



MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Brett Lenart, Planning Manager
Michelle Bennett, Senior Planner

DATE: August 5, 2025

SUBJECT: Future Land Use Map Recommendations, Second Draft of
Comprehensive Land Use Plan

During review of the second draft of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (the “Plan”), the Planning Commission is reconciling areas where the future land use map categories largely are multi-family residential developments. In an effort to densify and vary the city’s building types, the Planning Commission is interested in preserving development potential in these areas, regardless of the current scale of buildings existing today. The Planning Commission has been similarly mindful of avoiding the creation of large-scale non-conformities. In reviewing these 16 areas across the city, the Planning Commission remains uncertain on how to appropriately designate the remaining areas into the future land use framework of residential, transition, or hub.

As currently conceptualized, “residential” covers R-1 and R-2 (page 110). City Council has requested that residential, with this understanding, be capped at three stories and at three units per parcel. This leaves R-3 (which is capped at 30 feet but permits up to 10 du/acre) and the R4 zones (heights that exceed 35 feet and up to 74 du/acre) not completely accounted for in the future land use framework.

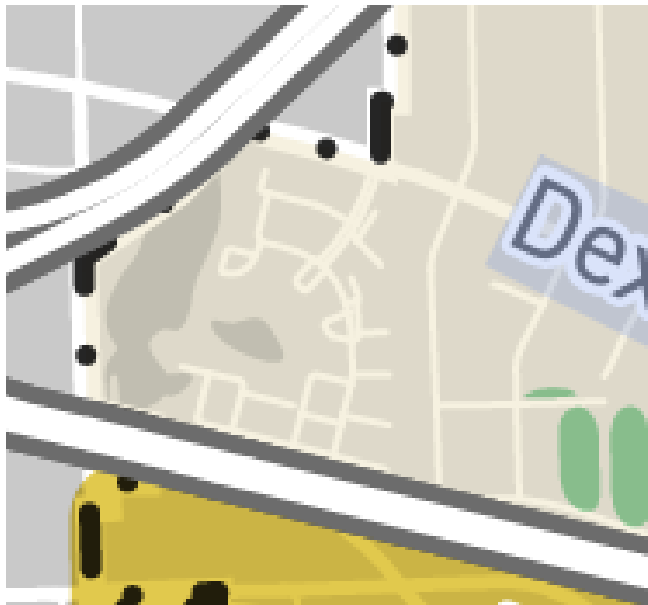
Examples

Site 15: This site is on the western periphery of the city, between Dexter Road and I-94. It is currently zoned R4A, which permits up to 45 feet in height. It is separated from an adjacent transition district by I-94. While it is already developed as a two-story multi-family development, the exercise of determining a vision for the site is not clear. The Planning Commission expressed reservation for the residential category, as it could potentially reduce the development potential from 45 feet height to 35 feet, depending on the configuration of a possible building. The City Council July resolution adds further challenge if considered, as this site includes more than a triplex.

Current Zoning for Site 15, R4A

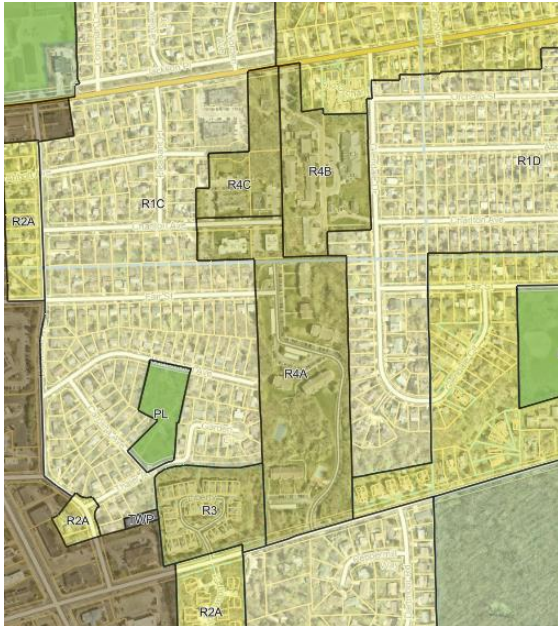


Future Land Use Designation for Site 15, Residential

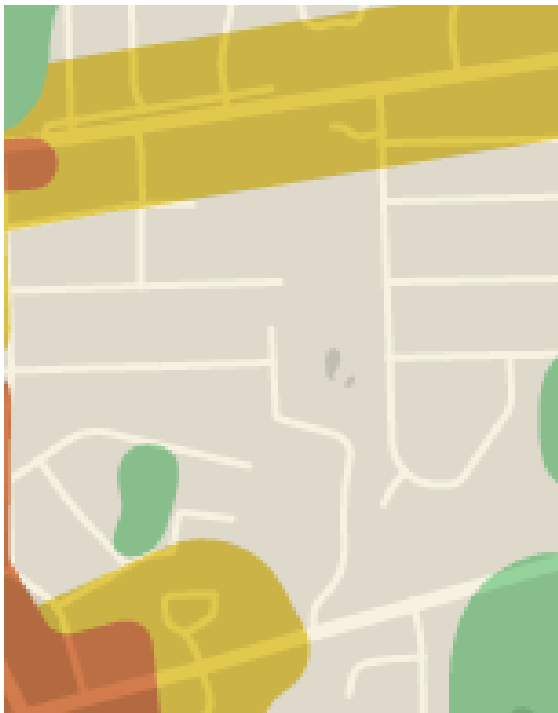


Site 14: This strip of development between Jackon Ave and Liberty Ave is zoned R4A, R4B, and R4C. Part of this road segment holds the three-story Westwood Apartments and the two-story Hillside Terrace Senior Living, and a one-story building. Again, Planning Commission feels that neither category is well suited. If it were to remain residential, the CPC would like the flexibility to exceed the height or unit limit, otherwise this area may be forced into transition when that may not be a good application of this category in this context.

Current Zoning for Site 14, R4A-R4C



Future Land Use Category for Site 14, Residential



This challenge has resulted from numerous factors and decisions that have led the Plan to this point:

1. The initial City Council resolution that initiated the Comprehensive Plan directed the Plan to “Develop recommendations and policies that promote fewer zoning districts or categories, that contain more flexibility for re-use and adaptability over time”
2. The initial development of a Residential District by the Planning Commission was flexible, incorporating taller height limits and flexibility in the number and configuration of homes.
3. Responding to a City Council resolution in April of 2025, the Planning Commission amended the Plan to reflect a maximum of three stories in residential areas.
4. Depending on how the Planning Commission chooses to consider the subsequent language from a City Council resolution of July 2025, additional disparity may result due to the number of homes on a property designated for the Residential land use category.

City Planning Staff proposes the Planning Commission consider the following options toward this issue:

- A. Expand and/or “tier” the Residential Land Use Category (recommended)
Modify the Residential land use category to be inclusive of a wider range of residential building patterns as previously proposed by the Planning Commission, but with additional language or delineation that describes how different housing patterns may not be equally appropriate in all areas identified in the map. This approach would result in maintenance of the Residential Land Use Category as described, but its description would be modified to reflect clear distinctions within that category. For example, the category could call for implementation via zoning district(s) that limit housing to a maximum of triplexes in some areas (perhaps traditional R1 and R2 areas) and other zoning district(s) that provide greater housing quantity through greater physical potential, without unit count limitations in other geographies (perhaps traditional R3 and R4 areas).

Considerations for Option A:

- This could be accomplished on pages 118-119 that within the residential category, it is envisioned that there is a spectrum of lower density to higher density residential, with multiple districts to be implemented. These could be mapped to indicate specific locations or could be described in text with clear authority for future decisions by the city on where and how to apply the distinct subsets of the Residential Category.
- This would permit the commercial business component of the residential category but would primarily remain residential.
- This could apply to areas like sites 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16 that don’t fit well into residential or transition. These sites might be self-contained condo associations, on curvilinear street patterns, not in proximity to a major corridor, on a narrow ROW, that could be apt for greater housing density but not necessarily fulfill the intent of transition.
- Other examples:

- [Cambridge, MA](#) (p. 43) has similar style future land use map that collapses all residential into one category and another for mixed-use corridors
- [Minneapolis, MN](#) has an urban neighborhood future land use category that encompasses three residential zoning districts
- Actions
 - As a result of this change, update the language on page 118
 - Review the future land use map to re-categorize and indicate on the map this distinction
 - Update graphics to include this range of structures

B. Limit and/or “Tier” the Transition Land Use Category

Another option would be a similar approach, but with the utilization of the Transition Land Use category, where refinement of this category could result in a subset or tier of this category that provides a more predictable physical development outcome in primarily residential areas, than strictly relying on yet-to-be defined standards that may be more easily conceived and applied to corridor-adjacent development than larger multi-family properties.

Option B Considerations:

- Staff considered this option but do not find it to be broadly applicable if the primary goal is to reach a residential density that is not currently accounted for.
- The intent of the land use category is to be mixed-use and multi-modal. This is best left to corridors and nodes that align with TheRide and the hub to enable enough space for this change to reach its intent.
- Transition also currently permits all uses and ranges from 4 stories to the tallest buildings in the hub. This category might not fit well in some of the R-3 and R-4 sites reviewed (e.g. site examples from bullet point three under Option A)
- Please note that the residential category currently permits commercial business so this application would still permit a mix of uses.

C. Create a New Land Use Category

A third option would be to define a new land use category that is more specifically tailored to these areas, define it in the Plan, and reflect the appropriate location of the category on the Future Land Use Map.

Option C Considerations:

- This category could capture R-3 and R-4 in a parallel manner to the Residential Category capturing R-1 and R-2.
- Some communities still use this approach of dividing residential into several categories.
 - [Boulder, CO Map](#) and [Land Use Descriptions](#)

- [Austin, TX Map](#)
 - [Grand Rapids, MI](#) (map is page 4-17)
- Actions
 - Identify all geography that would be suitable to new land use category.
 - Create and define the category in a similar manner to other Land Use Categories in the Plan.