

Draft Ordinance-Style Amendments

Proposed Amendments to Chapter 50 – Zoning Code

Section ____: Adaptive Reuse of Former School Buildings and Places of Worship

A. Purpose

The purpose of this section is to ensure that the adaptive reuse of former school buildings and places of worship located within residential districts maintains neighborhood character, protects public infrastructure, and promotes community-beneficial development.

B. Applicability

The standards of this section apply to any vacant or former school building or place of worship proposed for conversion to a new use within R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5 zoning districts.

C. Additional Use Limitations

1. **High-density residential uses, including multifamily dwellings exceeding ____ units, shall require a Conditional Use Hearing and neighborhood impact review.**
2. **Shelters, transitional housing, or similar uses shall not be permitted by right in residential districts and must meet enhanced review standards demonstrating:**
 - **No adverse effect on residential characters.**
 - **Adequate security and onsite management.**
 - **Compatibility with surrounding land use.**
3. **Commercial or institutional uses shall be limited to those that generate low traffic, minimal noise, and minimal stormwater impact.**

D. Stormwater and Infrastructure Requirements

1. **Any proposed redevelopment shall include a Stormwater Impact Assessment demonstrating no net increase in runoff to public systems.**
2. **A Green Infrastructure Plan (e.g., bioretention, permeable pavement, detention basins) shall be required for all site modifications.**

E. Neighborhood Compatibility Standards

- 1. Architectural alterations shall maintain the scale, façade rhythm, and visual character of surrounding residential structures.**
- 2. Outdoor lighting, parking, and signage must be screened to prevent impacts on adjacent homes.**
- 3. A Community Impact Statement shall be provided describing compatibility with neighborhood goals and potential impacts on traffic, noise, parking, and safety.**

F. Priority Reuse Categories

The City shall prioritize reuse options that:

- Support neighborhood stability.**
 - Provide direct community benefit.**
 - Generate low environmental impact.**
 - Preserve historic and cultural character.**
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4. Examples of Appropriate Reuse That Do NOT Harm Neighborhoods

These examples show how vacant schools and churches can be reused **without damaging neighborhood character**:

✓ Community-Serving, Low-Impact Uses

- Community centers or youth recreation programs**
- Senior centers or adult day programs**
- Small business incubators or coworking spaces**
- Nonprofit offices**
- Food pantries or community kitchens (low-traffic models)**

✓ Educational + Cultural Uses

- Arts and cultural studios**
- Early childhood centers**
- Music or dance academies**
- Local history museums**

✓ Green + Environmental Uses

- **Indoor urban farms or hydroponic facilities**
- **Community workshops for sustainability programs**
- **Stormwater management hubs with green infrastructure**

✓ **Limited Residential Uses (If Strictly Controlled)**

- **Adaptive reuse into townhomes or low-density senior housing**
- **Artist live-work spaces with limited unit counts**

✓ **Public/Shared Spaces**

- **Meeting halls**
- **Maker spaces**
- **Libraries or digital learning lab**