

## 5. Specific Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zone

### a. The City of Greenbelt Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zone (NCO zone)

The City of Greenbelt Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NCO zone) is established in accordance with the procedures and standards of this Section.

- i. The purpose of the NCO zone is to preserve the development features of the New Deal era "green town" planned and developed as a complete town on a single tract of land by the Federal Government. Planning principles incorporated into the design include the English garden city; the Radburn superblock, including the separation of vehicle and pedestrian traffic; the Perry neighborhood unit; the mix of uses and pedestrian connections among them; the density and range of dwelling types; and open space set-asides.
- ii. The original mid-1930's residential areas in the NCO zone, consisting of single-family, two-family, three-family, and townhouse dwellings, were laid out by the Federal Government in superblocks and not on individual lots. When the town was sold, in the early 1950's, it was divided into parcels with letter designations A through Z1 and Z2 ("Lettered Parcels"). These parcels correspond roughly to the original superblocks. They are bounded by a city street on one or more sides, are internally undivided by streets, and contain dwellings sited around Courts that generally access the street by a single driveway and bear a single street number. Dwellings are generally arranged with a 'Garden-side' entrance facing a court or green space, and a 'Service-side' entrance facing a driveway or road. Since 1952 the Lettered Parcels have been owned and managed by Greenbelt Homes, Inc. (GHI), except for certain historic multi-family buildings under other ownership in Parcels O and P.
- iii. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT: All residential permit applications in the NCO zone shall comply with the following standards:
  - (A) The historic design of the residential areas, laid out in superblocks containing rows of homes with distinctive Garden-side and Service-side entrances, shall be maintained. Retain internal walking paths ("internal pathways") creating pedestrian connections within and between superblocks. Retain and protect existing common green spaces, including interior parks and woodlands with no infill development.
  - (B) The historic curvilinear design, where pedestrian pathways including pedestrian underpasses are separated from roadways, should be retained.
  - (C) The 87.65 acres of GHI-owned woodlands included in the 2013 State of Maryland Forest Conservation Management Agreement shall not be developed. Minimum open space set-asides shall apply exclusive of, and in addition to, these 87.65 acres.
  - (D) No formula regulating lot coverage for individual dwellings in the Lettered Parcels shall be imposed.
  - (E) Density for each Lettered Parcel, defined as the number of dwelling units per acre, shall not exceed the existing value as of the date this NCO zone is established in law. Construction of new dwelling units in the Lettered Parcels is not allowed,

except to replace existing dwelling units.

- (F) Demolition of original dwelling units erected by the Federal Government is prohibited unless the permit application demonstrates that repair and/or renovation is unfeasible. Demolition by neglect is specifically prohibited, and shall not be allowed as justification for removal of an original building. Prior to demolition, where permitted, a period of (90) days shall be allowed for historic documentation of the original structure and, where feasible, preservation or reclamation of historically significant building components.
- (G) The total size of all additions to two-family, three-family, or townhouse dwellings shall not exceed 100 percent of the gross floor area of the original dwelling unit. Adding an additional story to a dwelling unit is prohibited. Two story additions shall be placed only on the Garden-side or at the end of a dwelling unit. Service-side additions shall not exceed one story.
- (H) Consistent with Greenbelt's historic layout and mixed-use design within the NCO zone boundaries:
  - (i) Buildings need not be oriented to face streets, nor situated with any face parallel to them. Buildings shall be oriented wherever possible facing green space on one or more sides.
  - (ii) No more than one parking space per dwelling unit is required.
  - (iii) Where not otherwise allowed in the underlying zone, non-residential uses that are existing as of the date this NCO zone is established in law shall be permitted to remain.
  - (iv) Modifications to existing GHI dwelling unit additions not otherwise complying with the requirements of this Section, that do not expand the overall size of the dwelling unit, shall not be prohibited by the terms of this paragraph 5.a.iii.

- iv. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT: All permit applications for commercial development in the NCO zone shall comply with the following standards:
- (A) Multifamily dwellings and commercial structures constructed as part of the original planned town shall retain their character defining architectural features, where existing and in serviceable condition, including but not limited to brick or concrete block exterior walls, casement windows, flat roofs, open porches, glass block walls, courses of decorative brick, exterior doors, and exterior light fixtures.
  - (B) New construction of commercial and multifamily rental/apartment buildings should mimic as to size, height, massing, and architectural style the existing commercial structures. Exterior materials such as brick and concrete block shall be used. Height of new buildings shall not exceed the lower of 40-feet above finished grade, or the roof height above grade of existing structures in the Roosevelt Center.
  - (C) Demolition of original multifamily buildings and commercial buildings erected by the Federal Government is prohibited unless the permit application demonstrates that repair and/or renovation is unfeasible. Demolition by neglect is specifically prohibited, and shall not be allowed as justification for removal of an original building. Prior to demolition, where permitted, a period of (90) days shall be allowed for historic documentation of the original structure and, where feasible, preservation or reclamation of historically significant building components.
  - (D) An Architectural Review Board comprised of persons residing within the boundaries of the Greenbelt NCO shall be appointed by the Greenbelt City Council under procedures established by that body. The Architectural Review Board (ARB) shall consist of not more than seven (7) persons, three (3) of whom shall be members of GHI and appointed by the GHI Board of Directors.
    - (i) The Architectural Review Board shall develop, publish and maintain a Style Guide to assist in the preservation of character defining features in the NCO zone.
    - (ii) The Architectural Review Board shall, in an advisory capacity, review all permit applications for commercial development in the NCO zone, applying the standards established in this Section and in the Style Guide. Matters relating to GHI commercial properties shall be referred to the GHI Board of Directors for comment.
    - (iii) City of Greenbelt Planning Director shall advise against issuance of a permit for commercial development absent a determination that the proposal complies with the standards established in this paragraph 5.a.iv.