



Legislation Text

File #: 110205., **Version:** 0

Mixed Use Districts (B)

Petition PB-11-28 TCH, City Plan Board. Amend the Land Development Code to establish activity centers in the mixed-use districts which modifies the regulations in the MU-1 (8-30 units/acre mixed use low intensity) and MU-2 (12-30 units/acre mixed use medium intensity) districts.

The purpose of this petition is to implement the City's Comprehensive Plan policies as it relates to urban development and to more specifically address City Commission Strategic Initiative 2.4. The majority of the proposed text of this amendment was prepared by the consultant firm Planning Works, with revision by students from the University of Florida Urban Planning Program and City Staff. The petition language was also reviewed by a group of stakeholders from the development community.

The proposed text changes to the MU-1 and MU-2 zoning districts will establish a hierarchy of activity centers: core, transition and edge. An activity center is defined as a concentrated area of uses intended to serve the needs of residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, the City or the region. Activity centers may consist of a single development project under unified ownership and control or a cluster of projects under multiple ownership and control. The designation of the three types of centers helps to define what parts of the city that should have a dense urban form, those areas that are in transitions, and those areas that are suburban in nature that can be improved.

Core and Transition areas are planned to be developed in accordance with urban design characteristics that include a combination of design factors. Those factors include:

- 1) Build-to lines that locate buildings close to a wide street side sidewalk with appropriate street trees;
- 2) A connected sidewalk and path system promoting safety, comfort and convenience by linking buildings within the center and to adjacent properties;
- 3) Building facades facing the street and aligned to form squares, streets, plazas or other forms of a pleasant public realm;
- 4) A horizontal or vertical mix of residential and non-residential uses within core area activity centers;
- 5) Limited street frontages for single businesses;
- 6) Ground level entertainment and retail uses;
- 7) Building articulation and glazing to stimulate pedestrian interest; and
- 8) Off-street parking, located at the rear or side of buildings, and away from pedestrian areas, or on-street parallel parking when designed to buffer pedestrian circulation areas from automobile circulation areas;

Edge areas may be designed with some of the characteristics of Core and Transition areas; however, Edge areas will include larger landscape areas, wider setbacks between uses, and lower building heights. The proposal to have Edge areas recognizes the fact that areas on the edge of the City have a different character and expectation. Many areas on the edge of the City are developed with lower density single family neighborhoods that the Comprehensive Plan seeks to protect. However, well designed and properly placed Edge activity centers will allow neighborhood type services within walking distance of most residential neighborhoods.

The proposed changes also recognizes that there are many parcels zoned MU-1 and MU-2 that will not be included in an activity center; the plan proposes that those areas be develop in accordance with the Edge area standards.

Lastly, the proposed change would remove the possibility of Large Scale Retail (a retail business or building designed for a single retail business encompassing 100,000 square feet or more of gross leasable area on the ground floor) from locating in a MU-1 or MU-2 areas. Large Scale Retail uses that need 100,000 square feet of ground floor area will be allowed in appropriate areas designated for commercial use. The MU-1 and MU-2 zoning districts will allow businesses with more than 100,000 square feet as long as the first floor footprint is not greater than 50,000 square feet. These types of businesses will be allowed in multiple story structures.

The City is currently in the process of hiring a land development consultant to rewrite the City's land development code incorporating formed based code principals. It is staff's opinion that the consultant will need to review this petition in order to make sure that it will be consistent with the language and concepts that will be used for the entire city code. Realizing that this petition only addresses a small portion of the overall code update staff is concerned that implementation of this petition without consideration of other potential code changes may create some inconsistencies throughout the code.

The Plan Board reviewed the petition and recommends approval with the activity center map, and with a recommendation that the petition be incorporated into the land development code update by the City's Land Development Consultant. Plan Board voted 6-0 to approve the petition.

Public notice was published in the Gainesville Sun on March 8, 2011. The Plan Board held a public hearing on March 31 and May 26, 2011.

None.

City Plan Board to City Commission - The City Commission approve the petition and the activity center map with a recommendation that the petition be incorporated into the land development code update by the City's Land Development Consultant.

Staff to City Commission- The City Commission approve Petition PB-11-28 TCH as recommended by the City Plan Board.