

From: BRIAN CHAMBERS

Sent: Tuesday, November 09, 2021 12:10 AM

To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>; Disch, Lisa <LDisch@a2gov.org>; Lenart, Brett <BLenart@a2gov.org>

Subject: Proposed Rezoning of the South State/Eisenhower Pkwy Area to Transit Corridor District (TC1)

Planning Commission and Brett Lenart:

I am writing in support of the 'Proposed Rezoning of the South State/Eisenhower Pkwy Area to Transit Corridor District (TC1)' on tomorrow's agenda. One may anticipate some vocal community concern, as I believe these types of Transit Oriented Development projects are often misunderstood.

The 226 acres total for the site comes to .353 square miles. Best practices for transit oriented development 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.

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, it would minimally have 3,400 to 5,600 units across this site for it to have enough scale to really support transit based development and the bus lines supporting it.

We'd need over twice that density at the Blake Transit Center, and then a couple of other bus transit-hubs in a ring fashion around the city. Four of these would be a good

number, I think. That would provide a fairly robust transit based development system around the city.

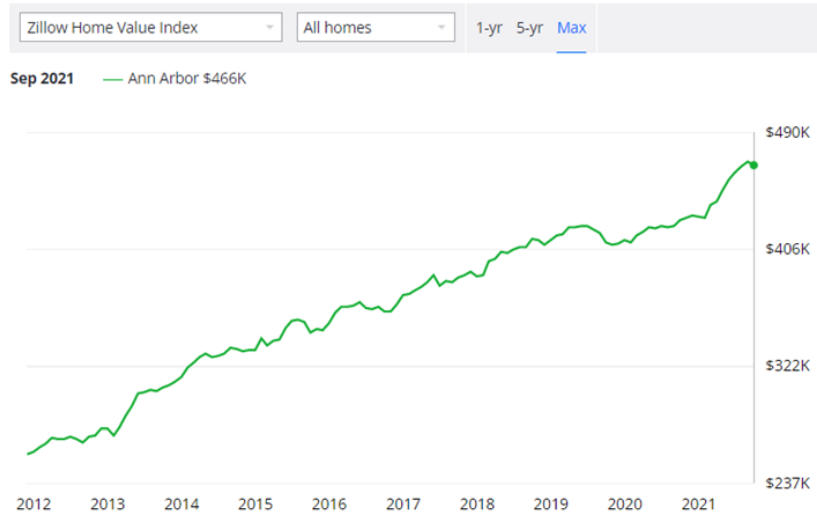
The post WWII boom remade the city with a 300% increase in Ann Arbor housing through 1980. Our housing supply has been relatively flat since then. In national assessments, the more recent rapid increases in housing prices has been driven by this supply constraint. To address this in the Ann Arbor market, housing densities on this scale are needed in order to reduce the continued growth of the price curve. See <https://www.zillow.com/ann-arbor-mi/home-values/>

Ann Arbor Market Overview

Data through Sep 30, 2021

\$435,873 ZHVI

No data 1-yr forecast



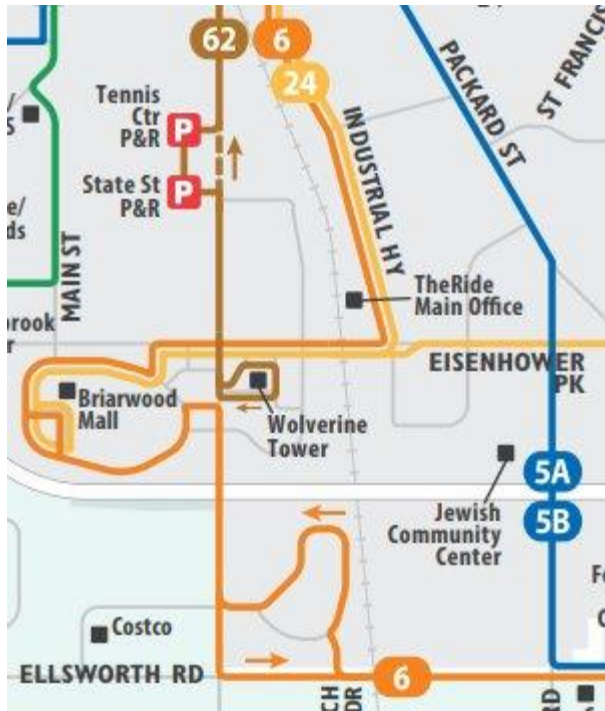
The thing is, we would not want these multiple TOD-based Districts all built out at once. So, starting in the south side of the city is a reasonable starting point, especially if there are a set of developers ready to do the project with a reasonably robust set of investors.

Once the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update project gets approved to go forward, I believe the 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. That will have to wait for another day.

For the current site under 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 would better support 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 these 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, and taking it to Council.

Best regards,

Brian Chambers, Ph.D.

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