Acknowledgements

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- City of Omaha, Planning Department, Long Range Planning
- City of Omaha, Planning Department, Neighborhood Planning
- City of Omaha, Planning Department, Urban Design
- City of Omaha, Public Works Department, Traffic Division
- Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce
- Metro Transit
- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA)

**TOD Stakeholder Group - Represented Entities**
- AARP
- The Architectural Offices
- Children’s Hospital & Medical Center
- City of Omaha City Council Liaison
- City of Omaha Urban Design Review Board
- Downtown Improvement District
- Dundee-Memorial Park Neighborhood Association
- Fullenkamp, Jobeun, Johnson & Beller
- Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
- Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce
- Greenslate Development
- Investors Realty
- Lamp Rynearson
- Midtown Business Association
- Midtown Neighborhood Alliance
- Noddle Companies
- North Omaha Neighborhood Alliance
- Omaha Bikes
- Omaha by Design
- Omaha Community Foundation
- Peony Park Neighborhood Association
- Shamrock Development, Inc
- The Sherwood Foundation
- South Omaha Neighborhood Alliance
- Spark CDI
- Swanson Park Neighborhood Association
- UNMC / Nebraska Medicine
- UNO
- Urban Village Development
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Introduction

The introduction of Omaha’s first bus rapid transit route, ORBT, brings the opportunity to facilitate Transit Oriented Development along the route. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is development centered around or located within walking distance of a transit station. TOD includes quality connections, mix of uses, greater density, and pedestrian scale design. Uses should further walkability, transit use, and pedestrian activity and safety. Design should create and / or reinforce a safe and comfortable pedestrian oriented environment. Key components of a pedestrian oriented environment include wide sidewalks, landscaping, buildings and entrances fronting sidewalks, facades of quality durable materials and windows, active ground floor uses, and limited conflict points between pedestrians and automobiles.

The City of Omaha Planning Department has undertaken a TOD Initiative (see timeline in Figure 1), which consists of two major actions:

1. Amend the City’s Master Plan to support and encourage Transit Oriented Development.

   As a basis for potential amendments to zoning regulations in the Municipal Code or any other components of the TOD initiative, the Planning Department developed two amendments to the Master Plan to include the ORBT service area, which reflect current best practices for transit-oriented development. The first amendment, unanimously approved by the City Council on September 10, 2019, established and defined TOD policy within the Land Use, Urban Design and Transportation elements of the Master Plan and amended the future land use map by identifying TOD Nodes along the ORBT corridor.

   The second amendment, building upon the previously approved TOD policy, proposes adding a TOD land use area to the future land use map in the Land Use Element of the Master Plan, clearly defining where TOD zoning is appropriate. The amendment will be supplemented with a TOD Sub-District Land Use Map providing specific policy implementation which is based upon the following general criteria:

   1. Proximity to the transit stops.
   2. Existing entitled rights (zoning rights).
   3. Existing street type.
   5. Transition of scale from high to low intensity
   6. Preservation of residential neighborhoods.

   The proposed TOD Sub-District Land Use Map incorporates the policies set forth above and was developed through extensive public engagement during the spring of 2019 and further refinement by the TOD stakeholder committee.

2. Develop and propose Transit Oriented Development (TOD) regulations for the Zoning Ordinance.

   While examples of TOD zoning vary across the country, typical characteristics include increased residential and employment density, regulation for automobile-oriented uses, urban design to support walkability, and alternatives for minimum parking requirements. Based upon extensive public engagement during the TOD process and through technical analysis, the Planning Department developed amendments to the Municipal Code to best regulate TOD with the general themes laid out within this guide.
Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Implementation Strategy

Following City Council approval of the proposed master plan amendments and Municipal Code amendments, neighborhoods within the TOD area on the Future Land Use Map will not be proactively rezoned to the newly adopted TOD zoning. However, as development and redevelopment occur within the TOD area of the Future Land Use Map, the developer/owner will be encouraged to proceed through a rezoning process, which includes public hearings at Planning Board and City Council. Thus, property owners will “opt-in” to the newly established TOD zoning. (Development review process overview)

The specific TOD requirements can be found in the following companion documents:
- Proposed Zoning Code Amendment for Transit Oriented Development (TOD),
- Proposed Zoning Code Amendment for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs),
- Proposed Zoning Code Amendment to Establish Minimum Bicycle Parking Requirements in TOD and MU Districts and to Revise Related Provisions,
- Future Land Use Map Amendment (Establishing the TOD Land Use Area), and
- TOD Sub-District Land Use Map

ORBT (Omaha Rapid Bus Transit)

ORBT is a new service from Metro Transit that will unite smart technology and streamlined travel for faster, more frequent public transportation that will move more people along the Dodge St corridor, connecting to major destinations from Downtown to Westroads Mall. ORBT will run every 10 minutes during peak hours and offer enhanced stations, spacious vehicles, and other travel upgrades. It is anticipated to launch in Fall 2020. The timeline outlining the project’s development is shown in Figure 2. Visit rideorbit.com for updates and more information.

It is envisioned that ORBT will be the first in a series of enhanced transit routes that connect along major corridors in the Omaha Metro Area, serving as the backbone of a more reliable and rapid transit system. Initiatives like MAPA’s Heartland 2050 and the Omaha Chamber led ConnectGO Initiative are working with partners and stakeholders, including the City of Omaha, to develop a strategy for these future transit investments.

Other cities have seen an increase in development along transit routes like ORBT. The City of Omaha’s TOD Initiative is intended to foster high quality, context-sensitive transit oriented development along ORBT and other enhanced, high-frequency transit routes in the City of Omaha.
Figure 1: City of Omaha Transit-Oriented Development Initiative Process Summary

Dec. 2016: City awarded technical assistance grant from Smart Growth America to study and help maximize potential of transit-oriented development along the ORBT corridor.

May-Oct 2017: Smart Growth America Technical Assistance team and Planning Dept. hold site visits and workshops with key stakeholders to explore and discuss potential of TOD along ORBT corridor.

Nov 2018: Planning Dept. hosts a kick-off public meeting to introduce the TOD initiative, gather input, and conduct a visual preference survey. The visual preference survey was also available online Nov 2018-May 2019.

Nov 2017-Feb 2018: Smart Growth America team finalizes all TOD technical assistance memos including a housing market study, a review of the existing zoning code, and an analysis and recommendations memo for maximizing benefits of development along the ORBT corridor.

Apr-May 2019: Planning Dept. hosts a second series of five neighborhood public meetings (grouped by ORBT station areas) to present changes to the draft “Tier” maps and gather additional input on neighborhood preferences.

Feb-Mar 2019: Planning Dept. hosts a series of five neighborhood public meetings (grouped by ORBT station areas) to gather input on neighborhood preferences, conduct visual preference surveys, and have attendees participate in TOD “Tier” mapping exercises.

Summer 2019: Planning Dept. drafts amendments to the City’s Master Plan to support TOD and lay groundwork for code amendments.

Sept 2019: City Council approves amendments to the Land Use, Transportation, and Urban Design Elements of the Master Plan to support TOD.

Mar-May 2020: Draft Zoning code amendments and Land Use Element updates presented to TOD Stakeholder Committee and public.


Late Summer 2020: City Council reviews draft code amendments and Land Use Element update.

Fall 2019 - Winter 2019/2020: Planning Dept. develops draft zoning code text; holds regular TOD action team and stakeholder meetings to refine proposed code changes.

City updates and revises TOD zoning regulations and Master Plan as needed for successful implementation.

Nov 2018: The visual preference survey was available online Nov 2018-May 2019.
Figure 2: ORBT (Omaha Rapid Bus Transit) Project Schedule*

* Visit www.rideorbt.com for updates and more information
The purpose of the TOD district zoning is intended to implement Omaha’s comprehensive plan by facilitating infill and redevelopment for those parts of the city which, because of their proximity to pedestrian oriented mass transit infrastructure, are considered of primary importance to create active, pedestrian oriented streetscapes and development that varies in intensity and use.
TOD districts are designed and developed to achieve "people first" pedestrian environments. While it is well known that portions of the proposed district are automobile centric, it is intended that development over time will improve the pedestrian character of these areas. The physical characteristics of pedestrian and transit-oriented places include the following:

- Building heights vary depending on context and proximity to transit stations or busy streets;
- Buildings include a high degree of transparency, specifically at the ground floor;
- Building entrances relate directly to the street and sidewalk with a strong uniform building line;
- Streets provide wide curbside landscaping and sidewalks with pedestrian scaled street lighting;
- Streets provide parallel or diagonal on-street parking.
- There is little to no off-street parking between the building and the street;
- Width of pavement of the adjacent streets is relatively narrow - a pedestrian can cross without much difficulty and buildings relate to one another across the street;
The TOD district nomenclature will include six distinct types by combining “building size” categories (TOD-1, TOD-2, TOD-3 and TOD-4) with “use group” categories (MX - Mixed Use, MUR - Mixed Urban Residential, MNR - Mixed Neighborhood Residential, and SFA - Single Family Accessory) described on the following page. This system will provide a wide variety of “building sizes” and “uses” that can be applied and calibrated to fit with existing contexts. Maximum building size is further controlled for each district by considering the type of street adjacent to the development as described in the Building Size section on page 12.

The TOD sub-districts (size and use combinations) include:

1. TOD-1-MX
2. TOD-2-MX
3. TOD-2-MUR
4. TOD-3-MX
5. TOD-3-MNR
6. TOD-4-SFA

Combined, the MNR and SFA districts will specifically address the need for alternate formats of low density housing known as “Missing Middle Housing.” Middle density housing was far more prevalent historically by common availability of accessory apartment, duplexes, small multi-plexes, row homes, courtyard housing and stacked flats. Modern banking and development practices along with restrictive zoning regulations have reduced the types of housing “products” to primarily single family detached houses with conventional loans and large multi-family apartment complexes owned by corporate investors. While some exceptions do exist, the demand for middle density housing is very high as interests in downsizing and demand for pedestrian oriented older neighborhoods trend upward. The TOD zoning will allow for the compatible mixing of different housing formats and development of middle density housing near the ORBT route.
How a building is used and occupied is one of the fundamental provisions of Omaha's zoning code. The use of a building has significant influence on its design and the access required for the building and how well it fits in with the surrounding area. The proposed TOD code has four (4) “use categories” that each allow a set of specific use types:

1. **Mixed-use (MX)**, allowing a wide variety of commercial and residential uses similar to Aksarben Village, Midtown Crossing or Heartwood Preserve. Mixed use districts are commonly associated with neighborhood business districts or commercial corridors and will vary in size and intensity depending upon location. MX districts will also allow many forms of housing such as duplexes, townhomes, and apartment buildings.

2. **Mixed Urban Residential (MUR)**, allowing many forms of smaller and middle density housing such as accessory dwelling units, duplexes, townhomes with an upper limit that allows medium and large apartment buildings.

3. **Mixed Neighborhood Residential (MNR)**, allowing many forms of smaller and middle density housing such as accessory dwelling units, duplexes, townhomes with an upper limit that allows small and medium sized apartment buildings.

4. **Single Family Accessory (SFA)**, primarily single family detached housing that also allows middle density housing, such as accessory dwelling units, duplexes and an upper limit of 3-5 townhomes.

An ADU is a small residence that shares a single-family lot with a larger, primary dwelling. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s) can be found throughout Omaha today, in most cases considered a legal nonconforming use. The TOD policy encourages this already accepted form of housing within the TOD land use area and will be permitted within all residential TOD zoning districts. Characteristics of ADUs are:

- As an independent living space, an ADU is self-contained, with its own kitchen or kitchenette, bathroom and sleeping area
- An ADU can be located within, attached to or detached from the main residence
- An ADU can be converted from an existing structure (such as a garage) or built anew
- Because ADUs are built on single-family lots as a secondary dwelling, they typically cannot be partitioned off to be sold separately
- An ADU can provide rental income to homeowners and be an affordable way for renters to live in single-family neighborhoods
- An ADU can enable family members to live on the same property while having their own living spaces — or provide housing for a hired caregiver
- For homeowners looking to downsize, an ADU can be a more appealing option than moving into an apartment or, if older, an age-restricted community
- ADUs can help older residents remain in their community and “age in place”
Infill redevelopment requires careful consideration of the possible impacts new development will have on existing neighborhoods and commercial districts. New projects that differ substantially in terms of height, typically more than two stories, and footprint, typically more than twice the common footprint, can have dramatic negative effect on the fabric of existing neighborhoods. While new development and investment is a positive outcome of new transit infrastructure, disrupting or diminishing the quality of existing neighborhoods and commercial centers should be avoided.

The TOD zoning is designed to allow a range of building sizes in terms of maximum height and maximum building footprint. Together these two variables establish the maximum building size that will be allowed. Further refinement of the building context will be established by consideration of the type of street adjacent to the development. The four types of streets identified include, from the largest to the smallest; Arterial streets (both major and minor), Collector streets, and Local streets. Larger buildings will be allowed on larger streets such as arterials, medium buildings on medium streets such as collectors and smaller buildings on smaller streets such as local/residential streets.

Table 1 shows how building sizes will vary for each TOD district depending on the street type adjacent to the development. The primary façade height is limited to the “base height” with the condition that stories above the base height are “stepped back” from the main façade at least 12 feet and do not exceed the “maximum height”. This “wedding cake” effect further diminishes the impact of taller buildings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Type</th>
<th>Max Base Height (3)</th>
<th>Max Base Height (3)</th>
<th>Max Base Height (3)</th>
<th>Max Base Height (3)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td>96’ max</td>
<td>60’ base</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td>60’ base</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collector</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td>60’ max</td>
<td>48’ base</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td>48’ base</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td>60’ max</td>
<td>48’ base</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td>48’ base</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(1) The minimum height for TOD-1 Districts shall be 4 stories.
(2) The minimum height for TOD-2 Districts shall be 2 stories.
(3) Refer to section 55-576(a) for maximum façade heights applied to the base of buildings.

UL = Unlimited NR = Not Required
District Location and Calibration

The determination on where TOD districts occur is commonly called calibration. The TOD calibration method includes a context assessment and the consideration of several key variables to determine appropriateness of the proposed zoning regulations. The existing context assessment includes the following variables:

1. **Proximity to the transit stops.** Development with closer proximity to the ORBT transit stops (within 1/4 mile) will be allowed to achieve higher intensity.

2. **Existing entitled rights (zoning rights).** Generally, the recommended TOD zoning classifications reflect the existing uses and intensity allowed under the current zoning. The TOD zoning provides for compact development and includes higher standards for urban design. Furthermore, building intensity will be mitigated by the introduction of improved pedestrian and building design outcomes required by the TOD zoning.

3. **Existing street type.** More intensive street types will allow for greater building intensity, scale and size.

4. **Neighborhood Survey.** A public engagement process yielded neighborhood preference data for building heights through the tier mapping exercise. This data was referenced when determining building size limits.

5. **Transition of scale.** The TOD size and scale allowances will be used in such a way as to transition from higher to lower scales with intermediate scales and vice-versa. This will provide for transitional forms of development from higher scale/density to lower scale/density.

6. **Preservation of Residential Neighborhoods.** Historic neighborhoods (local or national register districts) that include uniform, large lot, detached single family residences and zoning (R1-R3) will be excluded from the TOD district as new smaller lot and attached housing types could be considered incompatible. Also, preservation districts with existing residential zoning that allows for significantly larger buildings will use TOD zoning that limits building sizes to a scale more consistent with the neighborhood unless located in close proximity to an enhanced transit corridor where added density is appropriate.

A TOD Sub-district Land Use Map provides specific guidance on the location of future TOD districts based on the above listed criteria. The TOD Sub-District map is found within the Appendix of this document and may be subject to amendment over time.
Site development standards regulate how the building site can be utilized and commonly include provisions for minimum lot area, width, set-backs and maximum lot coverage. The TOD site development standards will allow for smaller more compact development with buildings closer to each other and closer to the street. Existing front yard set-backs will be maintained in existing neighborhoods when there is a consistent condition greater than the minimum allowed.

Table 2 describes the site development standards for TOD districts. Section 55-925 cited in the table refers to the urban design standards for build-to/set-backs. These standards will require the building to be located in close proximity to streets and sidewalks while also insuring that adequate sidewalk width and landscaping is provided. Small setbacks and wide sidewalks with street trees will be a consistent character of all TOD development. Additional setback provisions from existing detached single family homes is addressed elsewhere under Screening and separation of uses.

The combined use of site development parameters (Table 2) and building size parameters (Table 1), discussed previously, will form the primary means to regulate the site development standards of new development in TOD districts.

**Table 2: Site Development Parameters (4)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOD-1</th>
<th>TOD-2</th>
<th>TOD-3</th>
<th>TOD-4</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot Area (min. s.f.) (1)</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Width (min.)</td>
<td>50'</td>
<td>35'</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>20'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Yard Build-to/Setback</td>
<td>Sec. 55-925</td>
<td>Sec. 55-925</td>
<td>Sec. 55-925 (2)</td>
<td>Sec. 55-925 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Side Yard Build-to/Setback</td>
<td>Sec. 55-925</td>
<td>Sec. 55-925</td>
<td>Sec. 55-925</td>
<td>Sec. 55-925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Side Yard Setback - MX districts</td>
<td>0'</td>
<td>0'</td>
<td>0'</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Side Yard Setback - MUR, MNR, and SFA districts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>5'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Yard Setback (3)</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>10' (3)</td>
<td>10' (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impervious Coverage (max.)</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
(1) Minimum lot area may be reduced if part of an attached housing development provided that the maximum building footprint for the common structure is not exceeded.
(2) The Front Yard Build-to/Setbacks for residential use only buildings shall be the greater of either, a) section 55-925 or, b) the average setback demonstrated by the dominant pattern of the existing context pursuant to section 55-570(e)3.
(3) Rear yard setbacks may be reduced by 50% when located on an alley.
(4) See 55-576(g) for additional setback requirements.
Urban Design Standards have been used in Omaha’s zoning code since 2007. These provisions have been applied in areas throughout the City such as Aksarben Village, Midtown Crossing, Heartwood Preserve, Village Pointe and Downtown. While site development and building size standards address general form of development, the urban design standards address many of the important aesthetic details necessary for pedestrian-oriented places. Following are brief descriptions of the applicable urban design code sections applicable to TOD districts as well as some representative images that include many of these general characteristics.

- **Sidewalk areas.** Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-924
  These standards generally include requirements for 8 feet of landscaping along the street curb planted with over-story trees and sidewalks that vary in width from 5 to 10 feet depending on the location.

- **Build-to/set-back lines.** Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-925
  The arrangement of buildings in relation to the street is a critical component in making streets become places. Building façades adjacent to sidewalks help to create a sense of enclosure by serving to frame or enclose the streetscape and are often collectively called the street-wall. The street-wall organizes pedestrian movement and activity along the roadside through the common public space of the sidewalk. Without a clearly defined edge the street lacks cohesiveness, becomes ambiguous and the sidewalk tends to lose its relevance as the path of travel. As mentioned previously, the build-to/set-back provision will require buildings to be closer to the street facing property lines and sidewalks. This also includes the condition that there is no intervening parking lot or vehicle drive lanes between the building and the street.

- **Ground-level transparency.** Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-926
  When a building is adjacent to the sidewalk it should provide for a visual connection between the sidewalk and the ground floor. This connection is necessary to link the interior functions of buildings with the sidewalk environment. Uses such as retail sales, restaurants, general services, offices and entertainment are well suited for linking to the sidewalk areas. Transparency cannot always be accommodated due to operating characteristics of some businesses but it is an urban design feature that is strongly encouraged. Long expanses of blank walls are not allowed in certain areas and will be discouraged within the district. The ground floor of residential buildings may not be suitable for high degrees of transparency and issues related to privacy are addressed under supplemental conditions for residential buildings.
• **Screening of service areas.** Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-927

Utility equipment such as dumpsters, loading docks, HVAC equipment may obstruct and or diminish the appearance of streetscapes unless carefully designed. Service areas and utility equipment will be designed to be in remote locations and or screened from public view. Screen walls, when visible from public streets, will use a higher quality of materials similar to the adjacent building materials.

• **Green parking areas.** Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-928

Parking lots are important components of the urban infrastructure. However, these facilities often locate vehicles and pedestrians in direct conflict with one another and do not necessarily contribute to the appearance of the streetscape. Parking lots are typically large expanses of paved areas. Providing perimeter and interior landscaping helps to improve their overall appearance and can also help to mitigate excessive storm water run-off from the site. Green parking lots establish minimums for parking lot landscaping and also provide for the opportunity to utilize storm water mitigation concepts within these facilities. Landscaping is typically required at the time of construction and is required to be maintained permanently.

• **Parking structures.** Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-929

Parking structures are an efficient means to increase parking density and capacity within urban areas. Parking structure design should be compatible to the surrounding context. Requirements for exterior building materials, height and scale of building elevations help to create this compatibility. When a parking structure is adjacent to a pedestrian oriented streetscape and other active ground floor uses such as retail, parking structures will include retail in a portion of the ground floor. This helps to maintain the quality and character of the pedestrian environment and limits the possibility of long blank walls.

• **Site and building access.** Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-930

Curb cuts for access to parking lots or buildings will be limited in quantity and size to limit vehicles from crossing sidewalks. Access to parking lots will use alleys or adjacent parking lots when available. This section of the urban design zoning code will be supplemented by additional provisions within the TOD code.
• Neighborhood Connectivity. Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-931

Maintaining street connectivity in urban areas is necessary to allow for the free movement of all forms of mobility. Commercial areas should be easily accessed from neighborhoods without requiring unnecessary or circuitous travel. In older parts of town where a street network is established every effort should be made to keep the grid intact. Vacating streets or alleys is discouraged and working to create new or maintain existing connections is required.

• Location of utilities. Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-932

Overhead services such as utility poles, transformers and connections will be underground when possible. Often these utilities are installed and maintained by different agencies over an extended period of time and can result in a disorganized and cluttered appearance - such negative impacts should be mitigated when possible.

• Signs. Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-933

Regulating the type, quantity, height and location of signs is an important part of urban design requirements. Excessive amounts of signage or poorly located signs can lead to unsightly appearances, increased competition and an aggressive advertising environment. Streetscapes are public places where signs should be informational and limited to business identification only. Business may promote special offers or additional information on the interior of the building. Signs in TOD districts will be limited to business identification or wayfinding and directional signs.

• Retaining walls; landscape berms. Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-934

Large expanses of tall, undifferentiated wall areas next to sidewalks or adjacent properties will be discouraged. Certain methods of landscaping and or limiting rise and run of walls is recommended to limit the effect of large retaining walls. Walls that are screened from view or behind buildings do not have special requirements.
Building design guidelines. Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-932

The building design guidelines address common physical design characteristics of building design. These standards do not address architectural style, but consider basic formal elements common to a wide variety of buildings. Following is a general outline and photo examples that incorporate many of these building design requirements.

- **Wall materials:** Exterior walls will require the use of high quality materials.
- **Continuity of design:** Buildings should have continuity of design on all sides. Sides and backs of buildings should be well designed in addition to the front.
- **Articulation of the facade:** Buildings should be designed as dynamic three dimensional forms and avoid flat, two dimension box-like structures.
- **Base of buildings:** Exterior walls along pedestrian areas should be designed with details and features that enhance the pedestrian space of the sidewalk.
- **Proportion of long elevations:** Limits are placed on long, undifferentiated facades.
- **Proportion and visibility of entrances:** Buildings should be accessible from all pedestrian walkways and sidewalks and relate to the streetscape.
Building design guidelines. Article XXII (urban design), Section 55-932 (Continued)

- **Organization of windows**: Windows should be designed in scale and proportion to the building elevation.
- **Relating large buildings to sloping sites**: This preserves the existing topography of the landscape.
- **Building signs**: Limits are provided for quantity, type, size and location of building signs.
- **Utility screening**: This requires rooftop equipment, loading and service entrances, and exterior site equipment to be screened from view.
- **Parking lot set-backs and sidewalks**: Buildings that face towards parking lots will provide large sidewalks along the front.
Supplemental Standards Specific to TOD Districts

In addition to the site development standards and the urban design standards, TOD districts will include supplemental provisions to address unique needs not otherwise covered by the urban design code. These are more nuanced requirements that will improve TOD district development and strengthen the pedestrian areas. The following is a general outline of the supplemental standards and representative photo examples of projects that do or do not illustrate each standard.

Maximum height for base of buildings.

As mentioned previously, the height of a building will be limited at the lower floors. Additional height may be added, usually one to two stories, provided that the upper stories are stepped back from the lower façade by at least 12 feet. This "wedding cake" technique reduces the apparent scale of buildings and provides for improved compatibility while allowing an increase to the building square footage.

Building frontage.

These standards will require buildings to locate along public streets and to minimize gaps between buildings by providing a more continuous "street wall." Building façades along public streets and sidewalks improve the function and practicality of sidewalks, provide convenient access for pedestrians and create a more active street scape. Buildings will be required to occupy 70% of the buildable street frontage along the transit corridor.

On-site pedestrian circulation

New developments will be required to provide wide sidewalks with clear routes to building entrances and public ways.
Vehicular parking and access.

TOD districts will promote the use of walking and transit (BRT) as a viable alternative to using an automobile. While the automobile will continue to be a prominent feature, the design and character of new development is intended to minimize the conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and limit the negative impacts of parking lots. Providing a district wide parking solution is a common strategy for pedestrian oriented districts. This would include the use of public parking facilities such as garages and on-street parking in addition to off-street private parking.

Standard development often results in surface parking lots that consume up to 65% of the developed site. In older neighborhoods this results in unnecessary demolition of existing properties and loss of the historic fabric and character. TOD districts will support a reduction in required parking quantities, account for the use of existing on-street parking or provide new onstreet parking when feasible. Off-street parking lots will be limited to no more that 35% of the buildable site area and there are no limits to how many stalls are provided internal to buildings.

The pathways and movement of vehicles will also be addressed. The number of driveways crossing the sidewalk will be limited to minimize the disruption of the sidewalk. Vehicle parking or drive lanes will be prohibited between the front of buildings and the street and sidewalk. It is intended that parking and vehicle movements occur to the side or rear of buildings through proper site planning and the use of existing alleys when feasible.

Bicycle Parking

Adequate bicycle parking is an important component of pedestrian-oriented, transit supportive development. Bicycle parking regulations are being proposed as a new section of the Off-Street Parking and Loading section of the zoning code concurrently with the TOD zoning code amendments summarized in this document. The bicycle parking requirements will apply to development in TOD districts and Mixed Use (MU) Districts and will set minimum required bicycle parking quantities based on land use.
Building design, supplemental requirements

This section of the TOD district zoning regulations will provide supplemental building design standards that are more detailed than the current urban design standards.

**Transparency**

When buildings are located adjacent to public streets and sidewalks it’s important to provide a visual connection to the interior of the ground floor. This visual connection adds vitality and a sense of place to streetscapes and is a common feature of traditional main street contexts. The TOD district zoning will require that at least 50% of the ground floor be provided with transparent windows or doors when adjacent to sidewalk areas. Upper stories on facades facing the street will also be required to meet minimum transparency standards of 30%.

**Residential unit entrances adjacent to public ways**

Since the TOD district zoning allows for more compact forms of housing with smaller set-backs when appropriate, the separation of public and private uses will be addressed. This issue is primarily a concern when residential units are placed on the ground floor of buildings and in close proximity to sidewalks and public areas. This section of the code will require a public-private transitional feature such as a porch, patio or stoop be provided when unit entrances are adjacent to public ways.

**Residential entrances - other**

When residential units are located in the ground floor of buildings, in close proximity to public ways, but do not have an entrance, vertical separation will be required to provide a public-private separation by elevating the unit above the sidewalk level.
**Projecting balconies**

Balconies are private spaces used by the resident. Projecting balconies along street facing facades will be integrated into the design of the building and project no more than 50% of their depth to minimize the public-private exposure.

**Roof forms**

Architectural compatibility is achieved through general features such as building footprint and height and materials. In residential districts the style and type of roof can also be a considerable feature, such as gable, hip or flat roofs. When a roof type is a dominant pattern in a neighborhood, new development will be required to use a similar style.

**Screening and separation of uses.**

As mentioned previously, set-backs in TOD districts will be reduced; however, certain larger set-backs from existing single family properties will be required. This section identifies four types of screening that may be used alone or in combination to help provide visual separation. Additional physical separation is also required depending on the proposed building size and type of activity.

**Off-premises signs (billboards)**

As with all urban design areas in Omaha, new billboards will be restricted from TOD districts. Certain provisions are provided to allow existing billboards to remain and allowing for their possible relocation.
All projects within TOD districts will be required to undergo an administrative review process known as the Urban Design site plan review (UDSPR). This review is undertaken by Planning Department staff with the objective of mitigating unforeseen negative impacts that a proposed development may introduce. Not all zoning codes can anticipate all possible situations and in some cases additional requirements which are more restrictive than the code may be necessary. The UDSPR process is unique in that any appeal to dismiss the additional requirements must undergo a review from three boards; 1) the Urban Design Review Board, 2) the Planning Board and, 3) the City Council. Ultimately, any zoning code requirement can be waived through approval of the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). The UDSPR provides for multiple levels of review before any ZBA waiver can be heard.

Adjustments to the TOD code that are less restrictive may be approved for developments using the Planned Unit Redevelopment (PUR) Overlay District zoning tool. This process will require review from the Planning Director and approval from Planning Board and City Council.

For both of these approval processes, the UDSPR and the PUR, once a project is approved, it is “locked in” to a specific design and any building permit application must conform to the approved design (even if the property is sold).
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Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
TOD SUBDISTRICT
DRAFT
Land Use Map
July 27, 2020