

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brett Lenart, Planning Manager
FROM: Alexis DiLeo, City Planner
DATE: June 8, 2017
SUBJECT: Introduction to Implementing Transit Corridor Density Overlay Zones

INTRODUCTION

Increasing density along transit corridors is a top priority called out in several of the City Master Plan elements. The [Sustainability Framework](#) is a set of 16 goals to help Ann Arbor become more sustainable, and increasing density along transit corridors would further most, if not all, goals in the *community* and *land use and access* theme areas. The community vision for the City, as documented in the [Land Use Element](#), notes the desire for “interconnectedness of natural, transportation and land use systems,” and wanting “extensive opportunities for alternatives modes of travel,” “extensive choices in housing (including low cost housing), shopping, employment and recreation activities.” Increasing density would help achieve that community vision, and further numerous City Master Plan Land Use Element goals, objectives and action statements.

The Zoning Ordinance is our primary tool address and affect land use in Ann Arbor. It is the most obvious starting point and may be the most effective agent to realize increasing density. Therefore, planning staff are researching and preparing background material and developing project scope.

BACKGROUND

Zoning Tools - While the term “TOD” (Transit Oriented Development) has been used in opening conversations, initial work on this task indicates that the existing transit system here in Ann Arbor would not support true TOD regulations. Rather, our preliminary work points to density overlay zones as the most promising zoning tool to explore.

Transit Corridors – In Ann Arbor, our transit corridors are the arterial roads leading to downtown as well as the inner cross-town thoroughfares:

- Washtenaw Avenue
- South State Street
- Plymouth Road
- South Main Street/Ann Arbor-Saline Road
- West/East Stadium Boulevard
- Packard Street
- East/West Eisenhower Boulevard
- Jackson Avenue/Huron Street*
- Huron Parkway*

** Immediately eliminated for consideration because these thoroughfares do not have any existing commercial uses or zoning.*

Washtenaw Avenue has been recently studied for transformation through the Reimagine Washtenaw effort. Staff feel it is the leading candidate for this project, building on the momentum already established by Reimagine Washtenaw. Other strong candidates include South State Street, specifically the Briarwood Mall area, and West Stadium Boulevard between Pauline Boulevard and North Maple Road.

POTENTIAL SCOPE

The potential scope of the task is straightforward: develop a zoning tool to increase density along one or two transit corridors with the possibility of replicating the work on additional transit corridors after a trial period. A project advisory team should be assembled, and they should first confirm this potential scope.

1. Determine or confirm the zoning tool
2. Identify the one or two transit corridors
3. Prepare a working draft of Zoning Ordinance and Map amendments
4. Review of the working draft by the Ordinance Revisions Committee and the Planning Commission
5. Consideration of City-initiated Zoning Ordinance amendments by City Council