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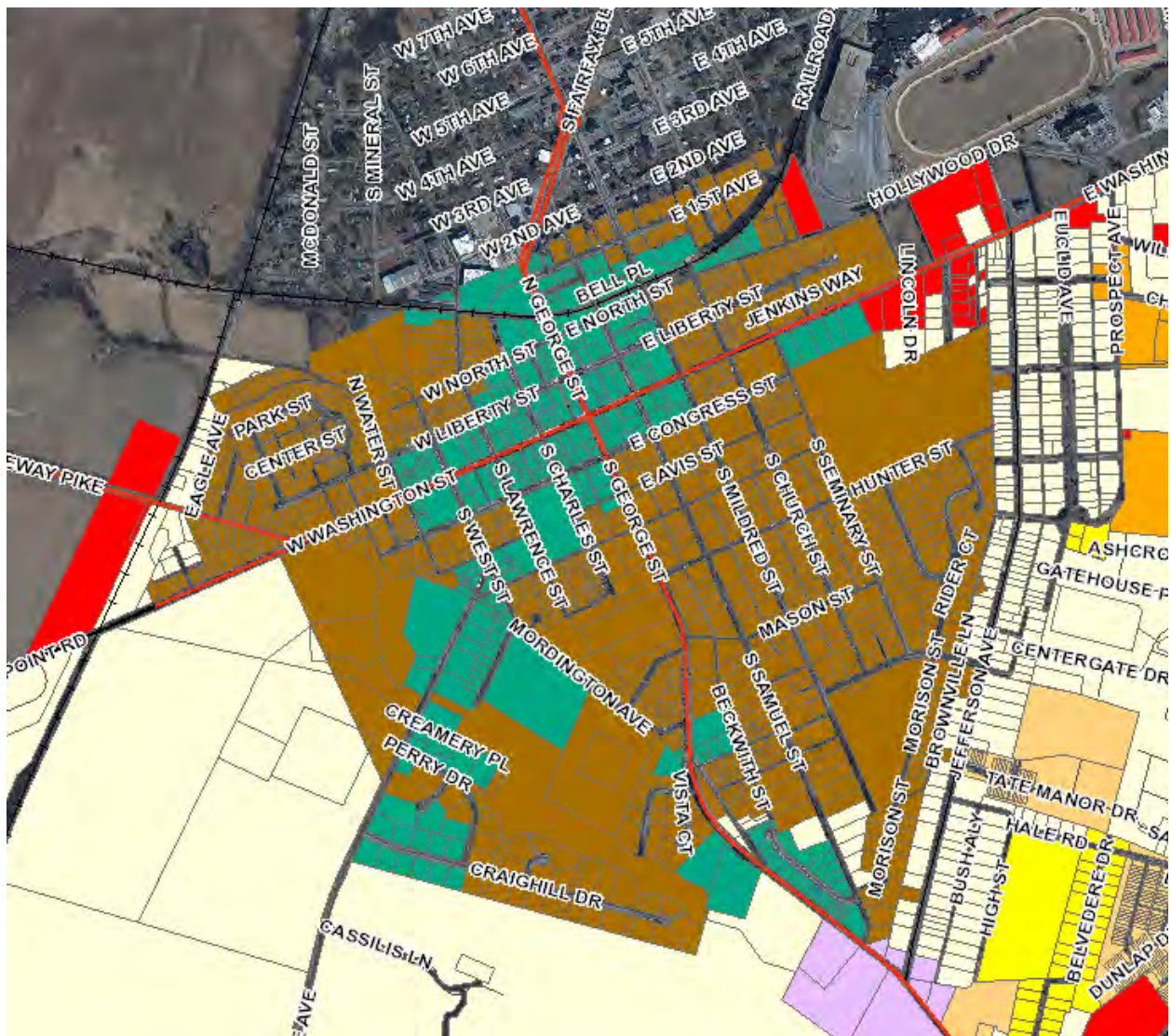
OT-MUC Permitted Uses

Date: For the August 17, 2026 City Council meeting

Report by: James Newman, City Planner, Zoning/Subdivision Administrator.

OLD TOWN MIXED-USE COMMERCIAL ZONING OVERVIEW

The City's Old Town Mixed-Use Commercial (OT-MUC) Zoning District covers a large portion of downtown and its key access points. The Zoning Map below shows the OT-MUC District **in green**:



The purpose of the District is to:

Recognize the diversity of existing Uses and **provide for a wide range of Uses** in a manner that **strengthens** Charles Town's **urban core**, **contributes** to its **historic character**, **minimizes impacts** on adjacent land Uses, and provides connections to annexed properties. The OT-MUC District shall include the areas formerly consisting of NC, OR, GC, CBD, and I Districts. The OT-MUC District will accommodate the Uses previously allowed in the individual districts because the OT-MUC District is designed to provide the flexibility and variety in one Zoning District that was previously provided by five districts.

The OT-MUC District furthermore fosters a greater opportunity for creative Infill Development and Redevelopment by encouraging **a mix of Uses compatible with existing and neighboring properties** and providing housing and business Uses in locations where City services are available. The intent is also to encourage interaction among activities located within the OT-MUC District, to enhance business vitality, **reduce vehicular traffic**, **increase access to** and **the use of transit** services, provide employment opportunities for residents close to home, **ensure the compatibility with each of the Commercial and residential Uses**, ensure that the **appearance** and **effects** of Buildings and **Uses are harmonious with the character of the area** in which they are located by:

1. Allowing a diversity of Uses in close proximity in the OT-MUC District within a limited area, including residential, retail, office, and industrial;
2. Preserving and restoring the overall character of the OT-MUC District;
3. Promoting a balance of land Uses;
4. Promoting the opportunity for people to work, interact, shop, dine, and utilize business and public services in the vicinity of their residences;
5. Providing opportunities for the development of affordable housing;
6. Providing opportunities for a mixture of Uses in the same Building;
7. Promoting a positive pedestrian environment in the OT-MUC District;
8. Facilitating integrated physical design;
9. Promoting a high level of design quality;
10. Encouraging the development of flexible space for small and emerging businesses;
11. Facilitating development proposals responsive to current and future market conditions; and
12. Encouraging the development of Open Spaces and Parks within the OT-MUC District to accommodate workers, residents, pedestrians and shoppers;

ISSUE

In the past few months the Community Development Department has received inquiries from automobile related business looking to set up in the OT-MUC District. These automotive related uses are not compatible with the purpose of the District as such uses:

1. Do not strengthen the historic urban core. The founding of the City predates the invention of the automobile;
2. Have a negative impact on neighboring land uses due to vehicle volume, traffic, visual blight, noise, and fumes;
3. By their very nature they increase, rather than reduce, vehicular traffic.
4. Are not harmonious with the desired live/work retail character of the District as a whole.

CITY COUNCIL

On June 1, 2026 voted to initiate the text amendment process by referring this to the Planning Commission.

EXISTING USE TABLE

Table 1322.04, Zoning District Use Table

CHARLES TOWN ZONING ORDINANCE		ZONING DISTRICTS						
		DISTRICT USE TABLE	Residential Low Density	Residential Medium-High Density	Neighborhood Residential	Neighborhood Commercial	General Commercial	Old Town Mixed Use Commercials
ITE Code	Land Use	Key: P – Permitted Use S – Special Exception Use PA – Permitted Accessory Use SA – Special Exception Accessory Use	R-3	R-15	NR	NC	GC	OT- MUC
841	Automobile Sales						P	P
941	Quick Lube Vehicle Shop						P	P
942	Automobile Care Center						P	P
943	Automobile Parts and Service Center						P	P
944	Gasoline/Service Station					P	P	P
945	Gasoline/Service Station with Convenience Market				P	P	P	P
946	Gasoline/Service Station with Convenience Market and Car Wash					P	P	P
947	Self-Service Car Wash						P	P
948	Automated Car Wash						P	P

PROPOSED USE TABLE

Table 1322.04, Zoning District Use Table

CHARLES TOWN ZONING ORDINANCE DISTRICT USE TABLE Key: P – Permitted Use S – Special Exception Use PA – Permitted Accessory Use SA – Special Exception Accessory Use		ZONING DISTRICTS						
		Residential Low Density	Residential Medium-High Density	Neighborhood Residential	Neighborhood Commercial	General Commercial	Old Town Mixed Use Commercials	Old Town Residential
ITE Code	Land Use	R-3	R-15	NR	NC	GC	OT- MUC	OT-R
841	Automobile Sales					P		
941	Quick Lube Vehicle Shop					P		
942	Automobile Care Center					P		
943	Automobile Parts and Service Center					P		
944	Gasoline/Service Station				P	P		
945	Gasoline/Service Station with Convenience Market			P	P	P		
946	Gasoline/Service Station with Convenience Market and Car Wash				P	P		
947	Self-Service Car Wash					P		
948	Automated Car Wash					P		

DEFINITIONS

AUTOMOBILE SALES – A dealership, typically located along major arterial streets characterized by abundant commercial development. Leasing and used car sales may also be areas of focus. May offer services and sale of parts.

QUICK LUBE VEHICLE SHOP – A business where the primary activity is to perform oil change services for vehicles. May also offer ancillary services such as preventative maintenance. Vehicle repair is generally not performed.

AUTOMOBILE CARE CENTER – A center which houses numerous businesses that provided automobile-related services. These service may include repair and servicing, upholstery, and stereo installation.

AUTOMOBILE PARTS AND SERVICE CENTER - Facility focused on the sale of automobile parts for maintenance and repair, and also provide a full array of auto repair services. Material sold may include oil and batteries, and a wide array of automobile parts

GASOLINE/SERVICE STATION – Business with a primary focus on fueling vehicles. May offer some ancillary repair services. Sale of goods is limited or non-existent. Does not have a car wash facility.

GASOLINE/SERVICE STATION WITH CONVENIENCE MARKET – Business with a primary focus on fueling vehicles. May offer some ancillary repair services. May sell a limited selection of food, beverages, and consumer goods. Does not have a car wash facility.

EXISTING AUTOMOBILE RELATED USES IN DISTRICT

Citgo Gas Station at 222 N. George Street.

Liberty Gas Station at 321 S. West Street.

Amigos Auto Sales is at 130 Augustine Avenue.

Bobby's Used Cars is at 155 Augustine Avenue.

Creamers Auto Repair at 200/208 E. North Street.

All of these uses would become legally non-conforming if the amendment is adopted as proposed. The NAPA Auto Parts at 213 E. North St. was previously included on this list, but upon review by the Planning Commission, was removed. They do not meet the requirements for any of the proposed uses as they only sell auto parts and do not offer any services, and would not be affected by this text amendment.

ZONING UPDATE

The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Committee is in the process of overhauling both Ordinances. While not yet ready for public review and comment (as both Ordinances are still in the draft phase), the changes proposed by this text amendment are in accordance with the changes proposed under the re-write.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission held a public hearing for this item at their July 27, 2026 meeting. There were no public comments. The Commission voted to recommend approval of the Ordinance, subject to removing NAPA Auto Parts from the list of affected businesses, which has been done for this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the 1st read.