

Meeting Date:

December 8, 2025

Request

Text and Map
Amendment to the Land
Development Code
establishing District 11

Applicant

City of Hudson

Case Manager

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Development Director

Contents

- Draft Amendment (revised)



Project Introduction:

City staff has prepared the following in response to the City Council request to consider LDC map and text amendments to establish District 11 South Darrow Rd Corridor.

Discussion has commenced over the following timeline:

- April – July, 2025: Council subcommittee discussions
- September 9, 2025 City Council Workshop: Proposed amendment was discussed with forwarding for the first meeting.
- September 16, 2025: City Council Meeting: First reading and referral to the Planning Commission.
- October 27, 2025: Planning Commission introduction
- November 10, 2025: Planning Commission Public Hearing
- December 8, 2025: Planning Commission continued discussion

Background

The South Darrow Council Subcommittee completed five sessions in recent months to develop a draft amendment framework to the Land Development Code. City Council received the work of the subcommittee, advanced the framework to a draft amendment, and conducted a first reading and referral to the Planning Commission on September 16, 2025. The proposed Land Development Code amendment to create Zoning District 11 along the South Darrow Road Corridor establishes:

1. Focus on office and light industrial uses to continue the areas emphasis as an employment center.
2. Expanded allowance of some intended outlot retail, service, and restaurant uses in response to the lack of amenities available to the existing office and industrial parks in the area.
3. Allowance for a more transformational mixed use planned development to leverage a potential large employer to the site and expand amenities to the larger area. The development could create a connected, internal campus including a mix of uses such as restaurant, lodging, health/fitness services, grocery, and residential.

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Discussion from November 10 , 2025 Meeting

Planning Commission requested staff capture the key discussion points to date and incorporate into a draft revised amendment:

1. Alignment of use terms in 1205.14 with definitions in Section 1213 - Minor adjustments were incorporated into the 1205.14 uses so they directly align to the terminology of the definitions in 1213.
2. Grocery Store - Staff recommends shifting this allowance to be limited to within a Planned Development. This shift would strengthen the office/light industrial focus and limit this larger scale commercial/retail to the higher standards of the Planned Development.
3. Lodging – Staff noted consideration of allowing smaller scale lodging as a use by right. Staff understands traditional chain hotels typically start at a minimum of 80-100 rooms. The following is proposed:
 - a. Lodging, Boutique as by right for facilities within less than 50 rooms and limited amenities.
 - b. Lodging, Full Service as a conditional use for facilities with 50 or more rooms and additional services such as restaurants, meeting rooms, entertainment, and recreational facilities.
4. Greenspace requirements within development parcels – This not a typical requirement within existing commercial/industrial districts; however, reference was added to the purpose statement to encourage incorporation of greenspaces such as courtyards and plazas into commercial or office use development to benefit district employees and patrons.
5. Landscape buffers along major corridors and protection of existing trees at the SE corner of Terex Rd and Darrow Rd – A reference was added to implement the Comprehensive Plan recommendation regarding enhanced streetscapes. Additionally, staff reviewed the existing statements of 1201.03 which would allow the ability to prioritize the following: *Preserve and protect forests and woodlands, existing trees and vegetation, agricultural lands, floodplains, stream corridors, wetlands, and other sensitive environmental areas from adverse impacts of urban and suburban development;*
6. Review residential density in reference to 2026 LDC Update discussions: The current proposal is to have the maximum density align with existing allowances for District 5. If any changes occur to District 5 in the future it would be appropriate to consider revising D11 at the same time. The conditional use and planned development requirements of District 11 also provide additional opportunity to ensure any proposal is appropriate to the site and surrounding development.
7. Review Comprehensive Plan recommendation for enhanced streetscape requirements - Added reference within the purpose statement
8. Townhomes – discussion questioning if townhomes were appropriate and if they might serve as an appropriate transition to adjacent residential to the north
 - o Residential to the north is separated from D11 by a 30ft deep wooded parcel & a 140 ft ROW.
 - o Townhomes could serve as a more appropriate transition then a light industrial user
 - o The 100 acres at 5555 Darrow Road were not vacant when the Comprehensive Plan was developed; however, mixed use redevelopment was anticipated and supported with the focus area plan: *The vision for Darrow Road is to enhance the mix of commercial and light industrial land uses while supporting new suburban residential use and public/semi-public space, creating a distinct mixed-use district that complements downtown Hudson.*
 - o Any residential would be limited to the Planned Development which requires review by Planning Commission and Council and per 1204.02 shall comply with the Purpose statement: *planned developments are expected to deliver exceptional quality products that preserve critical environmental resources, provide above-average open space amenities, incorporate creative design in the layout of buildings, open space, and circulation, assure compatibility with surrounding land uses and neighborhood character, and provide greater efficiency in the layout and provision of roads, utilities, and other infrastructure.*

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Considerations

District Standards (Section 1204.01) Zoning Map and Text Amendments

All applications for text or zoning map amendments shall be reviewed by the PC and City Council for compliance with the nine standards set forth within Section 1204.01 of the Land Development Code (LDC).

The following Section 1204 comments are reposted from the November 2025 Staff Report:

- a) *Whether or not the proposed amendment is in accordance with basic purpose and intent of the Land Development Code*
 - a. *Promote the public health, safety, convenience, comfort, prosperity, and general welfare;*
 - b. *Secure safety of persons and property from fire, flood, and other dangers, and to secure adequate open spaces for light, air, and amenity;*
 - c. *Conserve and stabilize property values through the most appropriate uses of land in relation to one another;*
 - d. *Preserve and protect forests and woodlands, existing trees and vegetation, agricultural lands, floodplains, stream corridors, wetlands, and other sensitive environmental areas from adverse impacts of urban and suburban development;*
 - e. *Facilitate the economic provision of adequate public facilities such as transportation, water supply, sewage disposal, drainage, electricity, public schools, parks, and other public services and requirements;*
 - f. *Prevent congestion in travel and transportation, reduce community dependence on automobile travel, and encourage trip consolidation;*
 - g. *Preserve and protect the architecture, history, and small-town character of the historic village core;*
 - h. *Encourage innovative residential development so that growing demand for housing may be met by greater variety in type, design, and layout of dwellings, and by conservation and more efficient use of open space ancillary to such dwellings;*
 - i. *Encourage nonresidential development that preserves and protects the character of the community, including its natural landscape, and that minimizes objectionable noise, glare, odor, traffic and other impacts of such development, especially when adjacent to residential uses or to the historic village core;*
 - j. *Manage overall community growth, including population and employment growth, to benefit the community and to encourage fiscally efficient and orderly development; and*
 - k. *Encourage a balance of residential and non-residential uses and development in the community so that future growth occurs in a fiscally prudent manner.*

Staff Comment: Staff offers the following

1. The proposed D11 area has limited environmental constraints allowing for; in general, less environmental impact than other portions of the city.
2. The multi lane divided median street design of St Rt 91 and Terex Rd do have greater ability to manager traffic and provide expanded separation to surrounding uses.
3. Residential development is only proposed through a Planned Development requiring a higher standard of design and review including acceptance by both the Planning Commission and City Council.
4. Non-residential development would have significant setback and buffer to surrounding residential zoning. The proposed amendment would remove the heavy industrial allowances and shift to a less intensive light industrial and commercial focus. Expanded landscaping standards could be considered along the street frontages.
5. The amendment would allow additional amenities to support the surrounding commercial/industrial areas and facilitate further investment in the large vacant areas within the proposed D11 Corridor.

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b) *Whether or not the proposed amendment furthers the long-range planning goals of the City (as outlined in the City's Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives);*

Staff Comment: The proposed D11 text and map amendment is responsive to the Comprehensive Plan recommendations to permit additional commercial uses along the eastern frontage of Darrow Road, the plan recommendation to step down the D8 industrial currently present on both sides of Darrow Road, and provides some additional redevelopment flexibility for the corridor in response to the vacant site at 5555 Darrow Road.

The proposed amendment would align with the following relevant to the Comprehensive Plan:

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan developed focus area recommendations for the Darrow Road Corridor. The plan recommended amending the zoning on the east side of Darrow Road from Terex Road or Georgetown Road to provide expanded opportunity for retail/restaurant/service uses. At the Council workshop on February 25th, staff presented a draft amendment responding to this narrow item of additional commercial along the frontage. City Council reviewed and requested a more holistic view be taken of the larger area.

In reviewing the larger South Darrow Rd Corridor, the following primary items guided the consideration of an LDC amendments:

1. The Comprehensive plan recommends allowing additional commercial south of Terex Road and east of Darrow Rd.
2. The Comprehensive Plan recommends revising the eastern and western portion of District 8 along Darrow Road from an industrial district to more of a light industrial-office zoning.
3. The former Joann facility (5455-5555 Darrow Rd) was occupied at the time of the Comprehensive Plan adoption; however, has since become fully vacant with the closure of Joann Corporate Headquarters. Further study was needed for this large site, beyond what was in scope for the district recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. The 100-acre site is larger than several existing zoning districts and the 1.4 million square foot structure is one of the largest available properties in Northeast Ohio.

Staff notes the following specific plan references relevant to the proposed amendment:

- Focus Area - Darrow Road Corridor:
 - Vision: *The vision for Darrow Road is to enhance the mix of commercial and light industrial land uses while supporting new suburban residential use and public/semi-public space, creating a distinct mixed-use district that complements downtown Hudson*
 - “Light Industrial Flex” is proposed for large portions of the D11 area. The Plan notes these areas should focus on a strong income tax base with the intent to limit large truck traffic.
- Plan Goals, Objectives and Recommendations
 - Objective 1.3.2 notes for the Main Corridor Focus area: *Progress development that is walkable, at a neighborhood scale and density, and creates an enhanced streetscape environment.*
 - Objective 1.5 under land use and Focus Areas notes *Continue to strengthen the local economy along major commercial corridors while protecting open space*
 - 1.5.1: *Identify and progress a mix of uses, including residential, along the S.R. 91 and S.R. 303 corridors, where existing commercial centers exist.*
 - 1.5.2: *Prioritize development of existing industrial and commercial sites over new development.*

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- *Objective 2.3: Promote retail and mixed-use developments in designated areas that align with the evolving workplace and economy.*
- *2.3.1 Perform surveys of the business community to help determine the state of the evolving workplace and economy and consider implementing needs identified in, or responsive to, the survey*
- *Objective 2.4: Seek the adaptive reuse of existing office, commercial, and industrial centers.*

Zoning revisions to industrial corridors across the community: The Council Subcommittee completed some brief review of all Comprehensive Plan recommendations related to office/industrial areas. The Comprehensive Plan recommendations focus on implementing minor adjustments to the current D6 and D8 and considering splitting these two districts into three categories/districts:

1. Office Park (D6)
2. Light Industrial Flex (potential D12)
3. Industrial (D8)

The subcommittee determined these additional considerations to office/industrial areas outside of the draft D11 would be studied as a standalone future effort as further market and community focus is known to D11 and the 996 Hines Hill Rd sites.

- c) *Whether or not conditions within the City have changed since the Land Development Code was last adopted/amended, or there was a mistake in the Land Development Code, that justifies the amendment;*

Staff Comment: Since the Land Development Code, office/industrial development has evolved to desire increased access to support amenities. This is somewhat counter to the current District 8 zoning which only permits such uses on a narrow, limited basis. Additionally, the large vacant facility at 5555 Darrow Rd is a significant change in conditions requiring study of the larger corridor.

- d) *Whether or not the amendment corrects an inequitable situation created by the Land Development Code, rather than merely grants special privileges;*

Staff Comment: The proposed amendment would not grant special privileges as the corridor covers a large area with numerous development sites. The currently vacant facility at 5555 Darrow Rd does contain a large portion of the district; however, this site at 100 acres and 1.4 million square feet of building is significantly larger than several existing zoning districts within the City of Hudson.

- e) *Whether or not the amendment avoids unlawful exclusionary zoning;*

Staff Comment: The amendment avoids unlawful exclusionary zoning.

- f) *With respect to zoning map amendments, whether the proposed zoning map amendment is consistent with the zoning classifications of the surrounding land;*

Staff Comment: The proposed map amendment would be consistent with classifications of surrounding land. The modest step down from industrial zoning of the corridor will provide an improved transition from the industrial development on the southern edge to the commercial and residential areas to the north.

- g) *With respect to zoning map amendments, whether all of the new requirements attendant to the proposed zoning classification can be complied with on the subject parcel(s);*

Staff Comment: the proposed requirements can be complied with.

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h) Does the amendment affect the City's ability to provide adequate services, facilities, or programs that might be required if the application were approved;

Staff Comment: The amendment would not affect the city's ability to provide adequate services. Staff notes the existing street and utilities network has adequate capacity.

i) Whether or not the amendment is necessary to address changed or changing social values, new planning concepts, or other social or economic conditions in the areas affected.

Staff Comment: Staff notes the incorporating of some mixed use elements and allowances for retail/service commercial will address changing in the amenities desired adjacent to modern office development. Additionally, the amendment is responsive to the current economic conditions of the corridor which contain significant vacant facilities.

Required PC Action

The PC shall conduct a public hearing, make specific recommendations to the City Council, and transmit the application to the City Council, together with the text and map amendments pertaining thereto, within 120 days from the date of initiation of the application for text or official zoning map amendments. The initiation of the application was commenced with City Councils referral on September 16, 2024.

The City Council shall hold a public hearing and take final action within twenty days of said public hearing. An amendment before the City Council for consideration shall take effect only if passed or approved by not less than five members of the City Council.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Commission review the proposed text amendments, consider the testimony from the public hearing of November 10, 2025, and then proceed with consideration of a formal recommendation to City Council.