

Neighborhood perspectives on MU and UR zoning proposed revisions:

See the City document (Informal Report – IR 9994) for a brief history of the Mixed Use and Urban Residential zoning categories. The City convened a Mixed Use Zoning Advisory Group (MUZAG) to propose changes to the current Mixed Use and Urban Residential zoning ordinances. The City Council will vote on those proposed changes on Tuesday, June 6, 2017.

Concerned neighborhood residents who have long experience in neighborhoods near Fort Worth's 16 Urban Villages and Mixed Use zoning, some of whom served on the MUZAG, have summarized their comments and objections to the proposals to the 28 proposed changes below. These are issues you may want to make residents of your neighborhood aware of.

The overarching issue in the MU and UR proposals is the permission of increased population density which is creating large and dense residential developments near established neighborhoods. Just one of the issues which goes along with those large developments and proposed increased population density across the board is that the City is not requiring adequate parking for the new developments. The impact of this increased density and inadequate parking (thus pushing more parking into adjacent single family neighborhoods) is potentially negative for neighborhoods and needs to be studied before it is enacted.

To sum up, one neighbor said, "The City is allowing transit oriented development to occur near our existing neighborhoods, but we aren't getting the mass transit itself. We are doing this backwards. In some cities also developing transit oriented development, they require that new development come with adequate parking UNTIL the mass transit is developed to serve the new development. By not requiring that here, the City is sending that parking into our neighborhoods. We are concerned in the larger sense about how continuing increasing population density and requisite new development is impacting our neighborhoods."

Here are key points:

- At least 11 of the 28 MUZAG proposals raise serious issues that we believe should not be approved at this time but should instead be sent back to the Mixed Use Zoning Advisory Group.
- Four of the proposals best illustrate our concerns:

#6 - Increased population density across the board

#15 – Bars being allowed in MU-1

#19 - Height in stories versus height of new buildings measured in feet

#21 - Micro units of 500 square feet

- Three of these proposals are intended to increase population density in existing and future MU-1, MU-2 and UR districts. The fourth relates to a commercial use -- bars -- not appropriate for MU-1 districts.
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- The impact of these proposed changes, unless ameliorated by changes to our present urban infrastructure or by additional zoning requirements limiting their applicability, will be to:
 - create an artificial, unnecessary and entirely avoidable shortage of parking
 - aggravate traffic congestion
 - increase crime, increase the need for police resources while creating an urban environment in which citizen-assisted community policing is not workable
 - increase the need for additional firefighting resources, e.g., by requiring additional firefighting stations and different equipment, such as hook-and-ladder units needed to fight fires in taller buildings
 - increase litter
 - increase stormwater runoff
- There is no better way to make a city more unlivable and undesirable for business than creating traffic congestion and making existing inner city neighborhoods less desirable with the unrealistic hope that if more MU-1, MU-2 and UR districts are created, mass transit and the taxpayer will to support it will suddenly materialize.
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- After more than 16 years of MU-1, MU-2, and UR zoning, Fort Worth has no rapid transit and bus service to existing MU-1, MU-2, and UR districts is inadequate. Statistics such as the number of stops made by buses in a district are meaningless. To rely on public transit, bus schedules must be robust, must include Saturdays and Sundays, and must be routed in such a way as to enable residents to get from here to there within some reasonable amount of time.
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- The MU-1 and MU-2 districts created have not proven themselves to be pedestrian friendly in any meaningful sense of the term. In addition, being pedestrian friendly often involves development that deliberately slows traffic, including traffic on major arterials, to make it safer for pedestrians and to slow down drivers as a means of attracting them to the commercial establishments with the MU-1 and MU-2 districts.
- We do not believe that MUZAG, the Zoning Commission, or the Council have been provided adequate benchmarking. Pretty pictures of developments in other communities should be coupled with meaningful comparisons such as comparisons of public transit availability, stormwater

management, traffic, parking, and impacts on emergency response capabilities.

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- Many neighborhoods approved MU-1, MU-2 or UR zoning based on the development standards then in place. Changing those standards today to allow such changes as increased density, increased building heights, increased lot coverage, and more would be a betrayal of those neighborhoods relying on the earlier standards.
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- The proposals to remove the Board of Adjustment from considering certain changes in the zoning requirements denies affected residents, businesses, and neighborhoods the opportunity to object to important changes and is, in some cases, of questionable legality because the City Council may not lawfully transfer to other agencies the authority of Boards of Adjustment created by ordinances permitted by state law.

* For the above reasons, among others, we urge that the proposed MU-1, MU-2, and UR revision proposal be returned to the Mixed Use Zoning Advisory Group or, in the alternative, that the following proposals be sent back to MUZAG for further consideration.

CONCLUSION:

There are 4 top proposed revisions we would like to see removed for further study:

#6 - Increased density across the board

#15 - Bars in MU-1

#19 –Height measured in stories versus height of new buildings measured in feet

#21 - Micro units of 500 square feet

There are seven other proposed revisions of significant concern:

#9 - Vicinity test

#12 - Height bonus for structured parking (not in MU-1)

#13 - Height bonus for green space (not in MU-1)

#16 - Tattoo businesses

#17 - Cottage industry (needs to be parked)

#22 - 5,000 square foot maximum lot size for single family

#28 - Hotel rooms counted as residential to get height bonus