



TC1 Narrow ROW Conditions

City Planning Commission
Regular Session

08-15-2023



Discussion Agenda

1. Overview
2. Problem Definition
3. Proposed Solution + Rationale
4. Potential Counterarguments



Overview



TC1 Intent

- To promote mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly redevelopment near transit corridors.
- To reduce vehicle travel, increase destination access, and offer housing options, while easing regulatory constraints like Floor Area Ratio.



Council Resolution R-22-390

- Passed on 12-05-22
- Directs CPC to consider modifications to TC1 Zoning District, specifically:
 - *Incorporate limited automobile-related uses ..., excluding drive throughs and gas stations (1st reading by Council 8-7-2023; 2nd 9-5-23)*
 - *Address constraints of existing narrow rights-of-way*

Tonight's Motions + Staff Recommendation

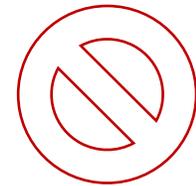


1. Modify Section 5.10.2 to establish Transit Corridor as a Street Type Designation with a reference map.
2. Amend Chapter 55 Unified Development Code, Section 5.17 to provide front setbacks based on Street Type Designation (20 ft min and 40 ft max and measured from curb lines)
3. Clarify other parameters



Amendments Goal

- **Ensure new buildings do not block the possibilities and future needs of the Sidewalk Zone in TC1 corridors**
- **Limit farthest distance of buildings to 40' from curb (or front lot line, whichever is closest)**
- These setbacks are not a substitute for:
 - Corridor study and development vision tailored by location
 - Design guidelines informed by location
 - Capital investments to fund desired streetscapes
 - ROW acquisition





Applicable Corridors

Currently Zoned TC1:

State/Eisenhower, Stadium/Maple

Potential Rezoning:

Plymouth, Washtenaw



Problem Definition



Narrow Rights of Way

- Inconsistent frontages - some Front Lot Lines are close to curbs, or very far away from them
- Current setbacks allow building to Front Lot Lines, even if that is 2' from the curb
 - Even if the max setback of 15' is utilized, it is not required
- Walkable, transit-friendly infill can only happen with high pedestrian comfort and space for amenities

	State / Eisenhower	Stadium / Maple	Plymouth	Washtenaw
Existing ROW (curb to property line)	State: 0-50 ft Eisenhower: 11-65 ft	Stadium: 0-14 ft. Maple: 2-?ft	0-69 ft	0-38 ft

S State at Hilton / I-94 (~5')



Transportation City of Ann Arbor

An aerial photograph of an intersection in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Hilton Blvd runs horizontally across the middle, and S State St runs vertically through the center. A red line is drawn along the curb of the intersection, and a yellow line segment is drawn perpendicular to it, with a measurement of 4.71 ft. A 'Measure' dialog box is open on the right side of the map, showing the unit as 'Imperial' and the distance as '4.71 ft'. The dialog box has a 'New measurement' button at the bottom.

4.71 ft

Measure

Unit: Imperial

Distance: 4.71 ft

New measurement



W Eisenhower at S Main (~50')

Transportation City of Ann Arbor

The image shows an aerial view of the intersection of W Eisenhower Pkwy and S Main St. A vertical orange dashed line indicates a measurement of 50.11 ft from the centerline of S Main St to the edge of the sidewalk on W Eisenhower Pkwy. A red line follows the curve of the sidewalk. A "Measure" dialog box is open on the right side of the map, showing the measurement in feet (50.11 ft) and a "New measurement" button.

50.11 ft

W Eisenhower Pkwy

S Main St

Measure

Unit: Imperial

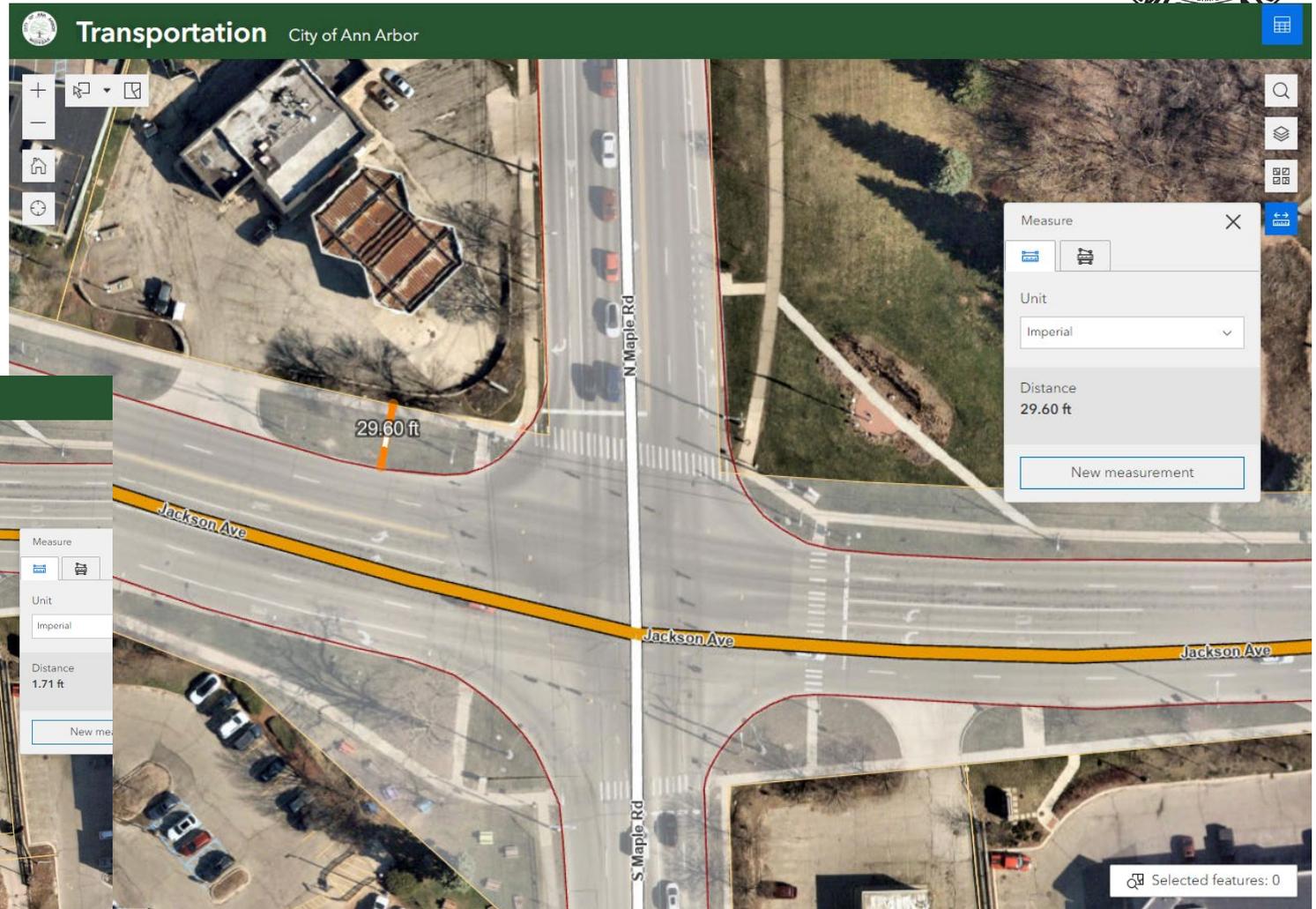
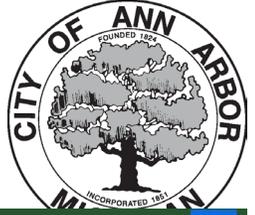
Distance: 50.11 ft

New measurement

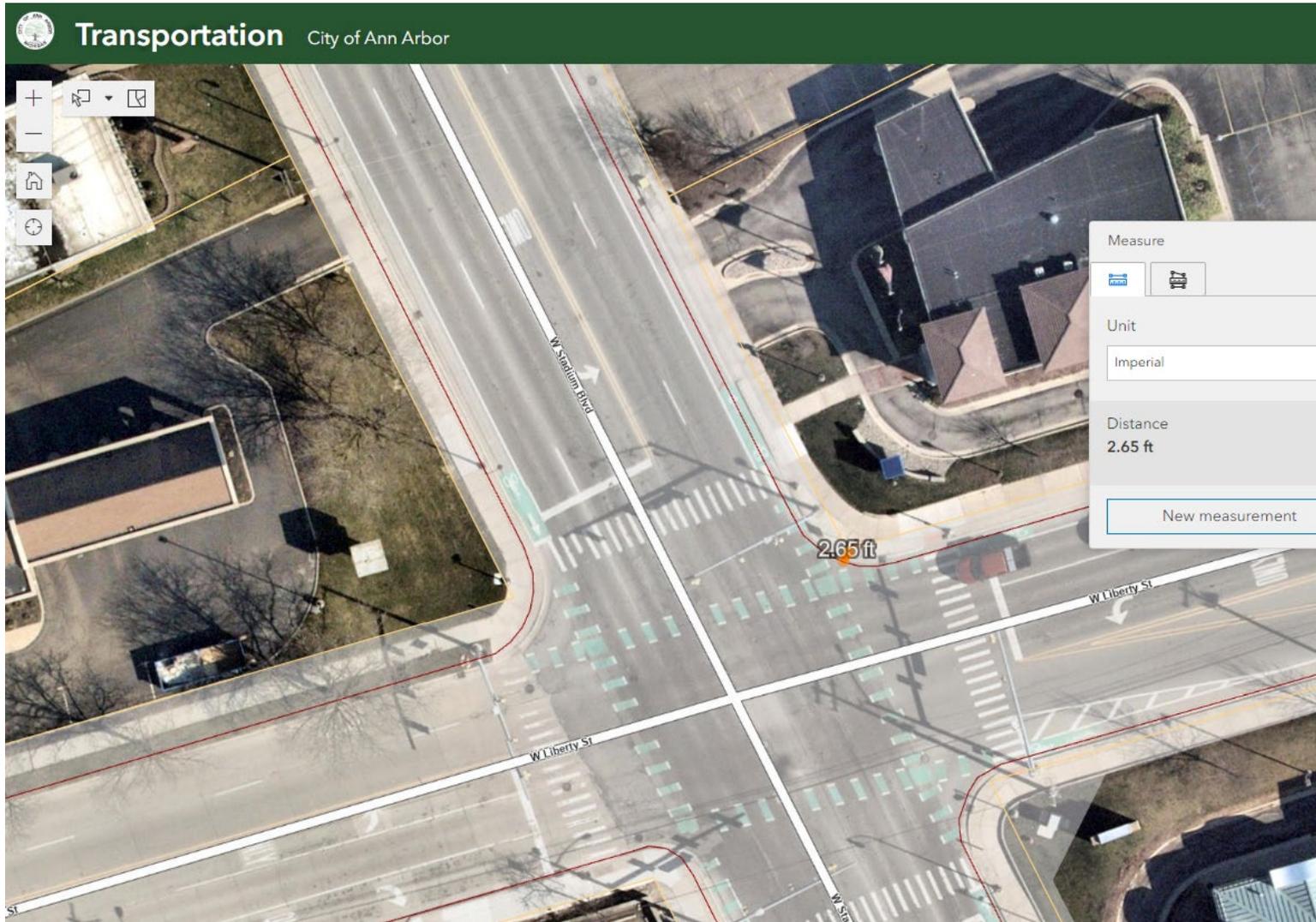
W Stadium at Arbordale (~5')



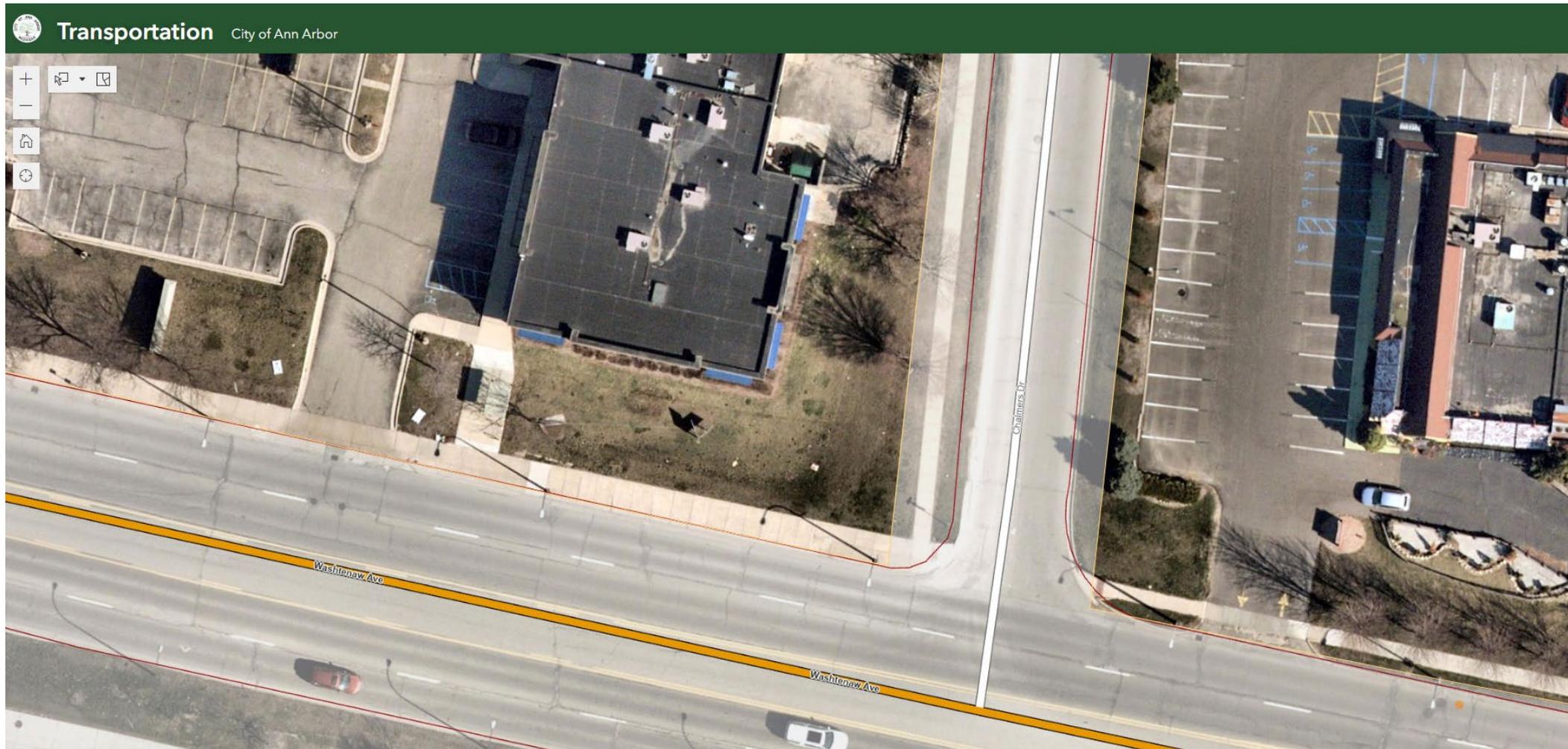
N Maple and Jackson



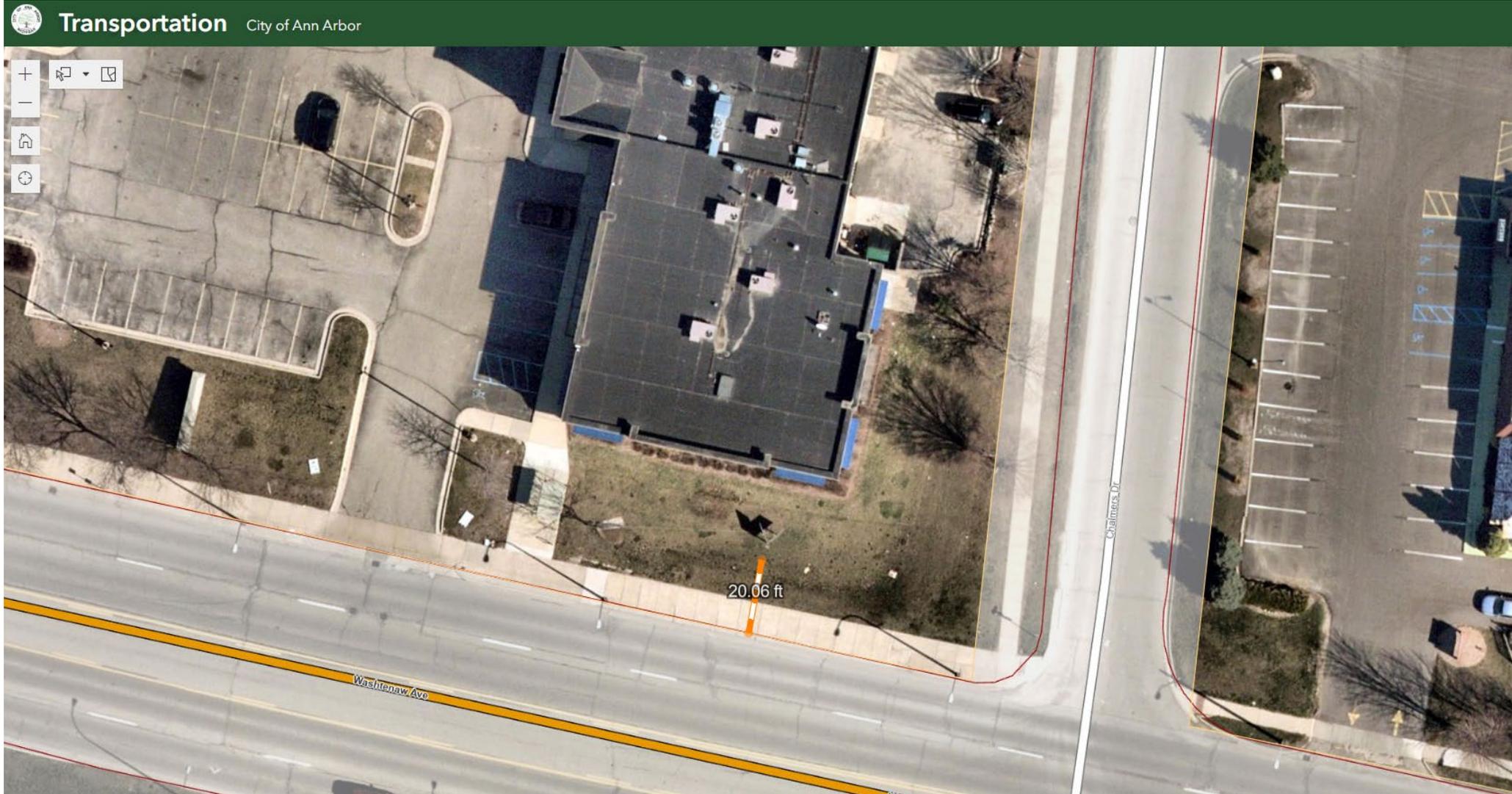
W Stadium at W Liberty (~3')



Washtenaw at Chalmers (0')



Washtenaw at Chalmers (0')



Washtenaw at Chalmers (0')





Proposed Solution + Rationale



Proposed Solution: Curb Setbacks

- Consistently require buildings 20' to 40' (or Front Lot Line if distance from curb is greater than 40')
- Limit requirement to Transit Corridors, defined in a Street Type Designation map, leaving other setbacks unchanged
- The proposed amendments account for desired walkable conditions and work backward from the space they will require to recommend a setback that results in clear space.





Rationale: Sidewalk Zone Needs

NACTO recommends 8-12 feet in commercial areas and downtowns for the Pedestrian Zone



Click a number for more information

PEDESTRIAN THROUGH ZONE

The pedestrian through zone is the primary, accessible pathway that runs parallel to the street. The through zone ensures that pedestrians have a safe and adequate place to walk and should be 5-7 feet wide in residential settings and 8-12 feet wide in downtown or commercial areas.

Rationale: Space for Healthy Trees

- For medium to large trees to grow to their mature potential, 8-10' is often the minimum

UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

UF/IFAS
BEST RESEARCH
ENH1328

How Much Space Does My Shade Tree Need? Planting Space Recommendations for Medium and Large Trees in Florida Cities¹

Deborah R. Hilbert, Andrew K. Koeser, Brooke L. Moffis, JuWanda G. Rowell, and Drew C. McLean²



Figure 5. A Chinese elm tree (*Ulmus parvifolia*) in a planting strip between street and sidewalk. Recommended planting strip width is 8 feet of buffer (4 feet on each side) plus the expected trunk flare diameter (TFD). For this Chinese elm, that would be 10 feet total. (Figure not to scale.)

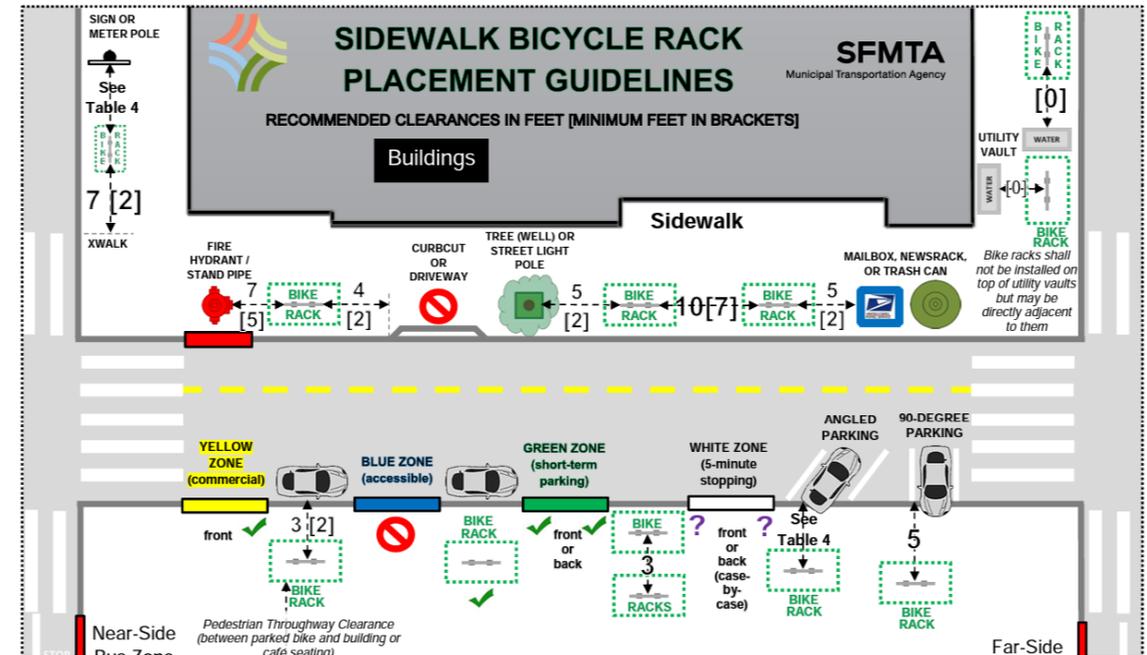
Credits: Deborah R. Hilbert, UF/IFAS



Rationale: Space for Amenities

Amenity	Minimum Space Anticipated
Benches	6 feet
Bus Shelters	7 feet
Bike Racks	6 feet

Summary of minimum Furnishing Zone space to comfortably site key amenities



Rationale: ADA

U.S. Access Board: Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines

The Access Board is an independent federal agency, created in 1973, that develops and maintains accessibility guidelines and standards under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and other laws.

R308.1.1.1 Dimensions. Boarding and alighting areas shall provide a clear length of 2.4 m (8.0 ft) minimum, measured perpendicular to the curb or street or highway edge, and a clear width of 1.5 m (5.0 ft) minimum, measured parallel to the street or highway.

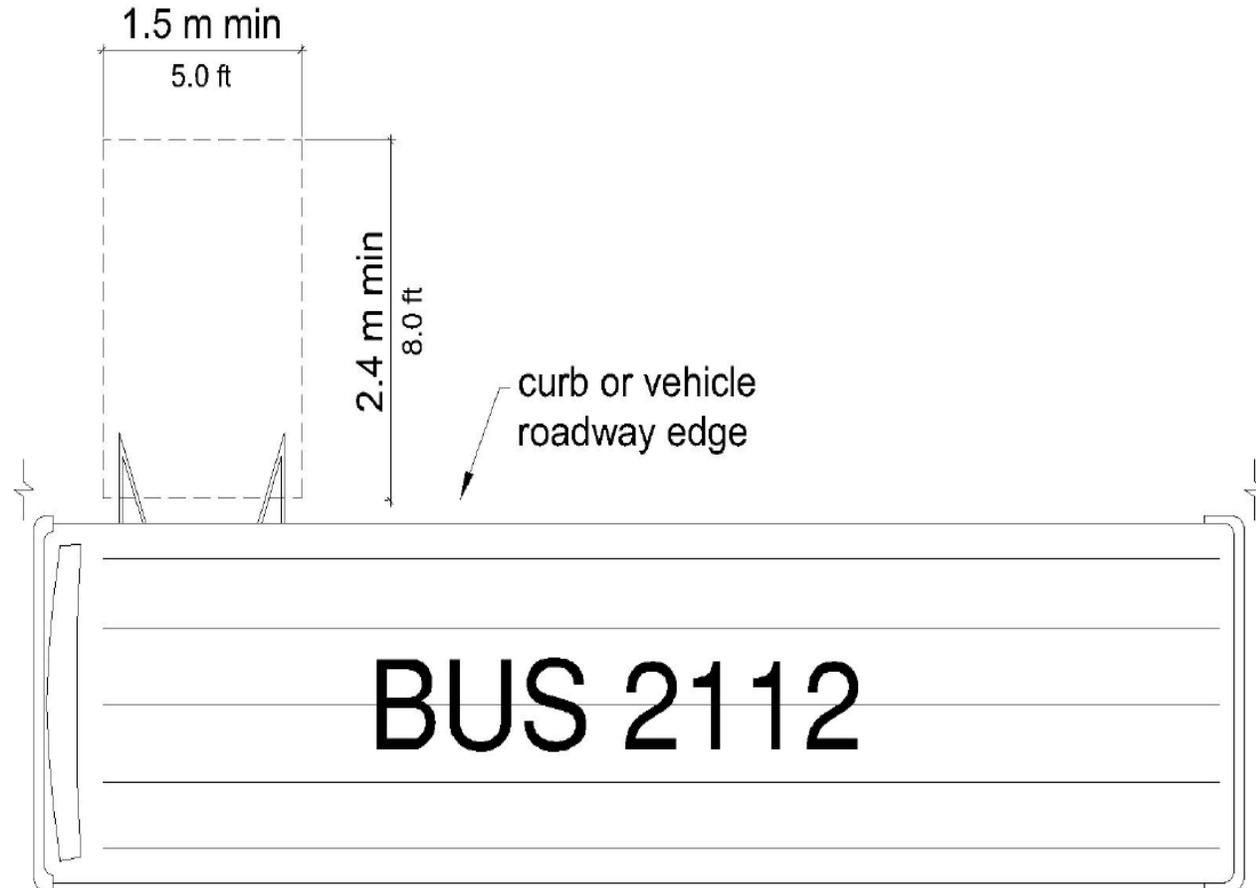


Figure R308.1.1.1
Dimensions



Rationale: Precedent

Gainesville, FL:

Zoning Code

Table V-2: Building Form Standards within Transects

“Principal streets include lower levels of pedestrian activity compared to storefront streets.

This street type is located in mixed-use areas where the traffic volume is anticipated to be higher than on local streets.”

Table V - 2: Building Form Standards within Transects.

TRANSECT	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	DT
E. BUILDING PLACEMENT										
min-max from curb										
min landscape/min sidewalk/min building frontage										
Storefront Street	15'-20' 5'/5'/5'				15'-20' 5'/5'/5'				16'-21' 5'/6'/5'	15'-20' 4'/6'/5'
Principal Street	17'-37' 6'/6'/5'				17'-27' 6'/6'/5'				17'-27' 6'/6'/5'	17'-27' 6'/6'/5'
Thoroughfare Street	19'-100' 6'/6'/5'				19'-100' 8'/6'/5'				19'-100' 8'/6'/5'	19'-100' 8'/6'/5'
Local Street	15'-35' 5'/5'/5'				15'-20' 5'/5'/5'				16'-21' 5'/6'/5'	15'-20' 4'/6'/5'



Potential Counterarguments



Disclaimer

Adding new setback language will not automatically acquire necessary space for pedestrians and transit users where it is lacking.

It does not solve the need for conversations and action on topics like easements, donations, or capital improvements on a property or citywide basis.



Relocate Curbs Instead of Buildings

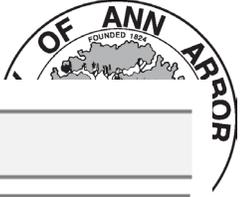
- Difficult to accomplish because of utilities situated adjacent to the curb: water lines, gas lines, stormwater infrastructure, telecommunication lines, street lighting, traffic signals and associated underground wiring
- Existing easements to access infrastructure
- Need space for active transportation, transit infrastructure, and the essential role of certain streets for urban freight
- With dedicated space for other needs, “excess space” in the road quickly evaporates
- It's imperative to plan for and anticipate the goals of Ann Arbor's key corridors before accepting to alter their curb-to-curb widths

Others:



Issue	Argument	Rebuttal
Curbs May Move	Sometimes curbs move, and this will impact the setbacks.	While curbs can indeed move, property lines can also shift under some circumstances. The proposed setback language provides flexibility to accommodate curb changes within the 20 to 40 foot range. Planning staff are informed that capital projects to significantly shift curb lines on major corridors are unlikely.
Presence of Multiple Curbs	Some TC1 corridors have slip lanes that effectively present two curb lines.	In cases with multiple curb interpretations, staff determination will be required.

Issue	Argument	Rebuttal
Unwilling Property Owners	Not every property owner may be open to collaborating with the City on easements or similar legal instruments for future public use of their property.	Property owner cooperation challenges exist regardless of setback method utilized. The proposed changes ensure that buildings aren't constructed in the Sidewalk Zone, allowing time for negotiations and creative solutions.
Variability of Transit Routes	In the absence of fixed route transit, bus routes are subject to change.	The Unified Development Code (UDC) already contains regulations related to transit stops and streets, with the knowledge that they could change. The proposed setbacks align with this convention. Moreover, the corridors associated with TC1 connect Ann Arbor from various directions over extended distances, making them prime candidates for sustained, and increased transit demand. It's unlikely that The Ride would withdraw service from these corridors.



Issue	Argument	Rebuttal
20 Feet Minimums Are Too Wide	Some believe that a 20-foot setback is excessive, potentially introducing a suburban-style setback into a walkable urban commercial area.	For many reasons outlined in this report, 20 feet seems just right to provide truly healthy trees, buffered and comfortable pedestrian space appropriate for a high volume road.
40 Feet Maximums Are Too Wide	Some argue that a 40-foot setback is excessive, potentially introducing a suburban-style setback into what should be a walkable urban commercial area.	A 40 foot setback, while seemingly generous, would be allowed under TC1's current 0-15' setbacks for many properties based on front lot lines. New setback regulations aim to catch the outliers with front lot lines which are either very close or very far from the street edge. Within the range suggested in this report, an 8 foot future landscaping zone coupled with an 8 foot pedestrian zone means that pedestrians could be even closer to structures than they are currently. The 40 foot provision also offers adaptability for varied urban designs and gives properties anticipating future expansion the necessary space to evolve.



Discussion



Rationale: Transit Service

	State / Eisenhower	Stadium / Maple	Plymouth	Washtenaw
Transit Frequency (frequency in min)	30	15-30	15-30	15-30
Plan Goal for Transit (frequency in min)	15 or less	N/A	15 or less	15 or less
Current Vehicular Volume (AADT)	19,337 (NB)	9,995 (SB)	12,243 (WB)	15,924 (WB)
Planned Bike Infrastructure	All Ages and Abilities	Existing	All Ages and Abilities	Existing
Existing ROW (curb to property line)	State: 0-50 ft Eisenhower: 11-65 ft	Stadium: 0-14 ft. Maple: 2-?	0-69 ft	0-38 ft