

**City of Springfield
Minutes
Planning and Zoning Commission**

Bill Knuckles
Helen Gunther
Jennifer McClure
David Jacquez

Randall Doennig, Chair

Christopher Souliere
Eric Pauly
Dan Scott, Vice Chair
Layne Hunton

March 26, 2026

6:30pm

**Regional Police-Fire Training Center
2620 West Battlefield Road
Room 101, 102, and 103**

ROLL CALL.

Present: Commissioner Doennig, Commissioner Hunton Commissioner Pauly, Commissioner McClure, Commissioner Knuckles, Commissioner Gunther, Commissioner Souliere, and Commissioner Scott. Absent: Commissioner Gunther and Commissioner Jacquez.

Staff in attendance: Justin Crighton, Planning and Development Assistant Director, Bob Hosmer, Planning Manager, and Laura Vales, Assistant City Attorney.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

The minutes of March 12, 2026 were approved.

COMMUNICATIONS.

CONSENT ITEMS. None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

Update to the Official Zoning Map / Proposed R-SF to R-MX1 Remapping
Citywide

Applicant: City of Springfield

Mr. Crighton presented the second component of the overall citywide remapping (R-SF, Single-Family Residential District to R-MX1, Mixed Density Neighborhood – Low District, noting that the Commission voted to divide the question to consider separately the direct translation of current zoning classifications to their counterparts in the new Land Development Code and to consider rezoning properties currently zoned R-SF, Single-Family Residential District to R-MX1, Mixed-Density Neighborhood – Low District) that was postponed to this date and presented the subset of the original map.

He presented the following updated information after the second notice was sent out.

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| 3,775 — Properties identified by neighborhood workshops | 3,670 — Properties remaining after owner removal requests | 87 - Property owners have requested removal across all engagement | 54 - Callers confirmed request to remain R-SF | 90-day no-cost appeal window available to all owners after adoption |
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Staff recommend approval of the original map as presented as it reflects the adopted Land Development Code, incorporates neighborhood engagement, and is consistent with Forward SGF.

Commissioner Scott questioned staff's interpretation of specific text from "Forward SGF" regarding "complete neighborhoods" (Chapter 7, Goal 1) and the integration of missing middle housing to "preserve single family character in the heart of the neighborhoods" (Chapter 7, Goal 2.2). He contended the plan suggested staying *out* of the neighborhood core and expressed concern that R-MX1 rezoning could lead to increased rentals, potentially making Springfield a "rental capital," rather than promoting homeownership. He noted that public input for the staff map seemed less positive than presented, with low attendance at meetings and the "opt-out" notification method potentially leading to skewed results.

Mr. Crighton stated that staff's position is the map as originally presented does align with Forward SGF and the goal is about creating complete neighborhoods, diversifying housing options and integrating density into neighborhoods as part the strategy. He noted the idea is to expand or diversify housing choices and concentrate density along the corridors and integrate missing middle housing across existing neighborhoods. Commenting that R-MX1 zoning would not have a detrimental effect on homeownership and would possibly add more housing units that would help the housing shortage.

Commissioner McClure wanted clarification on the start of the 90-day appeal window and Mr. Crighton stated that it is tentatively scheduled for April 7, 2026.

Commissioner Doennig clarified that the Commission had already unanimously approved the "organic transition" of 4,881 parcels citywide (number confirmed by Assistant Attorney Laura Vales) from old zoning (R-TH) to the new R-MX1 under the new Land Development Code, stating that the commission had not ignored missing middle housing.

Commissioner Scott again referred to the public comments and stated that it was hard to find a positive comment from the 47 submitted. Mr. Crighton stated that the general sense of support comes from the overwhelming number of people who were notified of the change and that there was an additional round of notifications that were sent out and several more people did request to be removed from the transition to R-MX1.

Commissioner Doennig noted that the original motion and second from the February 26, 2026 meeting is still on the floor.

Commissioner Scott handed out his written comments and noted that city staff had these for a week and half, allowing them to make comments or have questions and proceeded to read the following:

"The role of a Planning and Zoning Commissioner requires us, by oath, to follow the adopted ordinances of the City of Springfield. Where room for interpretation exists in areas that lack explicit language, Commissioners exercise their personal and professional judgement and look for overriding themes to make our determinations. Such is the case with the Forward SGF strategic plan. It is a far-reaching document that combines explicit statements with implied themes to guide our work.

This can be directly applied to the evaluation of the two proposed remapping options. The first option indicates remapping of 3775 parcels to R-MX1, reaching significantly into the heart of neighborhoods in north and west Springfield, while the second proposed remapping limits the R-MX1 rezoning to 1009 parcels along collector streets and corridors. The essential question: Which option is more reflective of the goals of Forward SGF? The following analyzes this through various excerpts from the comprehensive plan and the new Land Development Code. *Italics are added for emphasis to some of the quoted text.*

Chapter 2 - Forward SGF Vision

1) Page 9 - The number one goal stated in the Forward SGF TOP 10 goal initiative is Restore SGF - Neighborhood Revitalization which "includes Restore SGF, a local initiative that aims to *encourage reinvestment and homeownership in Springfield's neighborhoods.*"

Chapter 5 - Land Use and Development

- 2) Page 34 contains a section titled Placetype Assignment and Transitions which includes seven characteristics and several sub-characteristics with an introductory statement stating, "The following conditions and land characteristics should be considered when changes or amendments are proposed to and within a placetype." One of the considerations says, "*Greater focus on integrating diverse uses at the edges and areas of transition.*"
- 3) Page 35 shows a detailed City map of Future Placetypes. There is no indication on this "Future" map that large portions of Traditional and Center City Neighborhoods are planned to become Mixed Residential placetype.
- 4) Page 35 also provides a definition of Residential Neighborhood-Center City indicating that it is "typically characterized by a diverse range of *single-family homes...*".
- 5) Page 35 also provides a definition of Residential Neighborhoods-Traditional as, "post-war residential neighborhoods that contain *predominantly single-family detached dwellings...*".
- 6) Page 37 establishes how transitions should occur within Traditional and City Center Neighborhoods, stating, "(a) 'stepped down' approach is used to transition between higher density/intensity residential and non-residential uses to single-family homeland uses, *with the greater densities/intensities located on higher function roadways, at the periphery of the neighborhood.*"
- 7) Page 38 illustrates the City Center Neighborhood Placetype Diagram. Keynote Two states, "Missing middle and diverse housing types and other supportive uses such as neighborhood-scale commercial *are located along the perimeter*, and historic streetcar stops, prominent intersections that bisect the neighborhood, or where other community facilities and abilities already exist."
- 8) Page 39 illustrates the Traditional Neighborhood Placetype Diagram. Keynote Two states, "Missing middle and diverse housing types and other supportive uses such as neighborhood-scale commercial *are located along the perimeter*, and around major intersections that bisect the neighborhood."

Chapter 7 - Housing and Neighborhoods contains several key references:

- 9) Page 69, Goal 2 - Diversify Housing Choices contains an entire section titled, "*Strategic Multi-family Along Commercial Corridors*"
- 10) Page 70 - The "Step Down Development Intensity" section states, "as redevelopment occurs, single-family attached, and multifamily development should be established *along key corridors* and surrounding activity centers...".
- 11) Page 70 also has a 3-D diagram, showing intensity resolving within the first two blocks of a neighborhood edge. There is no indication of increased density within the core of a neighborhood.
- 12) Page 72 section titled Increasing Housing Diversity has text stating "the following graphic is an example of how missing middle housing type could be seamlessly mixed into a residential area, with *higher density housing oriented towards higher intensity roadways to preserve the single-family character in the heart of the neighborhoods.*"
- 13) Page 72 - The 3D graphic itself illustrates increased density resolving with the first two blocks of a major roadway, with no increased density in the neighborhood core, except Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as the appropriate way to increase density in the heart of a neighborhood.
- 14) Page 73 - Attach or detached ADUs are allowed in single-family zoning. Thus, rezoning to R-MX1 is not required.
- 15) Page 75 states, "*Reinvestment in Springfield's existing housing stock must be prioritized* to ensure the continued high quality of life for residents and to support thriving authentic neighborhoods."

Chapter 8 - Economic Development

- 16) Page 96 includes a section titled Integrated Higher Density Residential which restates discussions from Chapter 2.1 and Chapter 7; "*...context sensitive higher density residential development should also be encouraged along neighborhood edges...*".

Land Development Code

- 17) Table 4-1 provides a Code based perspective of where higher density residential and neighborhood scale commercial should be placed in Traditional and City Center Neighborhoods.
 - a) The table indicates that higher density zoning of R-MX1 (additionally R-MX2 (pending text amendment 3), R-MX3, and C-MX1) are appropriate in either Transition Areas of Traditional and Strategically Integrated in Center City Neighborhoods previously zoned R-SF.
 - b) Transition Area is defined in the footnotes of this table, stating "(t)the zoning district may be appropriate *within an area of transition between the designated placetype or along the edge of a neighborhood*".
 - c) Strategic Integration is defined as a "zoning district that may be located within a placetype in a deliberate and coordinated way to further the goals of Forward SGF...". The terms 'strategic' and 'deliberate' suggest limited use within a placetype.

These multiple references stated above provide mostly explicit language and overarching implied themes supporting the idea that broad rezoning to R-MX1 in the heart of neighborhoods is neither supported by Forward SGF nor the new Land Development Code. Furthermore, it seems like there has been an over-emphasis on the neighborhood meetings, if less than one percent of the property owners of these neighborhoods should determine the rezoning of over eighteen percent of the parcels. On a related note, it has also not been indicated to the Commission that the attendees were, in fact, verified landowners within the neighborhoods where the meetings occurred.

In conclusion, it should be stated that this analysis does not diminish the efforts of the staff in their community engagement and remapping efforts in any way. They are to be congratulated in their efforts and deserve the recognition they have been awarded. This is simply a case of "agree to disagree" on the appropriate interpretation of Forward SGF and the resulting number of parcels that should be included in the R-MX1 remapping.

I cannot ignore a total of twenty direct quotes or clearly illustrated diagrams that support the Corridors and Collectors alternate map. I believe my oath and my professional judgement requires me to support the alternate map."

Commissioner Pauly stated he supports the measured approach, acknowledging staff's outreach efforts but noting historically low turnout at such meetings.

He commented, "I've been to many of these meetings before that would align with this, align with other projects as well that that turnout unfortunately tends to be very low. But at some point, you have to make that decision that without those voices being heard, that perhaps either you have those that may not be interested, they may agree, or they may disagree with things, but you do have to go forward with your process. I think that we have sufficiently erred on the side of caution, which I am very happy for and I'm glad that we now have this before us in order to go ahead and make a decision on."

Commissioner McClure supported the amended map as a "phasing" step, allowing for future expansion as opportunities arise and stressed the importance of a healthy housing ecosystem with diverse types (owned/rental) that can create a path to homeownership.

She commented, "I'm comfortable with both maps, but I'm most comfortable with the amended map, but I would say that I see it as a step toward more of a, of a phasing toward exploring and adding more housing units overall. The data does indicate that more housing units of multiple types, owned, rental, all of those different categories are needed and because of that ecosystem, the interrelation of different types of housing that creates a stronger, more healthy market and it creates a situation in which individuals can rent at rates where they can own that can become a better ladder and path to home ownership. So, I think it's important not to villainize any particular type of housing, but to recognize that ecosystem and interrelationship and the importance of more housing units overall. Ultimately, I'm very, very comfortable with the approach of the second map in the hope that it demonstrates the success of this type of housing and that we can continue to move forward from those examples with more of that type of housing as those opportunities open."

Commissioner Souliere agreed with Commissioner Scott, seeing conflicts with "Forward SGF" regarding the strategic placement of R-MX1 and feared that blanket rezoning would make it easier to replace single-family homes with higher-density units, leading to future incompatibility and displacement.

He commented, "I just fail to see the connectivity there of the R-MX1 and how that transition and strategic placement fit the proposed map and thinks there's conflict with what Forward SGF, and the plan provides us. I also understand the missing middle housing, but where should it be? I don't think single-family housing should be the last resort. Single-family housing should be looked at as a priority and not look at as a place for R-MX1 and feel like I'm in a similar scenario which I've tried to research and I don't know when it happened, but where I live in the past, either the area was rezoned or during initial zoning a single family-home, but it's a high density residential area and over many years a lot of apartment buildings are around single-family homes and it doesn't fit. I hate to think that that's what decision we're making for somebody many years down the road and I think that when the time comes to rezone for whatever reason may occur in the future, that that's when it gets rezoned. Not today, when it doesn't fit because it feels like the only thing that that accomplishes is making a process easier down the road for someone to remove a street of homes and feel like the alternative map fits a lot better for the objective and that's what I'll be voting for."

Commissioner Knuckles emphasized preserving neighborhood integrity and supported the amended map for aligning with "Forward SGF's" intent to place higher density along edges and major roadways.

He commented, "I too feel that the integrity of a neighborhood is something that's very important and to start putting cracks in it with R-MX1 by "just kind of blanket voting" is not a good method and other Commissioners identified the sections stating that it's kind of meant to be around higher density roadway traffic and on the edges of neighborhoods to protect the integrity of the inside of the neighborhood. I also like the amended map better because I feel it meets the Forward SGF and what we're trying to accomplish with that. So, I'm much more comfortable with the amended map based on those ideas."

Commissioner Doennig also supported the alternative map due to concerns about transparency, the low number of property owners who influenced the original map (e.g., 8-11 attendees identifying 3,775 parcels), and the lack of specific notification in the initial letter. He highlighted that the remaining ~2,700 parcels from the original map could still be rezoned individually via a standard, cost-free process, allowing neighborhoods to make more informed decisions.

He commented, "First, I feel that it is important to clarify, hopefully to avoid additional misrepresentation or misinterpretation, that at the February 26, 2026 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission, obviously the remapping question was split, but this Commission did vote unanimously to recommend approval of the organic transition of zoning classifications based on the table provided in page three of the staff report from the old Land Development Code to the new one, provided that that recommendation is approved by City Council next month. There are 4,881 parcels in the city which will become R-MX1 and the notion that missing middle zoning was somehow jettisoned or disappeared by act of this commission is simply not true. However, we have the question of the additional non organic transition of properties from R-SF1 to R-MX1 and how many additional properties should be moved as a part of the remapping process, I want to commend city staff for their efforts to create opportunities to educate and engage the public in neighborhood and zone meetings. Unfortunately, attendance at those meetings was shy of 200 people across the nine neighborhoods. That number also included staff, press and other people who were not property owners in those neighborhoods and based on the information provided in the staff report, the Grant Beach, Mid-Town and Tom Watkins neighborhood meetings had only 11, 9 and 8 possible owner attendees respectively. Yet those small groups identified the additional 3,775 parcels which are to be non-organically or additionally rezoned on that original map. Letters were mailed to every property owner in the city, but for those 3,775 owners, the letter offered no specific notice that their property was changing from R-SF to R-MX1 and there was also no specific notification of how many parcels in their neighborhood were affected. Each property owner was asked to go to a map and figure it out; I feel like a great deal of responsibility was placed on those property owners to understand all of the ramifications of this process. Now a second set of letters which did specifically notify property owners of the change on their properties were sent and there's been a much higher response rate from those owners asking not to be rezoned. This makes me feel like we're winning if we give property owners more information and that the result is potentially going to be better. While I feel like missing middle housing is a very important issue for the City of Springfield, the rush to better facilitate it is should not come at the expense of transparency in the process or at the expense of neighborhoods which may not have a clear understanding of compliance with the Comprehensive Plan or the potential impact that added missing middle housing may have on ownership rates or density in their neighborhood. For that reason, I'm supportive of the more measured approach offered in the alternative map amendment. It is important to note that beyond the 983 additional R-MX1 parcels adoption of this map will create in the city, that's 983 on top of the 4,881 we've already recommended approval for. The remaining roughly 2,700 parcels identified on that original map are still eligible to be considered separately for zoning to R-MX1 during the 90 days following passage by City Council, however, this process will be a standard rezoning process with postings and neighborhood meetings, but at no cost to the applicant. I believe that process will allow the neighborhoods to better understand the scope of the potential additional rezoning and make a more informed decision, both as individuals and as neighborhoods in support of those zoning changes and intend to support the alternative map."

Commissioner Doennig noted that public hearing had already been closed, but he would allow anyone who wants to speak to the original proposal or the new amended proposal.

Mr. Doennig opened the public hearing.

Mr. Rusty Worley, 807 W. Walnut Street, supported the amended map and acknowledged the need for housing diversity but emphasized concerns about declining homeownership (West Central neighborhood at 30%) and market encroachment by college housing. Advocated for "guardrails" and a "measured approach" for density to protect the homeownership fabric of neighborhoods.

Mr. Brendan Griesemer, 1409 W. Sunshine Street, urged caution on the scale and depth of rezoning and reiterated his previous advice to limit missing middle housing to neighborhood edges, collector/arterial streets, or near activity centers. He warned that the original proposal's scale (60-70% change in some neighborhoods near 50/50 owner-renter balance) could destabilize struggling neighborhoods. He noted that it would be difficult to reverse and advocate for a "phased or pilot approach" as well as guardrails to promote homeownership and is in opposition to the original proposal and in support of the amendment.

Mr. Jay Byrd, 1020 Delaware Avenue, supported missing middle housing as a pathway to homeownership, arguing that economic realities (wages, affordability) are the core problem, not the housing type itself. He acknowledged the need for zoning to prevent uncontrolled college student encroachment but emphasized the crucial role of middle housing.

Mr. Vince Gabriel, 2748 W. Harrison Street, expressed concern as a 40-year homeowner about duplexes or quadplexes being built next door if his property was rezoned to R-MX1, potentially lowering property values. Staff clarified R-MX1 allows duplexes or townhomes, not tiny homes, with overall building size based on lot size and confirmed he had opted out of the rezoning.

Commissioner Scott asked about the number of units per acre and Mr. Crighton noted that it is lower than 11 units per acre.

Ms. Becky Volz, 1910 N. Grant Avenue, emphasized a holistic approach to neighborhood development, stressing the need for a balance between homeownership and rentals. She supported missing middle housing but sought more education on its reality and guardrails to prevent large investors from converting properties to rentals and cited research on the benefits of homeownership for stabilizing neighborhoods and improving residents' quality of life.

Mr. Doennig closed the public hearing.

COMMISSION ACTION: (amended)

Planning and Zoning Commissioner Scott moved to amend Item 5.1 (Update to the Official Zoning Map / Proposed R-SF to R-MX1 Remapping) by replacing the map as presented by City staff regarding the properties proposed to transition from R-SF to R-MX1 with the map as presented in Item 5.1.1. The item **Passed** with the following votes: Ayes: Commissioner Doennig, Commissioner Hunton, Commissioner Pauly, Commissioner McClure, Commissioner Knuckles, Commissioner Souliere, and Commissioner Scott. Nays: None. Absent: Commissioner Gunther and Commissioner Jacquez. Abstain: None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS. None

ADJOURN.