

CENTRAL CORRIDOR ZONING

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

FROM AUTO-ORIENTED TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED

The Central Corridor Zoning Study resulted in rezoning properties located along the METRO Green Line between the City's border with Minneapolis and the Capitol/Rice Street station area. It followed several major planning efforts that included the Central Corridor Development Strategy (CCDS) and the subsequent completion of 11 station area plans between 2007 and 2008. The City adopted an interim zoning ordinance in 2008, which remained in place until the adoption of the recommendations in the Central Corridor Zoning Study in 2011.

Prior to changes, zoning designations along University Avenue had primarily supported commercial and industrial uses, effectively prohibiting the denser and more pedestrian-friendly development that the CCDS and station area plans envisioned. For example, most of the area within a block or two of the corridor did not allow residential uses, required large setbacks, and required significant amounts of parking.

INTERIM ZONING

In 2008, the City of Saint Paul adopted the interim Central Corridor Overlay District prior to the completion of the more detailed zoning study. This ordinance applied only to property where change was likely, excluding established residential uses not immediately adjacent to University Avenue.

The interim overlay zoning included the following provisions:

- No new, or expansion of, existing auto-oriented uses
- Minimum 1.0 FAR within ¼ mile of station
- Minimum 0.5 FAR elsewhere
- Minimum two-story building height
- Parking located to rear or side of buildings

The interim overlay zoning allowed other conforming uses in nonconforming buildings to expand during the study period without fully meeting site plan requirements, provided that any building expansion did not make the nonconforming condition worse.

ZONING STUDY IMPLEMENTATION

Portions of the Central Corridor are planned for mixed-use and smaller-scale retail. In these areas, the City changed zoning designations based primarily on the range of Traditional Neighborhood zoning that the City adopted in 2004. These included T1, T2, and T3 designations that vary in use and intensity. Rezoning allowed many existing structures to come into conformance, particularly buildings developed during the streetcar era. Zoning changes allow a mix of land uses, require pedestrian-oriented site plans, increase allowable density and building height, and reduce or eliminate parking requirements. As a result of the study, the City identified the need to create a fourth, more intense mixed-use district called T4, which was applied to the Midway and Westgate areas.

City objectives also supported continued industrial uses in the West Midway Industrial Area. However, the City wanted stronger design standards for parcels that immediately front University Avenue. The City created a new IT-Transitional Industrial district. This designation supports a similar range of uses to the I1-Light Industrial district but includes many of the site and design standards in the Traditional Neighborhood Districts. Furthermore, automobile-oriented uses that are permitted in the I1 District became conditional uses in the IT District.

FAST FACTS

Transit:

METRO Green Line Extension

Traditional Neighborhood Zoning

- T1 to T4 Districts
- Minimum 1.0 FAR within ¼ mile of station
- Building height 25 to 75 feet
- CUP for additional height
- Reduced setbacks
- No parking requirement within ¼ mile of station
- 25% parking reduction between ¼ and ½ mile from station for residential
- Bicycle parking required
- Limits on auto-oriented uses
- Parking enclosed or to rear of building

Transitional Industrial Zoning

- New design guidelines for industrial uses fronting corridor

KEY DATES

2004: Traditional Neighborhood mixed-use zoning districts adopted

2007: City adopts Central Corridor Development Strategy

2008: City adopts Central Corridor Zoning Overlay District

2011: Central Corridor rezoning completed



This map shows the results of the Central Corridor Zoning Study, with new zoning designations consistent with the long-term policy vision and potential of the corridor.

The Zoning Study eliminated minimum parking requirements for all uses within one-quarter mile of LRT stations. An earlier City parking study modified citywide parking requirements, reducing most retail and office uses to one space per 400 square feet. Ordinary residential requirements are one space for efficiencies and one-bedroom units, 1.5 space per 2-bedroom unit, and 2 spaces per 3-bedroom unit. With the Central Corridor Zoning Study, the City reduced residential parking requirements for the T3 and T4 districts by 25%.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Thanks to the Zoning Study, the code accommodates changes in non-conforming uses and structures over time. It also considers development proposals that may not yet be able to meet all regulatory provisions such as density. The City recognizes that the development market may not respond uniformly, and that there may be development proposals that meet other planning objectives such as need for affordable housing.

The interim Central Corridor Overlay Zoning allowed the City to dive deeper into issues raised by the community about use, scale, parking, and the rights of property owners and businesses. Specific concerns included parking, building height, and how to address established non-conforming uses. The City also had to address concerns about the negative impacts of gentrification that new development could bring.

The City modified its minimum density requirements in Traditional Neighborhood districts since first implementing them in 2004. It increased the minimum FAR within ¼ mile of stations but due to practical difficulties experienced elsewhere, it reduced them for areas outside of the ¼ mile station area radius.

HOW DOES THIS PLANNING WORK SUPPORT TOD?

Connect: Rezoning allowed residential uses and development at greater densities than they had been prior to implementation, ensuring the market is connected to nearby high-quality transit service. The reduction in parking requirements by the City acknowledges that future residents and business owners will more likely travel to their destinations via transit, bicycling, and walking.

Intensify: Rezoning has supported new development and intensification along the corridor. One example is **Hamline Station** at 1333 University Avenue, a mixed-use development with T2 zoning that replaced an auto sales lot. The new T4 zoning designation is accommodating more intense uses in the southeast quadrant of Snelling and University, near the new Allianz Field. Other planned uses adjoining the stadium site include a hotel, residential, and offices.



The Central Corridor Development Strategy explored potential new building forms and intensity along the corridor, which informed both station area planning and regulations.

Demonstrate: The City's approach to rezoning followed an evolution of planning experience in the corridor. The City address initial concerns about low-density and auto-oriented development by implementing an interim zoning ordinance. This allowed the time to explore in depth planning issues and concerns by community stakeholders. Finally, the City adjusted its regulatory strategy based on need and experience with higher density mixed-use development.

LEARN MORE

[Central Corridor Development Strategy](#)
[Central Corridor Overlay District](#)
[Central Corridor Zoning Study](#)
[Central Corridor TOD Guide Book](#)

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FEEDBACK

Did you find this information useful? Do you have questions or suggestions for improvement? Contact us at TODGuide@metc.state.mn.us

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