

Subchapter: Managing Our Demand / Land Use

Submitted by Commissioner Kenny

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Amendment 1

Purpose: Strengthen policies to facilitate transit-supportive density along the Transportation Priority Network and high-capacity transit routes

Origination: Commissioner adaptation of UTC items (see Background)

Amendment 1 section: Policy 1, “Promote transit-supportive densities along the Transit Priority Network”, Managing Our Demand / Land Use (pg. 36)

Amendment 1 changes (full text of policy):

Plan ~~Promote~~ transit-supportive densities along the Transit Priority Network

Use all planning tools to establish ~~Require or incentivize~~ transit-supportive densities along Transit Priority Network corridors appropriate to the transit mode planned

Appropriate land use density is the foundation for efficient public transportation; dense urban areas with multiple uses including employment centers, multifamily homes, and commercial uses make high-quality transit services, viable. Transit-oriented development is not just density; a rich mix of land uses and a great public realm with a pedestrian-friendly streetscape and amenities is what causes ~~When~~ more people to live close to transit, which allows transit to ~~to~~ run more often and connect people to more destinations. Establishing transit-supportive development (including densities) along planned investments in high-capacity transit is essential to their success, and to securing federal transit funding, and should be a top planning and

investment priority. This can and should dovetail with established city goals to add housing near transit lines, especially housing affordable to Austinites with lower incomes.

The high-capacity transit routes planned in Austin run through different types of built environments, including downtown, commercial centers, already-dense mixed-use neighborhoods, and areas dominated by detached, single-family homes. Transit-supportive densities are measured for routes as a whole, and planning should be flexible to take into account the existing character of neighborhoods and community input to appropriately allocate density within transit corridors, but plans must be projected to achieve the transit-supportive density appropriate for the planned mode of transit.

~~Transit-supportive density can be achieved by requiring an appropriate level of density through land planning efforts and zoning regulations, as well as through development incentives associated with small area planning policies. Encouraging denser development near the Transit Priority Network will foster development patterns which will create compact centers designed to encourage walking and bicycling, and will enable transit-supportive development.~~

The full range of planning tools should be used to establish this density, including zoning reviews, small area plans, density bonuses, affordable housing investments, transit-oriented development zones, and revisions of the land development code, potentially including zone entitlements and bonuses tied to the distance from transit. The city will develop a comprehensive transit-oriented development strategy for the High-Capacity Transit Network to guide private and public investment, develop policy recommendations, establish station-level action items to foster high quality transit-oriented development, and prioritize need to allocate limited resources. The portions of the Transit Priority Network not planned for high-capacity transit should have transit-supportive densities considered in land use planning, but are a lower priority.

Other sStrategies to encourage this type of development include providing incentives in certain cases or enacting more permissive regulations for developments that go above and beyond base zoning requirements. Direct public investment in and management of redevelopment at major mobility hubs will ensure high levels of community benefits accompany density along the Transit Priority Network. These community benefits should include affordable housing, affordable space for arts, music, “legacy,” and small business uses, civic spaces, and other amenities like “green” design and childcare. Bicycle facilities, sidewalks, and other investments that allow people of all abilities to access transit should also be prioritized along the network. Affordable housing investments near the network should be steered to comply with standards in federal transit funding opportunities as much as possible without sacrificing effectiveness.

Finally, people living downtown and near the University of Texas campus already have the lowest rate of drive-alone trips and vehicle miles travelled, and increasing density in these areas is one of the surest ways to lower that rate city-wide and facilitate increased transit ridership.

Amendment 2

Purpose: Provide specificity to action item for Land Development Code updates for transit-supportive density

Origination: Commissioner adaptation of UTC items (see Background)

Amendment 2 section: Action Item 21, “Land Development Code Update”, Managing Our Demand / Land Use (pg. 270)

Amendment 2 changes (full text of action item):

Land Development Code Update

Update the land development code to:

- Require a more compact and connected street network
 - Revise zones, an immediate zoning map, and/or bonuses to A allow for and incentivize transit-supportive densities, and require a mixture of land uses along the Transit Priority Network and within ½ mile of planned high-capacity transit, in a manner that blends-in with, and is sensitive to, existing forms of housing
 - Allow for missing middle housing types, including mixed-use infill development types
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Amendment 3

Purpose: Provide specificity to action item for corridor-based land use planning

Origination: Commissioner implementation of Policy 1 changes and UTC recommendation (see background below)

Amendment 3 section: Action Item 22, “Corridor-based land use planning”, Managing Our Demand / Land Use (pg. 270)

Amendment 3 changes (full text of action item):

Corridor-based land use planning

Conduct corridor-based land use planning in parallel with corridor mobility planning and implementation to calibrate zoning and land development code requirements with needs, constraints, and opportunities to create cohesive multimodal corridors, quality built environment, and transit-supportive and context-sensitive density scale that is projected to achieve Federal Transit Administration transit supportive density ratings of “Medium-High” (for the Project Connect BRT-Light network) or “High” (for the Project Connect High Capacity Rapid Transit and Commuter Line networks) within ½ mile of planned high-capacity transit investments

Amendment 4

Purpose: Create action item for updates to downtown and UNO plans

Origination: Commissioner implementation of Policy 1 changes and UTC recommendation (see background below)

Amendment 4 section: New action item, “Update downtown and University Neighborhood Overlay plans”, Managing Our Demand / Land Use (pg. 270)

Amendment 4 changes (full text of action item):
Update downtown and University Neighborhood Overlay plans

Refresh the downtown and University Neighborhood Overlay zoning and land use regulations to allow for greater density to meet mode-share goals.

Amendment 5

Purpose: Create action item to implement comprehensive transit oriented development (TOD) strategy

Origination: Commissioner implementation of Policy 1 changes and UTC recommendation (see background below)

Amendment 5 section: New action item, “Comprehensive transit oriented development strategy”, Managing Our Demand / Land Use (pg. 270)

Amendment 5 changes (full text of action item):
Comprehensive transit oriented development strategy

Action item: Collaborate with Capital Metro to develop a comprehensive transit oriented development (TOD) strategy, including an implementation action plan and a system to track and monitor success to refine and improve the strategy in the future.

Amendment 6

Purpose: Create indicator and target on progress in planning transit-supportive density / transit-oriented development around high-capacity transit lines

Origination: Commissioner implementation of Policy 1 changes and UTC recommendation (see background below)

Amendment 6 section: Indicators and Targets, Managing Our Demand

Amendment 6 instruction: Create a new indicator and target showing which portion of the planned high-capacity transit lines have fully completed plans that project appropriate transit-supportive density

Amendment 7

Purpose: Revise explanation of transit-supportive densities to reflect federal grant benchmarks and evidence-based practices

Origination: Commissioner implementation of UTC recommendation (see background below)

Amendment 7 section: “Transit-Supportive Densities” box under Policy 1, “Promote transit-supportive densities along the Transit Priority Network” (pg. 36)

Amendment 7 text:

Transit-Supportive Densities

Population density refers to the amount of people that live, work, or play within a specified geographic area. It is generally measured by people or units per acre. When enough people live, work, or play in an area, it means that public transportation serving the area can be economically, environmentally, and socially efficient.

Different contexts, including whether a place is urban or suburban, whether it is residentially- or commercially-focused, and other differences, may require different densities to be transit-supportive. Transit-supportive densities are also different for different levels of transit service; generally the higher the level of investment, the higher the density. Within the urban and suburban contexts of Austin, Capital Metro has defined what transit-supportive density levels are. There are three principle sources for appropriate transit-supportive densities: Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant benchmarks and the Puget Sound Regional Council 2015 meta-analysis, “Transit-Supportive Densities and Land Use,” address density around high-capacity transit and Capital Metro has standards for general bus service. Both the FTA and the Puget Sound study measure density as an average across an entire transit line - individual segments may have higher or lower densities - which helps give flexibility in planning.

FTA benchmarks are important because their grants are a substantial portion of funding for transit projects. The FTA set them to “ensure that neighborhoods surrounding proposed transit stations have the fundamentals in place to ensure that as service is improved over time there is a mix of housing options for existing and future residents.” All projects submitted must achieve the “Medium” density grade to be eligible, and a “Medium-High” or “High” level makes grant proposals more competitive. The FTA measures density in half-miles from transit stations, so transit lines with stops spaced less than a mile apart and final station locations that are not set can be measured along the corridor ½ mile from a transit line, while greater-spaced transit lines or those with set final station locations can be measured in a ½ mile radius around stations. The FTA also takes Central Business District Parking levels into account.

	<u>Station Area Development</u>		<u>Parking Supply</u>	
<u>Rating</u>	<u>Employment Served by System</u>	<u>Avg. Population Density (per acre)</u>	<u>CBD Typical Cost-Per-Day</u>	<u>CBD Spaces Per Employee</u>
<u>High</u>	<u>>220,000</u>	<u>>23.4</u>	<u>>\$16</u>	<u><0.2</u>
<u>Medium-High</u>	<u>140,000-219,999</u>	<u>15-23.4</u>	<u>\$12-\$16</u>	<u>0.2-0.3</u>
<u>Medium</u>	<u>70,000-139,999</u>	<u>9-15</u>	<u>\$8-\$12</u>	<u>0.3-0.4</u>

The Puget Sound study provides appropriate density ranges for different modes of transit to ensure adequate ridership and costs-per-passenger, and to achieve decreases in BMT and drive-alone trips. These are not thresholds to meet but goals that, as we achieve them, the health of our transit system improves.

	<u>Light Rail</u>	<u>Bus Rapid Transit / All-day Frequent Bus</u>
<u>Residential Density</u>	<u>16-67+ residents per acre</u>	<u>7-8+ housing units per gross acre</u>
<u>Employment</u>	<u>100,000 - 150,000+ jobs in CBD</u>	<u>(not addressed)</u>
<u>Activity Units</u>	<u>56-116+ residents and jobs per gross acre</u>	<u>17+/- residents and jobs per acre</u>

Capital Metro measures density ¼ mile from transit corridors that support basic transit service. By achieving these transit-supportive densities along the Transit Priority Network and other existing bus lines, Capital Metro can avoid service changes that eliminate or move routes due to a lack of density and riders.

Capital Metro Residential transit-supportive density: 16 people per acre

Capital Metro Commercial transit-supportive density: 8 people per acre

Background:

This policy revision and the associated action items amendments are an adaptation of the following UTC recommendations:

- With respect to Action Item 21, update the Land Development Code related to housing and transit-supportive density to:
 - Increase density not just on identified transit-friendly corridors but within ¼ mile of those corridors to further shift mode choice away from single-occupancy vehicles; transition zones from corridor should reflect ImagineAustin and extend one to four blocks on either side of the corridor;
 - Increase residential zoning to more ably address the housing affordability crisis and provide more options (including "missing middle" housing);
- Insert new action item after Action Item 22 to state: "Plan for downtown growth. Plan and zone for the downtown and the university to grow in both residential and employment density as fast as the region's growth or faster." Downtown is a special part of the transportation network as the one part of the city that can reach and be reached by public transportation to and from anywhere in the city that is on public transportation. The existence of the downtown housing and job cluster makes it much easier for job movers and two-earner households to find transit supportive residential and job locations.
- Amend Policy 1 ("Promote transit-supportive densities along the Transit Priority Network") to direct that all land use processes and decisions adopt minimum targets of transit-supportive densities along the High-Capacity Transit Network appropriate for the transit mode planned.
- Average densities for the lines should achieve a "High" rating for the immediate portion of the High-Capacity Transit Network and a "Medium-High" rating for the evolving portion of the network, and be based on the recommended density levels in the Puget Sound Transit Supportive Densities and Land Uses study.
- An action item should be created to create and adopt a comprehensive transit-oriented development strategy for new planning along the entire High Capacity Transit Network, and an indicator showing the progress towards completing those plans. The plan should include developing pedestrian-friendly infrastructure to support walkable neighborhoods near transit.
- Make conforming changes throughout the ASMP.