



Memorandum

Planning Division
Community & Economic Development Department

To: Planning Commission

From: Nick Norris, Senior Planner

Date: March 2, 2010

Re: Transit Station Area Zoning District

As part of the North Temple Boulevard Project and as a major implementation tool identified in the North Temple Boulevard Station Area Plans, the Planning Division is in the process of creating a new zoning district for the Trax stations along the Airport Light Rail Line. This zoning district is proposed to be applied to those areas identified in the station area plans as a Core or Transition Area. The intent of the briefing is to introduce the Planning Commission to this concept and to get initial feedback on the proposal.

The proposed zoning ordinance is more of a form based type of code, versus the use based code that the City currently uses. This would be a major change in the manner in which the City approaches zoning regulations and processes. The major differences include:

- The Transit Station Area zoning district identifies the different types of station areas. Each type of station area has its own set of development regulations.
 - Within each type of station area there are two subareas, the core and transition. The core identifies where the most intense level of development can occur while the transition subarea acts as a transition between nearby neighborhoods and other stable areas near a transit station.
 - Under the current system, the type of land use dictates the approval process because the zoning ordinance lists permitted and conditional uses identified in each zoning district. In the proposed ordinance, the site and building design dictate the approval process.
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- A set of design standards that are required for all new projects. These standards are based off of the principles, goals and action items identified in the station area plans.

- Introduction of a “design score” that will be used to determine the process that a project will go through. The higher the score, the shorter and easier the approval process would be. The overall intent is to use design as an incentive for property owners and developers.
- A tiered scoring system that would require a minimum design score. Those projects at the minimum and slightly above the minimum would be required to go through the building and site design review process with the Planning Commission. The second tier would require an applicant to go through an administrative notice or administrative hearing process. Those projects with the higher score would go through the normal building permit process. This process is modeled after the LEED certification process.
- A series of incentives that if included in a project could boost the design score. These incentives could include:
 - A vertical mix of uses
 - Inclusionary Housing
 - LEED certified building
 - Reuse of a historic structure
 - Accessible Housing
 - Meeting a certain level of residential density.

Over the next month, the Planning Division will be holding a series of open houses to refine the ordinance, create design guidelines that will be adopted by reference, assigning a value to each design guideline and establishing the series of thresholds for the design score. We will also be analyzing similar systems that are used elsewhere so we can identify the pros and cons of taking this approach and to hopefully learn from what other communities have done.