

# Memo

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**To:** Erik Bredfeldt, Planning and Development Services Director  
**From:** Michael Lauer, AICP - Principal  
**Date:** February 22, 2010  
**Re:** Status Report on Mixed Use Activity Center Plan and LDC Amendments

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**Overview.** The Planning Works Team has been coordinating with City planning staff to refine draft plan and LDC amendments that accomplish the following objectives:

- Clarify Plan policies addressing the mix of uses, scale and design within the Mixed Use Low and Mixed Use Medium future land use categories.
- Apply these policies in core, transition and edge areas of the MU-1 and MU-2 zoning districts.
- Develop appropriate standards for large-scale retail projects.

Amendments are in draft form and a public review draft will be prepared pursuant to our discussion with the staff and the Community Development Committee during the first week of March. More comprehensive amendment of the LDC is proposed to be accomplished in a longer-term project.

**Draft Plan Policy Amendments.** Proposed Plan policy amendments are primarily refinements and clarification of existing plan policies addressing the mixed use low and mixed use medium future land use categories. The most significant changes are to:

- **Distinguish core, transition and edge areas.** Recent regulatory difficulties have, in part, arisen out of the lack of clarity about where urban design standards should be required. Proposed amendments will map areas that are designated as core, transition and edge. Activity centers in core and transition areas would require more urban design standards than edge areas. Within the transition areas, there would be greater flexibility in the application of urban standards.
- **Require Master Planning for future Redevelopment of Large-Scale Developments.** Developments within edge area activity centers that encompass more than 100,000 square feet of non-residential development would be required to provide a master plan showing how the project could transition to a more urban character.

**Draft LDC Amendments.** The proposed amendments to replace existing MU-1 and MU-2 district language, add language addressing large-scale retail development, supplement definitions and allow for large-scale retail development in the CCD, BA, BT or BUS districts. Large-scale retail stores would not be allowed within a MU-2 district unless part of a mixed-use development. Specific provisions in the draft LDC amendments include:

1. Mapped activity centers and their designation by scale (regional, community or neighborhood) and character (core, transition or edge). Staff is in the process of refining a draft map.

2. Ministerial approval by staff for developments with fewer than 100 dwellings or 50,000 square feet or less of non-residential space. Authorized deviations from standards and application of edge area standards in transition areas would require DRB or Plan Board approval.
3. Distinct site and building design standards for core and edge area activity centers in the MU-1 and MU-2 zoning districts, which include:
  - a. Establish build-to lines along streets in core and transition areas that are adequate to accommodate sidewalks and streetscaping. Edge area setbacks allow one parking aisle and a narrow landscape strip between buildings and the street.
  - b. Transitional design standards between residential and non-residential uses.
  - c. Streetscaping standards for all areas.
  - d. Use of garden walls to screen loading, mechanical and dumpster areas.
  - e. A parking cap that allows only 80% of required parking unless structured parking is used.
  - f. Pedestrian connectivity standards.
  - g. Connectivity standards that establish maximum block perimeters of 1,700 in core area and 2,500 feet in edge areas for the MU-1 district and maximum block perimeters of 2,000 in core area and 3,000 feet in edge areas for the MU-2 district.
  - h. Maximum ground floor areas per project (100,000 square feet) and per business (50,000) square feet in MU-1 districts.
  - i. MU-1 height standards that require a minimum of 25 feet and a maximum of 4 stories in core and transition areas, and set a maximum of 3 stories in edge areas. MU-2 height standards require a minimum of two stories or 30 feet for corner buildings and 25 feet for interior structures. Maximum building height in MU-2 districts is 5 stories, subject to neighborhood setback requirements. Heights of up to 8 stories may be allowed by special use permit in core areas for both the MU-1 and MU-2 districts.
  - j. Building design standards that address entries, building materials, glazing (windows), articulation for long walls, rooflines and parking structure design,
4. Mixed use standards. Mixed uses are encouraged, but not required at the project level in the MU-1 district. In the MU-2 district, a mix of uses or a master plan providing for a mix of residential and non-residential uses are required for any project encompassing 150,000 square feet or more of floor area. Credit for residential development at 6 dwelling units per acre within walking distance (1,200 feet) is still allowed.
5. Standards for large-scale, stand-alone retail projects in the BA, BUS BT or PD zoning districts. These standards include most of the site and building design standards described above, plus requirements for community spaces (e.g., courtyards, landscaped areas and civic uses), maximum separations for entries (250 feet), outdoor storage, trash collection and loading area standards, transit facility requirements, market study requirements and guarantees that the building will be reoccupied or removed if abandoned for 18 or more months.
6. Standards and procedures for approval of master plans for the future urbanization of developments with 150,000 square feet or more of non-residential development within mixed-use activity centers. Master plans are required to show consistency with the comprehensive plan, concurrency, internal and external compatibility, environmental sensitivity and support for multi-modal transportation.
7. Procedures and criteria for modification of the activity center map showing core, transition and edge areas.