

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

For Planning Commission Meeting of September 19, 2023

SUBJECT: Amendments to Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code)

Sections 5.17.4 (Mixed Use Zoning Districts) and 5.18.6 (Premiums)

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the amendments to Chapter 55, Unified Development Code, to eliminate the floor area premiums provided in Section 5.18.6 Premiums and to change the maximum FAR (floor area ratio as a percentage of lot area) of the D1 (Downtown Core) and D2 (Downtown Interface) in Section 5.17.4 Mixed Use Zoning Districts, Table 5.17-4, from up to 900% and 400%, respectively, to none.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends **approval** of the proposed amendments to the Unified Development Code to eliminate the floor area premiums and change the FAR of the D1 and D2 districts. The changes will clarify and simplify development expectations and may better encourage downtown density through development forms similar to those currently built.

SUMMARY:

Consultants Carlisle Wortman Associates, Inc. have completed an evaluation of the floor area premiums offered in Section 5.18.6 and suggest eliminating the premiums section and the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of the D1 and D2 districts.

REPORT:

The proposed amendments to the premium options and D1/D2 district FAR standards are the result of a six-month evaluation process, summarized as follows:

- February 2, 2023 Planning Commission regular meeting: Consultants Carlisle Wortman Associates, Inc. (CWA) kicked off their work by presenting their initial review and analysis.
- April 4, 2023 Planning Commission regular meeting: CWA engaged the Planning Commission on assumptions and agreements to move forward.

- May 2, 2023 Planning Commission regular meeting: CWA provided draft policy options to discuss with stakeholders for the Planning Commission to endorse, as well as updated assumptions and agreements.
- May and June, 2023: CWA used the accepted policy options at meetings with various stakeholder groups, which included the Energy Commission, the Renters Commission, and the Downtown Development Authority Board.
- June 11, 2023 Planning Commission working session: CWA reported on the consultations with stakeholders and presented options to consider.
- August 8, 2023 Planning Commission working session: CWA presented proposed amendments to Section 5.18.6 (Premiums) based the cumulative input received from stakeholders, boards and commissions, and the Planning Commission.

All CWA reports and meeting presentation materials are in published packets for each meeting, and are also consolidated online:

<https://www.a2gov.org/departments/planning/Pages/UDC-Premiums-Evaluation.aspx>

Attached is CWA's final report and the proposed ordinance to amend Chapter 55.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff support the evaluation work done by CWA and the proposed amendments. To continue to remove barriers to increased density, including downtown, and to align our development standards with zoning administration norms, staff further recommend that Section 5.18.4 Exceptions to Height Limits be immediately evaluated to allow exceptions for certain architectural and mechanical features such as parapet walls, elevator overruns, HVAC equipment, solar collectors, and the like, within established limits. Amendments to Section 5.18.4 should be considered as soon as possible to coincide with or immediately follow City Council's action on these amendments to Sections 5.17.4 and 5.18.6.

Prepared by Alexis DiLeo
Reviewed by Hank Kelley and Brett Lenart
9-13-23

Attachments: CWA Report on Proposed Unified Development Code Amendments
(September 11, 2023)
Ordinance to Amend Chapter 55 (Premiums, D1/D2
FAR) (September 13, 2023)