

Transition Zones and Their Effects on Allandale

By Todd Shaw

The City Council directed staff to provide additional “missing middle” housing in what are called *transition areas* adjacent to areas that council has previously approved increased housing density that include Imagine Austin activity centers, activity corridors, and transit priority networks (TPNs).

A little background:

Imagine Austin (IA) is the City’s comprehensive plan approved in 2012 which directed increased housing and transportation along specific street corridors and high-density developments called centers.

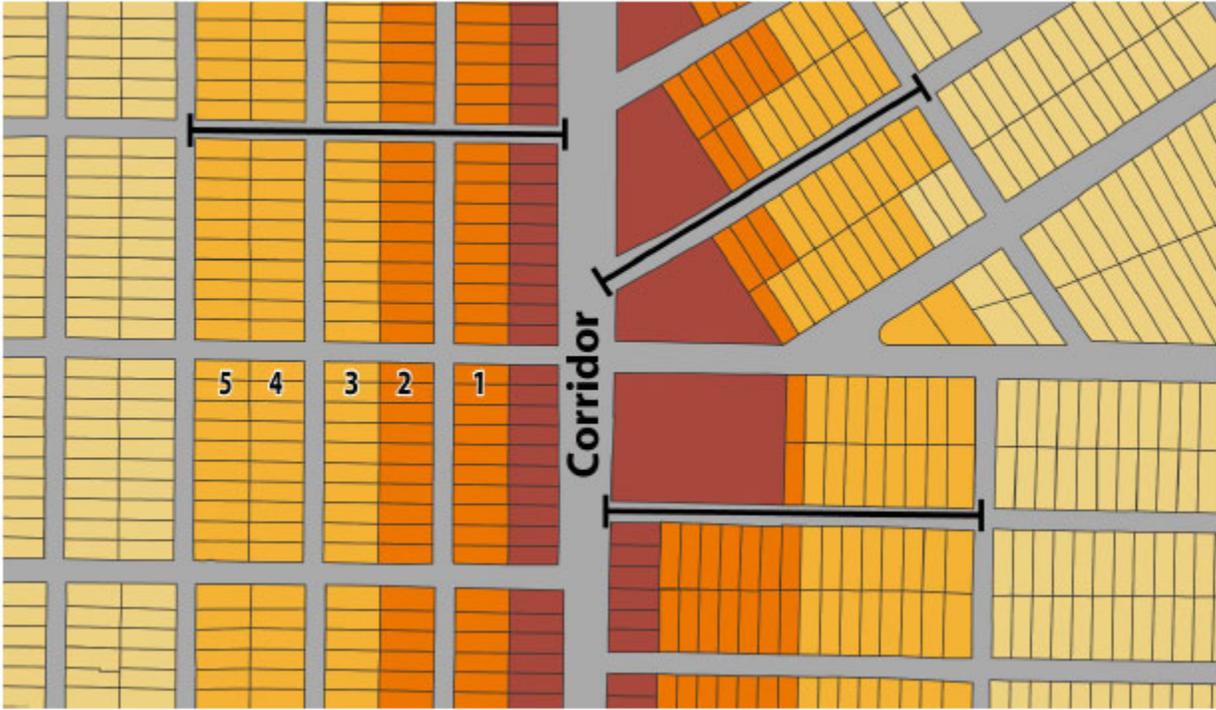
The TPN is the network of roads where Cap Metro has current high-frequency service or plans to expand its service. As a result of this council direction, Allandale can expect transition areas along:

- Burnet Rd.
- West Anderson Lane
- 45th Street
- Possibly surrounding the Northcross Mall development, which is a neighborhood activity center

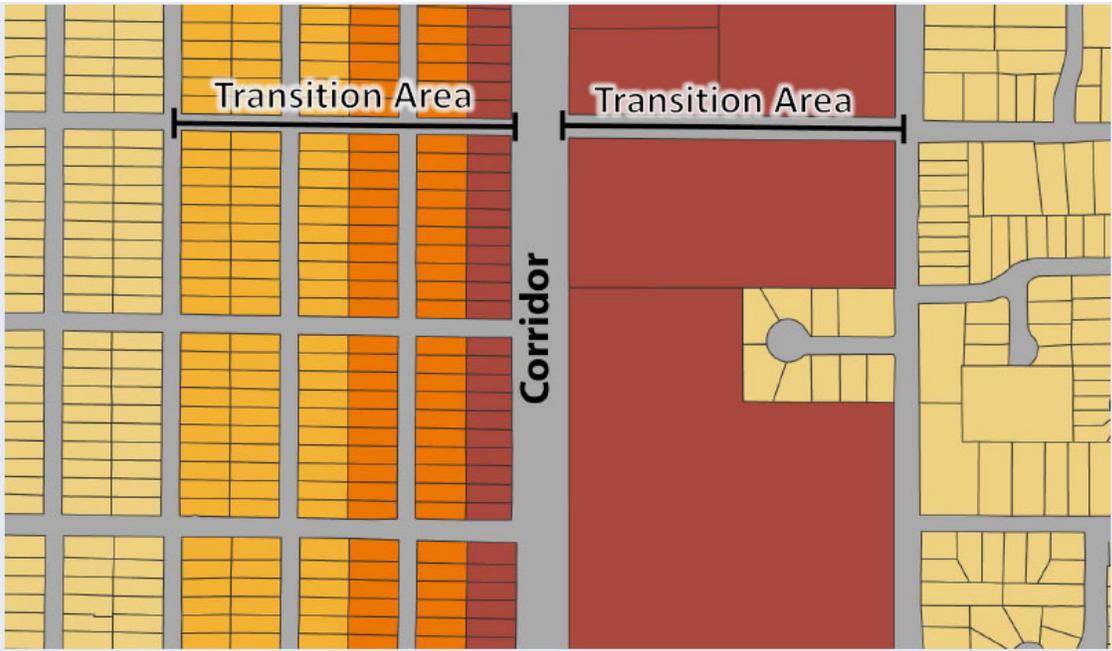
Council then provided the City Manager with instructions on sizing the transition areas. Transition areas were to be two to five lots deep beyond the corridor lots (Imagine Austin corridors and TPN) with the density and length of transition areas relatively more or less intense for areas that meet more or fewer of the criteria listed below:

1. Located on Transit Priority Network, or Imagine Austin centers or corridors
2. Located within the Urban Core (as defined in the [McMansion Ordinance](#))
3. Has a well-connected street grid (provides for walkable street to the corridor)
4. Located in a high opportunity areas (as defined in the [Enterprise Opportunity 360 Index](#))

City staff presented council with its process for mapping transition areas on August 28th which proposed mapping in excess of 5 lots in cases where lots are oriented parallel to the corridor and removing transition areas where the corridor-fronting lot is very deep. The following is a slide from the presentation showing how the number of lots in the Transition Area could exceed five lots. The red lots are corridor lots, orange are higher density transition zones (6 – 11 units depending on affordable density bonus), darker yellow are lower density transition zones (4-9 units depending on affordable housing bonus), and pale yellow are single family zoned lots outside of the transition area.



Then staff presented a slide showing the example with a deep corridor lot where the transition zone would be eliminated.



You can also look at [the map](#) on the city's Land Development Code site.

Additional context sensitive criteria for mapping was also provided which reduced the length and density within the transition areas. They include transition areas:

- Located in “Vulnerable” areas identified in the [UT Gentrification Study](#)
- Bounded by other zones, uses, or environmental features (such as floodplains)
- In areas with drainage and flooding issues
- With existing market-affordable multi-family units (mapped with equivalent zoning to encourage preservation).
- Where the distance between corridors is less than ½ mile
- Where the majority of the existing single-family neighborhood area would be transition area
- For TPN that are not Imagine Austin corridors (like 45th St.), the street facing lot should generally begin with missing middle zoning (orange or dark yellow colored lots in above exhibits)

There are other changes to the land code, but the introduction of transition areas will have the greatest impact on Allandale. Because the Council has fast-tracked the public involvement process, please refer to the Allandale website for the latest updates and attend as many public meetings as you can to voice your opinions.