

Memo:  
January 12, 2012  
To: Rachel Ray, Steve Langworthy  
Re: comments on proposed Bridge Street Corridor Zoning map  
File: Dublin  
Cc: Ben Carlson

In response to your request, we have assessed the Bridge Street Corridor zoning map as prepared by Planning on November 10, 2011 and the changes recommended by the Architectural Review Board and Planning and Zoning Commission as noted in the zoning map dated December 8, 2011. As you suggested, we have not attempted to compare the two maps but rather to recommend changes that would apply to one or both maps that we believe would reflect the letter and spirit of the Vision Report adopted by Council. We have focused on the zones located along Bridge Street/West Dublin-Granville Road and several parcels directly to the south and west of the Sawmill Center redevelopment area.

The vision for the entire Bridge Street Corridor provides a clear statement of intent for the entire area:

The Bridge Street Corridor is Dublin's centerpiece. ***Dublin's historical and cultural heart is strengthened and balanced by highly walkable districts and neighborhoods on both sides of the Scioto River.*** Exceptional green spaces preserve the outstanding natural features in the corridor and seamlessly connect each unique district along the corridor. ***Mixed-use districts bring together complementary arrangements of living, working, and recreation in memorable settings created by distinctive, human-scaled architecture and streets that invite walking and gathering.*** Greatly expanded choices in housing, employment, activities, and transportation attract new generations of residents, businesses and visitors. ***The Bridge Street Corridor radiates a diversity and vitality that mark it as a special place*** not only within Dublin, but within the region, nation and world. (Vision Report, Page 4)

For most parts of the Bridge Street Corridor the proposed zoning succeeds in implementing the Vision Report's recommendations. We would, however, recommend the following modest changes to the maps prepared by Planning and the ARB and PZC. For clarity we have assigned numbers to the specific parcels or groups of parcels for which we recommend changes; these numbers are noted on the accompanying maps.

## Recommendations

- **Bridge Street /West Dublin-Granville Road Parcels 1-3. We recommend that all of these parcels be zoned BSC Office District for the following reasons:**
  - While Bridge Street is intended to be primarily an office address location, it is also intended to be—like all of the Bridge Street Corridor—a lively mixed-use area. Higher density housing should be permitted along with office, ground floor retail, and other appropriate commercial uses.
  - Based on the market research of Zimmerman Volk (housing) and W-ZHA (office and other commercial uses), it is highly likely that higher quality multifamily housing (e.g. lofts) will enjoy a much stronger market than office in the nearer-term. In turn, office demand will be accelerated by the presence of additional nearby housing and the walkable retail that this housing would support. Zoning that discourages higher quality multifamily housing will likely slow desirable redevelopment on these parcels.
  - W-ZHA emphasized that creating a cohesive walkable environment, rather than piecemeal redevelopment, would spur new investment of office and related jobs-producing development—in effect, all property owners on and near Bridge Street will benefit from consistent zoning, appropriate zoning.
  - Issues related to existing, potentially non-conforming, uses can be resolved by grandfathering these uses and should not present an obstacle to putting zoning in place that implements the adopted Vision. In effect, the right long-term zoning should represent a win for current property-owners, other property-owners in the Bridge Street Corridor, and for the City.
  - An assessment of BSC Office, Commercial, and Vertical Mixed Use districts indicates that both BSC Office and BSC Vertical Mixed Use are preferable to BSC Commercial. Because BSC Office zoning is proposed for most of Bridge Street/West Dublin-Granville Road, and we strongly believe that the parcels in question should over time be developed in a consistent manner with those already proposed as Office, there is little reason to apply the BSC Vertical Mixed Use District at this time. This view is reinforced by the fact that, not surprisingly, BSC Office is moderately more appropriate for Bridge Street in terms of those uses and building types that are or are not allowed [see appended tables 1 and 2]. In light of these observations, we have compared the BSC Office and BSC Commercial zoning districts:
    - **Desirable uses** along Bridge Street/West Dublin-Granville Road that are allowed under BSC Office but not allowed under BSC Commercial:
      - Live-work dwellings
      - Multifamily dwellings
      - Conference center

- More significantly, **desirable building types** along Bridge Street that are allowed under BSC Office but not under BSC Commercial:
    - Apartment building
    - Loft building
    - Corridor building
  - Conversely, **less appropriate uses** along Bridge Street that are *not allowed* under BSC Office but *are* allowed under BSC Commercial:
    - Fueling/service stations
    - Sexually-oriented business establishments
    - Vehicle sales, rental and repair (note that existing establishments can be addressed through the Existing Uses provisions)
  - **Less appropriate building types** along Bridge Street that *are* allowed under BSC Commercial, but not BSC Office:
    - Commercial center
    - Large format commercial building
- **Bridge Street /Dublin-Granville Road Parcel 4. We recommend that this parcel be zoned BSC Commercial as recommend by the Planning and ARB/PZC.** At a future date it may also be desirable to revisit the zoning for this parcel given its prominent location along Bridge Street and the city's intent to conduct a planning study for the nearby Metro Center/Frantz Road Corridor.
- **Parcels 5 and 6 located to the west of the Sawmill Center Neighborhood. We recommend that these parcels be zoned BSC Residential until the city adopts a development plan for the BSC Sawmill Center Neighborhood District, at which point rezoning may be appropriate, for the following reasons:**
  - The Vision Report provides clear goals for the Sawmill Center redevelopment area: *"The Sawmill District is a prime location to establish a major walkable mixed-use district,* owing to its proximity to the I-270 interchange at Sawmill Road and the consolidated ownership of more than 50 acres of land on the current Dublin Village Center site. *This district concept depends on the incorporation of enough complementary activities into a dense, pedestrian-oriented network of mixed-use buildings and blocks to form a critical mass that is active weekdays, evenings and weekends alike."* (Vision Report, page 46)
  - Because, due to its size and prominence, the character and quality of the BSC Sawmill Center Neighborhood District will have a significant impact on the ability to achieve the city's goals for the larger Bridge Street Corridor, zoning for adjacent parcels should depend on which zoning will contribute most effectively toward achieving the City's goals articulated above.

- The critical issue that will determine whether the BSC Sawmill Center Neighborhood District emerges as a “walkable mixed use district” is the ability to focus the relatively intense mix of uses in the core of this District sufficient to support walkability and vitality. Without a master development plan prepared by the property owner and adopted by the City, it would be preferable not to designate additional parcels as BSC Sawmill Center Neighborhood District to avoid spreading development over a larger area in a manner that that may well undercut the ability to achieve the City’s goals for this area.
- In the future, following an adopted development plan that addresses one or more adjacent parcels and demonstrates that BSC Sawmill Center Neighborhood District zoning for these parcels would contribute to creating “a critical mass that is active weekdays, evenings and weekends alike” for the Sawmill District, then these parcels could be appropriately rezoned from BSC Residential to BSC Sawmill Center Neighborhood District.
- **Parcel 7 to the south of the Sawmill Center Neighborhood. We recommend that these parcels be zoned BSC Office District essentially for the same reasons noted for Parcels 5 and 6 above. BSC Office District is fully appropriate to achieve the goals adopted by Council.**

I hope these comments are helpful. Please call me on my cell (617 413 5077) if you wish to discuss or have any questions.

Best,

David Dixon, FAIA  
Principal in Charge of Planning and Urban Design

Attached:

- Map 1: Proposed Bridge Street Corridor Zoning proposed by Planning (Nov 10, 2011)
- Map 2: Proposed Bridge Street Corridor Zoning proposed by Planning (Nov 10, 2011)—GC Proposed Changes
- Map 3: Proposed Bridge Street Corridor Zoning proposed by ARB and PZC (Dec 8, 2011)
- Map 4: Proposed Bridge Street Corridor Zoning proposed by ARB and PZC (Dec 8, 2011)—GC Proposed Changes
- Table 1: **Comparison of desirable and less appropriate *uses*** for Bridge Street allowed or not allowed under different zoning scenarios
- Table 2: **Comparison of desirable and less appropriate *building types*** for Bridge Street allowed or not allowed under different zoning scenarios