

**Code Refresh  
Diverse Economy Working Group  
Meeting #1 – May 19, 2025 (Module 1)**

**TABLE 1**

1. **Use Thresholds: In the Draft Use Provisions, Commercial, Manufacturing, and Industrial uses are permitted in certain districts based on their size. Do these proposed square footage breaks make sense?**
  - Commercial – Is the 1,500 square feet just storefront or the entire use?
  - Why was 1,500 square feet decided? There may be a need for a commercial realtor roundtable to see if this makes sense.
  - What are the conditions for the conditional uses?
  - Try to figure out why business choose to locate in the counties.
  - Most industrial and manufacturing users want at least 30,000-50,000 sf depending on operations.
  - The proposed IL zoning in Shockoe Valley maybe should be IX.
  - Commercial in Residential areas should only be on certain streets (Major Streets?)
  - Don't allow commercial uses in RD districts.
  
2. **Market Demand: Are there uses that the zoning ordinance is prohibiting or limiting that the market wants to be here? Are there businesses and industries that the zoning ordinance should encourage? Have you experienced an issue with the existing zoning ordinance while working with a business, industry, or entrepreneur that should be addressed in the new zoning ordinance?**
  - The future of vacant institutional uses.
  - Talk to businesses about what makes them want to stay and expand (CoStar)
  - Who is targeting our graduates?
  - What about allowing it w/ an SUP?
  - Nightclubs should go through an approval process for each one (not by-right anywhere).
  
3. **CG-4 Zoning District: The Commercial General Zoning District (CG-4) was added to accommodate more auto-oriented commercial corridors in the short to medium term. The zoning district allows for a big box, auto-oriented building form and permits more auto-oriented uses. But exactly where should it be applied? Are we making too many existing properties non-conforming if we limit where this district is applied? Are there uses permitted in the CG that should be permitted in other districts?**
  - Zoning isn't what is keeping grocery stores away – other incentives are needed.
  - Even if we zone what we want, will it be built?
  - When will the market catch up?

**TABLE 2**

1. **Use Thresholds: In the Draft Use Provisions, Commercial, Manufacturing, and Industrial uses are permitted in certain districts based on their size. Do these proposed square footage breaks make sense?**
  - RD-B: 1,500 SF + restaurant = Conditional Use Permit
  - RD-C: 1,500 SF small restaurant = Permitted Use
  - RD-C: 2,000 SF+ = Conditional Use Permit
  - RA-A through RA-C: Change 1,500 SF threshold to 2,000 SF
  - RA-A through RA-C: 2,000 SF+ = Permitted Use
  - Maritza will scan and email our comments.
2. **Market Demand: Are there uses that the zoning ordinance is prohibiting or limiting that the market wants to be here? Are there businesses and industries that the zoning ordinance should encourage? Have you experienced an issue with the existing zoning ordinance while working with a business, industry, or entrepreneur that should be addressed in the new zoning ordinance?**
  - Limits make it difficult to build a very tall building – Floor Area Ratio and inclined plane – these could be eliminated to encourage corporate headquarters.
  - Increase residential density to bring back retail to corridors.
  - Can zoning encourage parcel consolidation to bring larger users to IX and Industrial areas?
3. **CG-4 Zoning District: The Commercial General Zoning District (CG-4) was added to accommodate more auto-oriented commercial corridors in the short to medium term. The zoning district allows for a big box, auto-oriented building form and permits more auto-oriented uses. But exactly where should it be applied? Are we making too many existing properties non-conforming if we limit where this district is applied? Are there uses permitted in the CG that should be permitted in other districts?**
  - CG-4 makes sense to have and perhaps expand?
  - Maybe CG-4 shouldn't abut residential districts?

**TABLE 3**

1. **Use Thresholds: In the Draft Use Provisions, Commercial, Manufacturing, and Industrial uses are permitted in certain districts based on their size. Do these proposed square footage breaks make sense?**
  - How are the square footage cut offs determined? Is 1,500 SF /5,000 SF grounded in data about the typical size of these spaces? What are they now?
  - Are we going to hurt light manufacturing with the size restrictions? Are they grounded in data? 5,000 to 50,000 SF is a very broad spread. Discussed light/food manufacturing going on at Stoney Point; would those uses be allowed?
  - If uses require conditional approval, red tape would be prohibiting for small/underrepresented businesses. Make sure there is data backing categories and sizes.

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  - Will zoning allow for creative uses in empty buildings (for example office or big box)?
  - Will zoning encourage creation of more childcare in employment centers (for example, can childcare centers go into empty office space). Petcare?
  - Need for flexible language for urban food systems, enterprise food systems solutions, provide room for innovation and creativity (solutions to urban food deserts, urban gardening, co-ops, urban land trust model)
  - Strategic nodes; are we prohibiting too much?
  
3. **CG-4 Zoning District: The Commercial General Zoning District (CG-4) was added to accommodate more auto-oriented commercial corridors in the short to medium term. The zoning district allows for a big box, auto-oriented building form and permits more auto-oriented uses. But exactly where should it be applied? Are we making too many existing properties non-conforming if we limit where this district is applied? Are there uses permitted in the CG that should be permitted in other districts?**
  - Discussed the need for more housing density. Moving away for auto-oriented uses supports development of additional housing units.
  - How did the consultants decide where this should/shouldn't be used?
  - As redevelopment happens in auto-oriented corridors; what happens to small businesses that have long-time operations (specifically talked about immigrant, minority-owned businesses)? Will they be priced out?
  - How does parking work as many auto-oriented areas becomes mixed-use?
  - Discussed whether redevelopment in the city is hurting or helping people (is it making places unaffordable).

**TABLE 4**

2. **Use Thresholds: In the Draft Use Provisions, Commercial, Manufacturing, and Industrial uses are permitted in certain districts based on their size. Do these proposed square footage breaks make sense?**
  - Concerns with IX districts next to residential districts when it allows low impact industrial less than 50,000 SF.
  - The 1,500 SF threshold could be increased to 2,000 SF.
  - Look at other incentives for keeping local and small businesses.
  - Look at what local competing localities do with zoning to attract businesses.
  
2. **Market Demand: Are there uses that the zoning ordinance is prohibiting or limiting that the market wants to be here? Are there businesses and industries that the zoning ordinance should encourage? Have you experienced an issue with the existing zoning ordinance while working with a business, industry, or entrepreneur that should be addressed in the new zoning ordinance?**

- Allow more co-working spaces.
  - Look at ways to allow multiple revenue streams for businesses in one location/building.
  - Encourage arts, music, nonprofit community impact spaces.
  - Allow pop-up ready spaces (indoor & outdoor) that allow retail
  - Allow above and below ground floor commercial
  - Make sure laundromats are still permitted.
  - Allow underutilized spaces (garages) for commercial purposes
  - Don't limit outdoor uses.
3. **CG-4 Zoning District: The Commercial General Zoning District (CG-4) was added to accommodate more auto-oriented commercial corridors in the short to medium term. The zoning district allows for a big box, auto-oriented building form and permits more auto-oriented uses. But exactly where should it be applied? Are we making too many existing properties non-conforming if we limit where this district is applied? Are there uses permitted in the CG that should be permitted in other districts?**
- Support for CG-4 to protect existing businesses.
  - Support for grandfathering uses.

#### **PARKING BOARD**

- There should be a CCET sweep on Broad Street.
- How is single-stair reform incorporated/considered in the Code Refresh project?
- How will the rezoning impact tax assessments? Concern with businesses getting pushed out.