



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Alexis DiLeo, Principal Planner  
Brett Lenart, Planning Manager

DATE: May 14, 2024

SUBJECT: Petition for Text Amendments related to TC1 Standards

### Introduction

A petition has been submitted requesting five amendments to the Unified Development Code related to the TC1 district as attached and has been considered by your Ordinance Revisions Committee. The ORC generally supported two of the five amendments, somewhat supported a third amendment, and did not support a fourth amendment as presented. The final amendment was determined to be possibly unnecessary depending on the outcome of two amendments. The ORC recommended having a similar discussion with the entirety of the Planning Commission on the proposed amendments.

In this memo, staff briefly review the two supported amendments, then provide a review with additional materials for the two lesser supported amendments. The possibly unnecessary amendment is mentioned last.

In summary, the petition requests:

1. Increasing the number of curb cuts allowed in the TC1 district for sites on more than one street.
2. Increasing the building dimensions allowed in the TC1 district for larger sites.
3. Allowing some exceptions to minimum building frontage requirements in the TC1 district for certain open spaces.
4. Allowing some exceptions in the use specific standards for parking structures for design and uses at the street level based on site size or street frontage designation.
5. Adding a definition for block.

### Background

In addition to the normal development standards provided in the Unified Development Code, buildings in the TC1 district must comply with additional standards provided in Table 5.17-8 of Section 5.17.7.

Certain uses also have use specific standards, as noted in the permitted use tables in Section 5.15 and provided in Section 5.16. Parking structures are among the uses with specific standards.

### **Supported Amendment: Increase/Change curb cut limits**

- **Current TC1 Standard:** Sites less than 250 feet in lot width may have one curb cut, sites over 250 feet in lot width may have two curb cuts. See Table 5.17-8.
- **Impact Analysis:** This standard was intended to achieve downtown-like streetscapes with continuous and limited driveways along the transit corridors. It allows fewer curb cuts compared to all other zoning districts and determines curb cuts by lot width (one side of a lot even with multiple fronts) rather than total street frontage (all fronts of a lot). Specific to 2845 S State Street, this development is allowed 2 curb cuts for 2,500 feet of frontage along three public streets. If outside of the TC1 district, it would be allowed 6 curb cuts for its 2,500+ feet of frontage.
- **ORC Comments:** The ORC agreed an amendment would address the petitioner's request without negatively impacting future development or redevelopment elsewhere in the district.
- **Proposed Amendment:** An amendment will be drafted to change the curb cut allowance to one for every 250 feet of street frontage and moving the standards to Table 5.21-1 Maximum Number of Openings in Section 5.21 Streets and Access. This change will help enable sites with a substantial length of street frontage to achieve a downtown-like street/driveway/opening pattern while still maintaining as much of a downtown-like streetscape where lot widths are narrow. In this site example, it would provide for 10 curb cuts.

### **Supported Amendment: Parking Structure Use Specific Standards**

- **Current TC1 Standard:** In the D1, D2 and TC districts, parking structures are required to have active uses on the ground floor adjacent to the street. See Section 5.16.3.L.
- **Impact Analysis:** The use specific standards for parking structures seek to ensure there is an active use at the street level to maintain vibrant, pedestrian-friendly places.
- **Petition Request, Staff Suggestion:** The petitioner requests an amendment, either excepting up to 30% of the ground floor from the active use requirement or only requiring active uses on the ground floor adjacent to a designated *transit corridor* street. Staff supported the concept to require active uses on the ground floor adjacent to a designated *transit corridor* street.
- **ORC Comments:** The ORC agreed with staff's suggestion to only require active uses on the ground floor adjacent to a designated *transit corridor* street. More

information on how many parcels only front a non-*transit corridor* designated street is requested.

- **Proposed Amendment:** An amendment will be drafted to Section 5.16.3.L to require a parking structure to be separated from a designated transit corridor street type by a permitted primary use at least 25 feet in depth from the front wall.

#### **Somewhat Supported Amendment: Building dimensions**

- **Current TC1 Standard:** Buildings in the TC1 district are limited to 250 feet in width parallel to the street and 360 feet in maximum diagonal dimension.
- **Impact Analysis:** These dimensions were roughly based on the dimensions of the original plat of Ann Arbor, having 16 central blocks 264 feet on each side. Outside of these central blocks, blocks are at least twice as long. In the TC1 district, 264 feet was rounded down to 250 feet and the maximum diagonal standard of 360 feet is rounded up from 553 feet, the hypotenuse of a right triangle with 250-foot sides. This fixed standard for buildings no more than 250 feet wide and 360 feet diagonal does not allow a variety of building sizes or block patterns on larger sites as found downtown. It also limits flexibility for efficient parking structures and/or efficient residential buildings surrounding parking structures or open courtyards.
- **Petition Request, Staff Suggestion:** The petitioner requests an amendment to add an option for buildings up to 300 feet in width and up to 450 feet diagonal when the site is more than 3 acres<sup>1</sup>. Staff suggests considering an alternative, adding an option for the buildings up to 500 feet in width and up to 72 feet diagonal after the fourth building on the site. The staff suggested dimensions maintain the proportions of the central blocks downtown for smaller sites and then allow the same proportions as downtown blocks outside of the central squares on larger sites.
- **ORC Comments:** Allowing increased building dimensions may be acceptable on larger sites, but how much of an increase is still subject to discussion. Examples of buildings at the current maximum dimensions and of the proposed dimensions may help in the decision-making process. If larger dimensions are allowed, design standards such as articulation and building modules should be considered as well.
- **Additional Information:**
  - There are a combined total of 423 parcels zoned TC1. Fifty-three are more than 3 acres, potentially eligible for larger building dimensions by this petition, and 370 are less than 3 acres. In the TC1 district surrounding the State & Eisenhower area, more than 50% are over 3 acres. In the TC1 district along West Stadium & Maple, around 7% are more than 3 acres.

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<sup>1</sup> Maps attached to indicate where parcels 3 acres or larger are in current and proposed TC1 areas.

- Building frontage and diagonal dimensions of example buildings:

Building	Building Frontage	Diagonal Dimension
The Yard (615 S Main)	295 feet (along S Main)	375 feet
618 South Main Street	310 feet (along S Main)	345 feet
The Standard (425 S Main)	350 feet (along S Main)	395 feet
Fourth & William Parking Deck	325 feet (along S Fourth)	345 feet
Downtown Library	180 feet (along S Fifth)	235 feet
Ann Arbor Justice Center	270 feet (along N Fifth)	275 feet
UM Credit Union (340 E Huron)	265 feet (along S Division)	285 feet
The Foundry (413 E Huron)	225 feet (along E Huron)	265 feet
Sloan Plaza (505 E Huron)	140 feet	185 feet
YMCA (400 W Washington)	245 feet (along W Washington)	275 feet
Federal Building (200 E Liberty)	220 feet (along E Liberty)	280 feet
Maple Village (215-227 N Maple)	770 feet	765 feet
Westgate Shopping Center	900 feet	933 feet
Briarwood Mall	1120 feet	1215 feet

**Not Supported as Presented Amendment: Building Frontage**

- **Current TC1 Standard:** Buildings in the TC1 district span 70% of the lot width, after allowing for a 30-foot-wide driveway and sidewalks normally and allowing for a 45-foot-wide driveway, sidewalks, and buffer strip when adjacent to residential zoning. See Table 5.17-7.
- **Impact Analysis:** Building frontage standards reinforce the expectation and requirement that buildings are built at the front of the lot creating a streetwall along the transit corridor. The terms used to regulate building frontage in the TC1 district slightly differ than the building frontage regulations on *primary street* and *secondary street* type designations in the downtown character overlay districts. No exceptions are offered in the TC1 district whereas some exceptions are permitted in the downtown character overlay districts for entry court or plaza area.
- **Petition Request, Staff Suggestion:** The petitioner requests an amendment to provide exceptions for “public open space, natural features preservation, plazas, park areas, gathering spaces, and public art installations.” Staff suggests regulating building frontage in the TC1 district the same as primary street and

