning Ordinance, such as Historic Preservation, Signs, and Planned Developments among others, include definitions within their respective Articles in addition to the definitions found in Article II. These definitions will be consolidated into Article II rather than maintaining separate definitions in multiple places in the Zoning Ordinance. Links to defined terms will be incorporated into the text of the Zoning Ordinance.

Article III – Zoning Districts

This section of the Zoning Ordinance establishes the various zoning districts in Champaign. Article III also regulates land uses and performance standards for properties located within these zoning districts.

The ordinance changes being made in this section include:

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered and order to begin with Sec. 37-300 through Sec. 37-399, in reference to Article III.

2. Permitted Use Table. Currently, all listings of permitted, provisional and special uses in the zoning ordinance are organized into lists within the code. This change would consolidate the list of permitted provisional and special uses into a single table. Uses would be identified with links to relevant definitions and design standards for specific uses – if applicable. Additional language included in this section will guide the reader through how to interpret the table of regulations.

3. Revisions to Zoning Districts. This change will add some additional zoning districts to the ordinance and eliminate others. These changes are intended to achieve several goals including supporting more neighborhood oriented commercial development, expanding opportunities for new housing construction, and supporting continued investment and expansion in the University of Illinois Research Park. This change will also protect industrial areas from encroachment by commercial uses, preserving valuable land in Champaign for industrial, manufacturing, and other employment uses that benefit the region. The following changes are proposed:

- Create an additional MFUniv Multifamily University Neighborhood Zoning District. (MFUniv-1 and MFUniv-2) This district would allow increased heights in key locations adjacent to commercial areas, along high-frequency transit routes and near public open spaces.
- Split the existing CN Neighborhood Commercial District into two new districts. CN-1 Walkable Neighborhood Commercial for properties near existing residential areas and within the core of the community. CN-2 Neighborhood Commercial Center would be applied to larger, more auto-oriented areas such as the Windsor Galeria and Nieman's Plaza at Kirby and Duncan.
- Establish a Research Park zoning district to allow for the development of limited industrial uses along with other institutional, research, bioprocessing, and technology uses. Commercial uses and some multifamily uses will also be allowed.
- Eliminate the existing CI Commercial Industrial zoning district and rezone the remaining properties as either a commercial zoning district (CG or CB1) or Industrial zoning district (I1 or I2).

4. Consolidate District Performance Standards. Performance standards are rules that apply to all uses within a zoning district. They are intended to protect the character of the district and prevent impacts on surrounding zoning districts where there may be conflicts between different intensities of uses. These standards will be consolidated into a single section of the Article. Links to these sections will also be included in the Permitted Use Table and Development Standards tables where required.

Article IV – Development Standards

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-400 through Sec. 37-499, in reference to Article IV.

2. Combined Table IV-A and IV-B. These tables implement the various development standards of the individual zoning districts – things such as setbacks, maximum height, floor area ratio, building footprint and lot coverage. Currently there are two tables – one for most zoning districts and then a separate table for the In Town Zoning Districts. These tables will be combined into a single table of regulations. Additional language included in this section will guide the reader through how to interpret the table of regulations. The table will also include amendments intended to address building heights and bulk to mitigate out of scale building design that is possible due to the elimination of minimum parking.

3. Amending Building Heights. This change will implement direction from City Council to remove variable building height requirements in the multifamily zoning districts to set clear standards for how tall buildings can be in certain districts. This amendment will also align zoning height requirements to typical building construction heights. The following requirements will be implemented: (See Table Below)

Zoning District				
	Feet	Stories	Feet	Stories
SF1	35’	--	36’	2 ½
SF2	35’	--	36’	2 ½
MF1	Variable	--	36’	3
MF2	Variable	--	66’	5
MF3	Variable	--	90’	7
MFUniv-1	75’	--	90’	7
MFUniv-2	--	--	150’	12
MHC	18	--	30’	2
IT-SF1	35	2 ½	36	2 ½
IT-SF2	35	2 ½	36’	2 ½
IT-MR1	35	--	36’	3
IT-MR2	45	--	54’	4
IT-MX	55	--	66’	5
CO	35	--	42’	3
CN-1	35	--	42’	3
CN-2	--	--	42’	3
CG	--	--	90’	7
CB1	85	--	102’	8
CB2	115	--	150’	12
CB3	175	--	222’	18
CI	--	--	90’	7
RP	--	--	90’	7
IBP	--	--	--	--
I1	--	--	--	--
I2	--	--	--	--

Proposed height changes will include both a building story and foot-height maximum. These rules work together to maintain the existing height intent of each zoning district while recognizing modern construction methods. Revised maximum heights assume a typical story height of twelve feet for frame construction and upper stories in mixed use buildings and eighteen feet ground floor story heights in commercial, mixed use, or podium style buildings.

4. Lot Area + Width Requirements. Minimum lot areas and minimum lot widths will be reduced in the multifamily and commercial zoning districts. These are intended to prescribe minimum sizes and dimensions for new lots being created – they do not apply to existing lots. Existing lots which may not meet these minimum standards are still permitted to build any of the permitted or provisional uses listed in the Zoning Ordinance by right. No changes are being made to the SF1, SF2 or In-Town Zoning Districts. The following minimum lot area and width changes are proposed:

- Reduce the minimum lot area in MF1, MF2, MF3 and MFUniv from 6,500 ft^2 to 5,000 ft^2 and reduce the minimum lot width from 65 feet to 50 feet. This matches the existing standards for the In-Town Zoning Districts that allow multifamily residential.
- Reduce the minimum lot area in CN, CO, and CG from 6,500 ft^2 to 5,000 ft^2 and the minimum lot width from 60 feet to 42 feet.
- The proposed CN-2 Walkable Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District will have a minimum lot area of 2,200 ft^2 and a minimum lot width of 22 feet. No non-conforming lot areas are created by this zoning change.
- Establish a minimum lot area in the Central Business Districts of 1,080 ft^2 and a minimum lot width of 18 feet. No non-conforming lot areas are created by this zoning change.

5. Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Amendments. Floor area ratio is the relationship between building size and lot area and regulates the size and bulk of buildings on a lot. Adjustments to FAR are being made along with maximum heights to provide clear standards for building bulk in districts where no parking is required. The following FAR adjustments are proposed:

- Increase the minimum FAR in CN-1 Walkable Neighborhood Commercial District from 0.35 to 0.90. This matches the FAR in the CO district.
- Increase the minimum FAR in CN-2 Neighborhood Shopping Center from 0.35 to 1.25.
- Decrease the minimum FAR in CG General Commercial from 4.00 to 3.00.

6. Create a Consolidated Site and Building Design Standards Section. This will consolidate design and development standards from various parts of the Zoning Ordinance that deal with development of property. These include special requirements for development along a floodplain, site lighting, and building design standards within the In Town, University Neighborhood, and Central Business Zones. Currently, these standards are found in several sections of the Zoning Ordinance such as Article V Provisional and Special Uses and Article XI Supplemental Regulations. These different standards will be consolidated into a single location within the Zoning Ordinance within Article IV.

Article V – Use Regulations

Currently, Article V regulates specific provisional and special uses within the Zoning Ordinance. It also includes procedures for review and approval. This section will be reduced to only include standards for specific land uses. Procedures for Special Use Permits will be moved to consolidated section about Zoning Administration and Procedures.

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-500 through Sec. 37-599, in reference to Article V.

2. Listing of Use Standards for Principal Uses. The following standards will be compiled from existing provisional use standards within the Zoning Ordinance:

- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Animal Clinic
- Auto-Repair, Minor
- Bed and Breakfast
- Biomanufacturing
- Clinic
- College or University
- Community Center
- Contractors Shop
- Cottage Court Development
- Data Center
- Drive-Through Uses
- Day Care Center, Adult
- Day Care Center, Child
- Detached Dwelling
- Attached Dwelling
- Townhouse Dwelling
- Multiplex Dwelling
- Multifamily Dwelling
- Ground Floor Dwelling
- Upper Story Dwelling
- Eleemosynary Student Foundation
- Emergency Shelter
- Event Center
- Financial Institution
- Freestanding Telecommunication Towers
- Government Facility
- Group Housing, University
- Hotel
- Kennel
- Kitchen, Commissary
- Manufactured Housing Community
- Microbrewery
- Micro-Distillery
- Office
- Office Conversion
- Personal Service
- Recycling Center

- Religious Institution
- Research Testing Facility
- Residential Care Facility
- Restaurant
- Retail, Food and Drug
- Retail, General Merchandise
- Retail, Package Liquor
- Rooming House
- Salvage Yard
- Solid Waste Transfer Facility
- Schools K-12
- Shopping Center
- Tavern
- Transitional Housing
- Truck Stop
- Utility Station
- Vehicles Sales
- Vehicle Storage Lot
- Warehouse
- Warehouse, Self-Storage

3. Standards for Accessory Uses. These are for standards that apply to accessory uses and accessory structures.

- Detached Accessory Structures
- Detached Garages
- Home Occupations
- Wind Energy Conversion Systems
- Rooftop Solar Energy Systems
- Freestanding Solar Energy Systems
- Freestanding Automatic Teller Machines
- Others?

4. Standards for Temporary Uses. These are standards that apply to temporary uses. Existing temporary uses mentioned in the ordinance include:

- Construction Site Temporary Structures
- Garage Sales
- Portable Storage Units
- Home Retail Parties

Article VI – Parking, Loading and Access Drives

This section of the ordinance outlines requirements for off-street parking, residential driveways, commercial access drives, loading areas and bicycle parking. City Council has provided direction to eliminate minimum

parking requirements throughout Champaign, these and other associated amendments have been incorporated into this Article of the Zoning Ordinance.

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-600 through Sec. 37-699, in reference to Article VI.

2. Eliminate Minimum Required Off-Street Parking Spaces. This would delete the various ratios which determine the existing minimum number of spaces required for various uses. Revised standards for minimum bicycle parking will continue to be included in the table. Uses will be updated to be comprehensive for the listing of uses in the Zoning Ordinance.

3. Parking Lot Design Standards. These standards specify that all parking areas must be paved, landscaped, and meet minimum construction standards. They also specify minimum dimensions for parking spaces, access aisles, build stormwater detention, and lighting. A few modifications are being made to these standards that will require:

- A dedicated pedestrian walkway connecting a front entrance of a building to a public sidewalk through any parking areas in front yards.
- Access aisles at periodic intervals of 26 feet minimum width to accommodate fire apparatus access.
- Create standards of head-in off-street parking from a public alley.

Article VII – Landscaping and Lighting

This section of the ordinance outlines requirements for on-site landscaping, buffering between different land use intensities and required parking lot landscaping. This section also prescribes standards for screening utilitarian uses, mechanical equipment and trash enclosures.

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-700 through Sec. 37-799, in reference to Article VII.

2. Update Land Use Impact List. Existing categories will be updated to reflect defined land uses listed in the zoning ordinances. This list currently utilizes uses that are not listed in the zoning ordinance or does not identify all uses currently listed as permitted or provisions. This leads to unclear standards for different uses and requires more interpretation by the Zoning Administrator.

3. Update Parking Lot Landscaping. Parking lot perimeter and interior landscaping will incorporate existing standards applied in the Curtis Road Interchange Area Overlay District.

Article VIII – Signs and Outdoor Advertising Sign Structures

This Article of the zoning ordinance regulates on premise signage for businesses and off premise advertising on outdoor advertising sign structures – commonly called billboards.

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-800 through Sec. 37-899, in reference to Article VIII.

2. Split Sign Regulations from OASS Regulations. This change will separate On-premise sign regulations from the regulations for outdoor advertising sign structures. This will help to provide clarity between the regulations and will assist with future amendments.

Article IX – Historic Preservation

This section specifies regulations for the protection of historic locally designated landmarks in Champaign. This article also creates the Historic Preservation Commission and establishes their review procedures for landmark landmarks, landmark districts, conservation districts, and design review.

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-900 through Sec. 37-999, in reference to Article IX.

2. Create a Process for Removal of Landmark Designation. The zoning ordinance is not clear on the process or procedures for removal of a landmark designation. The code section only says that removal of a landmark designation should only occur after following the same procedure as landmark designation. This lack of clarity does not provide guidance on how to process or standards for review of these cases. As a result, a proposed amendment would establish a formal process for an applicant to remove a landmark designation and specify findings and criteria for such a removal.

3. Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness for Window and Door Replacements. A recent International Building Code and International Residential Code change now requires that replacement of doors and windows receive a building permit, which is the trigger for review of the permit by the Historic Preservation Commission. Previously, these alterations to historic landmarks were reviewed by Planning and Development staff through an Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). This amendment would re-establish an administrative review of these permits by staff.

4. Additional Design Review Standards. This section will expand and clarify the existing design standards for historic landmarks to be more objective in nature and provide illustrations where appropriate.

Article X – Nonconforming Properties, Uses, and Structures

This section establishes regulations for properties, uses, and structures that do not meet the current requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. The section outlines processes and procedures for how to regulate these non-conforming uses and what actions trigger compliance with current regulations.

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-1000 through Sec. 37-1099, in reference to Article X.

2. Extending Development Timelines. Currently, nonconforming properties lose their legal protections after six months. This timeline is often not enough for a property owner to explore options to either bring the property into compliance or reinvest in the property that would require any permit review and inspection. Staff is proposing to extend this timeline to one year, with an additional year available to a property owner with Planning Director approval.

Article XI – Administrative Procedures and Enforcement

This section specifies processes and procedures for site plan review, zoning review of building permits, and other administratively reviewed exceptions to the Zoning Ordinance standards. This section is compiled from several sections and includes new processes and procedures.

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-1100 through Sec. 37-1199, in reference to Article XI.

2. Site Plan Review. This is an administrative review that is done by the Zoning Administrator to provide preliminary compliance with zoning ordinance requirements and to receive preliminary feedback on any development related issues. This site plan review is required for large multifamily development sites over two acres - however it is also offered as a courtesy service for other projects as well. This section will formalize this process and add additional developments to the list of required site plan reviews.

3. Administrative Planned Development. This is a new process that would allow for certain development types, especially missing middle housing, to utilize an administrative review process rather than a public hearing with Plan Commission and final approval by City Council. It would allow for certain limited waivers to be issued to zoning and subdivision regulations proposed process for certain development types such as Cottage Courts Developments. This new development type was identified by City Council as a proposed strategy to help implement the Incremental Development Council Goal and promote missing middle housing types.

4. Greenfill Priority Area Development Plans. This amendment would require an overall development plan for large greenfield sites identified by the Comprehensive Plan. This process currently exists within the Zoning Ordinance for properties within the Curtis Road Interchange Area. This would require that large tracts of undeveloped land prepare a comprehensive plan for new development and obtain feedback from planning and development as well as surrounding neighbors through a public meeting prior to initiative a subdivision development.

4. Administrative Mitigation Plan. This is an existing procedure within the Zoning Ordinance that was utilized to address non-conforming commercial properties – however it has not been utilized for many years. This process was developed as part of the 1996 Zoning Ordinance Update and was intended to eliminate the amortization provisions intended to eliminate non-conforming uses. The mitigation plan allowed non-conforming commercial uses to continue to operate while mitigating their negative impacts on neighboring properties. This mitigation plan process is proposed to be modified into an administrative procedure that could be utilized by property owners to document their non-conforming properties and memorialize a uses continuation despite its non-conforming status. The property owner would be required to provide a site plan for review and staff would be able to apply limited conditions of approval to mitigate potential conflicts with surrounding properties where appropriate. This modified procedure will help to address existing non-conforming multifamily properties which need to make improvements to the property requiring a building permit. This would eliminate the need for special use permits for these situations where an existing owner is seeking to invest in their property but is limited by the non-conforming status. This proposed administrative process is more in keeping with City Council's philosophy of addressing these non-conforming uses, particularly for residential uses.

5. Transfer of Development Rights for Historic Properties. This will provide an incentive for properties that are locally designated landmarks to monetize their development potential on their property by transferring that potential to another development project in the City of Champaign.

6. Alternative Landscaping Plan. This section specifies an existing process for receiving administrative relief for providing an alternative landscaping plan. This process already exists within the Zoning Ordinance but would be incorporated into this section.

Article XII – Public Hearings, Zoning Entitlements, Variations and Appeals.

This section would compile several processes and procedures from various parts of the zoning ordinance that involve review by Plan Commission or the Zoning Board of Appeals, and approval by City Council. Many of these processes are currently included in the Zoning Ordinance but would be reorganized into a single Article of the Ordinance.

1. Numbering Order. All sections will be renumbered to begin with Sec. 37-1100 through Sec. 37-1199, in reference to Article XI.

2. Standards for Public Hearings and Notices. These regulations outline the procedures for public notifications for meetings. Many provisions are regulated by State law. No changes are proposed to these standards.

3. Zoning Map Amendments. This section prescribes the process for a zoning map amendment – often referred to as a rezoning.

4. Planned Developments. This section prescribes the process for a planned development that is reviewed and approved by City Council following a public hearing by City Council. .

5. Special Use Permits. A Special Use Permit process allows for a use that is not permitted by right but may be appropriate at a given location with additional review or conditions of approval.

6. Text Amendments. Outlines the process for amending the text of the Zoning Ordinance.

7. Appeals. The appeal process allows an individual to challenge an interpretation of code or the denial of a permit by the Zoning Administrator.

8. Variations. Variations allow a property owner to request relief from a provision of the Zoning Ordinance by demonstrating a hardship in meeting the regulations or based on unique circumstances of a particular property.