

Subject: The Hub District

From: Will Leaf
Sent: Friday, May 9, 2025 5:54 PM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
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Hi there.

Below are some suggestions for the Hub District.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cTLqqc2gKQoOgScBc4kcMu5dlpfriCBnit85kTgQ7GI/edit?usp=s_haring

Hub

Summary

1. Page 102—Remove active-use ground floor commercial requirements.
2. Page 103—Remove references to nodes.
3. Consider replacing TC1 with the new Transition zoning district.

Remove Active First Floor Commercial Requirements

These requirements would be damaging for at least two reasons:

1. The Hub districts include many necessary uses that are not “active commercial,” like daycares, urgent cares, Planned Parenthoods, nursing homes, and schools, etc. Banning these uses from first floors would severely stifle essential services for no good reason.
2. Active commercial requirements would make it more difficult to build housing in Hub areas.



An urgent care on Stadium that would become a nonconforming use.



A clinic on Plymouth that would become a nonconforming use.



An eye clinic and neighboring physical therapy center on Plymouth, both of which would become non-conforming uses.

Remove References to Nodes

The city has a severe housing shortage and expensive commercial rents. It would not make sense to limit construction because a potential development is not immediately next to an intersection or a “point of convergence.”

It would be best to delete all references to nodes. Staff is already drawing the boundaries of the land use categories partially based on street type, so there is no need for a second layer of regulation based on nodes.

Consider Replacing TC1 with Transition

Right now, the plan says the Hub district will be implemented by the zoning districts D1, D2, and TC1.

It's worth considering whether it would be better to replace TC1 with the new Transition district called for in the plan. Having a single district would be simpler and more equitable compared to having two very similar districts right next to each other.

If both districts are retained, the main differences between them would be:

1. TC1 would be slightly stricter about what uses are permitted,
2. TC1 would have stricter design rules.

The commission recently amended the TC1 design rules to be more flexible, but they still forbid buildings with long building widths and one story buildings. The architect Bradley Moore told me that the building width limits preclude some of the most common types of apartment buildings, like the "Texas Doughnut." The one-story rules forbids one-story grocery stores and hardware stores like Stadium Hardware. I don't think these design rules are wise or necessary, so I don't support retaining a TC1 district.

On the other hand, if the commission is dead-set on restricting storage lockers or other boring uses, then the TC1 could be the more curated shopping district where these uses are excluded. Preserving existing TC1 areas would be better than creating a whole set of new Transition districts with complex and arbitrary use restrictions.

If you like the idea of cutting districts, you could even combine D1, D2, TC1, and Transition into a single "Contextual Mixed Use" district, but this change would sound radical and could make the plan a harder sell politically.

In conclusion, I think it'd be best to replace TC1 with the new Transition district, but I don't think the issue is critical. In contrast, keeping the Transition district as an undivided, single, broad mixed-use district is essential for reasons I discuss in my Transition memo:

Transition Memo

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZzUpiWnm2f2cTcNt3CJW1rsf2FbEUaBq5Jnzi2tL11A/edit?usp=sharing>

Thanks for reading,

Will