



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**

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**Agenda Item Number:** 4

**Agenda Date:** December 19, 2024

**In Control:** City Council A Session

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**DEPARTMENT:** Transportation Department

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Catherine Hernandez

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

**SUBJECT:**

Ordinance Adopting the Transit-Oriented Policy Framework and the Proposed Amendments to Chapter 35, Unified Development Code, Section 35-342 “TOD” Transit-Oriented Development District, Section 35-510 Buffers, Section 35-515 Lot Layout Regulations, Appendix A Definitions, and City Code Chapter 28-70 Specific Urban Corridor – UC-6, San Pedro Urban Corridor District, and Ordinance adopting the proposed boundary along the Green Line ART, as illustrated on maps, related to VIA Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) Corridors.

**SUMMARY:**

This item is consideration and action on proposed amendments to Chapter 35, Unified Development Code (UDC), to update the current “TOD” Transit-Oriented Development District and other components of the UDC to introduce “TOD” provisions. This item will also consider the boundary to illustrate eligibility of properties that could apply to rezone to this district, should they opt to. Additionally, as part of this process, an update is required for City Code, Chapter 28, Signs, to remove a conflict as a result of the “TOD” code update and applicability along the San Pedro Avenue Corridor.

Part of the amendments to the “TOD” zoning code include a process to determine applicability through the creation of maps that outline a boundary illustrating what properties are eligible to request a “TOD” zoning district through the rezoning process. As new corridors are considered

and created in the future, the process requires a stakeholder process to define a balanced Taskforce of representatives from neighborhoods and organizations that represent housing, transit and development organizations. The Taskforce helps to provide a proposed boundary that provides an opportunity for neighborhood and business community input that culminates with Zoning Commission consideration of the boundaries for City Council final approval.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

On June 22, 2023, City Council approved the execution of two Interlocal Agreements with VIA that established a cooperative partnership with the City to deliver the Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) North/South (N/S) Corridor Project as well as Advanced Transportation District (ATD) funds for advanced transportation and enhanced mobility purposes.

On January 22, 2024, Governance Committee considered a Council Consideration Request (CCR) from Councilmembers Marc K. Whyte (District 10), Teri Castillo (District 5), and Sukh Kaur (District 1) regarding the creation of a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan. The Plan would build upon VIA's investments by incentivizing and reducing barriers to development along the ART routes and improve our multi-modal transportation system. The Plan will also ensure alignment with the SA Tomorrow Plan, Multimodal Transportation Plan, the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP), the Economic Development Strategic Framework, and other adopted plans.

In October 2023, the Housing Commission created a nine-member Technical Working Group under the Removing Barriers To Affordable Housing Production and Preservation Subcommittee to focus on recommendations to update the Unified Development Code (UDC) to support affordable housing near transit. Additionally, the Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing Development and Preservation Subcommittee continued their efforts to implement the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) by developing recommendations concerning the protection of existing and the development of new affordable housing in areas served by rapid transit.

Governance Committee considered the CCR on January 22 and recommended staff move forward with a Taskforce to review the UDC and make recommendations to update the Transit Oriented Development "TOD" zoning district. The work would be coordinated with the Technical Working Group and the Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing Production & Preservation Subcommittee (RBSC) of the Housing Commission as part of the Transit-Oriented Policy Framework.

## **ISSUE:**

### Transit-Oriented Policy Framework

The Transit-Oriented Policy (TOP) framework that promotes housing affordability and multimodal transportation, by integrating economic development, resilience, health, and quality of life, creating a comprehensive and equitable approach to development along transit corridor. The Framework consolidates key principles of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), which is a single

development with transit access, and Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC), which is a neighborhood where all essentials to live, work and play, are at your doorstep or a transit ride away, while also drawing from best practices in transit corridor development nationwide. (See attached graphic.) The recommendations produced by the groups under the direction of the Housing Commission will aid in advancing housing availability and affordability along rapid transit corridors in San Antonio. This framework outlines San Antonio's vision and strategy for adopting Transit-Oriented Policy (TOP) initiatives in the years to come, setting the stage for a more connected and thriving community. The draft Policy Framework can be accessed from our SASpeakUp site: [Transit-Oriented Development - PublicInput \(saspeakup.com\)](https://saspeakup.com)

The Transit-Oriented Policy (TOP) Framework provides a comprehensive guide for the city's growth around transit corridors, focusing on housing affordability, multimodal connectivity, economic development, resilience, and health. It builds on existing transportation investments, specifically the Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) system, aligns with City plans, utilizes goals from the CCR (listed below), and outlines strategies to foster vibrant, pedestrian-friendly communities. For each of the five principles, objectives were defined by the RBSC, TWG and CoSA departments to chart next steps, offering clear desired outcomes. To activate the framework, action items were also identified by stakeholders and outlined for each strategy. These actions will be further analyzed and explored during the next phase with the development of the implementation plan. Funding was appropriated in the FY 2025 Adopted Budget to develop the Strategic Implementation Plan. Key components include:

- Affordable Housing: The framework promotes affordable housing near transit to prevent displacement and ensure inclusivity.
- Multimodal Connectivity: It aims to create integrated networks where walking, cycling, and public transit are viable, reducing car dependency.
- Health and Quality of Life: Public spaces near transit stations will be designed to encourage social interaction and promote physical and mental health.
- Economic Opportunity: TOD aims to stimulate economic growth by attracting new businesses and supporting small businesses along transit corridors.
- Resilience: The framework emphasizes building communities that are adaptable to climate challenges, such as extreme heat. It promotes green infrastructure, like tree canopies and stormwater management systems, to protect vulnerable populations living along transit corridors.

#### "TOD" Zoning Code Update

The update to the "TOD" Zoning District is part of the work of the Policy Framework. The proposed amendments are recommendations from staff and the Taskforce that consists of 26 members representing the San Antonio community. Representation includes city registered Neighborhood Associations along the Green and Silver lines including District representation from Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10, and residents representing organizations that are experts in the transportation, development and housing industries. The current "TOD" zoning district is a Special Zoning District that is a base zoning district. "TOD" zoning is currently allowed anywhere within ½ mile of a bus stop. This means there are no guardrails limiting it. It is also not context sensitive to neighborhoods. The proposed revisions incorporate protections for existing residential neighborhoods and allow for opportunities for TOD development in Regional Center Areas with proposed boundary lines, consistent with our SA Tomorrow Plans. The process to update the code provides a better tool in our development toolkit for a property owner to choose from along our

ART corridors. The process to update this code does not rezone any properties. Should a property owner wish to rezone to “TOD”, the rezoning process is required.

The code amendments include the following:

- Creation of three (3) categories of “TOD” zoning districts that create levels of density of intensity of uses: A mixed use district that includes a mix of residential and non-residential uses allowing for walkability. A hybrid-industrial district that supports employment near corridors while transitioning to a more mixed use environment. And finally, a residential only district that allows density and serves as a transition from the mixed use and hybrid industrial districts.
- Updated standards that protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible development. These standards include height restrictions abutting single family homes, and setbacks when abutting single family homes.
- Updated standards that include unique characteristics to create pedestrian environments such as outdoor pedestrian space requirements, transparency requirements such as windows to minimize blank wall widths, and minimum distance requirements for pedestrian access along the corridor.
- A narrowed approach to eligibility of properties. Currently, the “TOD” zoning district is allowed anywhere within ½ mile of a bus stop. The process to allow its eligibility is proposed to be as follows:
  - VIA Board designates corridors as an Advanced Rapid Transit “ART” Corridor through Board action.
  - A stakeholder participation process is required to develop a map that illustrates the boundaries eligible for “TOD” zoning applications. The stakeholder participation process involves key stakeholders such as residents and businesses and others to be part of that process to create the maps.
  - The UDC is updated to reflect the new corridor and the maps are adopted by ordinance.
- Exclusions that prevent encroachment into the middle of an established residential blockface, as well as prohibitive language that does not allow single family zoned, single family used residential properties less than or equal to ½ acre to rezone to “TOD” outside of the CRAG area or original 36 square miles, and prohibits all single family zoned, single family used residential properties within the CRAG from being eligible to rezone to “TOD”, thereby protecting established single family neighborhoods in our urban core.
- Protections for neighborhoods with overlay districts such as Historic Districts and Neighborhood Conservation Districts, by requiring properties zoned “TOD” to comply with design standards for these overlay districts.
- Reduction in minimum parking requirements. The proposed amendments recommend a 50% reduction for the residential only district and no minimum parking requirements for the mixed use and hybrid-industrial districts, as these districts are intended to be applied to advanced rapid transit corridors only.
- Lastly, a recommended change to City Code Chapter 28 is recommended to remove a conflict related to a minimum front setback requirements, as the updated “TOD” code does not recommend a minimum front setback along the corridor.

Status Update:

Planning Commission Recommendation: On October 14, 2024, the Planning Commission Technical Advisory Committee considered the amendments and recommended approval with amendments for Planning Commission consideration. On November 13, 2024, the Planning Commission considered the item and PCTAC's recommendations and recommended approval with the following amendments:

1. All Single Family zoned lots with single family uses within the CRAG are excluded from TOD zoning.
2. Require a traffic circulation study for schools, both public and private, as well as charter schools
3. The staff proposed amendments for Rules of Interpretation, Development Standards and Permitted Uses including permitting by right Parking Garages within the MX and HI districts.

All of these amendments were supported by staff and have been incorporated into the document.

Zoning Commission Consideration: On November 19, 2024, the Zoning Commission considered the amendments and proposed eligibility boundaries and recommended approval with the following amendment to the Code:

1. Waive minimum parking requirements by 75% for the TOD-MX districts.

This recommendation is documented on the draft code document.

The Zoning Commission also recommended approval of the proposed boundary with the staff proposed amendments as a result of neighborhood feedback and input. These amendments are as follows:

1. Airport to Rector Map: adjusting the boundary to a private road just east of San Pedro, north of Loop 410 and adjusting the boundary along Isom Road to the north side of E Ramsey Road; adjusting the boundary to remove a property west of the intersection of Blanco Road and Lockhill Selma Road.
2. CRAG Boundary to IH 35 Map: adjusting the boundary to remove multifamily zoned property on W Norwood Court just east of San Pedro, and removing single family used properties along W. Ridgewood Court currently zoned "O-2" just east of San Pedro.
3. Cesar Chavez to Steves Map: adjusting the boundary to remove multifamily zoned property on Turner Street, King William Street, and removing property on Madison Street that is the King William Association office. All properties are west of S. St. Mary's Street.

These amendments have already been incorporated on the maps.

The Housing Commission considered the proposed Transit-Oriented Policy Framework on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, and recommended City Council adopt the Framework.

The Building-Related and Fire Codes Appeals and Advisory Board considered the amendment to Chapter 28 on Friday, December 6, 2024 and recommended approval.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

The alternative to no change to the current “TOD” district results in the current code remaining in place with no limitations or guardrails. TOD should be specific to corridors that have a high capacity transit component so density and intensity can be focused to those corridors, where applicable.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Transit-Oriented Policy Framework, the proposed amendments to the UDC, City Code and the proposed eligibility boundary as shown on maps.