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he Master Plan is a guide for New Orleans’ future growth. It is a policy guide that includes goals and strategies. The Master Plan document consists of well over 1,000 pages of text organized around various plan elements or topics including housing, neighborhoods, community facilities, transportation, environmental quality, etc. The most significant chapter of the Master Plan is the Land Use Plan (Chapter 14) combined with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Chapter 14 and the FLUM Map are utilized in zoning decisions/changes. In short, any zoning changes must be consistent with Chapter 14 and the FLUM. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) is the legal framework for implementing the Master Plan. It must be emphasized that a change to the FLUM does not constitute and automatic change to the zoning ordinance and/or zoning map. Only a property owner can request a zoning change. Map 1 illustrates the existing FLUM for the Garden District. Within each FLUM designation there are multiple zoning classifications considered by the CPC to be consistent with the FLUM.

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he City Planning Commission held two meetings (noted below) to make recommendations to the New Orleans City Council on amendments to the Master Plan as follows:

1. Tuesday, January 24, 2017 covered amendments for the FLUM map and FLUM category descriptions.
2. Tuesday, February 7, 2017 covered Master Plan Text Amendments (not including the above).

This brief presents the results and recommendations by the CPC that have been forwarded to the City Council. The New Orleans City Council is scheduled to hold a public hearing on Thursday, April 6th. Recommendations for each Master Plan amendment affecting the GDA follow each description. The GDA letter submitted to the CPC is included as Attachment 1 to this brief.

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f the 200+ Map Amendment (FLUM) applications, 12 applications have implications for change to the Garden District neighborhood. Map 2 presents the proposed amendments to the FLUM for the Garden District neighborhood and illustrates the CPC recommendation for each. Table 1 follows Map 2 with a description for each proposed amendment including recommendations. Three particular map amendments were opposed by the GDA based on the fact that if approved, property owners would be allowed to apply for zoning changes that would then allow for more intense uses. These amendments include:

* **2200 St. Charles Avenue - House of Broel (ID #2 on Map 2 and Table 1)** – The CPC recommended approval of the FLUM amendment as the proposed designation of Mixed-Use Medium Density (MUM) is more consistent with the existing development on the site. (It should be noted, that CPC staff indicated in its report that the current land use is a Bed and Breakfast. There is no record on the city’s data website that indicates this is a Bed and Breakfast.) The current FLUM classification is Residential Medium Density Pre-War (RMD-PRE), which does not include commercial uses.

While there has been discussion that this particular amendment (submitted by CM Cantrell on behalf of the property owner) was going to be withdrawn, this has not occurred.

**RECOMMENDATION [HIGH PRIORITY]:** **Oppose** the FLUM amendment and/or confect a Good Neighbor Agreement prior to City Council action. Allowing higher intense uses on this historic property will continue encroachment along St. Charles Avenue.

* **Magazine Street (ID #12 on Map 1 and Table 1)** – The CPC recommended denial of the proposed amendment by CM Williams in which the current Mixed-Use Low Density (MUL) would be changed to Mixed-Use Medium Density (MUM), thus increasing intensity of uses. It is emphasized that CM Williams also proposed this amendment for numerous corridors throughout the city and not just Magazine Street. The CPC recommendation is in keeping with the low scale development along Magazine Street and previous Master Plan discussions.

**RECOMMENDATION: [HIGH PRIORITY]:** **Support** the CPC recommendation to maintain the MUL designation for Magazine Street. Ask neighborhood organizations along the Magazine Street corridor to also support the CPC recommendation.

* **The Rink, Latter & Blum Office and Commander’s Palace (ID #3 on Map 1 and Table 1)** – The CPC staff proposed the FLUM for this area along Washington Avenue (between Coliseum and Prytania streets inclusive of The Rink) be changed from Neighborhood Commercial (NC) to Mixed-Use Low Density (MUL). This proposed amendment by CPC staff was not specific to the GDA but was proposed by staff in all “pre-war” neighborhoods including the Garden District, Lower Garden District, and Uptown areas. The amendment would allow multi-family uses but only if a zoning change was requested by the property owner. Note, while townhouses would also be allowed with the FLUM amendment, the CZO currently prohibits them in the GDA.

**RECOMMENDATION [LOW PRIORITY]:** Be **neutral** on the CPC recommendation. Given the current established land uses in this area, it is unlikely that the FLUM amendment will have any affect. While there is still one single-family home located in the area, the surrounding neighborhood commercial uses have been in existence for numerous years and are unlikely to change.

Nine of the map amendments were supported by the GDA. These amendments are compatible with specific zoning map amendments the GDA requested during the CZO process and were approved. Seven of the 9 map amendments were recommended for approval by the CPC. Two map amendments were recommended for denial including:

* 3116 Prytania Street (ID #5 on Map 2 and Table 1) – CPC staff recommended denial stating that the property has a history of multi-family use and that there is a trend for multi-family developments in the vicinity of the property.

**RECOMMENDATION [LOW PRIORITY]:** Be **neutral** on the CPC recommendation. The likelihood of overturning the CPC recommendation is very low.

* 1442 Harmony Street (ID #6 on Map 2 and Table 1) – CPC staff recommended denial stating that while the property is developed with a single-family residence it is surrounded on all sides by multi-family dwellings.

**RECOMMENDATION [LOW PRIORITY]:** Be **neutral** on the CPC recommendation. The likelihood of overturning the CPC recommendation is very low.

The remaining 7 map amendments were recommended for approval by the CPC. See Map 2 and Table 1 for the specific properties.

**Support** the 7 map amendments as recommended by the CPC. The changes to the FLUM will bring these properties into consistency between the FLUM and CZO map.

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ver 100+ Text Amendment applications are under review. The various applications ranged from updates to data, re-writing of policies, goals and strategies, historic preservation initiatives to increasing the range of uses allowed within any designated land use on the FLUM. All of these were reviewed for applicability and impacts to the Garden District neighborhood with particular attention to Chapter 14 and the relationship with the FLUM. Four specific amendments requiring attention and **opposed** by the GDA are as follows:

* **Request No. 14-22Section A** - The Land Use Plan and the “Force of Law”: The CPC proposed amendment would give the Executive Director or his designee authority to make final decisions on minor map amendments and final decisions on interpretations of the FLUM.
* **RECOMMENDATION [HIGH PRIORITY]:** **Oppose** the amendment. It is unclear at this time if the proposed amendment has been recommended for approval by the CPC. If it has been recommended for approval the GDA should oppose this amendment, as it would violate the City Charter, Section 5-404.4, specifies the mandatory review process and schedule as well as public input process in amending the Master Plan. Further, the limitations on amendments to the Master Plan are a safeguard to protect its integrity.
* **Request No. 14-17, Section C** - Future Land Use Categories: The proposed amendment submitted by at-large councilmembers and the administration was recommended for approval by the CPC. It would remove the density limitations for all residential land use categories. The density limitations provide an overall goal for the development character of neighborhoods and thus should remain in the Master Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION [HIGH PRIORITY]: Oppose** the CPC recommendation for approval. Removal of the density limitations would violate the City Charter. Section 5-402.1 of the City Charter, states *“The Land Use element shall consist of text setting forth land use issues and policies, and a Future Land Use Map setting forth categories of allowable uses and density, for the City.”*

* **Request No. 14-15 and 14-16, Section C** - Future Land Use Categories, Residential Pre-War Low Density (RLD-PRE): The proposed amendment (submitted by CM Cantrell) would allow small multi-family residential uses and re-use of commercial sites. The CPC recommended approval of the amendment.

**RECOMMENDATION [HIGH PRIORITY]: Oppose** the CPC recommendation for approval. The proposed amendment to allow small multi-family residential is overly broad and conflicts with the existing goal of RLD-PRE to “Discourage the development of additional multi-family housing that is out of scale with existing character. The RLD-PRE designation constitutes the majority of the residential areas of the Garden District neighborhood.

* **Request No. 14-17, Section C** - Future Land Use Categories, MUL (Mixed-Use Low Density) and MUM (Mixed-Use Medium Density): The proposed amendment submitted by the administration would merge two of the mixed-use land use categories. The CPC recommended denial.

**RECOMMENDATION [HIGH PRIORITY]: Support** the CPC recommendation of denial.

The intensity of uses in the MUM categories is far greater than the intensity of uses in the MUL, in accordance with the proposed table showing the relationship between the land use categories and zoning classifications. The goal of the MUL category is to increase walkability within and along edges of neighborhoods while the goal of the MUL category is to serve as focal points within neighborhoods.