

From: [Luke Hanson](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Approve T District amendments; initiate a follow-up
Date: Thursday, October 9, 2025 1:35:26 PM

Dear City Councilmembers,

I'm writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposed updates to the Traditional Neighborhood zoning districts as recommended to you by the Planning Commission. These common-sense changes will make the T Districts easier for City staff to administer, and easier for prospective real estate developers (especially regular folks working on small, locally-financed, neighborhood-scale projects) to understand and follow.

I also want to urge you to quickly initiate another zoning study focused on broadly expanding the T Districts throughout Saint Paul. I suggest four concepts to be included within the scope of the study:

- Rezoning land along arterial and collector streets in Saint Paul into the T Districts (including but not limited to high-frequency transit routes)
- Simplifying the Zoning Code by sunseting the Business districts and the Vehicular Parking district (perhaps consolidating them into the T Districts)
- Identifying formerly commercial buildings that are currently zoned in the H Districts and rezoning them into T Districts (to re-enable commercial uses in the future)
- Adding language to the H Districts that would enable small-scale commercial land uses within them (e.g. corner stores and Accessory Commercial Units) under certain conditions

Prior to the 1970s, Saint Paul's zoning rules allowed for both residential and commercial uses along its arterial streets. In 1975, the City Council adopted an extremely rigid new Zoning Code and Zoning Map that essentially forbid new commercial spaces from opening in places where they didn't exist in 1975. I believe these rigid rules have needlessly impeded the organic development of local business nodes and walkable neighborhoods for the past fifty years. If the City of Saint Paul aims to attract more local businesses, strengthen its tax base, and become a more walkable city, I am convinced that expanding the T Districts (so that the City's zoning rules would be much like they were prior to 1975) is an obvious and essential step towards those goals.

I wrote three essays on this topic which were published by [streets.mn](#) in June. I will link those essays here ([Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), and [Part 3](#)) so that they can be included in the public record, if possible.

Thank you for the invitation to comment.

Luke Hanson
1423 Eleanor Avenue