

**From:** BRIAN CHAMBERS

**Sent:** Saturday, April 02, 2022 1:39 PM

**To:** CityCouncil <[CityCouncil@a2gov.org](mailto:CityCouncil@a2gov.org)>; Planning <[Planning@a2gov.org](mailto:Planning@a2gov.org)>

**Subject:** 3,400 to 5,600 Housing Units Target to Rezone 68 Lots to TC1 - State/Eisenhower and around Blake Transit Center

**Importance:** High

Mayor and Council:

I am writing in support of this Monday's agenda items:

- 1) **Ordinance to rezone 68 lots to TC1 - State/Eisenhower.**
- 2) **350 South Fifth Avenue PUD Zoning Ordinance** by the Blake Transit Center

The 226 acres total for the State/Eisenhower site comes to .353 square miles. Best practices for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) for a 'village' scale bus-based transit system would have a housing density of 15 to 25 housing units per acre for a 1/4 mile radius around the bus-transfer stops.

See:

<https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/How-to-implement-transit-oriented-development>

<http://www.2030palette.org/residential-densities/>

This has the potential for an 'idealized' TOD-based development. Low-rise and high-rise buildings are not necessary for these housing densities.

Here is a visual view of 27 Dwelling Units Per Acre (Net).



See:

<https://www.theurbanist.org/2017/05/04/visualizing-compatible-density/>

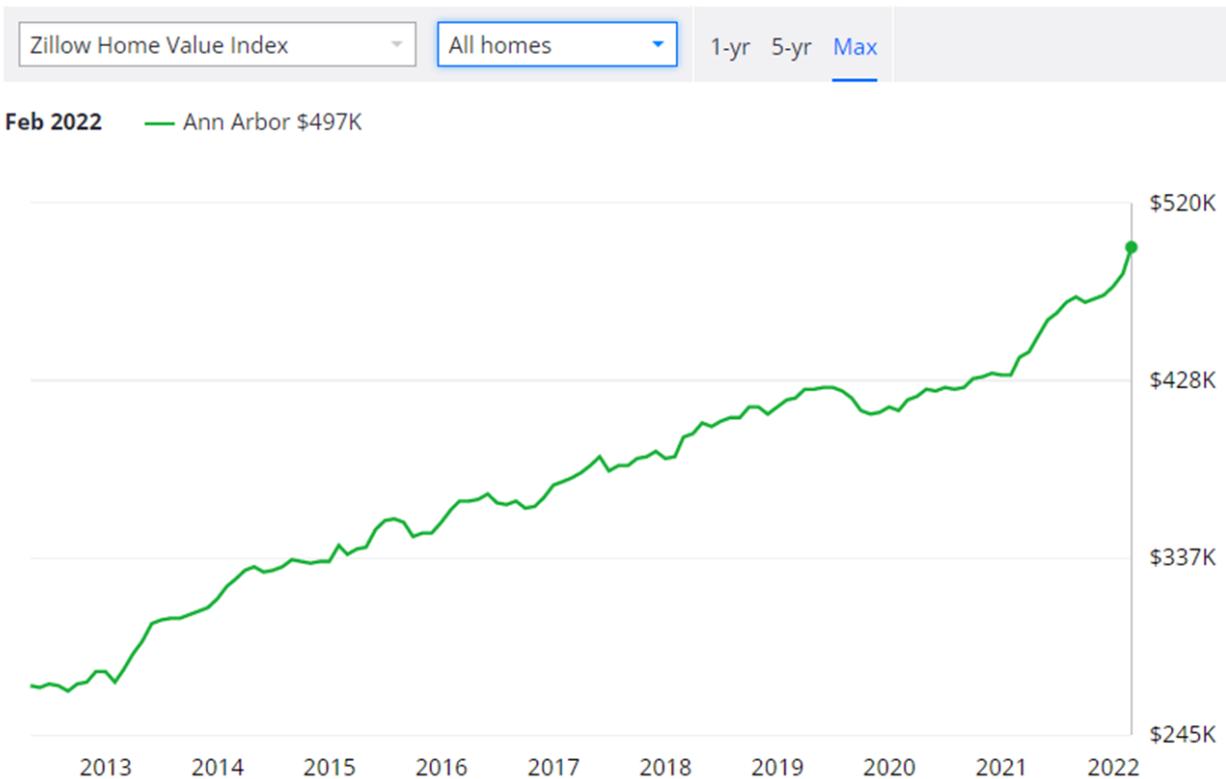
Doing the math, this area would minimally need to have 3,400 to 5,600 units across this site for it to have enough scale to effectively support transit based development and the bus lines supporting it, with any meaningful scale and shift away from cars.

We need over twice that density overall at the Blake Transit Center, so the 350 housing units for

the Y-lot site is only a start, and we need a couple of other bus transit-hubs in a ring fashion around the city. Four transit district designations of these would be a good number, I think. That would provide a fairly robust transit based development system around the city.

The post WWII boom remade the city with over a 300% increase in Ann Arbor housing through 1980. Our housing supply has been relatively flat since then. In national assessments, the more recent rapid increases in housing prices has been widely understood to be driven by this supply constraint.

To address this in the Ann Arbor market, increasing housing densities at this Transit Oriented Development (TOD) scale are needed in order to reduce the continued growth of the housing price curve. See <https://www.zillow.com/ann-arbor-mi/home-values/>



The thing is, we would not want these multiple TOD-based Districts all built out at once. So, the south side of the city is a reasonable starting point, especially if there are a set of developers ready to do the project with a reasonably robust set of investors.

Once the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update project gets approved to go forward, I believe Ann Arbor's R1 zoning should also be reconsidered for moderate density increases of 2-plex, 3-plex and 4-plex housing units within the same building envelopes as currently permitted in the current R1 districts. Select R1 Districts across Ann Arbor would convert to Form-based Zoning ones used in many Michigan cities (see: <https://michiganrelaw.com/2017/11/29/the-growth-of-form-based-codes-in-michigan-zoning/>). That will have to wait for another day.

For the current site under T1 District consideration, there are three bus lines supporting the area, Lines 6, 24 and 62.

See:

<https://www.theride.org/maps-schedules>



**Line 6** comes from the downtown areas and goes along Ellsworth, and could provide access to the housing units along there for employment in the other buildings that will be developed here, let alone bus access to the downtown for people living in this development, who might work or go to entertainment there.

**Line 24** goes to the St. Joes Hospital complex, as well as downtown Ann Arbor. Speaks for itself.

**Line 62** goes to the Central Campus area. Same logic.

Seems like there would be plenty of reasonable transit routes for housing and employment as a start of the first major transit hub, outside of the downtown Blake Transit Center.

The beauty of bus-based transit is it can be reconfigured more easily and has lower investment costs than fixed-rail systems. As the density grows here and across Ann Arbor the bus transfer stops can be reconfigured.

Such a robust amount of housing density, between 3,400 to 5,600 units, would better support the shift to bus transit and ridership.

A California study found that among those who drove to work when they lived away from transit, just over 50% switched to transit commuting on moving within a 1/2-mile walking distance of a

transit station.

On balance, research to date shows that TOD yields an appreciable ridership bonus: well-designed, concentrated, mixed-use development around transit nodes can boost patronage as much as five to six times higher than comparable development away from transit.

See:

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2004. Transit-Oriented Development in the United States: Experiences, Challenges, and Prospects. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

<https://doi.org/10.17226/23360>

I hope this supports your decision making on the rezoning, the challenge is to assure that developer proposals are submitted to the 3,400 to 5,600 unit densities, and provide the mixed use within the site for local essential services (grocery, Rx, etc.).

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance in support of your decision.

Best regards,

Brian Chambers, Ph.D.  
Ward 3  
c: 734-604-9367

**From:** Stephanie Raupp  
**Sent:** Monday, April 04, 2022 10:23 PM  
**To:** Planning <[Planning@a2gov.org](mailto:Planning@a2gov.org)>  
**Cc:** Kenneth A Raupp  
**Subject:** Feedback and comments - Maple Cove II site plans

Hello Planning Commission,

I live at 1680 N Maple Rd (a.k.a. 1680 Enclave Lane) directly across from Maple Cove #1 apartment buildings.

My husband and I have reviewed the site plan provided and have a few critical concerns with the plans:

**#1 There is not enough parking for residents. There needs to be at least 2 parking spaces per dwelling** because the apartment buildings are residential with no mixed use happening. We do not fully understand how or why this parcel is zoned "office" as it is clearly a residential district and these are clearly only used as apartment buildings or multi-family dwellings. Per the city's Unified Development Code, office buildings of this size would require 240 parking spots. We would think 170 seems reasonable with 2 spots for each apartment (just like the other residential dwellings) and 20-30 visitor spots. Despite the "office" zoning, this is a residential district of town and residents clearly drive to work, school, etc. Very very few residents take the bus, bike or walk as it is too far from the city center. The vast majority of businesses within walking distance are there to service the residents in this neighborhood (food, gas, services, etc.).

**#2 More green space including a dog run would benefit the surrounding neighbors as well as the residents. There is simply not enough grass for all of the dogs to utilize.** These apartments need more green space. Rooftop gardens do not help the pets. It is becoming a concrete jungle and we need more greenery. We all choose to live in Ann Arbor - Tree City - because of its greenery and landscape - and we need to keep and maintain the greenery, mature trees, shrubs and landscaping to help offset the fast growing, gray, concrete jungle that is threatening our town. Trees and shrubs also help with site lines and privacy of surrounding neighbors. The fact that today hundreds of people have a direct view into my front and backyard is not something that I wish upon anyone. We lost all privacy when the first building went up and I hope you will consider this issue moving forward.

**Lastly, I really think the City should consider rezoning these apartments to residential rather than "office" as it is not accurate. What is the benefit to the community of this particular zoning? Who does it benefit?** It is not being used as mixed use or office space at all. It feels like a loophole that is only benefiting the developer and is not in the best interest of this residential district.

My husband and I will try to attend the Public Hearing tomorrow 4/5/22, however we have other commitments and are not sure we can make it. Please make sure this feedback is provided to the City Planning Staff.

Thank you,  
-Stephanie Raupp & Ken Raupp

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**From:** Kirk Westphal  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 05, 2022 3:51 PM  
**To:** Planning <[Planning@a2gov.org](mailto:Planning@a2gov.org)>  
**Subject:** please delete policy directive for inclusionary zoning

Dear Commission:

As I mentioned a few weeks ago, I hope you will strike the sentence that advocates for the ability to implement inclusionary zoning from the policy memo you're evaluating tonight.

I'd recommend instead advocating for the ability for cities to implement other tools like split-rate taxes (aka, "land value" taxes", which are discussed in the context of Detroit recently at the link below) and perhaps rent control (which would have to be used judiciously, eg for old buildings, and not discourage new construction).

Thank you,  
Kirk Westphal  
Ward 2

Split-rate tax: <https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/articles/2022-04-report-taxing-land-detroit-homeowners-development>

**From:** Kirk Westphal  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 05, 2022 4:07 PM  
**To:** Planning <[Planning@a2gov.org](mailto:Planning@a2gov.org)>  
**Subject:** TC1 needs a lower parking maximum

Dear Commissioners:

I applaud the removal of parking minimums!

However, I'm concerned that the proposed change in TC1 parking maximums allows for expensive, suburban, non-transit-dependent housing and retail. Please consider lowering the parking ratio to 2 or 2.5 spaces/1000 sf.

If I understand correctly, the current TC1 residential parking maximum is 0.5 spaces per dwelling unit. This would ensure that at least half the units in a building are transit dependent. (I'm optimistic that this ratio is buildable for residential in the near term in areas very close to the campuses.)

The proposed change is to 3 spaces/1000 sf. If an average apartment is 700 sf, this means that each unit would be allowed two cars instead of 0.5, meaning an increase in the car allowance by a factor of four.

This is not even in the realm of "transit-oriented." It far exceeds the ratios for successful near-downtown residential developments. The Beekman development on Maiden Lane has a .9/unit ratio, and the parking reportedly is being used at a lower rate than anticipated. (And if we're talking about mixed-use or retail, 3 spaces/1000 is about the ratio of the Whole Foods shopping center on Washtenaw, which for all intents and purposes caters 100% to drivers and is never full.)

Despite claims to the contrary, we know developers actually do build more parking than they need, and we know those costs are passed along to tenants. I don't like that people use the term "luxury" to disparage new units, but by allowing multiple parking spaces for each unit, you will be allowing residential units to be constructed that will be charging a 20% premium.

And the residents will not be using transit. Research shows that the existence of parking attracts car users and makes it more likely that non-drivers will purchase and drive cars. When it comes to a resident's decision about whether to drive or take transit, parking availability is 3x more impactful than transit service levels. Ann Arbor is full of anecdotes to the contrary, but on the whole, people who own cars drive. (<https://transfersmagazine.org/magazine-article/issue-8/what-do-residential-lotteries-show-us-about-transportation-choices/>)

We have one shot at corridor transformation in our lifetimes. So please let's not allow the same suburban, car-dominated parking ratios to happen in places where the entire goal is to be transit dependent. If an area isn't ready to develop at a maximum of 2-2.5 spaces/1000 sf, it's not going to be transit dependent. It's okay that it doesn't redevelop for a while.

Best,  
Kirk Westphal