

**Special Planning Meeting
Tuesday, December 5, 2023**

**STAFF REPORT
2022-2023 MASTER PLAN PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE AMENDMENTS**

Date: November 13, 2023
To: City Planning Commission

Prepared by: City Planning Staff

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Home Rule Charter of the City of New Orleans requires that the City Planning Commission shall “Prepare, adopt, amend, and recommend to the Council a twenty year Master Plan for the physical development of the City.” “The Master Plan shall consist of a statement of development goals, objectives, and policies for the physical growth and development of the City, and shall include maps and a text setting forth principles, standards, and proposals.” The Master Plan, titled “New Orleans 2030: A Master Plan for the 21st Century”, was adopted by the City Planning Commission in January, 2010, and by the City Council on August, 2010.

The Home Rule Charter, Section 5-404, requires a review of the Master Plan “at least once every five years, but not more than once per calendar year, and at any time in response to a disaster or other declared emergency, the Commission shall review the Master Plan and shall determine, after one or more public hearings whether the plan requires amendment or comprehensive revision. If amendment or comprehensive revision is required, the Commission shall prepare and recommend amendments or comprehensive revisions and readopt the plan.” The Charter requires at least one public meeting for each planning district affected by amendments as well as one formal public hearing.

Master Plan Amendment Background

In the Summer of 2011, the City Planning Commission opened a City Charter mandated Master Plan Amendment Application period. No application fees were charged for this first year of amendments. During this period, nineteen (19) applications to amend the text of the Master Plan were submitted and fifty-seven (57) applications to amend the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) of the Master plan were submitted.¹ In addition, the City Planning Commission proposed over six hundred (600) amendments that included technical corrections and FLUM amendments. Throughout the process, the City Planning Commission held ten (10) planning district meetings and two (2) public hearings.² Following an eighteen-month process, the City planning Commission recommended approval and the City Council adopted many of these revisions to the Master Plan in December 2012.

In October of 2015, the City Planning Commission voted to open the Master Plan Amendment Application period for the second time. The Commission found that though the Master Plan is a

¹ Applications with multiple components were bundled according to the common applicant and planning district.

² Public Hearings were held December 13, 2011 and January 10, 2012.

plan designed to take New Orleans through the year 2030, it was heavily focused on recovery from the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent failures of the levee systems. While disaster recovery was the immediate priority, the need to plan for the city's long-term future was and continues to be necessary.

The City worked with numerous partners to generate several initiatives recommending how New Orleans should adapt to a changing natural environment, create flexible and reliable systems, invest in economic development, and prepare the city for future disasters. From April 25 to September 9, 2016, the City Planning Commission had an open Master Plan amendment application period. The CPC received one hundred two (102) applications to amend the text of the Master Plan as well as two-hundred nineteen (219) applications to amend the FLUM of the Master Plan. The public input process for these amendment applications included nine planning district meetings and two special public hearings in the Council Chamber.

On January 24, 2017, the City Planning Commission considered proposed amendments to the Master Plan's FLUM designations and the text descriptions of the FLUM categories. On January 31, 2017, the City Planning Commission considered proposed amendments to the text of the Master Plan. These changes generally were proposed to provide additional information and analysis, set goals, and recommended strategies or actions for implementation and achievement of goals. The New Orleans City Council adopted this round of amendments on July, 27, 2017.

2022-2023 Master Plan Amendment Period

It has been 5 years since the 2018 amendment period; the City Charter prompts CPC to consider whether an amendment to the Master Plan is necessary or desirable.

In September of 2022, the City Planning Commission voted to open the Master Plan Amendment Application period specifically to address Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designations. The 2022-2023 Master Plan Amendment period will address inconsistencies with properties' FLUM designations and their zoning designation and/or land-use. Furthermore, existing development patterns and desired development may not be consistent with the FLUM in some areas. FLUM categories are not the same as zoning districts, where specific rules are detailed. A FLUM category may be consistent with more than one zoning district and site history and neighborhood context also help determine appropriate zoning for a property.

Certain FLUM designations throughout the City have hindered economic development by severely limiting how properties can be used via their zoning designation. For example, large vacant swaths of New Orleans East have a single-family FLUM designation despite their locations near the Interstate and heavy commercial zoning districts. Consequently, these properties have largely remained vacant as any zoning change to permit commercial or multi-family uses would be inconsistent with Chapter 13 of the Master Plan.

Adopted FLUM changes would subsequently require a zoning change. Any zoning changes necessary to bring the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance into consistency with adopted amendments to the Master Plan will be considered at a later date with their own public processes.

In order to have an expeditious process, text change amendments to the Master Plan were not considered in this amendment period but may be considered on a separate track. Proposed FLUM amendments requests were routed through the City Council. This arrangement was intended to be a more efficient way of focusing both public and staff on citywide development needs.

From September 13, 2022, to October 14, 2022, the City Planning Commission had an open Master Plan amendment application period. The CPC received one hundred and ten (110) applications to amend the the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) of the Master Plan.

The following is a general breakdown of Future Land Use Map requests received and considered in this amendment period:

- Several requests ask the City Planning Commission to consider changing FLUM designations of General Commercial to a Mixed-Use FLUM designation, especially in the historic parts of the city. Many General Commercial FLUM designated areas are in multi-modal corridors that could benefit from future mixed-use development. Changing the FLUM designation to one of the Mixed-Use FLUM designation would allow for future zoning changes more inclusive of residential and commercial uses. The zoning districts compatible with the General Commercial FLUM designation generally preclude residential development with the exception of dwellings above the ground floor, which are permitted via the conditional use process. Changing the FLUM designation would provide a pathway forward to change the zoning districts to one that permits a broader range of residential and mixed-use developments.
- The City Planning Commission staff considered several requests that would retroactively create consistency between a site's zoning district and its FLUM designation. These sites were previously approved for a zoning change to a zoning district incongruent with their FLUM designation.
- Some requests considered would create continuity for certain sites with a split-FLUM designation.
- The City Planning Commission staff considered several requests to change a Future Land Use Map Designation of Residential Single-Family Post or Pre-War to a Residential Low Density Post or Pre-War designation. The Residential Single-Family Post/Pre War FLUM designations are compatible with zoning districts that generally only permit single-family residential development, despite many of these sites historically allowing for two- or multi-family development. The FLUM requests would allow a future zoning change to return historic densities to these areas.

The public input process for these amendment applications included nine (9) planning district meetings and will include one special public hearing in the Council Chamber on December 5, 2023, and a possible second hearing at a regularly scheduled City Planning Commission hearing on January 9, 2024.