

Memorandum

To: Planning Commission

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Subject: UDC Workplan Options



Options Comparison

Option 1

1. Floating Residential.
2. Use Analysis.
3. Hub Land Use Category.
4. Transition Land Use Category.
5. Development Standards and Procedures.
6. Residential Land Use Category.
7. Review Comprehensive Plan.

Option 2

1. Hub Land Use Category.
2. Residential Land Use Category.
3. Transition Land Use Category.
4. Use Analysis.
5. Development Standards and Procedures.
6. Review Comprehensive Plan.

Option 3

1. Residential Land Use Category.
2. Hub Land Use Category.
3. Transition Land Use Category.
4. Development Standards and Procedures.
5. Review Comprehensive Plan.

Option 1 Approach

Option 1 is Planning staff’s recommended prioritization of UDC work to realize the goals of the newly adopted Plan. An overview of proposed steps is provided with additional information for each step below.

1. Floating Residential
2. Use Analysis
3. Hub Land Use Category
4. Transition Land Use Category
5. Development Standards and Procedures
6. Residential Land Use Category
7. Review the Comprehensive Plan

Step 1: Floating Residential

A new residential zoning district would provide a ready-made district for property owners or other applicants to utilize (Note: referred to as “floating” as staff doesn’t envision Planning Commission-initiated rezoning of areas to the district upon adoption) in currently single-family restricted districts. The majority of housing being developed in the City already occurs in areas programmed to be Hub or Transition areas, but there remain challenges to realizing missing-middle scale housing in existing R1 designated areas. This also provides an opportunity to continue dialogue raised during the Plan process about height, scale, and realization of missing middle housing in existing neighborhoods. Additionally, the Ann Arbor Community Land Trust has submitted a proposed zoning amendment that could likely address many of the same questions. Staff envision that this process would be a full engagement.

Tasks

1. Provide up to three permitted units.
2. Consider applicability to existing R1, R2, and R4 zoning categories.
3. Consider existing and proposed area, height, placement regulations.
4. Consider standards for lot size, dwelling size, floor area ratio, and other factors that would contribute to the realization of missing middle housing in diverse configurations.

Step 2: UDC Use Analysis

The next priority would be consideration of uses in the Unified Development Code. In response to the original direction and dialogue, the adopted plan calls for a simplified regulatory framework for the City. As the City moves toward realizing this, an exercise to consider the existing use table will help to move forward with subsequent ordinance amendments. For example, as the City considers the broad range of uses in the Transition areas, having previously considered the differences or similarities to uses, will help to streamline and shorten the resulting regulations.

This work could occur with light to moderate engagement as the nature of the work would be well suited to some input. The work would likely focus on characterizing/defining uses, rather than more specific geographic considerations.

Tasks

1. Review, diagnose, and consolidate uses wherever feasible.
2. Modernize/add missing uses (e.g. data centers, more nuanced short-term rental definitions, etc.).
3. Integrate smart formatting features (e.g. cursor hovering to bring up definitions, links to other applicable sections).

Step 3: Hub Land Use Category

Next would be considering the identification and application of zoning regulations that support the goals identified in the Plan for the Hub land use category. For the best opportunity to minimize the number of districts that are utilized for Hub land use areas, consider all areas across the City provide the entirety of circumstances and factors for the City to consider. It is likely that considering all areas together will limit the potential for more area-specific zoning being developed one area at a time. The Hub land use areas will also provide fertile ground for considering how affordability or sustainability will be integrated into the regulations for these areas, which will provide a starting framework when we move to Transition areas. Due to fewer geographic areas, this would likely be lighter engagement.

Tasks

1. Compare zoning map with Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
2. Assess existing zoning districts compared to Hub description and goals.
3. Review development that has occurred in the areas over the past 5 years to identify desirable outcomes/opportunities for improvement.
4. Consider modification of existing districts, consolidation of districts, or establishment of new districts best advance plan goals.

5. Identify areas that are appropriate for rezoning based on criteria, including: existing zoning vs. future land use category, and availability of infrastructure to support development.
6. Initiate rezoning of identified areas.

Step 4: Transition Land Use Category

The Transition land use category includes approximately three times the number of distinct areas on the future land use map and the number impacted parcels. While the Plan calls for this land use category to respond to both residential land use categories, this stage will provide the appropriate reference points of Hub land use determinations and, at minimum, the floating residential district. While it could be argued that work in the Transition category occurs after Residential, the three-story recommendation helps to frame this influence.

This work will likely require at least moderate engagement, as the interaction between Transition areas and residential areas were raised numerous times through the Plan development process. Potential scope steps may mirror Hub, but due to the expansive nature of Transition areas, may benefit from some initial steps to prioritize or group transition areas into a few phases.

Tasks

See Hub steps

Step 5: Development Standards and Procedure Amendments

Originally specified in a resolution adopted in 2024, development review standards are identified as a later priority action in the adopted plan. This work will be expansive addressing everything from the development standards that govern how development occurs (e.g. natural features protections, stormwater regulations) and how development is reviewed (e.g. the site plan/permitting process, which entities have what authority). This work will likely require moderate engagement.

Tasks

1. Update applicability sections of the UDC to provide clarity and consistency when development standards apply, based on the scale of development: full site compliance, compliance only applicable to disturbed areas, not applicable.
2. Review/modernize non-conforming section.
3. Identify and remove any outdated and/or obsolete zoning regulations.
4. Review existing Short-Term Rental Regulatory Framework and consider any needed modifications and applicability to each future land use category.
5. Review existing and make recommendations for effective regulatory incentives to encourage increased energy efficiency requirements, the realization of more

accessible housing units, and affordable housing units beyond the Hub and Transition areas.

Step 6: Residential Land Use Category

With the benefit of elapsed time and use of the “floating” residential district, the City would have more information and experience to initiate zoning changes to realize missing middle housing in the residential land use areas. In addition to this experience, there may be available data on rate of housing development in these areas, and how the housing is realized (e.g. form, price). This will provide valuable feedback, in addition to data collected through this time period of how regulations can help to realize the Plan’s goals. This could result in refinement or additional zoning district work.

With the benefit of engagement already conducted during the floating district process, engagement would likely be best addressed geographically as the Planning Commission moved toward pro-active zoning of residential land use areas to a new district(s).

Tasks

1. Compare zoning map with Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
2. Assess “floating” and existing zoning districts compared to Residential description and goals.
3. Consider if modification of existing districts, consolidation of districts, or establishment of new districts best advance Plan goals.
4. Identify areas that are appropriate for rezoning based on criteria, including existing zoning vs. future land use category and availability of infrastructure to support development.
5. Initiate rezoning of identified areas.
6. Identifies areas appropriate for Transition or Residential, develop criteria/considerations for use by Planning Commission and City Council in considering zoning proposals.
7. Consider amendments to enable small-scale commercial uses in Residential Land Use areas, and develop regulatory framework to realize

Step 7: Initiate Review of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

It is important that we reflect and respond to what the City has learned, what outcomes were anticipated or not, what outcomes helped to achieve our goals, and modify and adapt to these experiences in a more regular cadence than previous elapses between land use plan updates.

Option 2 Approach

Option 2 is an option that moves Hub land use category work forward, as explored during the March 17th discussion.

1. Hub Land Use Category
2. Residential Land Use Category
3. Transition Land Use Category
4. Use Analysis
5. Development Standards and Procedures
6. Review the Comprehensive Plan

Step 1: Hub Land Use Category

To start, consider the identification and application of zoning regulations that support the goals identified in the Plan for the Hub land use category. For the best opportunity to minimize the number of districts that are utilized for Hub land use areas, consider all areas across the City provide the entirety of circumstances and factors for the City to consider. It is likely that considering all areas together will limit the potential for more area-specific zoning being developed one area at a time. The Hub land use areas will also provide fertile ground for considering how affordability or sustainability will be integrated into the regulations for these areas, which will provide a starting framework when we move to Transition areas. Due to fewer geographic areas, this would likely be lighter engagement.

Tasks

1. Compare zoning map with Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
2. Assess existing zoning districts compared to Hub description and goals.
3. Review development that has occurred in the areas over the past 5 years to identify desirable outcomes/opportunities for improvement.
4. Consider modification of existing districts, consolidation of districts, or establishment of new districts best advance plan goals.
5. Identify areas that are appropriate for rezoning based on criteria, including: existing zoning vs. future land use category, and availability of infrastructure to support development.
6. Initiate rezoning of identified areas.

Step 2: Residential Land Use Category

Moving to the Residential land use category provides a shift to the opposite “bookend” of the Transitional land use category. By shifting to the Residential land use category after Hub, the City will be establishing regulatory policy and boundaries for which the Transitional land use category is specified to respond to. Keeping this work early in the process will provide an avenue for missing middle housing development, which will most likely occur in moderate scales, over wide areas of the City. As noted in the background information memorandum, the City is currently experiencing the majority of housing development in areas designated for Hub or Transition areas. By dedicating time early after Plan adoption to the Residential land use category, the City will be opening housing opportunities broadly across the map.

This also provides an opportunity to continue dialogue raised during the Plan process about height, scale, and realization of missing middle housing in existing neighborhoods. Additionally, the Ann Arbor Community Land Trust has submitted a proposed zoning amendment that could likely address many of the same questions. Staff envision that this process would be a full engagement.

Tasks

1. Compare zoning map with Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
2. Assess existing zoning districts compared to Residential description and goals.
3. Consider if modification of existing districts, consolidation of districts, or establishment of new districts best advance Plan goals.
4. Identify areas that are appropriate for rezoning based on criteria, including existing zoning vs. future land use category and availability of infrastructure to support development.
5. Initiate rezoning of identified areas.
6. Identifies areas appropriate for Transition or Residential, develop criteria/considerations for use by Planning Commission and City Council in considering zoning proposals.

Step 3: Transition Land Use Category

The Transition land use category includes approximately three times the number of distinct areas on the future land use map and the number impacted parcels. While the Plan calls for this land use category to respond to both residential land use categories, this stage will provide the appropriate reference points of Hub land use determinations and, at minimum, the floating residential district. While it could be argued that work in the Transition category occurs after Residential, the three-story recommendation helps to frame this influence.

This work will likely require at least moderate engagement, as the interaction between Transition areas and residential areas were raised numerous times through the Plan development process. Potential scope steps may mirror Hub, but due to the expansive nature of Transition areas, may benefit from some initial steps to prioritize or group transition areas into a few phases, rather than considering all 32 areas simultaneously.

Tasks

(Similar to Hub)

Step 4: UDC Use Analysis

The next priority would be consideration of uses in the Unified Development Code. In response to the original direction and dialogue, the adopted plan calls for a simplified regulatory framework for the City. As the City moves toward realizing this, an exercise to consider the existing use table will help to move forward with subsequent ordinance amendments. For example, as the City considers the broad range of uses in the Transition areas, having previously considered the differences or similarities to uses will help to streamline and shorten the resulting regulations.

This work could occur with light to moderate engagement as the nature of the work would be well suited to some input. The work would likely focus on characterizing/defining uses, rather than more specific geographic considerations. This work may lead to needed modifications in the decisions previously made in the Land Use Categories, if deemed appropriate.

Tasks

1. Review, diagnose, and consolidate uses wherever feasible.
2. Modernize/add missing uses (e.g. data centers, more nuanced short-term rental definitions, etc.).
3. Integrate smart formatting features (e.g. cursor hovering to bring up definitions, links to other applicable sections).

Step 5: Development Standards and Procedure Amendments

Originally specified in a resolution adopted in 2024, development review standards are identified as a later priority action in the adopted plan. This work will be expansive addressing everything from the development standards that govern how development occurs (e.g. natural features protections, stormwater regulations) and how development is reviewed (e.g. the site plan/permitting process, which entities have what authority). This work will likely require moderate engagement.

Tasks

1. Update applicability sections of the UDC to provide clarity and consistency when development standards apply, based on the scale of development: full site compliance, compliance only applicable to disturbed areas, not applicable.
2. Review/modernize non-conforming section.
3. Identify and remove any outdated and/or obsolete zoning regulations.
4. Review existing Short-Term Rental Regulatory Framework and consider any needed modifications and applicability to each future land use category.
5. Review existing and make recommendations for effective regulatory incentives to encourage increased energy efficiency requirements, the realization of more accessible housing units, and affordable housing units beyond the Hub and Transition areas.

Step 6: Initiate Review of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

It is important that we reflect and respond to what the City has learned, what outcomes were anticipated or not, what outcomes helped to achieve our goals, and modify and adapt to these experiences in a more regular cadence than previous elapses between land use plan updates.

Option 3 Approach

Planning staff has proposed several options for how to approach the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan – 2050. An overview of proposed steps is provided with additional information for each step below.

1. Residential Land Use Category
2. Hub Land Use Category
3. Transition Land Use Category
4. Development Standards and Procedures
5. Review the Comprehensive Plan

Step 1: Residential Land Use Category

These land use changes are not dependent on extensive upgraded infrastructure capacity and can therefore be applied across the city first. Denser housing options are already permitted and occurring in TC1 and downtown zones; this is an opportunity to work on the provision of missing middle housing. From a technical standpoint, this could be the easiest to rewrite but would require buy-in and repair with some residents. Unlike a floating district, this would include map amendments and rezone large areas of the city to meet the Comp Plan's goals and would address all aspects of this district including development standards. Staff envision that this process would be a full engagement.

Tasks

1. Develop an engagement plan that seeks input from neighborhoods. This will likely require full engagement.
2. Write the intent.
3. Evaluate standards for lot size, lot width, square footage of dwelling units, massing (via floor area ratio or other methods), height (by feet), parcel assemblage to encourage and support missing middle housing realization and minimize nonconformities.
4. Permit up to three units per parcel in R-1 districts. Determine the criteria when to permit “small multi-family homes” and “neighborhood commercial.”
5. Evaluate corresponding development standards that apply to housing such as stormwater management, parking, accessibility, and tree protection.
6. Determine if design standards are feasible.
7. Start research on short-term rentals (STRs).
8. Work with city departments to evaluate how to streamline the process, and what steps can be removed, combined, or rearranged for speedier approval.

Step 2: Hub Land Use Category

Hub has the greatest potential for increasing housing supply, when supported by the necessary infrastructure. However, there are many other factors that hinder development in these areas that mean new development is not likely to be realized without other incentives from state or local government. Because of recent work on TC1, and its discrete areas on the Future Land Use Map, the rewriting of this district may be more straightforward. It would likely require lighter engagement.

Tasks

1. Determine what grouping of parcels can be upzoned given infrastructure constraints and select the appropriate geographies based on the Future Land Use Map.
2. Develop an engagement plan with light engagement.
3. Write the intent.
4. Analyze key characteristics of parcels including the ROWs, surrounding uses, height step backs, access management, land use definitions, dimensional standards of existing zones, development patterns over the last 5 years, and permitted use.
5. Evaluate corresponding development standards such as parking, stormwater, lighting, access management, design, etc.

Step 3: Transition Land Use Category

This is likely to be the most challenging part of the UDC to rewrite because it includes all land uses and therefore potential conflicts/nuisance; its location on corridors, nodes, and surrounding downtown; different scales depending on proximity to residential; and a high level of impact on the city. Because of its potential to increase density and impact infrastructure, this will require extensive land use research, and public and stakeholder engagement.

Tasks

1. Determine what grouping of parcels can be upzoned given infrastructure constraints and select the appropriate geographies based on the Future Land Use Map.
2. Develop an engagement plan with moderate to full engagement depending on location.
3. Write the intent.
4. Analyze key characteristics of parcels including the ROWs, surrounding uses, height step backs, access management, land use definitions, dimensional standards of existing zones, development patterns over the last 5 years, and permitted use.
5. Update land use definitions.

6. Determine barriers to development in zones that fall into Transition.
7. Evaluate corresponding development standards such as parking, stormwater, lighting, access management, etc.
8. Continue research on STRs and develop recommendations for how to regulate them in Transition.

Step 4: Development Standards and Procedure Amendments

There are some areas of the code that will not be updated with the land use category approach. This is the opportunity to address any of the outstanding standards and procedures.

Tasks

1. Update applicability sections of the UDC to provide clarity and consistency when development standards apply, based on the scale of development: full site compliance, compliance only applicable to disturbed areas, not applicable.
2. Review/modernize the non-conforming section.
3. Identify and remove any outdated and/or obsolete zoning regulations that were not previously addressed.

Step 5: Review the Comprehensive Plan

In 2031, the Planning Commission and staff shall review the Comp Plan to consider if it needs to be updated. Reviewing the data collected on metrics, current events that impact planning, and City Council direction will be some of the factors to determine to what extent the Comp Plan shall be modified.