

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT

For Planning Commission Meeting of April 13, 2021

SUBJECT: Amendments to Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code) to create a new zoning district, the TC1 (Transit Corridor) district

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the amendments to the Unified Development Code, Chapter 55, Sections 5.12, 5.15, 5.16.3, 5.17.4, and 5.20.4 to create a new zoning district, the TC1 (Transit Corridor) District.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the amendments to the Unified Development Code to create a new zoning district named TC1 (Transit Corridor) district **be approved, subject to** including the subsection in the specific purpose statement of areas meeting the intents, because creating a district, and the proposed permitted uses, use specific standards, and dimensional standards, are recommended by numerous goals and actions in the City Master Plan for increasing density along transit corridors.

SUMMARY:

Amendments to the Unified Development Code are proposed to create new zoning district named TC1 (Transit Corridor) district. The TC1 district is intended to require at least two-story buildings for sufficient density to support and sustain the existing transit system, encourage infill development, expand housing choices, and further the goals of the Master Plan. The scope of work includes an intent statement (Section 5.12), inserting a new column into the permitted use tables (Section 5.15), establishing use specific standards to address building forms and site layout (Section 5.16.3), inserting a new row into the mixed use district dimensional standards table (Section 5.17.4), and including TC districts in the conflicting land use buffer requirements (Section 5.20.4). A review of the City Master Plan is provided in this staff report as well as staff analysis and responses to frequently raised concerns.

REPORT:

The Planning Commission postponed action on these proposed amendments following a public hearing on April 6, 2021. Several revisions were requested and have been made, as described below.

Intent Statement – The intent statement has been revised to eliminate references to specific transit corridors, include references to the P (Parking) and R5 (Hotel) districts, and relax the language about fronting a transit corridor.

Accessory Use Table – Parking Structures were added to the TC1 as a permitted accessory use, referencing the corresponding use specific standards. (They are a special exception primary use in the D1 and D2 districts. However, parking structures are not an intended nor appropriate primary use in the TC1 district and should only serve as accessory to primary uses such as office, commercial or residential uses.)

Parking Lot or Structure Use Specific Standards – Amendments to Section 5.16.3.L are newly added to the proposed ordinance, and the subsection has been amended to include use specific standards for parking structures in a TC district. The proposed standards are similar to those required in the D1 district.

Transit Corridor Development Use Specific Standards – Some substantive changes and one non-substantive change has been made to the use specific standards for transit corridor development.

Substantive changes include:

- Reducing the minimum height of townhouse/apartment buildings on lots more than 250 feet wide from 3 stories to 2 stories
- Adding a requirement for street-facing entrances for apartment buildings
- Adding a requirement that garage doors not facing any street
- Reducing the deduction for building frontage on lots less than 250 feet from functionally 60 feet (30 feet plus a 30-foot side setback) to 30 feet or 45 feet when adjacent to R zoning
- Adding requirements within 100 feet of the intersection of rights-of-way to prohibited townhouse or apartment buildings and require the first story of mixed use buildings to be occupied by nonresidential use.

The *non-substantive change* is moving the minimum height and second-story coverage requirements from the use specific standards to the dimensional standards table to be consistent with D1 and D2 district.

Dimensional Standards Table – In addition to now hosting the minimum height and second story coverage requirement for the TC1 district, the mixed use zoning district dimensions table has been revised to eliminate the additional side and rear setback provisions for buildings over 30 feet in height by deleting the reference to footnote C in the TC1/Side and Rear Setback cell. This provision (an additional foot of side and/or rear setback for each foot of building height over 30 feet) is required in the O, C1, C1A, C1A/R, C1B, C2B, and C3 districts. It was not staff's intention to also require it for the TC1 district and has been removed from the proposed amendments.

With Footnote C, the space available for a 55-foot tall building within 80 feet of R zoning is 25 feet wide. The TC1 district seeks to enable infill development both in front of and behind existing development to raise the overall density of development along transit corridors. Graduated height limits in proximity to R zoning and graduated setbacks based on building height are at cross purposes, therefore graduated setback requirement has been eliminated in favor of the proposed graduated height limits.

Footnote A has been revised so lots in the TC1 district are excluded from the corner lot maximum front setback exemption.

Maps – An interactive map tool was created to enable users to visit different geographies in the City and apply 30-, 80-, and 300-foot buffers from residential zoning districts to evaluate the application of the TC1 area, height and placement standards as proposed. It went live on Thursday, April 8, 2021 through the page dedicated to the *Proposed Zoning District for Transit Corridors* initiative [here](#).

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff does not support removing drafted subsection 5.12.9.B.3 describing areas that meet the general intent and specific purpose of the TC1 district. The areas could be more generalized, for example, Plymouth Road generally between US-23 and Traverwood Drive. However, offering concrete examples of the areas intended for TC1 serves two purposes. It is a way to direct and support either city-initiated or owner-initiated rezonings of these areas. This subsection also describes the existing conditions and physical characteristics that are appropriate for rezoning to TC1 in a way that words alone cannot. Staff can analyze, Planning Commission can make a recommendation, and City Council can approve a rezoning petition better by comparing a petition elsewhere in the City with these known areas. Land owners can better assess whether the TC1 district would be a good fit for their own property by comparing what has already been determined rather than guessing if none are provided. Code language should always strive to be clear, to the point, and useful. Staff believe that keeping the subsection would do that.

Prepared by Alexis DiLeo
Reviewed by Brett Lenart
4/10/21

Attachment: Ordinance to Amend Chapter 55 Unified Development Code (TC1 Transit Corridor) – Draft 4/10/10
April 6, 2021 Planning Staff Report with Attachment

c: City Attorney's Office