

Draft language to initiate discussion regarding flexibility for incremental development of areas recommended for mixed-use

The expansion of mapped mixed-use categories in the Comprehensive Plan Update's Draft Generalized Future Land Use Map was originally brought up by staff for Commission discussion in the Phase 2 work sessions. While staff feels that the expansion of mapped future mixed-use areas into currently auto-oriented commercial development is appropriate, staff also feels that a strict interpretation of the mixed-use categories in some of these auto-oriented areas may limit reinvestment and slow the transition towards more pedestrian-oriented development. The limitation may occur through preventing redevelopment within some areas that could represent an improvement over existing conditions, but may not strictly meet the style of development described in the mixed-use categories.

Staff recommends including Plan language along the lines of *"Redevelopment of outlying RMU- or CMU-mapped areas with current auto-oriented development may be approved for single-use development as may occur in the E and GC categories, so long as the project results in substantial improvements to urban design and is developed in a manner that encourages bicycle, pedestrian, and transit use."* This language could be accompanied by a description or map that details what is covered by "outlying RMU- or CMU-mapped areas." These areas could be delineated as:

- West: the area bounded by Whitney Way on the east, the Beltline on the south and west, and Regent Street extended on the north.
- East: RMU and CMU areas along East Washington Avenue from Milwaukee Street east to the Interstate.

East Towne Mall, West Towne Mall, and the areas surrounding the malls are the most prominent parts of the proposed exception. The 2017 changes to the CMU and RMU definitions<sup>1</sup> add some form-based specificity to the land use categories while sacrificing some flexibility. The above exception would add flexibility back in to the plan, allowing the malls and surrounding areas to proceed with a "Hilldale-like" remodel/retrofit that retains some of the original structure/layout, while moving the rest of the development in a more mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly direction.

Note that the exception proposed above does **not** include any NMU areas **or** any planned mixed-use centers in developing neighborhoods. The Plan Commission may want to consider whether some single-story development is appropriate in these areas.

Staff would like direction from the Commission about how to proceed with developing possible mixed-use exception language for the Draft Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Both categories have more of a form-based element in the 2017 update, with CMU having a two-floor minimum and RMU having a four-floor minimum. Additionally, RMU has changed to become the most intense mixed-use category in 2017, as opposed to its 2006 use as a regional mall redevelopment category.