

PLANNING MEMO

TO: Common Council and Planning Commission

FROM: Erin Reinders, AICP, CPM

RE: Continued Discussion on Downtown Zoning Ordinance and Map Amendment

DATE: April 1, 2025

SUMMARY: This memo compliments the memo from the March 24, 2025, Joint Planning Commission and Common Council Work Session, and outlines a potential path forward for consideration. Though no formal vote will occur today, the hope is that the Planning Commission and Common Council will be able to reach consensus on the details of this ordinance this evening.

BACKGROUND: Originally, a Planning Commission Public Hearing was planned for April 1, 2025. However, it became clear at the Joint Planning Commission and Common Council Work Session on March 24, 2025, that the ordinance was not yet ready for a formal Public Hearing and Recommendation to the Common Council. Instead, all parties agreed that there would be value in having a second Joint Planning Commission and Common Council Work Session to continue a discussion about land use designation for the new zoning districts.

DISCUSSION: While we can certainly continue revising the details of the proposed land use designations for the new zoning districts and seeing if the Planning Commission and Common Council can reach an agreement, there is an alternative approach.

The ordinance could focus on creating the two zoning districts and changing the setbacks as we have discussed but leave the land use designation to match what is currently outlined in the Commercial District (see the attached Alternative Draft Ordinance). In other words, no calling out Accessory Uses, and no changes to what land uses are identified as Permitted, Conditional Uses, or Not Allowed from what the Commercial District currently has.

This allows for an ordinance to move forward that clearly creates a less restrictive development environment with more flexible setbacks. Additionally, this approach then paves the way for more holistic discussion about land uses and improvements that could be made to various zoning districts community wide. Additionally, as discussed on March 24, 2025, some land use definitions included the Code of Ordinances could be updated and others are lacking all together.

NEXT STEPS: Again, no formal vote will occur today. However, the hope is that the Planning Commission and Common Council will be able to reach consensus on a path forward. Next steps will involve the following:

1. Set up added joint work sessions, as necessary.
2. Finalize Ordinance draft.
3. Schedule and issue respective 30-day public notices as necessary for the following:
 - a. Planning Commission Public Hearing and Recommendation to Common Council
 - b. Common Council First Reading
 - c. Common Council Public Hearing/Second Reading