

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date May 17, 2013

Saint Paul Gas Light Company Island Station
HERITAGE PRESERVATION SITE DESIGNATION

WHEREAS, Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code directs that the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) shall recommend to the Mayor and City Council area and buildings which the HPC has reason to believe are eligible for designation as heritage preservation sites; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Gas Light Company Island Station (Island Station) at 437 Shepard Road (380 Randolph Avenue, formerly 1 Ross Road; RA-SPC-3323) is located in Section 12 of Township 28N R23W, about two miles upstream from downtown Saint Paul. It is in Planning District 9, known as the West 7th/Fort Road Federation. The electric-steam plant was constructed in 1924 and designed by the firm of Toltz, King and Day (now TKDA). It occupies the foot of a peninsula on the west side of the Mississippi River about 100 feet from the shoreline. This peninsula was originally the 6-acre Ross Island and was reached by a wood bridge (razed). The west half of the island is now infilled in part by ashes sluiced out of the plant furnaces; and

WHEREAS, Island Station was first surveyed as part of the *Historic Sites Survey of St. Paul and Ramsey County* in 1983. An inventory form was filed and the building was listed as a site of "Major Significance." A National Register nomination form was completed in 1984 for the owner at the time and recommended that the property was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) but did not evaluate it under specific criteria.

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

(cont.) In 1984 a memo from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) found the property did not meet the NRHP criteria for eligibility. A 2003 Environmental Assessment Worksheet noted the Island Station was not eligible for the NRHP and two additional studies for nearby developments in 2004 and 2006 noted that Island Station had been recommended by the SHPO as not eligible for listing in the NRHP; and

WHEREAS, In early 2013, the Department of Parks and Recreation hired Landscape Research to complete an *Historic Significance Evaluation Study* (Study) for the St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station pursuant to City of Saint Paul Ordinance No. 12-55. The Study further established the historical significance of the site and also examined the broader context of the Island Station as it relates to electric steam power generation in early Twentieth Century Saint Paul. On March 28, 2013, the HPC accepted the *Study* and voted to commence the designation process for the potential historic site. The State Historic Preservation Office has received the Study and the draft nomination form and is currently reviewing the proposal to locally designate the site; and

WHEREAS, the property contains the main plant, a screen house and a scale/car puller house and these have a fair degree of integrity while the condition of the main plant structure is considered poor. There is also a gable-roofed metal garage of unknown construction date at the northwest of the plant. The Period of Significance for the site is from 1924 when the building(s) was constructed to 1973 when the site was decommissioned as a power plant; and

WHEREAS, as required by Legislative Code 73.05 (b), the Heritage Preservation Commission has requested that the Planning Commission review the proposed designation and comment on the following: 1) the relationship of the proposed designation to the Comprehensive Plan; 2) the effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding neighborhood; and 3) any other planning considerations, along with a recommendation for approval, rejection, or modification of the proposed designation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Saint Paul Planning Commission finds the following regarding the proposed St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station designation:

1. *Relationship of the proposed designation to the Comprehensive Plan.* The proposed designation of the St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station is generally consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. The Historic Preservation Chapter recognizes that heritage preservation has been used effectively in Saint Paul as a tool for community development and revitalization (Strategies HP 3.11, 3.12, 4.3, 5.3 and 5.9). Specifically, the Land Use Chapter identifies this area as an opportunity site (LU1.54). The Land Use Chapter further encourages supporting the protection and enhancement of the visibility of architectural landmarks (LU3.18).

Specifically, the Great River Passage Plan Amendment (adopted by the City Council in 2013) provides a vision for preserving and redeveloping the Island

Station to become a year-round destination with a focus on river-oriented arts and leisure activities. The Fort Road Development Plan Summary (adopted by the City Council in 2005) and the District 9 Area Plan Summary (adopted by the City Council in 2010) highlight strategies to preserve and reuse Island Station, if not for housing, then the building for park use.

2. *Effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding neighborhood.*

Designation would have a positive effect on the surrounding area, both residential and commercial, and act as an anchor for redevelopment in the Ft. Road neighborhood and along this stretch of the Mississippi River. Having design review guidelines (Preservation Program) will help to ensure the site develops while maintaining its architectural and historical character over the long term. Designation, with the accompanying Preservation Program, would also provide clarity to future owners or developers in visioning how the building could be adaptively reused and incorporated within a larger development.

3. *Other planning considerations and recommendation for approval, rejection, or modification.* Retaining and reusing the current historic building provides a development opportunity with proximity to and good views of the river valley. Alternatively a new development will have to meet the regulations of the Floodplain and Critical Area Overlay Districts, which have floodproofing and river setback requirements, as well as the 35 foot height limit in the underlying T2 district.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission finds the designation of the Saint Paul Gas Light Company Island Station as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site, along with its Preservation Program, is consistent with the goals and strategies within Comprehensive Plan.



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: May 14, 2013
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Neighborhood Planning Committee
SUBJECT: West Grand Avenue Zoning Study

Executive Summary

A public hearing on the West Grand Zoning Study draft amendments was held on April 19, 2013. The draft recommendations included the following zoning changes for the study area:

- Reduce maximum height in RM2 (multiple-family) districts from 5 stories/50 feet to 4 stories/45 feet.
- Increase minimum lot area per unit for large units in RM2 districts from 1,500 square feet to 1,750 square feet for 3-bedroom units and 2,000 square feet for 4-bedroom units.
- Change the side yard setback requirement in the RM2 district from ½ of building height to 9 feet.
- Rezoning to T2 (traditional neighborhood) at commercial nodes at Grand/Cleveland and Grand/Fairview.

Building height was identified in public testimony as a major concern, particularly for single-family residents directly across an alley from RM2 lots, and District 14 suggested further height reduction. Based on public testimony and Comprehensive Plan goals, the Neighborhood Planning Committee concluded that the number of units is less important than building height and mass in regard to the relationship between Grand Avenue apartments and adjacent single-family residential lots. One person spoke in opposition to the recommended changes to RM2 density and dimensional standards. One individual spoke in opposition to the proposed commercial node rezonings.

The final recommendations include the following zoning changes:

- Reduce maximum height in RM2 districts from 5 stories/50 feet to 4 stories/40 feet.

- Increase minimum lot area per unit for large units in RM2 districts from 1,500 square feet to 1,700 square feet for 3-bedroom units and 1,900 square feet for 4-bedroom units.
- Change the side yard setback requirement in the RM2 district from ½ of building height to 9 feet.
- Apply T2 design standards to RM2 districts.
- Rezoning to T2 at commercial nodes at Grand/Cleveland and Grand/Fairview.

Background

In August of 2012, the City Council enacted Ordinance 12-53, an interim ordinance restricting any multiple-family development greater than 40 feet high along West Grand Avenue between Cretin and Fairview Avenues. The interim ordinance requested that the Planning Commission study whether the current RM2 (multiple-family residential) zoning and B2 (community business) districts best further the Comprehensive Plan's land use objectives, which include "supporting the prevailing character of Established Neighborhoods along this stretch of Grand Avenue." The zoning study would examine the impact of building height and unit density of apartment buildings designed for housing college students.

After commencing the zoning study, the City Council subsequently expanded the study area to include B2 parcels located along Grand Avenue just to the east of its intersection with Fairview Avenue. This slight easterly expansion of the original study area resulted in incorporating all B2 zoned property abutting the intersection of these two streets into the study. The attached map (Attachment 1) shows the expanded study area as amended.

Zoning Study Process

Staff met with representatives of the Macalester Groveland Community Council (D14), the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee (WSNAC), and others indicating interest in order to coordinate the zoning study with the Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) process being undertaken by D14 and WSNAC with the help of the Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). CDI is a proactive planning process intended to bring together neighborhoods, city government, and a technical team which included development consultants, design experts, and facilitators to evaluate market factors and neighborhood and city goals in order to raise the level of dialogue regarding redevelopment issues. The CDI process was completed in March and a report was submitted to the Planning Commission.

The Open Saint Paul online forum was also used to gather input on the issues central to the zoning study. This new tool facilitates community conversation around important issues, and offers an alternative to public meetings for individuals to provide input and feedback to City staff and officials.

On March 8, 2013, the Planning Commission released the zoning study and recommendations for public hearing. A public hearing was held April 19, 2013. Testimony from the hearing was reviewed by the Neighborhood Planning Committee (NPC) on April 24, 2013, and again on May 8, 2013. At the conclusion of this review, the NPC voted unanimously to forward the study and revised zoning recommendations to the full Planning Commission.

Existing Zoning and Land Use

While the study area contains a mix of residential and commercial uses consistent with its mix of residential and commercial zoning classifications, residential uses and zoning dominate most blocks within the study area. Residential uses include a mix of single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes, and apartment buildings. The building heights of these uses range from 2 ½ to 3 ½ stories. The underlying zoning is primarily RM2. However, a number of parcels in the study area, particularly those found on the south side of Grand between Howell and Fairview, are designated BC (community business converted) which allows for the commercial use of single-family and duplex structures. Commercial zoning includes B2 at the intersections of Grand with Cleveland and Fairview, B1 (local business) at Grand and Prior, and the aforementioned BC. Commercial buildings in the study area are one or two stories. Uses are generally neighborhood oriented in nature, and include restaurants, a coffee shop, a service station and a gas station/convenience store, a bank, a grocery store, a movie theater, a paint/wall-coverings store, and assorted small scale retail and service uses.

Across the alleys running between Grand and (respectively) Summit and Lincoln Avenues and therefore immediately adjoining the study area, are residential areas dominated by single-family homes and duplexes zoned R2 (one-family), R3 (one-family), and RT1 (two-family) residential.

Existing apartment buildings in the study area have an average density that is significantly greater than the 1500 sq. feet per dwelling unit/29 dwelling units per acre allowed under the current RM2 zoning, and similar to the 900 sq. feet per du/ 48 du per acre allowed under RM2 with the maximum bonus for underground parking. The ten existing apartment buildings along Grand between Cleveland and Cretin, for example, have an average density of 892 sq. ft. per du/49 dwelling units per acre, ranging from 1360 sq. ft. per unit/32 du per acre (2163 Grand) to 386 sq. feet per du/ 113 dwelling units per acre (50 S. Cretin).

Context: The Comprehensive Plan

Generalized 2030 Future Land Uses maps in the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan show the commercial node at Grand and Fairview as the west end of a “Mixed Use Corridor,” described in the Land Use Chapter as “primary thoroughfares . . . served by

public transit . . . [including] areas where two or more of the following uses are or could be located: residential, commercial, retail, office, small scale industry, institutional, and open space.”

The *Generalized 2030 Future Land Uses* maps in the Land Use Chapter designate Grand Avenue west of the commercial node at Fairview as a “Residential Corridor,” described in the Land Use Chapter as “segments of street corridors that run through Established Neighborhoods, predominantly characterized by medium density residential uses. Some portions of Residential Corridors could support additional housing.”

The *Generalized 2030 Future Land Uses* map in the Land Use Chapter designates the residential areas north and south of the Grand Avenue Mixed Use and Residential Corridor as “Established Neighborhoods,” described in the Land Use Chapter as “predominantly residential areas with a range of housing types. Single family houses and duplexes predominate, although there may be smaller scale multifamily scattered within these neighborhoods. Also includes scattered neighborhood-serving commercial, service, and institutional uses at the juncture of arterial and collector streets.”

The Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan states that “the core goal of Strategy LU-1, as visualized in the land use maps and described in the subsequent policies, is higher density development.” It goes on to say that “higher density development is not an objective to be sought solely for itself,” but to “contribute to the goal of creating a vibrant, economically strong community that is environmentally sustainable;” and that policies in Strategy LU-1 “direct new, higher density development to Downtown, the Central Corridor, Neighborhood Centers, Residential and Mixed-Use Corridors, and Employment Districts.” It states that “zoning standards and districts will be used to support the prevailing character of Established Neighborhoods and to allow higher density development in . . . Residential and Mixed Use Corridors.” (Pages 7-8)

Metropolitan Council growth targets contained within the Comprehensive Plan show Saint Paul adding 13,000 new households between 2010 and 2030. Strategy 1 of the Land Use Chapter directs this growth into higher density development in targeted areas, including Residential and Mixed Use Corridors.

Land Use Chapter Policy 1.9 states that the City should *encourage the development of medium density multi-family housing along Residential Corridors*. A table on page 8 of the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan defines Medium Density Residential as having a range 15-30 dwelling units per acre. Text with the table explains:

“The range of densities permitted by the existing RM districts is 22 units to 54 units per acre. Several multi-family residential developments constructed in the previous decade far exceed those densities. Densities of individual projects ranged between 40 units per acre and 90 units per acre. Similar densities in future residential developments in Residential Corridors, Neighborhood Centers and Mixed-Use

Corridors will go far in achieving the objective of compact, mixed-use development that supports transit. According to the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, a minimum of 15 units per acre will support frequent bus service, while a minimum of 50 units per acre will support a walkable community and transit use.”

It should be noted that the units/acre ranges in the land use descriptions on the *Generalized 2030 Future Land Uses* map in the Land Use Chapter have created some confusion. These average ranges were added at the request of the Metropolitan Council to meet their needs for transportation and infrastructure planning and forecasting purposes. These average density ranges are not intended to set either minimum or maximum densities that must be required by zoning regulations. Therefore, the Land Use Chapter does not suggest that the large amount of land in Established Neighborhoods (3-20 units/acre) and Residential Corridors (4-30 units/acre) zoned RM2 (which provides for much higher density) needs to be downzoned to comply with these average density ranges. Rather, Land Use Chapter Policy 1.3 is: “Study the RM multi-family districts and the TN districts to determine how they can accommodate more intense residential development.”

Residential Density Analysis

The Student Zoning Housing Study completed by the Planning Commission in 2012 found significant demand for student housing in the neighborhoods surrounding the University of St. Thomas (UST) campus, including the study area for the West Grand Zoning Study. It is reasonable to assume that the demand would support higher density residential development within the West Grand Study Area, and that the type of development to satisfy this demand can be targeted at college students, such as the current development under construction at the corner of Grand and Finn.

The development at Grand and Finn consists of 20 four-bedroom residential units on a 0.41 acre lot. This translates to a density of 48-units per acre. Dimensional standards in the RM2 district limit multiple-family density to 29-units per acre (based on a minimum lot size of 1,500 square feet per unit). However a “density bonus” allows additional units in exchange for providing structured parking. The Grand and Finn project is providing 37 parking spaces in an underground garage. It was argued that the higher unit density helps justify the high cost of providing underground parking which serves to reduce the impact of unattractive surface parking lots.

Even though the 48-dwelling unit/acre of the Grand-Finn building is consistent with the 49 du/acre average density of the ten existing apartment buildings along Grand between Cleveland and Cretin, the Grand and Finn development is composed entirely of 4-bedroom units and thereby differs from typical multi-family developments in the area which have smaller average unit size. It is apparent that the design of the large unit apartment building being built at Grand and Finn is designed to appeal to college students. Developments of this type would tend to have higher population density,

more adults, and potentially more cars per unit than the existing buildings and development typically anticipated in RM2 districts. However, there appears to be a unique demand for such developments in the West Grand area and, therefore, it may be appropriate to adjust zoning standards to account for the potential impact of this in the West Grand area.

Given that new development in the study area may favor the type of design being developed at Grand and Finn, it is worthwhile to examine the design limitation imposed on the area of the St. Thomas (UST) campus fronting Grand between Cretin and Cleveland. There, building heights for future residential buildings on the UST campus are subject to a 40-foot maximum height, 10 feet lower than the 50-foot height limit in RM2 districts. Unlike dimensional standards which apply to individual structures allowed in a zoning district, the UST height controls, along with greater required setbacks and other provisions, were intended to manage the overall impact of the entire campus, which includes multiple building and uses not otherwise allowed in residential districts.

While RM2 districts and its 50-foot height limit commonly abut RT1, RT2 , and RM1 zoning districts with their 40-foot maximum heights, it is not unusual for RM2 districts, as is the case along West Grand, to abut one-family districts with 30-foot height limits. And, given the apparent strong demand for higher buildings with higher than average density adjacent to one-family districts abutting West Grand it is appropriate to adjust the height standard in the West Grand area to address this potentially greater impact.

Adjustment of Residential Dimensional and Density Standards

The zoning recommendations released for public hearing called for changes to RM2 density and dimensional standards, reducing maximum allowed building height from 5 stories/50 feet to 4 stories/45 feet and increasing minimum required lot area per unit for three- and four-bedroom units (to 1,750 and 2,000 sq. ft., respectively, from 1,500 sq ft.). The study also recommended reducing required side yard setbacks from ½ of building height to 9 feet.

Setbacks and Building Height:

Public hearing testimony identified building height as a major concern of neighborhood residents, particularly on RM2 lots directly across an alley from single-family residential. Testimony from a number of individual residents as well as the Macalester Groveland Community Council specifically stated that maximum allowed heights should be further reduced (relative to the study's recommendation).

The NPC evaluated a number of options in response to this line of testimony, including reducing maximum building height, increasing minimum rear yard setbacks, and implementing a "step-up" approach where maximum building height at the rear setback

line is reduced but increases toward the overall maximum building height as the distance from the rear lot line increases.

A “step-up” approach to building height is used in the density and dimensional standards for T (traditional neighborhood) districts in Saint Paul. In these districts, the minimum rear-yard setbacks are substantially less than those required for the RM2 district. In the context of the RM2 districts in the West Grand study area, reduced rear yard setbacks would exacerbate the visual and other impacts of large multiple-family buildings on adjacent established neighborhoods, and would be inconsistent with the established urban form of residential backyards in the area.

Increasing minimum rear yard setbacks for RM2 districts in the study area could potentially move the mass of a building farther away from the adjacent low-density residential. However, it would not be possible to compensate with a corresponding reduction in the front yard setback without impacting the character of Grand Avenue. As a result, this approach would limit the available building envelope. It would also be inconsistent with the established urban form of the area.

Based on this analysis, the Neighborhood Planning Committee recommends modifying the proposed zoning text amendments to reduce maximum building height to four stories/40 feet. While zoning along Grand has always allowed taller buildings (RM2 currently permits 5 stories / 50 feet, and zoning prior to 1975 allowed even taller buildings), a 4 story/40 foot maximum height would be consistent with the 3 and 3½ story apartment buildings that are common along Grand Avenue, and consistent with the 40 foot maximum height allowed in RT1 two-family, RT2 townhouse, and RM1 multiple-family districts.

The RM2 zoning along Grand Avenue since 1975 has required side yard setbacks for multiple-family buildings to be ½ the height, but this is substantially greater than the typical side yard setbacks of most existing buildings. Consistent with a lower maximum building height that is more in keeping with existing building heights, it is also appropriate to consider a smaller minimum side setback requirement that is more consistent with existing buildings. A 9 foot side setback for buildings up to 40 feet in height would be consistent with the 40 foot maximum height/9 foot minimum side setback for duplexes in the RT1 two-family district and for townhouses in the RT2 townhouse district. It would also be consistent with the 18 foot separation requirement for apartment buildings on the same parcel. Interestingly, a townhouse in an RM2 zone would have a greater side setback requirement than a townhouse built in the lower density RT2 district. No modification from the public hearing recommendations was made in regard to the proposed changes to side yard setbacks.

Density:

Based on public testimony and discussion at committee, the NPC concluded that overall density of development—as measured by number of units per area—is less important in regard to the relationship between Grand Avenue and the adjacent neighborhoods than is building height and mass. Moreover, as noted previously, Land Use Chapter Policy 1.3 states that RM districts should be studied “to determine how they can accommodate more intense residential development.” But, this policy must be implemented in the context of the West Grand study area where unique market conditions have the potential to create development that has, as noted by the City Council in requesting the West Grand Zoning Study, the potential to impact adjacent neighborhoods more than typical multiple-family development. The NPC concluded that a better balance between these two considerations is achieved by adjusting the proposed changes to minimum lot area per unit requirements to 1,900 square feet for 4-bedroom units (from 2,000 in the public hearing recommendations) and 1,700 square feet for 3-bedroom units (from 1,750 in the public hearing recommendations). These changes will result in an allowed number of 3- or 4-bedroom units that is approximately 70% of what is allowed under current standards (for any given lot) within the study area.

The impact of any reduction in allowed residential density and building height on parking must also be considered. RM2 zoning districts award a density bonus for the provision of structured parking. No change to this was proposed in the public hearing draft amendments. Maximum development height would be an absolute cap, but property developers would still be allowed to provide structured parking in order to increase the calculated lot area as specified in zoning code Sec. 66.230., Residential District Density and Dimensional Standards. A number of individuals and the Macalester Groveland Community Council testified at the public hearing for the removal of the bonus for structured parking. However, the existing density bonus for structured parking provides an important incentive to reduce the impact of unattractive, inefficient, and environmentally harmful surface parking, consistent with major city-wide Comprehensive Plan goals to promote more efficient land use, improved aesthetics, and environmental quality. It is also consistent with the statement in the Macalester-Groveland Community Plan that surface parking lots are unattractive. Land Use Chapter Policy 1.3 calls for study of RM2 multiple-family districts to determine how they can accommodate more intense residential development. Providing for structured parking is one way this can be done while reducing environmental and aesthetic impacts. Eliminating the density bonus for structured parking would be inconsistent with this policy.

Alternative Residential Strategy

When the Neighborhood Planning Committee forwarded the West Grand Zoning Study to the full Planning Commission to be released for public hearing, the memorandum describing the findings and recommendations of the study included a section outlining a

potential alternative approach to the proposed residential zoning changes. In summary, this section suggested the possibility of rezoning RM2 areas to T1 or T2 zoning as an alternative to keeping the existing RM2 zoning and adjusting density and dimensional standards. Such an approach would put design standards in place to help protect the character of Grand Avenue, but would also introduce the potential for conflicts between commercial uses and low-density residential uses in the neighborhoods sharing an alley with Grand. Moreover, such an approach would involve additional research regarding how to limit building size and density; in T districts, density is measured by floor area ratio (the ratio of total floor area in a building to lot size) and, as compared to RM2 districts, there is more flexibility in building height and mass and where it may be sited on a lot.

No testimony received at the public hearing or during the comment period expressed support for rezoning RM2 districts to a T designation or even directly addressed the alternative approach. However, the comments submitted by the Macalester Groveland Community Council recommended providing design standards for the area consistent with the Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) report. Design standards for T districts are consistent with the CDI report and provide for transitions from higher density uses to adjacent lower-density neighborhoods, a key issue identified by the City Council in requesting this zoning study. Therefore, the NPC recommends applying T2 design standards to RM2 districts in the West Grand study area.

Commercial Analysis and Recommendations

Existing commercial property in the study area is zoned B2, B1, and BC. The existing B2 commercial nodes at Grand/Cleveland and Grand/Fairview reflect the natural locational advantage for commercial uses where arterial and collector streets intersect with a Residential or Mixed-Use Corridor. Rezoning the current B2 commercial districts to T2 (traditional neighborhood) districts (see Attachment 2) would allow increased height and density of development at these key intersections, consistent with Strategy One of the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. This approach would add greater flexibility for any future reuse of these parcels and would put in place design standards to ensure the new development fits the existing character of the area.

The proposed rezoning would result in the following buildings/lots becoming legally non-conforming with regard to building and parking placement: Whole Foods (NE corner Grand/Fairview), Abbot Paint (SE corner Grand/Fairview), Signals Garage (SE corner Grand/Cleveland), and Super America (NE corner Grand/Cleveland). Super America is a conditional use under either B2 or T2 zoning. Signals Garage is a legal non-conforming use under the current B2 zoning, and would remain so with the rezoning to T2. Any expansion of a non-conforming use requires Planning Commission approval, and is subject to a consent petition of surrounding property owners. Expansion of a structure would need to be consistent with dimensional and lot arrangement standards, but non-conformities with these standards could be approved as part of an expansion of non-

conforming use approval. Signage allowances are also more restrictive in T2 districts as compared to B2 districts.

The existing BC and B1 zoned parcels are proposed to remain as currently zoned, with the exception of the two BC parcels that are part of the commercial node at Grand and Cleveland on the north side of Grand immediately east of the Super America (see Attachment 2). These two parcels are proposed to be rezoned to T2 along with the B2 Super America parcel. Similarly, the RM2 parcel occupied by a single-family home between a large apartment building and Signals Garage at the SE corner of the Grand-Cleveland commercial node, immediately across from the proposed T2 lots on the north side of Grand, is also proposed to be rezoned to T2 (see Attachment 2). These actions would create larger areas of contiguous T2 zoning, which would make higher-density, mixed-use redevelopment at this commercial node at the intersection of two major streets more feasible.

Rezoning of BC parcels adjacent to the Grand/Fairview commercial node to T1 or T2, particularly the parcels that have commercial building types that are nonconforming under BC zoning, should also be considered.

Areas Needing Additional Study

Parking:

A significant issue raised by public testimony received during the West Grand Zoning Study is the impact of large, multiple-family buildings on the availability of on-street parking. The western-most two blocks of the West Grand study area, Grand Avenue between Cretin and Cleveland, include property within the campus of the University of St. Thomas, a large generator of demand for parking, both off-street and on. As a result, most of the neighborhood areas adjacent to the western end of the study area are included in residential permit parking districts. These areas are also adjacent to older multiple-family buildings that provided little or no off-street parking. The already over-subscribed supply of on-street parking is further taxed when new multiple-family development replaces what was previously much lower density housing. The best way to address this is through provisions for the residential permit parking districts. Regulation of permit parking is not part of the Zoning Code.

Residential Density Transitions Citywide:

Approximately 2200 of the approximately 5300 RM2 zoned parcels citywide are adjacent (shared lotline or shared alley) to parcels zoned RL-R4 single-family residential. While the demand for high density housing catering to college students may be unique to the study area, the issue of how to best transition building form from higher density RM2 districts to adjacent lower density districts is not. While, the NPC does not recommend applying any of the proposed zoning changes recommended herein beyond

boundaries of the study area, it does wish to identify residential density transitions as a topic for possible further study.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Neighborhood Planning Committee recommends the following zoning code text amendments pertaining to West Grand Avenue, along with rezoning of property at the intersection of Grand and Cleveland from B2, BC, and RM2 to T2, and rezoning of property at the intersection of Grand and Fairview from B2 to T2. The proposed zoning map amendments are shown on Attachment 2.

Note: New language to be added to Zoning Code Sec. 66.231 is shown by underlining.

Sec. 66.231. Density and dimensional standards table.

Table 66.231, residential district dimensional standards, sets forth density and dimensional standards that are specific to residential districts. These standards are in addition to the provisions of chapter 63, regulations of general applicability.

Table 66.231. Residential District Dimensional Standards

Zoning District	Lot Size Minimum (per unit)		Height Maximum		Yard Setbacks Minimum (feet)		
	Area (sq. ft.)(b)	Width (feet)	Stories	Feet	Front	Side	Rear
RL one-family large lot	21,780(d)	80	3	30	30(g),(h)	10(h)	25(h)
R1 one-family	9,600(e)	80	3	30	30(g),(h)	10(h)	25(h)
R2 one-family	7,200	60	3	30	25(g),(h)	8(h)	25(h)
R3 one-family	6,000	50	3	30	25(g),(h)	6(h)	25(h)
R4 one-family	5,000	40	3	30	25(g),(h)	4(h)	25(h)
RT1 two-family	3,000(f)	25	3	40	25(g),(h)	9(h)	25(h)
RT2 townhouse	2,500(c),(f)	20	3	40	25(g),(h)	9(h),(i)	25(h)
RM1 multiple- family	2,000 (c),(f)	n/a	3	40	25(g),(h)	½ height (h),(i)	25(h),(i)
RM2 multiple- family	1,500(c),(f), <u>(k)</u>	n/a	5 <u>(k)</u>	50 <u>(k)</u>	25(g),(h)	½ height (h),(i), <u>(k)</u>	25(h),(i)
RM3 multiple- family	800(c)	n/a	no max.	no max.	(g),(h),(j)	(h),(i),(j)	(h),(i),(j)

n/a - not applicable

Notes to table 66.231, residential district dimensional standards:

- (a) R4 one-family district dimensional standards shall apply when one-family dwellings are erected in less restrictive residential districts. RT1 two-family district dimensional standards shall apply when two-family dwellings are erected in less restrictive residential districts. RM2 multiple-family district dimensional standards shall apply when multiple-family residential dwellings five (5) stories or less in height are constructed in an RM3 multiple-family district.
- (b) In calculating the area of a lot that adjoins a dedicated public alley, for the purpose of applying lot area and density requirements, one-half the width of such alley adjoining the lot shall be considered as part of the lot.
- (c) In calculating the area of a lot for the purpose of applying the minimum lot area per unit requirement, the lot area figure may be increased by three hundred (300) square feet for each parking space (up to two (2) parking spaces per unit) within a multiple-family structure or otherwise completely underground. Parking spaces within an above-ground parking structure, except for the top level, may also be used for this lot area bonus. The maximum number of units possible on a lot using this lot area bonus can be calculated using the formula $X = L \div (A - 600)$, where X = maximum units allowed, L = lot area in square feet, and A = required lot area per unit in square feet. A site plan showing parking layout and dimensions shall be required when applying for this lot area bonus. No multiple-family dwelling shall be built, nor shall any existing structure be converted to a multiple-family dwelling, on a lot that is less than nine thousand (9,000) square feet in area.
- (d) A larger lot may be required depending on how much square footage is actually needed to properly site and install an individual sewage treatment system.
- (e) Where over half of the lot has slopes of twelve (12) percent or greater, the minimum lot size shall be fifteen thousand (15,000) square feet. When determining lot size, the slope shall be that in existence prior to any grading or filling. Alterations shall not be allowed that will lower the slope from twelve (12) percent or greater to less than twelve (12) percent prior to the creation of new lots.
- (f) If townhouses are developed on parcels where only the land immediately beneath each dwelling unit constitutes an individually described lot and all other land required for yards, other open space, parking, and other necessary land as required by this code constitutes "common" properties, jointly owned by the owners of the described lots beneath each dwelling unit, the minimum size lot per unit shall be applied to the entire parcel.

- (g) Where at least fifty (50) percent of the front footage of any block is built up with principal structures, the minimum front yard setback for new structures shall be the average setback of the existing structures, or the normal setback requirement in the district plus half the amount the average setback is greater than the normal setback requirement, whichever is less. Existing structures set back twenty (20) percent more or less than the average shall be discounted from the formula.
- (h) For permitted and conditional principal uses allowed in residential districts other than residential uses, the front yard shall be equal to the front yard required for residential use and the side and rear yards shall be equal to one-half the height of the building but in no instance less than the minimum requirements of the district in which said use is located.
- (i) Side yards are required only for dwelling units on the ends of townhouse structures. When two (2) or more one-family, two-family, or townhouse structures are constructed on a single parcel, there shall be a distance of at least twelve (12) feet between principal buildings. When two (2) or more multifamily buildings are constructed on a single parcel, there shall be a distance of at least eighteen (18) feet between principal buildings.
- (j) Minimum front, side and rear setbacks shall be fifty (50) feet or one-half the building height, whichever is less.
- (k) For property along Grand Avenue between Fairview Avenue and Cretin Avenue, between lines defined by the parallel alleys immediately north and south of Grand Avenue:
 - (1) Building height shall be limited to four (4) stories and forty (40) feet;
 - (2) The minimum lot size for units with three (3) bedrooms shall be one thousand seven hundred fifty (1700) square feet per unit, and the minimum lot size for units with four (4) or more bedrooms shall be two thousand (1900) square feet per unit;
 - (3) Minimum side setbacks for multiple-family residential dwellings shall be nine (9) feet;
 - (4) The T2 design standards in Sec. 66.343 shall apply.

West Grand Zoning Study Area

Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development
Date Created: 2/8/20



Attachment 2



city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number
date

RECOMMENDATIONS ON WEST GRAND ZONING STUDY

WHEREAS, the City Council, in August 2012, enacted Ordinance 12-53, an interim ordinance restricting any multifamily development greater than 40 feet high along West Grand Avenue between Cretin and Fairview Avenues, and requesting that the Planning Commission study whether the current RM2 multiple-family residential zoning and B2 business districts best further the Comprehensive Plan's land use objectives along this stretch of Grand Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the City Council subsequently expanded the West Grand Zoning Study Area to include B2 parcels along Grand Avenue immediately east of Fairview Avenue; and

WHEREAS, *Generalized 2030 Future Land Uses* maps in the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan show the commercial node at Grand and Fairview as the west end of a "Mixed Use Corridor," Grand Avenue west of the commercial node at Fairview as a "Residential Corridor," and residential areas north and south of Grand Avenue as "Established Neighborhoods;" and

WHEREAS, Strategy 1 of the Land Use Chapter, to target growth to areas where there will be compact mixed-use communities where housing, employment, amenities, and transit can work synergistically to serve the needs of people who live and work there, states that its "core goal" is "higher density development;" and

WHEREAS, Strategy 1 of the Land Use Chapter specifically intends for development to take place "at densities greater than currently found in the community," and states that "higher density development is not an objective sought solely for itself," but to "contribute to the goal of creating a vibrant, economically strong community that is environmentally sustainable;" that policies in Strategy 1 "direct new, higher density development to . . . Residential and Mixed-Use Corridors;" and that "zoning standards and districts will be used to support the prevailing character of Established Neighborhoods and to allow higher density development in . . . Residential and Mixed Use Corridors;" and

WHEREAS, while RM2 zoning is consistent with the density of existing multi-family uses along Grand Avenue, the height and impact of new large (4-bedroom) unit apartment buildings along Grand Avenue in the study area has been identified as a concern for the residents of one-family dwellings immediately across the alleys north and south of Grand; and

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has drafted zoning text and map amendments pertaining to the West Grand Zoning Study Area both to further the Comprehensive Plan's land use objectives and to address concerns expressed by residents of one-family dwellings immediately across the alleys north and south of Grand due to unique circumstances in the study area regarding the potential impact of and high demand for new student-oriented large-unit apartment buildings across an alley from one-family zoning districts; and

WHEREAS, a 40 foot maximum building height with a 9 foot minimum side setback requirement would be consistent with the height and setbacks of existing development on Grand Avenue, consistent with the 18 foot separation requirement for apartment buildings on the same parcel, and consistent with the 40 foot maximum height/9 foot minimum side setback for duplexes and townhouses in the RT1 two-family and RT2 townhouse districts that are compatible with adjacent one-family zoning districts; and

WHEREAS, the Macalester Groveland Community Council, consistent with a recent Corridor Development Initiative report, supports proposed rezoning to T2 at the commercial nodes at Cleveland and Fairview, and recommends providing design standards in the study area consistent with T2 design standards that provide for transitions from higher density uses to adjacent lower-density districts; and

WHEREAS, on April 19, 2013, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the West Grand Zoning Study, including draft zoning code text and map amendments; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission referred the draft West Grand Zoning Study to the Neighborhood Planning Committee for consideration, review of the public hearing testimony, and recommendation; and

WHEREAS, the Neighborhood Planning Committee forwarded its recommendations and rationale for Zoning Code text and map amendments pertaining to the West Grand Zoning Study Area in a May , 2013, memorandum to the Planning Commission;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, under the provisions of Minnesota Statutes § 462.357 and § 61.801 of the Legislative Code, that the Planning Commission hereby recommends to the Mayor and City Council the following amendments to Chapter 66 of the Zoning Code pertaining to development standards for RM2 districts along Grand Avenue between Fairview Avenue and Cretin Avenue; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission recommends rezoning of property at the intersection of Grand and Cleveland from B2, BC, and RM2 to T2, and rezoning of property at the intersection of Grand and Fairview from B2 to T2, as shown on Attachment 2, Proposed Zoning Changes.

NOTE: New language to be added shown by underlining.

Sec. 66.231. Density and dimensional standards table.

Table 66.231, residential district dimensional standards, sets forth density and dimensional standards to residential districts. These standards are in addition to the provisions of chapter 63, regulations that are specific of general applicability.

Table 66.231. Residential District Dimensional Standards

Zoning District	Lot Size Minimum (per unit)		Height Maximum		Yard Setbacks Minimum (feet)		
	Area (sq. ft.)(b)	Width (ft.)	Stories	Feet	Front	Side	Rear
RL One-Family Large Lot	21,780 (d)	80	3	30	30 (g),(h)	10 (h)	25 (h)
R1 One-Family	9,600 (e)	80	3	30	30 (g),(h)	10 (h)	25 (h)
R2 One-Family	7,200	60	3	30	25 (g),(h)	8 (h)	25 (h)
R3 One-Family	6,000	50	3	30	25 (g),(h)	6 (h)	25 (h)
R4 One-Family	5,000	40	3	30	25 (g),(h)	4 (h)	25 (h)
RT1 Two-Family	3,000 (f)	25	3	40	25 (g),(h)	9 (h)	25 (h)
RT2 Townhouse	2,500 (c),(f)	20	3	40	25 (g),(h)	9 (h),(i)	25 (h)
RM1 Multiple-Family	2,000 (c),(f)	n/a	3	40	25 (g),(h)	½ height (h),(i)	25 (h),(i)
RM2 Multiple-Family	1,500 (c),(f),(k)	n/a	5 (k)	50 (k)	25 (g),(h)	½ height (h),(i),(k)	25 (h),(i)
RM3 Multiple-Family	800 (c)	n/a	no max.	no max.	(g),(h),(j)	(h),(i),(j)	(h),(i),(j)

n/a - not applicable

Notes to table 66.231, residential district dimensional standards:

- (a) R4 one-family district dimensional standards shall apply when one-family dwellings are erected in less restrictive residential districts. RT1 two-family district dimensional standards shall apply when two-family dwellings are erected in less restrictive residential districts. RM2 multiple-family district dimensional standards shall apply when multiple-family residential dwellings five (5) stories or less in height are constructed in an RM3 multiple-family district.
- (b) In calculating the area of a lot that adjoins a dedicated public alley, for the purpose of applying lot area and density requirements, one-half the width of such alley adjoining the lot shall be considered as part of the lot.
- (c) In calculating the area of a lot for the purpose of applying the minimum lot area per unit requirement, the lot area figure may be increased by three hundred (300) square feet for each parking space (up to two (2) parking spaces per unit) within a multiple-family structure or otherwise completely underground. Parking spaces within an above-ground parking structure, except for the top level, may also be used for this lot area bonus. The maximum number of units possible on a lot using this lot area bonus can be calculated using the formula $X = L \div (A - 600)$, where X = maximum units allowed, L = lot area in square feet, and A = required lot area per unit in square feet. A site plan showing parking layout and dimensions shall be required when applying for this lot area bonus. No multiple-family dwelling shall be built, nor shall any existing structure be converted to a multiple-family dwelling, on a lot that is less than nine thousand (9,000) square feet in area.

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