

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT

For Planning Commission Meeting of November 1, 2023

SUBJECT: Amendment to the Zoning Map, Section 5.10.2, of Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code) to rezone parcels in the Plymouth Road area to TC1 Transit Corridor District

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve amendments to the Zoning Map, a part of Chapter 55 Unified Development Code, to designate the zoning classification of parcels in the Plymouth Road area as TC1 and designate certain lengths of Plymouth Road as Transit Corridor Street Type as shown on the attached ordinance.

SUMMARY:

The Planning Commission has initiated an amendment to the Zoning Map to rezone three areas along Plymouth Road to TC1 (Transit Corridor) District and designate those portions of Plymouth Road as a Transit Corridor street type. This city-initiated rezoning petition is proposed as directed by Council by [resolution](#)¹ on June 5, 2023.

LOCATION:

The area proposed for rezoning includes 45 parcels covering 127 acres in three areas along Plymouth Road. Three of the parcels are subdivided into condominium units, resulting in a total of 99 unique addresses.

BACKGROUND:

The TC1 Transit Corridor District – On November 16, 2020, City Council directed the Planning Commission to create a zoning district to support high density development along transit corridors and requested that work include a recommendation for preliminary geographic areas to consider for such designation (see Resolution R-20-439, Legistar File 20-1676).

The TC1 district was added as a new zoning district to the Unified Development Code by approval of Ordinance ORD-21-19 on July 6, 2021 as a meaningful and achievable way to simultaneously address many different but related goals expressed in the eight documents that comprise the Comprehensive Plan. Those goals include sustainability, access and choice in housing, housing affordability, reducing vehicle miles traveled, relieving vehicle congestion, supporting existing transit service, and supporting and expanding nonmotorized transportation.

¹ Full link: <https://a2gov.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6209367&GUID=44D663AF-6101-455A-A051-1F688B316342&Options=ID|Text|&Search=TC1>

More specifically, application of the TC1 district will accomplish:

- Promoting land use designs that reduce reliance on the automobile (Land Use Element [LUE] Goal B)
- Locating higher residential densities near mass transit routes and in proximity to commercial, employment, and activity centers (LUE Goal B, Objective 1)
- Improving the safety, accessibility and desirability of walking, biking or using mass transit (LUE Goal B, Objective 2)
- Providing a full range of housing choices (size, price, design, accessibility, etc.) that meets the existing and anticipated needs of all City residents (LUE Goal C)
- Encouraging a variety of housing types within new and mixed-use development projects (LUE Goal C, Objective 2)
- Encouraging commercial and employment centers that promote pedestrian activity, de-emphasize the use of the automobile, and provide a sense of balance with surrounding land uses (LUE Goal E)
- Supporting mixed-use, “village” centers in existing commercial areas that are designed to provide new residential opportunities, increase pedestrian activity and reduce the total number of vehicular trips (LUE Goal E, Objective 1)
- Encouraging developers to design commercial and office centers where the parking lot is not the dominant feature from the road (LUE Goal E, Objective 2)
- Becoming more transit-oriented, bike-friendly, and pedestrian-friendly, and less reliant on fuel consumptive forms of motorized travel (Transportation Plan)

The permitted uses and development standards of the TC1 district was amended once to allow additional uses and simplify the additional standards (see ORD-23-25, approved September 5, 2023). A second amendment adjusted the application of front setback requirements and formally designated Transit Corridor streets. The latter was recommended for approval by the City Planning Commission on September 6, 2023 and will be considered by the City Council beginning on November 6, 2023.

The Zoning Map – As part of their recommendation to approve Ordinance 21-19, the City Planning Commission also recommended four geographic areas to consider for the new district:

- South State Street between Oakbrook Drive and I-94, and East-West Eisenhower Parkway between South Main Street and the railroad (Completed by Ord 22-04 on April 4, 2022)
- Washtenaw Avenue between US-23 and Platt Road
- West Stadium Boulevard and North-South Maple Road between Jackson Road and Pauline Boulevard (Completed by Ord 22-16 on November 10, 2022)
- Plymouth Road between Traverwood Boulevard and US-23

To date, 258 parcels covering about 400 acres have been rezoned to TC1.

Public Engagement – On October 12, 2023, a community meeting about Plymouth Road area TC1 rezoning was held at the Ann Arbor Public Library, Traverwood Branch, located in the Plymouth Road Corridor area. The meeting was attended by at least 36 participants alongside Councilmembers Song and Watson. Planning staff sought constructive feedback from community members, affirming the value of public insight in the decision-making process. A summary of public feedback received at this meeting is attached to this report.

PROPOSED REZONING:

This staff report addresses a third city-initiated petition to rezone parcels along an existing transit corridor from its current zoning designation to the TC1 district. This petition is to rezone 45 parcels of land, of which three are further subdivided into condominium units, covering 127 acres in three areas along Plymouth Road. A fourth city-initiated petition to rezone parcels on the Washtenaw Avenue corridor between US-23 and East Stadium Boulevard is progress.

Plymouth Road Area – The proposed rezoning in the Plymouth Road area includes 45 parcels of land covering 127 acres. There are 99 unique addresses in the rezoning area from 42 individual lots and 3 condominiums. The area has been broken down into three sub-areas for discussion purposes: an east area, a central area, and a west area. Each is described below.

East Sub-Area – The east sub-area of Plymouth Road contains 19 parcels (17 individual lots and 2 condominiums) covering 53 acres of land. Major developments in the east area include: the Busch’s Plymouth Green shopping center, Plymouth Green Crossings, Plum Market, Hampton Inn, Carson’s Restaurant, CVS Pharmacy, and several offices and banks.

Parcels in the east area range from 12,070 to 407,110 square feet with an average of 209,298 square feet or 4.8 acres. It is estimated that there are 539,400 square feet of floor area in the east area for a Floor Area Ratio of 19%.

Current zoning designations in the east area are: O (Office), Plymouth Professional Park PUD, C1 (Local Business), RE (Research), C3 (Fringe Commercial), R5 (Hotel), C1B (Community Convenience Center), and Plymouth Green Crossings PUD.

Image: Plymouth Road – East Sub-area

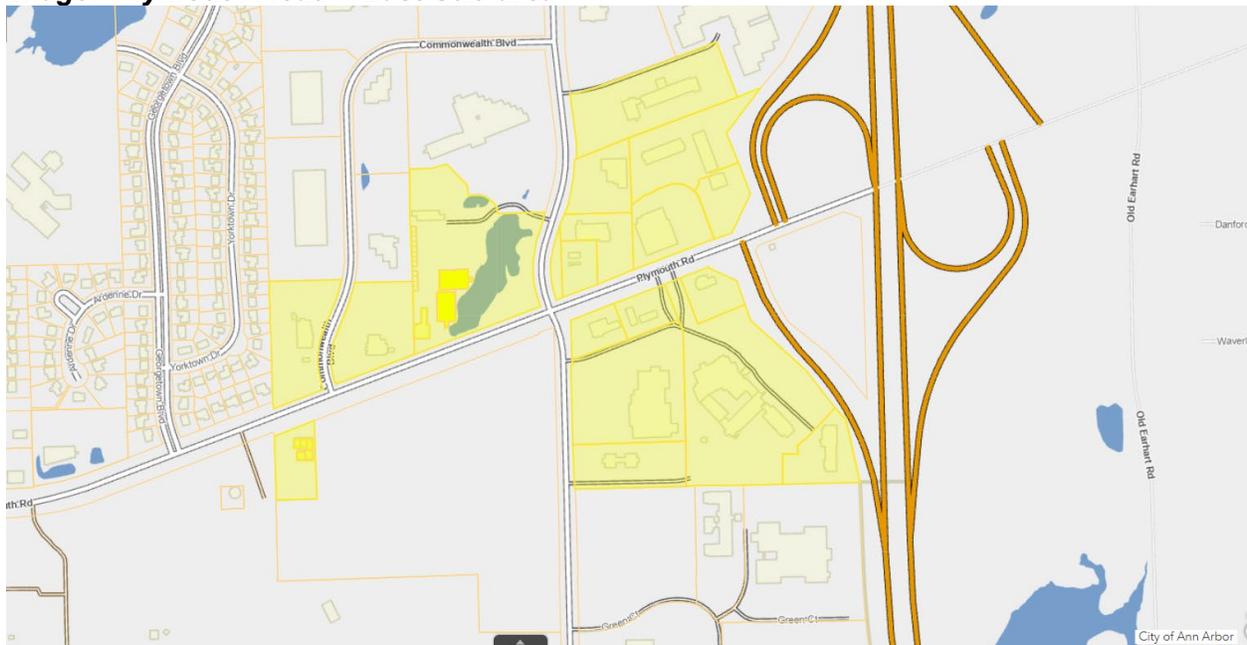


Table: Plymouth Road – East Sub-Area				
	PARCEL ID NUMBER	STREET ADDRESS	SITE AREA (sq ft)	CURRENT ZONING
1	09-09-14-304-900	3250 Plymouth Rd Units 1-10 (Tower Professional Center Condo.)	58,898	O
2	09-09-14-305-005	2000 COMMONWEALTH BLVD (Carson's Restaurant)	131,643	PUD
3	09-09-14-401-007	2000 GREEN RD (Offices)	101,988	C1
4	09-09-14-302-070	2001 COMMONWEALTH BLVD (Offices)	133,320	RE
5	09-09-14-303-001	2100 GREEN RD (City of Ann Arbor)	12,070	C3
6	09-09-14-400-006	2200 GREEN RD (Offices)	78,552	C3
7	09-09-14-400-014	2300 GREEN RD (Hampton Inn)	197,778	R5
8	09-09-14-401-005	3500 PLYMOUTH RD (Chase Bank)	40,735	C1
9	09-09-14-400-002	3501 PLYMOUTH RD (DTE)	36,118	C3
10	09-09-14-400-005	3535 PLYMOUTH RD (CVS Pharmacy)	66,162	C3
11	09-09-14-401-003	3550 PLYMOUTH RD (Colonial BP)	42,141	C3
12	09-09-14-401-006	3572 PLYMOUTH RD (Busch's Plymouth Green Center)	237,363	C1B
13	09-09-14-401-011	3600 PLYMOUTH RD (Double Tree Hotel)	407,110	R5
14	09-09-14-400-007	3601 PLYMOUTH RD (Plum Market)	99,087	C3
15	09-09-14-401-009	3610 PLYMOUTH RD (Microtel Inn & Suites)	75,767	R5
16	09-09-14-400-009	3611 PLYMOUTH RD (Panera Bread)	53,397	C3
17	09-09-14-400-008	3621 PLYMOUTH RD (Red Roof Inn)	143,914	C3
18	09-09-14-401-010	3650 PLYMOUTH RD (Flagstar Bank)	45,424	C3
19	09-09-14-305-900	3375-3469 Plymouth Rd (Plymouth Green Crossings Condo.)	359,698	PUD

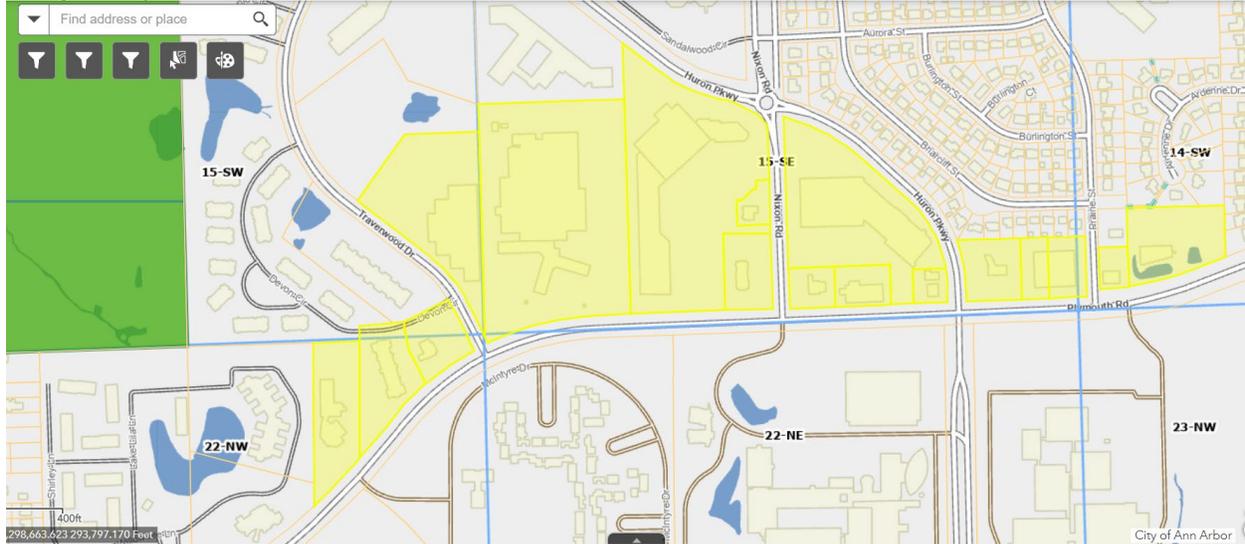
Central Sub-Area – The central area of the proposed rezoning contains 17 parcels and covers 60 acres of land. The central area is anchored by the Traver Village Shopping Center and the Plymouth Road Mall at the corners of Plymouth and Nixon Roads.

Parcels in the central area range from 22,390 to 635,988 square feet, with an average of 164,339 square feet or 3.8 acres. It is estimated that there is 486,200 square feet of floor area in the area for a Floor Area Ratio of 19%.

Current zoning designations in the central area are: ORL (Office Research Light Industrial), O (Office), and C3 (Fringe Commercial).

Table: Plymouth Road - Central Area				
	PARCEL ID NUMBER	STREET ADDRESS	SITE AREA (sq ft)	CURRENT ZONING
1	09-09-15-301-002	2000 TRAVERWOOD DR (US Environmental Protection Agency)	258,834	ORL
2	09-09-22-201-014	2301 PLYMOUTH RD (Islamic Center of Ann Arbor, Academy)	125,969	O
3	09-09-22-201-023	2401 PLYMOUTH RD (Mixed Offices)	108,922	O
4	09-09-22-201-022	2421 PLYMOUTH RD (Key Bank)	67,124	O
5	09-09-15-410-001	2565 PLYMOUTH RD (US National Vehicle & Fuel Emissions Lab)	635,988	ORL
6	09-09-15-410-007	2601 PLYMOUTH RD (Traver Village Shopping Center)	529,654	C3
7	09-09-15-410-004	2665 PLYMOUTH RD (Comerica Bank)	23,059	C3
8	09-09-15-410-002	2675 PLYMOUTH RD (McDonald's)	70,956	C3
9	09-09-15-400-003	2701 PLYMOUTH RD (Huntington Bank)	35,179	C3
10	09-09-15-400-011	2705 PLYMOUTH RD (Plymouth Road Mall)	323,907	C3
11	09-09-15-400-010	2793 PLYMOUTH RD (Commercial Center)	43,352	C3
12	09-09-15-400-001	2799 PLYMOUTH RD (Speedway)	22,390	C3
13	09-09-15-401-029	2901 PLYMOUTH RD (PNC Bank)	69,104	O
14	09-09-15-401-032	2925 PLYMOUTH RD (UM Credit Union)	76,603	O
15	09-09-15-401-031	2935 PLYMOUTH RD (UM Credit Union)	76,603	O
16	09-09-14-300-013	3001 PLYMOUTH RD (Offices)	23,587	O
17	09-09-14-300-075	3055 PLYMOUTH RD (Offices)	127,770	O

Image: Plymouth Road – Central Sub-area



West Sub-Area – The west sub-area of Plymouth Road contains 9 parcels (8 individual lots and 1 condominium) covering 13.6 acres of land. This area is anchored by the Upland Green development and The Courtyard Shops. While this area was not originally proposed during the establishment of the TC1 District, it is included the proposed rezoning area based on conversation between City staff and the Commission.

Parcels in the west area range from 20,278 to 164,587 square feet with an average of 30,064 square feet or 0.7 acres. It is estimated that there is 190,000 square feet of floor area in the west area for a Floor Area Ratio of 32%.

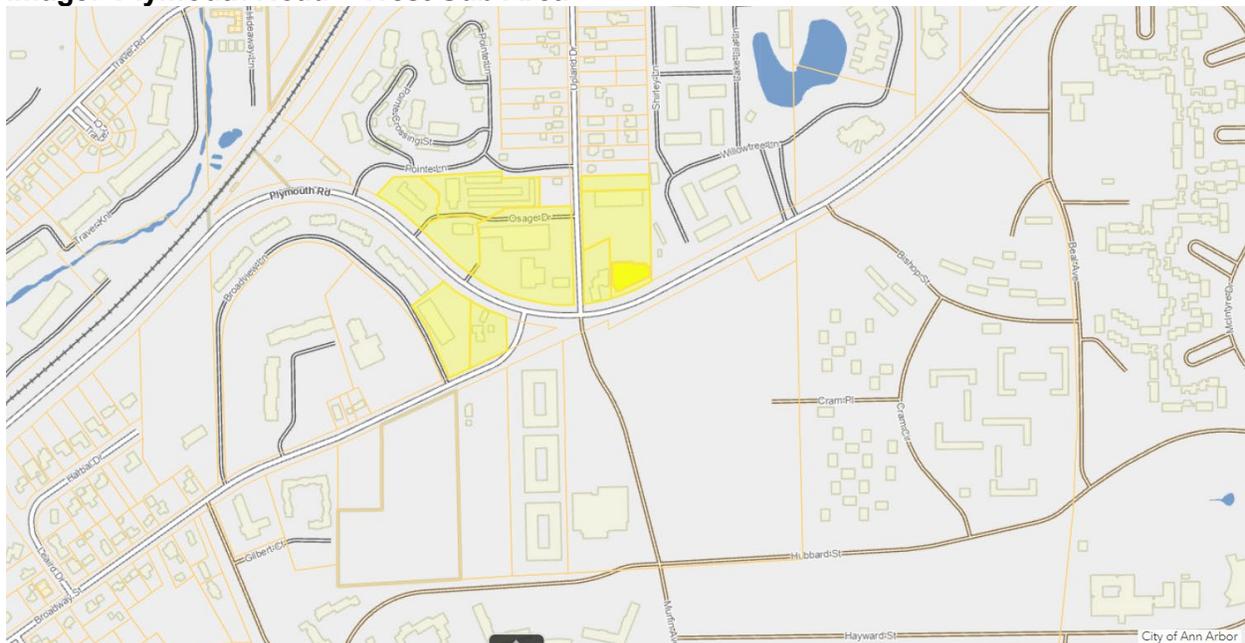
Current zoning designations in the west area are: Plymouth Road Commercial PUD, C1 (Local Business), C3 (Fringe Commercial), and P (Parking).

Table: Plymouth Road – West Sub-Area

	PARCEL ID NUMBER	STREET ADDRESS	SITE AREA (sq ft)	CURRENT ZONING
1	09-09-21-105-019	1635 PLYMOUTH RD (Victory Lane Car Care Center)	39,850	PUD
2	09-09-21-105-023	1645 PLYMOUTH RD (National Storage Ann Arbor)	80,123	PUD
3	09-09-21-105-022	1655 PLYMOUTH RD (Fast Food Restaurant)	43,130	PUD
4	09-09-22-202-008	1667 PLYMOUTH RD (The Courtyard Shops)	164,587	C1 and C1B
5	09-09-21-104-044	1750 PLYMOUTH RD (Commercial Center)	67,077	C1

Table: Plymouth Road – West Sub-Area				
	PARCEL ID NUMBER	STREET ADDRESS	SITE AREA (sq ft)	CURRENT ZONING
6	09-09-22-201-001	1763 PLYMOUTH RD (Brewer's BP)	30,798	C3
7	09-09-22-201-900	1771-1777 Plymouth Rd (Upland Green Condominium)	112,173	C3
8	09-09-21-104-008	1800 PLYMOUTH RD (Shell Gas)	36,303	C3
9	09-09-22-201-006	1812 UPLAND DR (Brewer's Towing Service)	20,278	P

Image: Plymouth Road – West Sub-Area



Proposed Street Type Designations – As part of the proposed rezoning, both the Zoning Map and the Street Type Designation Map will be amended. The Zoning Map will be amended to designate all parcels recommended for rezoning as TC1 Transit Corridor. The Street Type Designation Map will designate the Plymouth Road, Green Road, and Nixon Road frontages of the TC1 district as Transit Corridor type streets. Required front setbacks in the TC1 district depend on the street type designation. The required front setback from a Transit Corridor type street is a minimum of 18 feet and a maximum of 28 feet as measured from the curb line, otherwise the required front setback is a minimum of 0 feet and a maximum of 15 feet for mixed use buildings or 20 feet for townhouse or apartment buildings measured from the front lot line.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS COMPARISON:

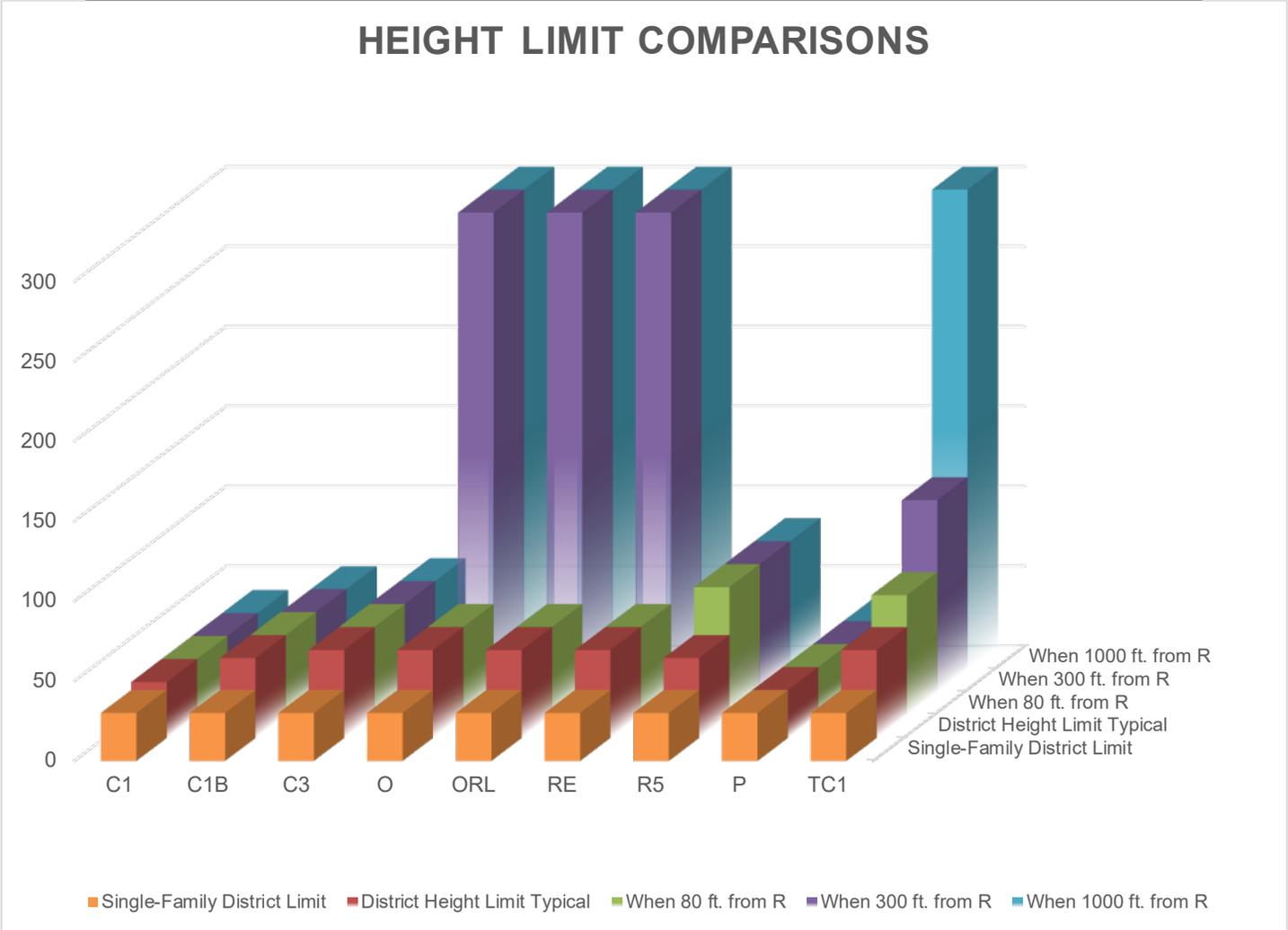
The proposed rezoning area currently has nine different zoning designations:

Current Zoning Designations	
C1	Local Commercial
C1B	Community Convenience Center
C3	Fringe Commercial
O	Office
P	Parking
R5	Hotel
RE	Research
PUD	Plymouth Green Crossings, Plymouth Professional Park, Plymouth Road Commercial

Area, Height and Placement Standards – Compared to the current zoning designations in the proposed rezoning area, the TC1 district allows significantly more floor area but requires each individual new building to have a smaller footprint and be slightly taller at minimum. Maximum building heights are in line with current zoning designations when near residential zoning districts. When far from residential zoning districts, the maximum heights permitted in the TC1 district are greater than the commercial and hotel districts but are less than the O, ORL, and RE districts. The table below incorporates UDC amendments currently under consideration by the City Council.

Zoning District FAR and Height Comparison									
	C1	C1B	C3	O	ORL	RE	R5	P	TC1
FAR (Max.)	100%	150%	200%	75%	75%	75%	900 sq. ft. per room	None	None
Height (Max.)	35 ft.	50 ft.	55 ft.	55 ft. or None	55 ft. or None	55 ft. or None	50 – 80 ft.	Equal adjacent district	55 – 300 ft.
Front Setback	Min: 15 ft. Max: 25 ft.	Min: 10 ft. Max: 25 ft.	Min: 10 ft. Max: 25 ft.	Min: 15 ft. Max: 40 ft.	Min: 25 ft. Max: 50 ft.	Min: 25 ft. Max: 50 ft.	Min: 15 ft. Max: 50 ft.	Min: 10 ft. Max: None	Min: 0/18 ft. Max: 15/20/28 ft.
<p>Height Footnotes O, ORL, RE – Maximum height is 55 feet when within 300 feet of residential zoning district; beyond 300 feet of residential zoning district maximum height is none. TC1 – Four height ranges: maximum 55 feet when 0-80 feet of residential zoning district; max. 75 feet when 80-300 feet; max. 120 feet when 300-1000 feet; maximum 300 feet when 1000 feet or more.</p> <p>Front Setback Footnote TC1 – Proposed minimum front setback is 18 feet from Transit Corridor street type measured from the curb line, otherwise 0 feet from front lot line. Proposed maximum front setback is 28 feet from</p>									

Transit Corridor street type measured from the curb line, otherwise 15 feet for mixed use or 20 feet for townhouses/apartments measured from the front lot line.



Additional Development Standards – The TC1 district requires additional development standards, whereas none of the current zoning designations have any requirements beyond the traditional FAR, setback and height regulations.

Additional development standards in the TC1 district include:

- No more than two curb cuts.
- Parking lots must be next to or behind buildings²
- Surface area of parking lot must be 100-125% of building footprints, additional spaces must be in parking structures or buildings.
- Site over 62,500 square feet (about 1.5 acres) must be designed in blocks.

² Parking lots must be next to or behind buildings in all zoning districts per Section 5.19.6 (Parking Standards – Design of Vehicle Parking Facilities), however, on corner lots a parking lot may be in front of a building on one side; no such exception is permitted in the TC1 district.

- Building frontage must be 70% of lot width or block width.
- Maximum building size is 250 feet wide and 360 feet diagonal.
- Buildings must have functional entrance facing street.
- Sidewalks required adjacent to all sides of a building with an entrance.
- Dwelling units not permitted within 100 feet of a signalized intersection.
- Buildings (except townhouses and apartment buildings) must meet the downtown building design requirements for minimum first-story height, street-level transparency and windows.

Parking Standards – Of the 79 land uses addressed in Table 5.19-1 (Required Parking), 19 have a maximum vehicle parking limit³. Most maximum vehicle parking limits are either 1 space per 265 square feet or 1 space per 250 square feet. Notable exceptions include designated marijuana consumption facilities (1/100 sq. ft), major retail and shopping centers (1/235 sq. ft.) and financial and medical/dental offices (1/180 sq. ft.). The TC1 district permits a maximum of 1 space per 333 square feet.

Compared to the maximum parking limits specific to average retail and general office uses, the TC1 district further restricts parking by about 25%. Compared to the maximum parking limits specific to banks and medical/dental offices, the TC1 district allows about 40% more.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

There are numerous benefits to rezoning large areas of the Plymouth Road corridor to TC1.

- The TC1 district will better achieve the variety of different but related goals expressed in the eight documents that comprise the Comprehensive Plan than the current zoning designations because of its carefully curated permitted (and prohibited) land uses and the additional form-based development standards. Compared to the current zoning designations, the TC1 district does not permit most auto-oriented land uses or traditional low-density, large-footprint land uses that compromise pedestrian-friendliness.
- The TC1 district promotes development designs that reduce the reliance on the automobile by requiring buildings with smaller footprints, entrances facing streets and surrounding sidewalks, enabling shorter walks between destinations, and making “one-stop shopping” even more realistic than the current zoning designations.
- The TC1 district enables higher densities, both residential and nonresidential, near mass transit routes and in proximity to other development centers.
- The TC1 district makes converting single-purpose developments, such as shopping centers or office complexes, into mixed-use village centers easier by focusing standards on building form rather than floor area to lot area ratios.

³ Uses with a maximum vehicle parking limit include: designated marijuana consumption facility; museum, art gallery; library; adult entertainment business; general entertainment; permanent outdoor sales; marijuana provisioning center/retailer; retail sales, shopping centers; laundry, cleaning, garment services, veterinary, kennels and animal boarding; bank, credit union, financial services; general office; medical/dental office; nonprofit corporation office; marijuana microbusiness; marijuana grower; accessory office; accessory retail sales.

- The TC1 district requires, not just encourages, designs where the parking lot is not the dominant feature of the site.
- Consolidating the zoning designation along the Plymouth Road corridor makes understanding the development expectations easier for everyone. Keeping track of one set of permitted land use and development standards is simpler for nearby and adjacent residents outside of the district, for landowners and developers in the district, and plan and permit reviewers and administrators of the district.
- While the current development patterns represent the values of their eras, with deep front lawns, an over-abundance of vehicle parking spaces, numerous vehicular access points from roads, low building heights, and separation of land uses, the TC1 district represents the need to make these already-developed areas work harder, more efficiently and for a broader range of customers, residents, employers and employees, which are values of the present era.
- The TC1 district offers the opportunity to evolve consistently and predictably toward higher-density development where capacity exists.

The proposed rezoning may also introduce new challenges.

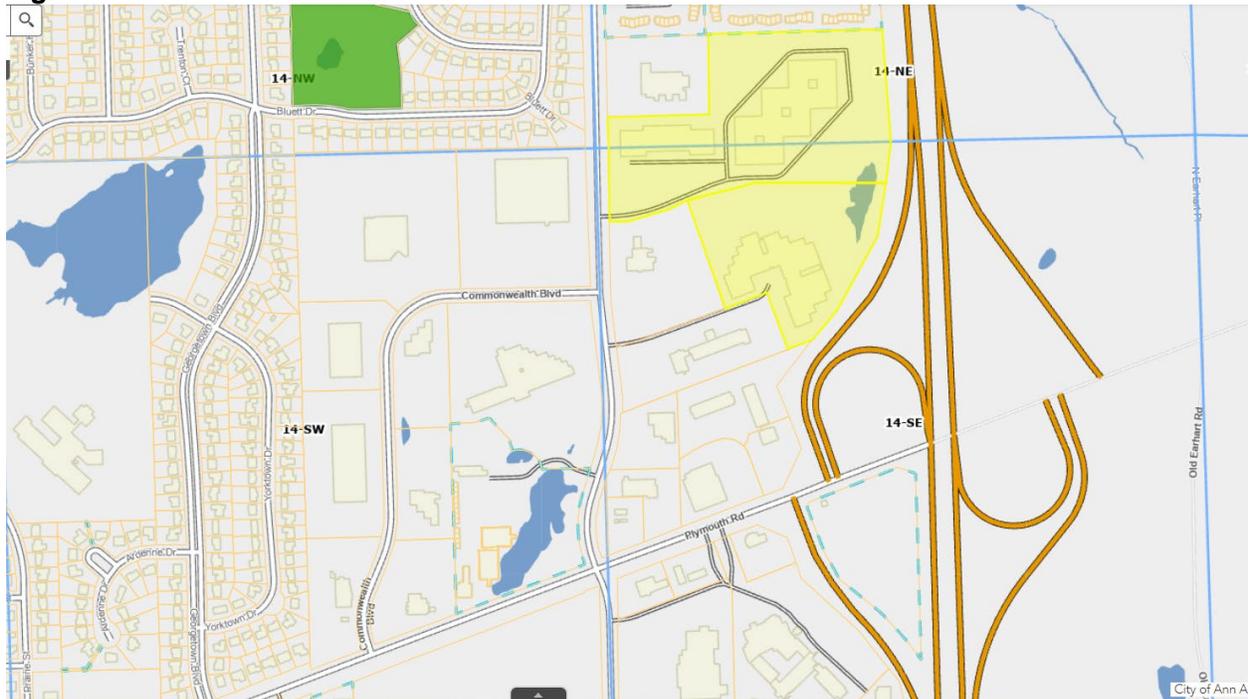
- Many existing buildings will become nonconforming structures because of their size (if more than 250 feet in width and/or 360 feet in diagonal) and front setback (if more than 15 or 28 feet depending on street designation). Any alteration to a nonconforming structure requires permission from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Rezoning may slow the pace of new development and redevelopment in the short term. There has been no new or infill development in any existing TC1 district to date.
- More than any other corridor, the Plymouth Road corridor experience is heavily influenced by the University of Michigan campus. Almost half of the street frontage of Plymouth Road is campus which is not part of the TC1 district.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Among the numerous written comments to the City Planning Commission regarding the proposed rezoning is a request from Oxford Companies to include two lots in the Northeast Corporate Center development, attached to this staff report for convenience and included in the agenda packet.

	PARCEL ID NUMBER	STREET ADDRESS	SITE AREA (sq ft)	CURRENT ZONING
	09-09-14-400-013	2350 Green Rd (Northeast Corporate Center)	410,870	RE
	09-09-14-100-437	2500 Green Rd (Northeast Corporate Center)	711,341	RE

Figure: 2350 and 2500 Green Rd



Prepared by Alexis DiLeo
Reviewed by Brett Lenart and Hank Kelley
2023-10-24

Attachments: Ordinance (TC1 Plymouth Rezoning) – October 26, 2023
October 12, 2023 Public Meeting Summary
July 11, 2023 Letter from Oxford Companies