



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
{{item.tracking_number}}

Agenda Item Number: {{item.number}}

Agenda Date: October 14, 2024

In Control: Planning Commission Technical Advisory Committee

DEPARTMENT: Transportation Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Catherine Hernandez

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing and Action on 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, related to VIA Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) Corridors.

SUMMARY:

This item is a briefing 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. 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.

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:

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. 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. To be adopted in December 2024, 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)

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 want 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”, 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.**

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.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the approval of the proposed amendments to the UDC and City Code, for advancement to Planning Commission consideration in November and City Council consideration in December.