

**Subject:** Woodbury Gardens Rezoning

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**From:** Will Leaf  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 20, 2026 11:02 AM  
**To:** Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>  
**Subject:** Woodbury Gardens Rezoning

Hello Planning Commissioners.

Below are some notes on the Woodbury Garden rezoning and how that project relates to zoning reform generally.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xXQ-\\_qy2AhJxY93rrR92rD2k0xqlDfVK97niiTuuFuk/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xXQ-_qy2AhJxY93rrR92rD2k0xqlDfVK97niiTuuFuk/edit?usp=sharing)

Hello Planning Commissioners. Happy New Year.

## Summary

The Woodbury Gardens rezoning application reveals several issues that are bigger than just one project.

1. The TC1 building-width standards are overly restrictive.
2. Site-by-site rezonings are not an efficient or equitable way to change land use policies.
3. Ann Arbor needs a [flexible mixed-use district](#).

## The TC1 building-width standards are overly restrictive.

Staff has said that the Woodbury Gardens project violates the TC1 district's maximum building-width rule. The purpose of this rule is to encourage walkability. I do not think this rule achieves its purpose for two reasons:

### A. Gaps between buildings do not ensure walkability

Developers might fence off the gaps between buildings or fill the gaps with shrubs and trees, making them impassible.

### B. Long buildings do not preclude walkability.

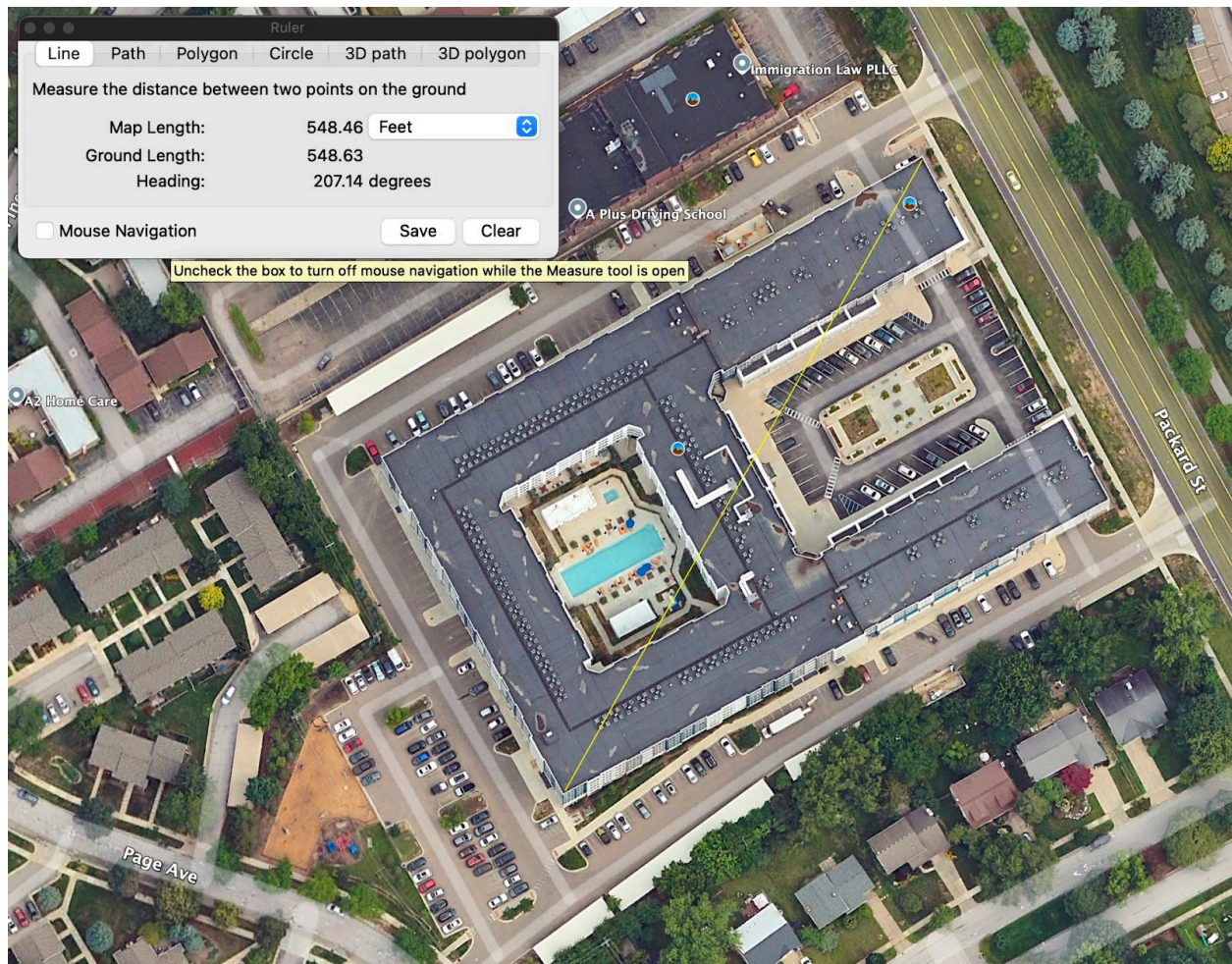
Many highly walkable cities have blocks that are longer than 300 feet with unbroken facades of buildings. Manhattan, arguably the most walkable area in the United States, has East-West blocks that are [generally](#) 650-920' feet long.



Many buildings in Ann Arbor would not be allowed under the TC1 rules.

### The George on Packard

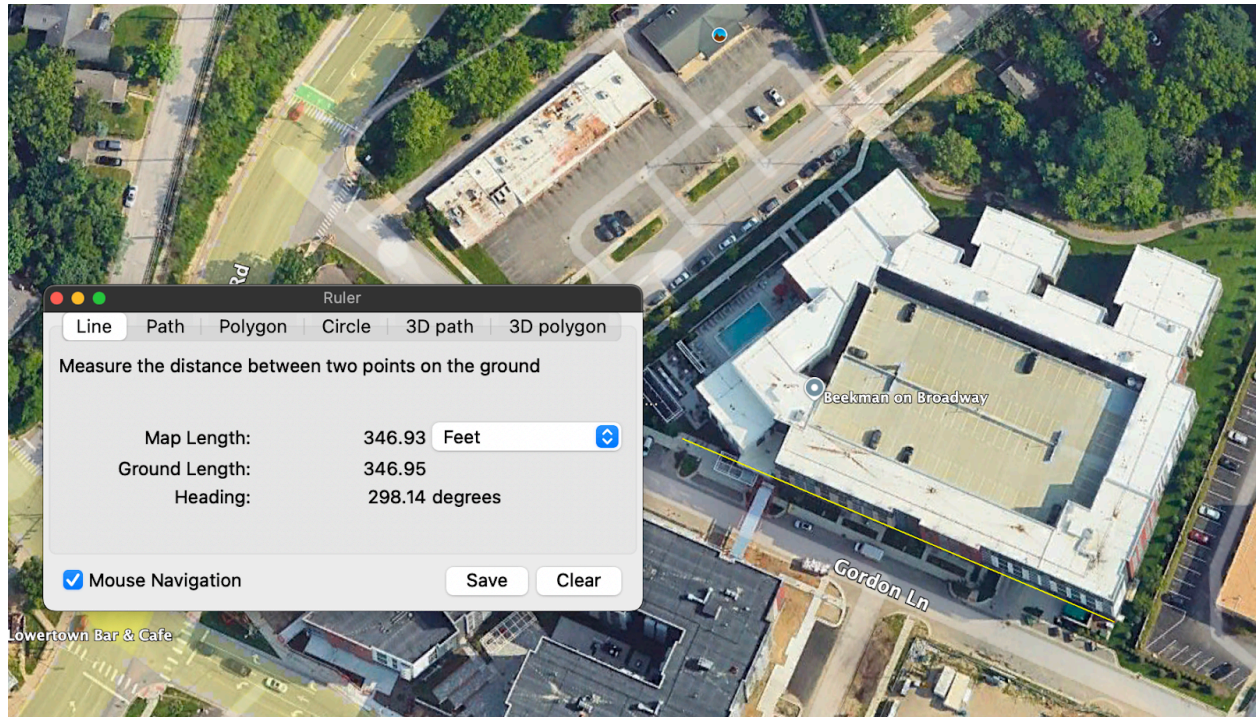
The diagonal dimension is above the 450 foot limit.



### The Beakman on Broadway

The building width is more than 300 feet.

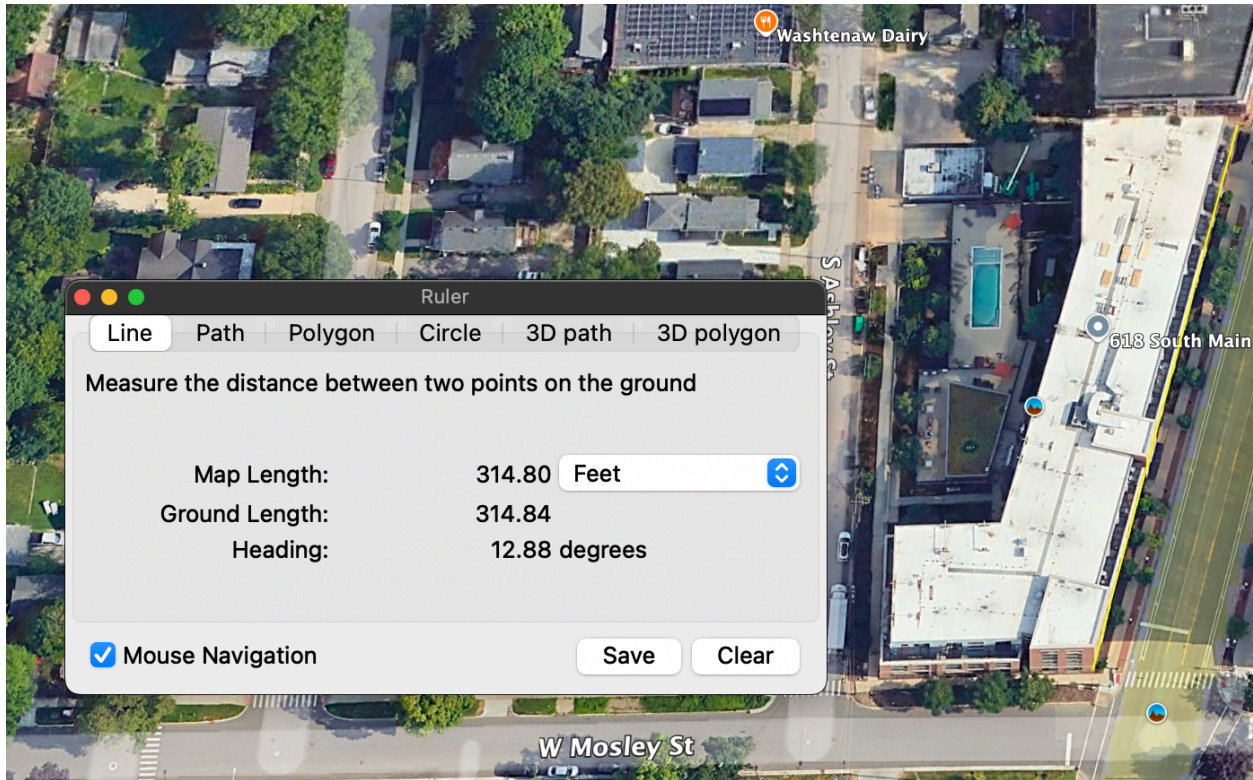




618 South Main

The building width is more than 300 feet





## Site-by-site rezonings are not an efficient or equitable way to change land use policies.

If the city [waits many years](#) to complete a full UDC-rewrite before making any zoning changes, the planning commission will have to evaluate all rezoning requests on an individual basis until that rewrite is finished. Evaluating all these proposals individually is bad for two reasons:

1. Different people may get treated differently depending on how vocal they are, how politically connected they are, and the desires of individual members of the commission and staff.
2. Staff, developers, the commission, and the public, will all have to spend a lot of time and effort whenever a new project comes up, giving the commission less time to consider broader policy decisions.

Ann Arbor needs a flexible mixed-use district.

If Ann Arbor proactively applies [flexible mixed-use district\(s\)](#) to implement the comprehensive plan, it will achieve a more efficient and equitable outcome than evaluating individual rezoning requests to our overly rigid existing districts.