

**Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division Report
Zoning Code Text Amendment**

Date: May 8, 2006

Initiator of Amendment: Council Member Schiff

Date of Introduction at City Council: March 31, 2006

Specific Site: Citywide

Ward: Citywide **Neighborhood Organization:** Citywide

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Intent of the Ordinance: To revise the minimum lot area requirements for residential uses in the C1 Neighborhood Commercial District.

Appropriate Section(s) of the Zoning Code: Chapter 548, Article II. C1 Neighborhood Commercial District

Background: Lot controls are established to provide for the orderly development and use of land and to minimize conflicts among land uses by regulating the use of lots and lot area in order to provide adequate light, air, open space and separation of uses. The minimum lot area requirements limit the amount of density allowed on a zoning lot.

Purpose for the Amendment:

What is the reason for the amendment?

What problem is the Amendment designed to solve?

What public purpose will be served by the amendment?

What problems might the amendment create?

The purpose of the amendment is to revise the minimum lot area requirements for residential uses in the C1 Neighborhood Commercial District. The C1 district is established to provide a convenient shopping environment of small scale retail sales and commercial services that are compatible with adjacent residential uses. Of the commercial districts, the C1 district is the most restrictive for residential density. Most commercial districts are located along our major urban corridors where a higher density is more appropriate. Therefore, reducing the minimum residential lot area requirements in the C1 district would support a more appropriate density. The lot area requirements are proposed to match those of the C2 district.

When mixed use developments or multi-family dwellings are proposed, the existing zoning often cannot support the proposed density even with a lot area variance and density bonuses. Developers have opted to rezone to the C2 Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District, which

allows for more density and height. This district also allows more intensive, auto-oriented uses, such as shopping centers and a broader range of automobile related uses. Because of the uses allowed in the C2 district, it is not always appropriate to allow this district where a rezoning is requested only to obtain a higher density or height. In the C2 district, the maximum height allowed is 4 stories or 56 feet, whichever is less. The C1 district allows a maximum height of 2.5 stories or 35 feet, whichever is less. A conditional use permit can be obtained to increase maximum height. Typically, staff prefers conditional use permit applications over rezoning requests because conditions can be attached to protect the public interest, and ensure compliance with the zoning code and comprehensive plan. The proposed amendment would allow more options for density without permitting more intensive, automobile-oriented uses.

Most commercial districts are located along our major urban corridors where a higher density is more appropriate. However, some properties zoned C1 are located on minor corridors where a higher density may be less appropriate if they're located next to low density residential areas. A map showing the locations of all existing C1 zoning is attached.

Timeliness:

Is the amendment timely?

Is the amendment consistent with practices in surrounding areas?

Are there consequences in denying this amendment?

The amendment is timely given that the City expects to continue to receive development applications that include rezoning from the C1 District to the C2 District for the purpose of allowing increased residential density. The amendment would allow a level of density in the C1 District that would implement adopted policies while avoiding rezoning to a district that would allow a range of automobile-oriented uses.

Comprehensive Plan:

How will this amendment implement the Comprehensive Plan?

The following policies of the comprehensive plan apply:

4.1 Minneapolis will encourage reinvestment along major urban corridors as a way of promoting growth in all neighborhoods.

Applicable Implementation Steps

Develop standards based on a recognition of the qualities that make urban corridors desirable, viable and distinctly urban, including; diversity of activity, safety for pedestrians, access to desirable goods and amenities, attractive streetscape elements, density and variety of uses to encourage walking, and architectural elements which add interest at the scale of the pedestrian.

- 4.2 Minneapolis will coordinate land use and transportation planning on designated Community Corridors streets through attention to the mix and intensity of land uses, the pedestrian character and residential livability of the streets, and the type of transit service provided on these streets.**

Applicable Implementation Steps

Strengthen the residential character of Community Corridors by developing appropriate housing types that represent variety and a range of affordability levels.

Promote more intensive residential development along these corridors where appropriate.

- 4.3 Minneapolis will support development in Commercial Corridors where it enhances the street's character, improves its ability to accommodate automobile traffic and foster pedestrian movement, and expands the range of goods and services offered.**

Applicable Implementation Steps

Support a mix of uses on Commercial Corridors--such as retail sales, office, institutional, higher density residential (including Major Housing Sites where designated), and clean low-impact light industrial--where compatible with the existing and desired character of the street.

- 4.5 Minneapolis will identify Neighborhood Commercial Nodes that provide a shopping environment of small-scale retail sales and commercial services and are compatible with adjacent residential areas.**

Applicable Implementation Steps

Promote medium density residential development around Neighborhood Commercial Nodes (see also Community Corridors policy in this chapter).

- 4.9 Minneapolis will grow by increasing its supply of housing.**

Applicable Implementation Steps

Support the development of new medium- and high-density housing in appropriate locations throughout the City.

- 4.18 Minneapolis will encourage both a density and mix of land uses in TSAs that both support ridership for transit as well as benefit from its users.**

Applicable Implementation Steps

Concentrate highest densities and mixed-use development nearest the transit station and/or along Commercial Corridors, Community Corridors and/or streets served by local bus transit.

Support the development of new housing types in the TSA, including townhomes, mansion apartments, garden apartments, granny flats/carriage houses, and multi-family residential buildings.

Support and encourage small-scale, pedestrian-oriented services and retail uses to locate near stations and within mixed-use buildings to serve transit riders and the immediate neighborhood (e.g., day care centers, cafés, dry cleaners, convenience grocery, etc.).

9.5 Minneapolis will support the development of residential dwellings of appropriate form and density.

Applicable Implementation Steps

Expand the understanding of the role that urban density plays in improving business markets, increasing the feasibility of urban transit systems and encouraging the development of pedestrian-oriented services and open spaces.

9.18 Minneapolis will establish land use regulations, in order to achieve the highest possible development standards, enhance the environment, promote flexibility in approaches and otherwise carry out the comprehensive plan.

Applicable Implementation Steps

Ensure that the city's zoning code revision corresponds adequately to policies outlined in The Minneapolis Plan.

Staff comment: The C1 zoning district is most often found along major urban corridors, including streets designated as community or commercial corridors by the Minneapolis Plan, as well as commercial nodes and transit station areas. The plan calls for concentrating higher residential densities in these locations to support and encourage the development of retail markets, pedestrian-oriented services, and urban transit systems. The proposed amendment would allow for medium density and a variety of housing types. Therefore, it would support the policies of the comprehensive plan.

Recommendation of the Community Planning and Economic Development--Planning Division:

The Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council adopt the above findings and **approve** the zoning code text amendment affecting the minimum lot area requirements for residential uses in the C1 Neighborhood Commercial District.