

ZONING COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

1. **FILE NAME:** Starbucks **FILE #:** 15-152-287
 2. **APPLICANT:** Ryan Companies US Inc. **HEARING DATE:** September 10, 2015
 3. **TYPE OF APPLICATION:** Conditional Use Permit & Variance
 4. **LOCATION:** 234 Snelling Ave N, SE corner at Marshall Avenue
 5. **PIN & LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** 032823220173, Boulevard Addition Pts Of Lots 1 And Lot 2 And Vac Alley In Cardigans Re And Pts Of Lots 9 Thru Lot 11 In Bushnells Re Of Blk 3 Blv Add Lying Nwly Of A L Desc Ascom At The Sw Cor Of Sd Cardigans Re Th N 0 Deg 3 Min 0 Sec W Along W L Of Sd Cardigans Re 148
 6. **PLANNING DISTRICT:** 13 **PRESENT ZONING:** T2
 7. **ZONING CODE REFERENCE:** §§65.513; 61.501; 61.601; 61.202(b)
 8. **STAFF REPORT DATE:** September 2, 2015 **BY:** Josh Williams
 9. **DATE RECEIVED:** August 20, 2015 **60 DAY DEADLINE FOR ACTION:** October 19, 2015
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- A. **PURPOSE:** Conditional use permit for drive-through sales (coffee shop) and variance of minimum floor area ratio
- B. **PARCEL SIZE:** 18730 sq. ft. (approx. 43 acres)
- C. **EXISTING LAND USE:** C-Vacant
- D. **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**
 - North: Marshall Ave, RR bridge, electrical substation
 - East: RR tracks
 - South: Commercial (bank)
 - West: Snelling Ave, commercial (auto repair, retail)
- E. **ZONING CODE CITATION:** §65.513 lists standards and conditions for drive-through sales; §61.501 lists general requirements for all conditional uses; §61.202(b) authorizes the planning commission to grant variances when related to permits, using the required findings of MN Stat. 462.357, Subd. 6.
- F. **HISTORY/DISCUSSION:** A conditional use permit for a drive-through coffee kiosk was issued in 1995. A bicycle cooperative previously occupied the former service station building. The last certificate of occupancy for the property was revoked in 2006, and the former service station building was registered as a vacant building in 2009. The service station building was demolished in 2014.
- G. **DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:** District 13 submitted a letter in opposition of the conditional use permit and variance.
- H. **FINDINGS:**
 1. §65.513 specifies standards and conditions for drive-through sales in the T2 traditional neighborhood district:
 - a) *Drive-through lanes and service windows shall be located to the side or rear of buildings, shall not be located between the principal structure and a public street, and shall be at least sixty (60) feet from the closest point of any residentially zoned property or property occupied with a one-, two-, or multiple-family dwelling.* This condition is met. The drive-through lane is proposed to be located to the rear of the building, which faces Snelling Avenue. The nearest residentially zoned or occupied property is located ninety-seven (97) feet from the drive-through lane and one hundred and eleven (111) feet from the service window. It should be noted that the residentially zoned property is not occupied by a residential use, and consists of a single, landlocked railroad-owned parcel immediately adjacent to the railroad ROW.
 - b) *Points of vehicular ingress and egress shall be located at least sixty (60) feet from the intersection of two streets and at least sixty (60) feet from abutting residentially zoned property.* This condition is met. The nearest point of ingress or egress point to the intersection of Snelling and Marshall is ninety-five (95) feet and the nearest point of ingress

or egress to residentially zoned property is sixty-six (66) feet. It should be noted that the residentially zoned property is not occupied by a residential use, and consists of a single, landlocked railroad-owned parcel immediately adjacent to the railroad ROW.

- c) *Speaker box sounds from the drive-through lane shall not be plainly audible so as to unreasonably disturb the peace and quiet of abutting residential property.* This condition is met. The nearest residentially zoned property is located approximately one hundred (100) feet to the east, but is not in residential use. The parcel is landlocked, owned by a railroad, and immediately adjacent to the railroad ROW. The nearest property in residential use is more than three hundred (300) feet from the drive-through speaker and window.
 - d) *A six-foot buffer area with screen planting and an obscuring wall or fence shall be required along any property line adjoining an existing residence or residentially zoned property.* This condition is not applicable. The subject property does not directly abut any existing residentially zoned or occupied properties.
 - e) *Stacking spaces shall be provided for each drive-through lane. Banks, credit unions, and fast-food restaurants shall provide a minimum of four (4) stacking spaces per drive-through lane. Stacking spaces for all other uses shall be determined by the zoning administrator.* This condition can be met. Establishment of the use will require site plan review. Provision of an appropriate amount of stacking spaces, as evidenced by site plan approval, should be a condition of approval.
 - f) *There shall be no more than one (1) drive-through lane and no more than two (2) drive-through service windows, with the exception of banks, which may have no more than three (3) drive-through lanes.* This condition is met. The applicant proposes one drive-through lane.
 - g) *The number of curb cuts shall be minimized. In light rail station areas, there shall generally be no more than one (1) curb cut on a block face per drive-through. Drive-through sales and services are prohibited along the entire length of block faces adjacent to light rail transit station platforms.* This condition can be met. There are currently two curb cuts at the subject property, one each on Snelling and Marshall Avenues; the applicant proposes maintaining relocated curb cuts, one each block face. Ramsey County and the MN Department of Transportation have given informal approval for the proposed curb cut configurations. Review and approval by the Saint Paul Department of Public Works of curb cut locations, as evidenced by site plan approval, should be a condition of approval.
2. §61.501 lists five standards that all conditional uses must satisfy:
- a) *The extent, location and intensity of the use will be in substantial compliance with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and any applicable subarea plans which were approved by the city council.* This condition can be met. The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan future land use map identifies the proposed project location as part of a Mixed-Use Corridor, which are intended to accommodate a variety of uses, including commercial/retail. Policy LU 1.21 calls for the City to balance a variety of objectives for Mixed-Use Corridors, including the accommodation of growth. Policy LU 1.45 calls for the City to *maintain and enhance retail commercial areas throughout the city by promoting standards that make them vital and attractive.* Policy LU 1.50 calls for the City to *facilitate the redevelopment of commercial areas where existing buildings are no longer considered functional to accommodate viable retail and businesses.* Policy LU 1.49 calls for the City to *continue to promote principles of traditional urban form in the design of new or renovated commercial buildings.* The Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Plan generally calls for pedestrian, bicycle and transit-friendly urban design. The proposed use will provide new investment and active reuse of the site of a former gas station that has been vacant or underutilized for more than 20 years. Subject to 1) incorporation into the design of the proposed building and site of horizontal and vertical structural elements which

provide physical separation from Snelling Avenue and visually enclose the proposed outdoor seating areas south of the proposed building, and 2) review and approval by Saint Paul Public Works, as evidenced by site plan approval, of the impact of the proposed use on pedestrian and bicycle safety, the proposed use is consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan. These requirements should be conditions of approval.

- b) *The use will provide adequate ingress and egress to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.* This condition can be met. Ramsey County and the MN Department of Transportation have provided informal approval of the proposed use and site plan. Saint Paul Public Works review and approval of the proposed site plan, as evidenced by site plan approval, should be a condition of approval.
 - c) *The use will not be detrimental to the existing character of the development in the immediate neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety and general welfare.* This condition is can be met. The proposed use is generally consistent with the existing character or development in the area. Provided that Public Works, upon review of the proposed use as part of site plan review, determines that the proposed use will not present an undue hazard to pedestrians and cyclists in the immediate vicinity, this condition can be met. Site plan approval should be a condition of approval.
 - d) *The use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.* This condition is met. The proposed use is generally consistent with other allowed uses in the surrounding districts. The reuse of a long vacant and underutilized site will encourage the continued development of the surrounding properties.
 - e) *The use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located.* This condition is met, subject to approval of a variance for Floor Area Ratio of the proposed structure.
3. MN Stat. 462.357, Subd. 6 was amended to establish new grounds for variance approvals effective May 6, 2011. The Planning Commission has the power to grant variances from the strict enforcement of the provisions of this code upon a finding that:
- a) *The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code.* This finding can be met. The applicant seeks a variance for Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The code requires an FAR of 0.5, the applicant proposes an FAR of 0.11. The FAR requirement in the code is intended to result in both efficient use of land and in a more compact urban form. The site is across the street from an electrical substation and a railroad bridge traverses Marshall Avenue immediately adjacent to the site, factors which limit the desirability of the site for residential uses. The applicant has proposed a conditionally allowed use of the site. Although it exceeds required minimums, the applicant has proposed an amount of off-street parking they deem necessary to serve the use. On-street parking in the area is limited. The size and configuration of the site make underground parking difficult to achieve at costs reasonably born by potential uses of the site. Expanding the size of the building for the proposed use will not appreciably improve the utilization of the site for the proposed use, which is driven by market conditions. Incorporation into the design of the proposed building and site of horizontal and vertical structural elements which provide physical separation from Snelling Avenue and visually extend the building and enclose the proposed outdoor seating areas south of the proposed building will make the proposed use more visually consistent with the intent of the code to promote a more compact urban form, and should be a condition of approval.
 - b) *The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.* This condition can be met. The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan future land use map identifies the proposed project location as

part of a Mixed-Use Corridor, which are intended to accommodate a variety of uses, including commercial/retail. Policy LU 1.21 calls for the City to balance a variety of objectives for Mixed-Use Corridors, including the accommodation of growth. Policy LU 1.45 calls for the City to *maintain and enhance retail commercial areas throughout the city by promoting standards that make them vital and attractive*. Policy LU 1.50 calls for the City to *facilitate the redevelopment of commercial areas where existing buildings are no longer considered functional to accommodate viable retail and businesses*. Policy LU 1.49 calls for the City to *continue to promote principles of traditional urban form in the design of new or renovated commercial buildings*. The Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Plan generally calls for pedestrian, bicycle and transit-friendly urban design. The proposed use will provide new investment and active reuse of the site of a former gas station that has been vacant or underutilized for more than 20 years. Subject to 1) incorporation into the design of the proposed building and site of horizontal and vertical structural elements which provide physical separation from Snelling Avenue and visually extend the building and enclose the proposed outdoor seating areas south of the proposed building, and 2) review and approval by Saint Paul Public Works, as evidenced by site plan approval, of the impact of the proposed use on pedestrian and cyclist safety, the proposed use is consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan. These requirements should be conditions of approval.

- c) *The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.* This finding is met. The applicant seeks a variance for Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The code requires an FAR of 0.5 the applicant proposes an FAR of 0.11. The FAR requirement in the code is intended to result in both efficient use of land and in a more compact urban form. The site is across the street from an electrical substation and a railroad bridge traverses Marshall Avenue immediately adjacent to the site, factors which limit the desirability of the site for residential uses and multistory commercial uses. The applicant has proposed a conditionally allowed use of the site. Although it exceeds required minimums, the applicant has proposed an amount of off-street parking they deem necessary to serve the use. On-street parking in the area is limited. The size and configuration of the site make underground parking difficult to achieve at costs reasonably borne by potential uses of the site. Expanding the size of the building for the proposed use, which would require elimination of the conditionally allowed drive-through and/or of surface off-street parking, would not appreciably improve the utilization of the site for the proposed use, which is driven by market conditions.
- d) *The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.* This finding is met. The site is constrained to the east by grade changes and railroad ROW. The site proposed for development was created by the applicant from 2 smaller parcels.
- e) *The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located.* This finding is met. Coffee shops and drive-throughs are allowed uses in the zoning district where the property is located.
- f) *The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.* This finding is met. The variance will allow redevelopment of a long vacant and underutilized parcel, and is consistent with the commercial character of the surrounding area.

- I. **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the above findings, staff recommends approval of the conditional use permit for drive-through sales (coffee shop) and variance of minimum floor area ratio subject to the following additional conditions:
1. Final plans approved by the Zoning Administrator for this use shall be in substantial compliance with the plan submitted and approved as part of this application.
 2. Incorporation into the building and site design of horizontal and vertical elements that visually extend the building to encompass the proposed patio and seating area on the south side of the building and that visually enclose and separate said patio and seating area from the Snelling Avenue ROW.
 3. Site plan approval.
 4. Saint Paul Public Works review and approval of proposed use and site plan in regard to adequacy of drive-through stacking, ingress and egress, and pedestrian and cyclist safety, as evidenced by site plan approval.
 5. The hours of operation of the drive-through service shall be no earlier than 5:30 am to no later than 10:00 pm.



CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION

Department of Planning and Economic Development

Zoning Section

1400 City Hall Annex

25 West Fourth Street

Saint Paul, MN 55102-1634

(651) 266-6589

Zoning office use only

File # 15-152287

Fee: 1100.00

Tentative Hearing Date:

9-10-15

PD-13

#032823 22 0173

APPLICANT

Name Trisha Sieh, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Address 2550 University Avenue W, Suite 238N

City St. Paul St. MN Zip 55114 Daytime Phone 651.643.0470

Name of Owner (if different) Ryan Companies

Contact Person (if different) Jason Gabrick Phone 612.492.4251

PROPERTY LOCATION

Address / Location 234 Snelling Avenue North

Legal Description Lot 1, Block 3 Boulevard Addition

Current Zoning T2

(attach additional sheet if necessary)

TYPE OF PERMIT: Application is hereby made for a Conditional Use Permit under provisions of
Chapter 66, Section 321, Paragraph _____ of the Zoning Code.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Explain how the use will meet all of the applicable standards and conditions. If you are requesting modification of any special conditions or standards for a conditional use, explain why the modification is needed and how it meets the requirements for modification of special conditions in Section 61.502 of the Zoning Code. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Please see attached memorandum

☐ Required site plan is attached

Applicant's Signature

[Signature]

Date

8/19/15

City Agent

[Signature]
8-20-15

PDd
8-19-15



APPLICATION FOR ZONING VARIANCE
Department of Safety and Inspections
375 Jackson Street
Suite 220
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1806
General: 651-266-9008
Fax: (651) 266-9099

Zoning office use only

File Number: _____
Fee: \$ _____
Tentative Hearing Date: _____
Section(s) _____
City agent _____

APPLICANT

Name Trisha Sieh Company Kimley-Horn
Address 2550 University Avenue W, Suite 238 N
City St. Paul St. MN Zip 55114 Daytime Phone 651-643-0470
Property Interest of Applicant (owner, contract purchaser, etc) _____
Name of Owner (if different) Ryan Companies Phone 612-492-4251

**PROPERTY
INFORMATION**

Address / Location 234 Snelling Avenue North
Legal Description Lot 1, Block 3 Boulevard Addition
(attach additional sheet if necessary)
Lot Size 0.43 Acres Present Zoning T2 Present Use Vacant
Proposed Use 2,157 SF Coffee Shop

Variance[s] requested: Relief on minimum FAR

Supporting Information: Supply the necessary information that is applicable to your variance request, provide details regarding the project, and explain why a variance is needed. Duplex/triplex conversions may require a pro forma to be submitted. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Please see attached memorandum

Attachments as required:



Site Plan



Attachments



Pro Forma

Applicant's Signature

T. Sieh

Date

8/19/15



MEMORANDUM

To: Josh Williams
City of St. Paul

From: Trisha Sieh, PE
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Date: August 19, 2015

Subject: ***Conditional Use Permit and Variance Request Narrative***

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

Explain how the use will meet all of the applicable standards and conditions. If you are requesting modification of any special conditions or standards for a conditional use, explain why the modification is needed and how it meets the requirements for modification of special conditions in Section 61.502 of the Zoning Code.

Although the proposed use is a permitted use under the T2 zoning, Per section 66.321, any retail space that includes drive-thru sales and service is a conditional use in the T2 (Traditional Neighborhood) District. The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit for a drive-thru associated with the development of a $\pm 2,157$ square foot Starbucks coffee shop. The proposed Site Plan meets all 7 conditions of Section 65.512 (a-g) for a drive-through sales and service standard conditions and additional conditions in the T2 traditional neighborhood district.

In addition to meeting all conditions listed under a specific use, there are general conditions that must be met for all Conditional Use Permits as follows:

- *The extent, location and intensity of the use will be in substantial compliance with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and any applicable subarea plans which were approved by the city council.*

The use is in substantial compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. The applicant has letters of support (available upon request) for the site plan from neighboring property owners on the two adjacent corners of the project intersection. The applicant also has received support from the Union Park Neighborhood Land Use Committee for both the requested conditional use permit for service drive and the variance for FAR.

- *The use will provide adequate ingress and egress to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.*

Sufficient site access can be achieved with the proposed site plan. Furthermore, the site currently has two points of ingress/egress. The proposed site plan would relocate the Snelling Avenue access point to a location further South, and the Marshall Avenue access point further east, providing additional relief from the intersection of Marshall and Snelling Avenues. Plans also include the straightening of the curb line on Marshall Avenue replacing what was an unused idling area with a curb closer to Marshall to improve sight lines and make the East/West bike path on Marshall safer. The ingress/egress plans have been reviewed by the City of St. Paul, MnDOT, and Ramsey County and the updated ingress/egress plan incorporates the comments of all parties including the elimination of a left out movement from the site onto westbound Marshall. This updated plan has received initial support from the agencies.

- *The use will not be detrimental to the existing character of the development in the immediate neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety and general welfare.*

The proposed use will revitalize the vacant, blighted parcel, which has sat vacant and out of operation for over two decades. The proposed use is not anticipated to endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare of the neighborhood. Improved safety conditions are anticipated due to adjustment of both driveway locations further from the intersection of Snelling and Marshall and the reconstructed curb line on Marshall, which will improve ingress/egress site lines and the bike lane experience on Marshall. The use is consistent with the thriving retail corridor on Snelling. The building will be designed to be LEED certified as a testament to the City's stated desire of more environmentally responsible building operations practices. Finally, important site details, including outdoor patio seating, Union Park bike racks, and improved sidewalk connections will enhance public wellness in the area.

- *The use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.*

Current site conditions are extremely constrained with the railroad Right of Way retaining wall being a major impediment to the East, the newly constructed Associated Bank building to the South and the small development area of the Site. The proposed use will not impede the development of the surrounding property, in fact, the developer has received Letters of Support (available upon request) from multiple neighbors and business owners, including the operators of business on two adjacent corners of the intersection. The applicant also has received support from the Union Park Neighborhood Land Use Committee for both the requested conditional use permit for service drive and the variance for FAR.

- *The use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located.*

With the exception of the requested variance, the use conforms to all other applicable development regulations.

VARIANCE

Supply the necessary information that is applicable to your variance request, provide details regarding the project, and explain why a variance is needed.

In the T2 Traditional Neighborhood, a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.3 is desired by City Code. The applicant is requesting a variance to allow for relief on the minimum floor area ratio. The main hardship is the size of the site and the existing conditions on the East boundary (an elevated railroad Right of Way) and on the South of the site (an elevated Bank Branch building). Related to size, as a corner parcel of only ±0.43 acres, access points are dictated by minimum intersection spacing and building location is generally fixed based on the existing access points.

The proposed use and site plan will help to revitalize the vacant, blighted property. The building is pulled up to both Snelling and Marshall Avenues with active patios and open building façade to both “hold the corner” while helping to create an engaging pedestrian experience. Complete onsite sidewalk connectivity and amenities such as bike racks and outdoor tables will help to further enhance the neighborhood. Finally, the building will be designed to be LEED certified as a testament to the City’s stated desire of more environmentally responsible building operations practices. The applicant also has received support from the Union Park Neighborhood Land Use Committee for both the requested conditional use permit for service drive and the variance for FAR.

Details supporting the variance findings are as follows:

Findings:

- *The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code.*
The variance is in harmony with the intent of the zoning code; the project features an approved use under the code, however the size of the parcel simply will not allow for a denser FAR use.
- *The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.*
The variance is consistent with the activity in the corridor, and buildings, which replace blighted sites with vibrant, connected, environmentally conscious design are supported by the comprehensive plan.

- *The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.*

Due to the size and corner location of the property, a FAR of 0.3 or greater is not attainable. The applicant has analyzed a number of alternative development scenarios in attempts to attain a FAR of 0.3 or greater:

- **Single-story 5,620 SF building with drive-thru**

Deficiencies and variances needed include:

- Setback variances
- Parking variance
- Perimeter Landscape variance
- Internal Landscape variance
- Surface Area stormwater treatment variance
- Drive-aisle width variance
- Impaired driveway sight-lines due to building placement
- Insufficient parking per use demands
- Retaining wall encroachment into adjacent property
- Dangerous Marshall Avenue access point

- **Multi-story building with underground parking:**

Deficiencies and variances needed include:

- Parking Variance - underground parking would be limited to 13 parking stalls, due to site size constraints
- Parking count insufficient per user demands
- Cost prohibitive due to underground parking inefficiencies – in excess of \$75,000 per stall and not enough spaces to justify ingress/egress ramping to a lower level with the small size of the site
- Inefficient building layout – 2 stairwells and an elevator shaft along with the typical utility support rooms needed for any new multi-story building would be required

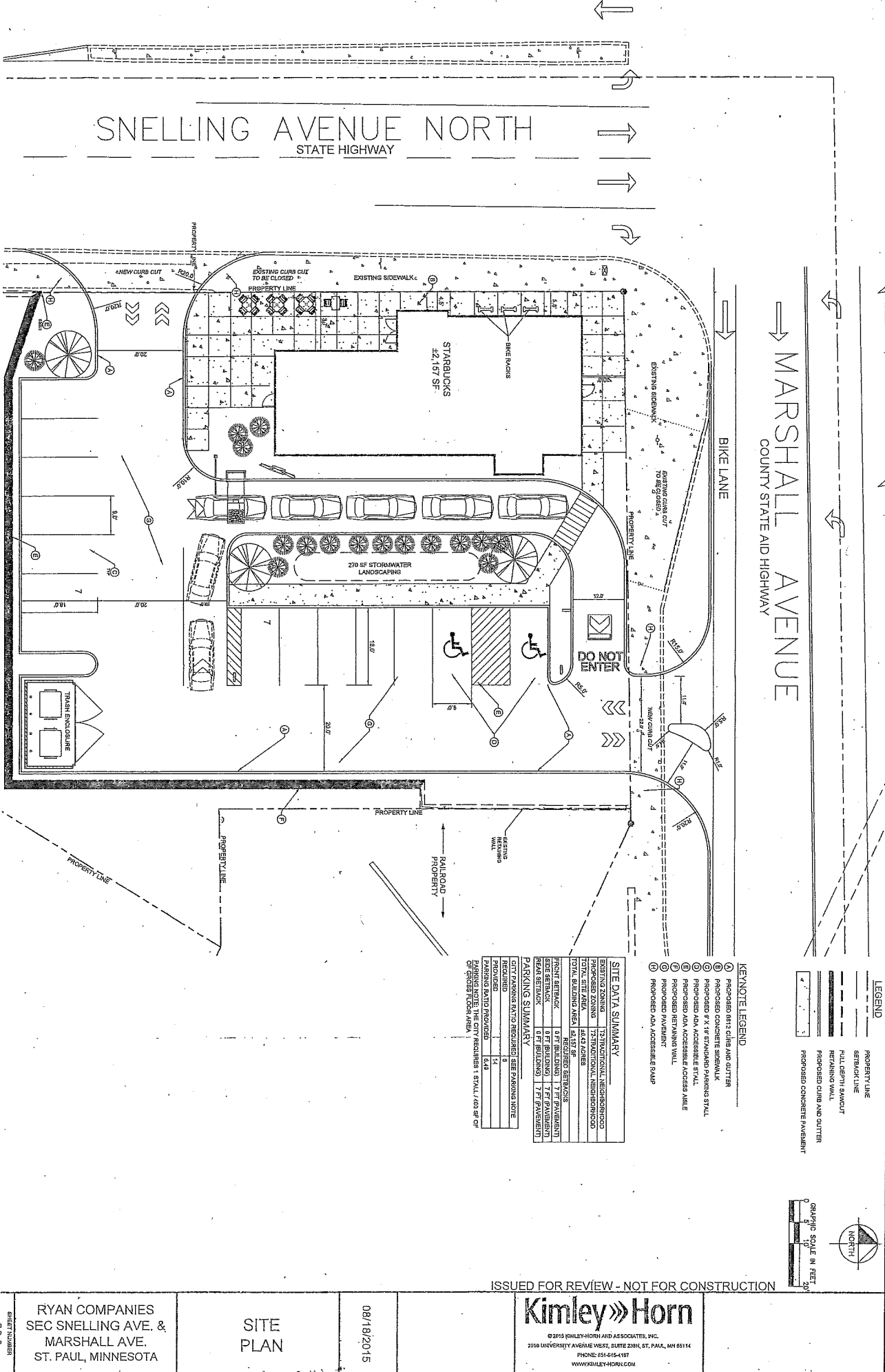
- *The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.*

The property is 0.43 acres, and is locked between an elevated railroad Right of Way (East), and existing Bank building (South), and Marshall (North) and Snelling Avenues (West). The East and South boundaries are blocked by a retaining wall that is as high as eight feet in the SE corner of the site.

- *The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located.*

The proposed use is permitted in the zoning district. The applicant also has received support from the Union Park Neighborhood Land Use Committee for both the requested conditional use permit for service drive and the variance for FAR.

- *The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.*
The proposed use will help to revitalize the Site and positively contribute to the essential character of the surrounding area. The project, which is the last component of the Vintage development and relocated Associated Bank building, has been able to achieve an overall FAR of 2.01. An exhibit on overall project FAR can be provided upon request.





UNION PARK DISTRICT COUNCIL

1602 Selby Avenue, Suite 10, Saint Paul, MN 55104

651.645.6887 | info@unionparkdc.org | www.unionparkdc.org

An Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer

Date: September 2, 2015

To: Josh Williams, Planning and Economic Development, City of St. Paul

From: Union Park District Council (UPDC) Board

Re: Variance and CUP application for Starbucks at 234 Snelling Avenue

At its regular meeting on Wednesday, September 2, 2015, the Union Park District Council Board reviewed the Application for Zoning Variance and Conditional Use Permit Application submitted on behalf of Ryan Companies for a Starbucks with a drive-thru at 234 Snelling Avenue North. Tony Barranco represented the developer Ryan Companies at the meeting.

After full discussion by Board members and neighbors, the Union Park District Council Board voted on a motion from its Land Use Committee supporting the applications. The motion did not pass.

Therefore, the Union Park District Council **does not support the applications.**

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Julie Reiter
Executive Director
Union Park District Council

From: Julie Reiter [<mailto:julie@unionparkdc.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, September 02, 2015 11:54 AM
To: Beach, Tom (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Anne White
Subject: Documents related to Starbucks site plan

Hi Tom,

It's my understanding that you were interested in information about the issues posed by the Starbucks plan. I've attached some documents related to the plan for your consideration.

1. *Starbucks Drive-through Conflicts*: This document describes vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle conflict points that present safety and traffic concerns.
2. *Land Use Snelling Ave Corridor*: This document sets out T2 zoning intent, and excerpts of planning documents relevant to a proposed drive-through on that parcel.
3. *Photo and satellite image of 4100 Spring Street development*: The Spring Street development is on .39 acres (compared to the Ryan site's .43 acres) and contains 39 large condo units with 2½ levels of parking (2 of them underground) and twice as much retail space. It is in Spring Lake Park -- on Lake Minnetonka about .25 miles from Lord Fletcher's. A resident who was involved in the project brought this development to our attention. I've included this item because Ryan has repeatedly told the Land Use Committee that there are practical difficulties with putting anything else on the site (which it created itself, out of a larger parcel) but the Starbucks.
4. *Starbucks Community Input*: This summarizes community input from social media conversations on the Starbucks site plan.

Please let me know if you have questions or need any other information.

Thanks,
Julie

Julie Reiter
Executive Director
Union Park District Council
651-645-6887
julie@unionparkdc.org
unionparkdc.org

Starbucks Drive-through Site Plan
Concerns re Conflict Zones, Danger to Pedestrians and Traffic Backups

Traffic Flow and Pedestrian & Bicyclist Safety – Conflicts and Congestion

The site plan creates multiple conflict points for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians

- **Marshall Avenue driveway**

- EB vehicles entering right-in cross three conflict zones: EB bicycle lane, pedestrians crossing the curb cut, and vehicles exiting the drive-through lane.
- WB vehicles entering left-in face an additional conflict point: they must line up in the left-hand turn lane along with cars waiting to turn left to go south on Snelling, then must cross the EB traffic lane, the EB bicycle lane on Marshall, the pedestrians crossing the curb cut, and cars exiting drive-through lane.
- Vehicles exiting right-out onto EB Marshall from drive-through must cross traffic entering from Marshall, then merge with cars coming from south to exit onto EB Marshall.

- **Snelling Avenue driveway**

- NB vehicles entering right-in from Snelling must yield to pedestrians crossing curb cut (72 peds/hour in morning walking to Starbucks alone, plus X going to other destinations), then turn left after two car lengths to enter drive-through lane, which also requires that they cross the line of cars exiting onto Snelling.
- Vehicles exiting onto Snelling can only turn right (NB) after yielding to pedestrians crossing the curb cut, then enter right-hand lane, which is designated for right turns onto Marshall. To continue NB on Snelling, they must merge left into through lane in very short distance before reaching Marshall.

Traffic Backups While Waiting to Enter Starbucks

- **Snelling Avenue NB**

- There is a strong likelihood of traffic backups on Snelling, especially during morning rush hour, due to limited space inside Starbucks site (2 cars) before turning left into drive-through lane

- **WB Marshall Left Turn Lane**

- WB vehicles waiting in left-turn lane to enter Starbucks will block cars trying to turn south on Snelling. With both EB and WB traffic turning into Starbucks across multiple conflict zones, pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles exiting the drive-through will all be at risk.

- **Backups Caused by 60 Cars per Hour During Morning Rush Hour**

- Unless it takes less than 60 seconds to place order, pay, and pick up, massive backups would be likely during morning rush hour. With 60 cars per hour anticipated between 7:00 and 11:00 am (44% of 550 daily cars), any additional time to fill an order will add to backup. (A friend who got a latte at the Snelling-Selby Starbucks at 10:30 am on a weekday morning found 10 people in line. He timed the transaction @ 8 minutes, 45 seconds: 2:45 waiting in line and placing his order, and 6:00 minutes more until his order was ready.)

Land Use and Urban Form in Snelling Avenue Corridor

Summary

The Zoning Code and the Comprehensive Plan of the City of St. Paul place great emphasis on the preservation of traditional urban form, the creation of compact commercial development, and the improvement of the pedestrian realm. The Comprehensive Plan highlights Snelling Avenue as a mixed-use corridor, where development should be designed to support transit use and walking (1.21), and which should be used as a pedestrian and bicycle connection to adjacent areas (1.27.) In addition to encouraging the creation of a “high quality pedestrian-scaled urban environment” (3.1), the Comprehensive Plan explicitly discourages new auto-oriented uses (1.52.)

Similarly, both the Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Plan (adopted in 2007), and the Union Park Plan Addendum (draft) emphasize the creation and preservation of human-scaled environments that promote walking, bike usage, and transit ridership (SHNP EPM27; UPPA LU1).

St. Paul Zoning Code

Sec. 66.313. - Intent, T2 traditional neighborhood district.

The T2 traditional neighborhood district is designed for use in existing or potential pedestrian and transit nodes. Its intent is to foster and support compact, pedestrian-oriented commercial and residential development that, in turn, can support and increase transit usage. It encourages, but does not require, a variety of uses and housing types, with careful attention to the amount and placement of parking and transitions to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
(Ord. No. 11-27, § 1, 4-20-11)

St. Paul Comprehensive Plan

Land Use

Strategy 1: Target Growth in Unique Neighborhoods

Mixed-Use Corridors

1.21 Balance the following objectives for Mixed-Use Corridors through the density and scale of development: accommodating growth, supporting transit use and walking, providing a range of housing types, and providing housing at densities that support transit.

1.27 Provide connections by bicycle and pedestrian facilities to adjacent areas.

Commerce

1.46 Encourage the expansion of compact commercial areas in Neighborhood Centers and Mixed-Use Corridors to further the objectives of both categories of neighborhoods.

1.47 Ensure that streets in compact commercial areas conform to the certain criteria: use of traditional urban building form, streetscape amenities, and traffic calming measures.

1.49 Continue to promote principles of traditional urban form in the design of new or renovated commercial buildings.

1.52 Prioritize the development of compact commercial areas accessible by

pedestrians and transit users over commercial areas more readily accessed by automobile. Discourage new and expanded auto-oriented uses.

1.53 Encourage changes to the design of existing auto-oriented commercial buildings and areas with elements of traditional urban form to minimize impacts on the pedestrian realm.

Strategy 3: Promote Aesthetic and Design Standards

3.1 Continue to utilize and improve the provisions and design standards for the Traditional Neighborhood (TN) districts and the citywide general design standards in Section 63.110 of the Saint Paul Zoning Code to achieve a high quality pedestrian-scaled urban environment; prepare a study of these sections of the Saint Paul Zoning Code and how they have been utilized since their adoption.

Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Plan

Urban Design

2. Promote Transit Oriented Development, a street design that provides for efficient automobile, bus and rail transportation while at all times respecting and encouraging the safety of pedestrians.

8. Introduce traffic calming elements along Snelling Avenue to improve aesthetics, reduce speeding and increase safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars.

12. e. Ensure sidewalks are well maintained and streetscapes are aesthetically pleasing, so residents are more likely to choose to walk for transportation and recreation.

Economic Development

21. Balance economic development and neighborhood character by encouraging economic development that enhances the pedestrian environment and keeps traffic off residential streets, with the exception of new mixed-use developments.

Environmental Protection and Management

27. Control and curb pollution in and around the community, by planning for neighborhoods where walking, biking, and public transportation are attractive alternatives to driving.

Union Park Plan Addendum (Draft)

Land Use

1. Support land uses that preserve Union Park as a connected, walkable, mixed-use, sustainable neighborhood with a pedestrian-oriented, human-scale streetscape.

1.1. Maintain and establish zoning that encourages compact development in commercial areas and in mixed-use corridors;

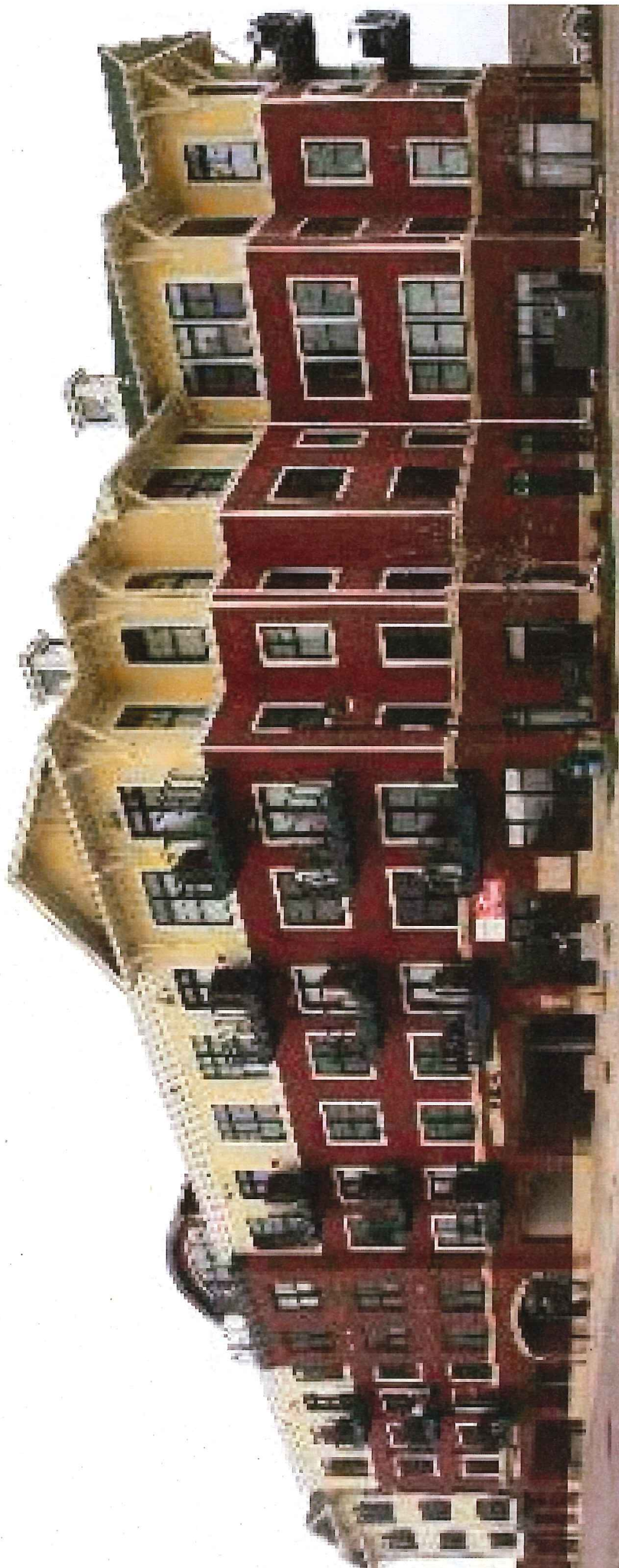
1.3. Promote development that provides safe, pleasant, and interesting pedestrian experiences, especially north of I-94, crossing I-94, and along major arterials such as Snelling, University, Hamline, Fairview, Cretin, Selby and Marshall Avenues.

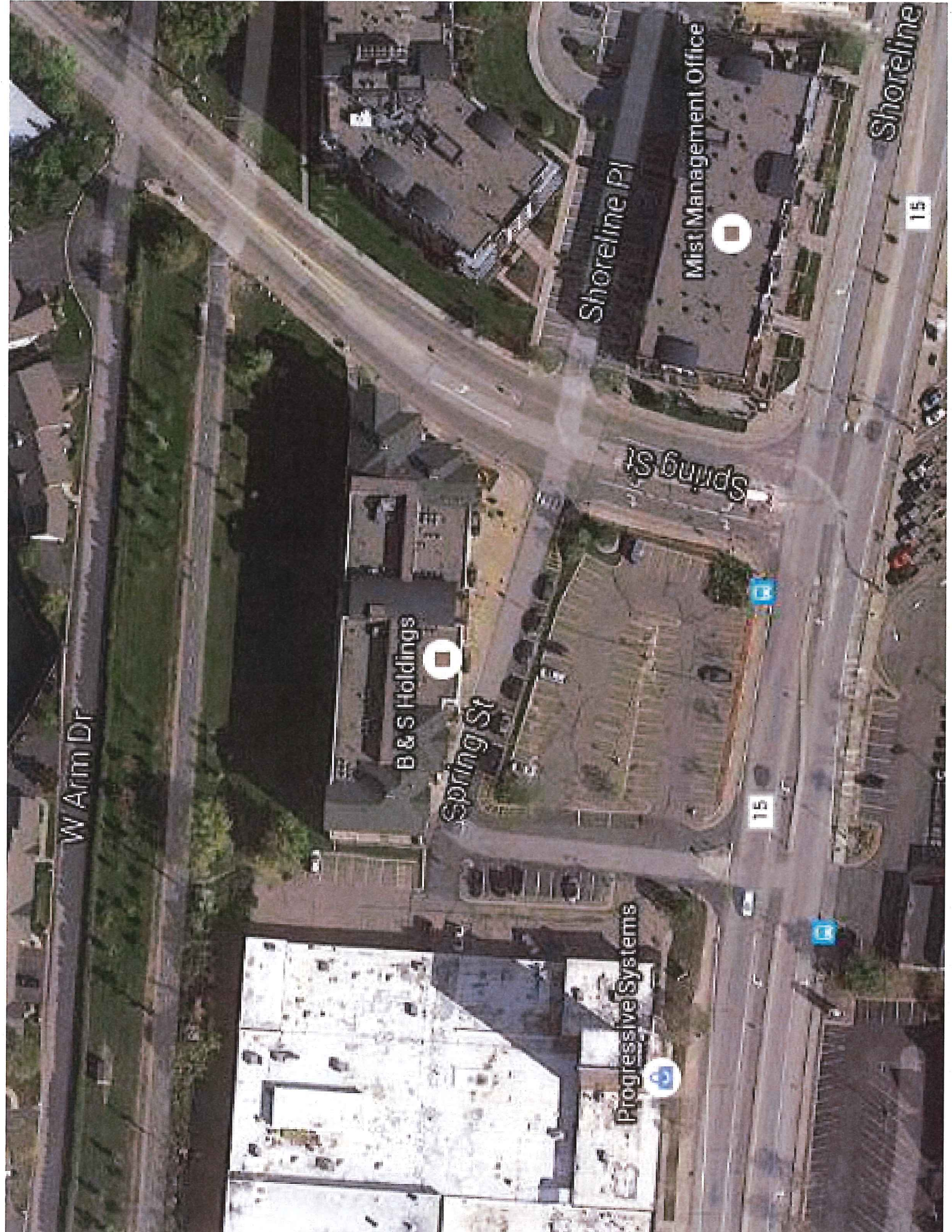
3. Encourage vibrant commercial development that takes advantage of the increased transit availability in Union Park.

Transportation

1. Encourage mass transit use and support the expansion of mass transit offerings to maximize public investment in transit while reducing traffic congestion, pedestrian hazards, and pollution, and increases social connectedness.

1.1. Support improved connectivity to the Green Line by working with Metro Transit to increase BRT and local route service options and improving transfers, and by working with city, county and state agencies to enhance biking options and sidewalk walkability to transit.





Community Opinions on the Starbucks Proposal at Snelling and Marshall

In social media discussions about the proposal in May 2015, there were 22 individuals who were opposed to the proposal. Three were for it, and three were supportive with conditions (that it not be a Starbucks, or that it not be the second Starbucks in the area). Three others were neutral; they asked questions and did not express a strong view for or against. Below are summaries of arguments for and against.

Arguments for the proposal:

- The parcel is long vacant, underutilized, blighted and ugly, and needs to be redeveloped.
- It's an awkward small parcel that probably can't be used any other way.
- The drive-through will probably be well designed.
- It will serve pedestrians as well as vehicle traffic.
- Starbucks is a good employer and neighbor.
- A Starbucks in the neighborhood raises property values.
- Accessible coffee is desirable.
- A coffee shop is better than a gas station or auto repair shop at that location.
- Although it's on the edge of a walkable neighborhood, it is also near an interstate.

Arguments against the proposal:

1. The proposal will create traffic that poses a serious safety concern
 - Traffic congestion will be especially bad in the area with the new Whole Foods
 - There is a much different traffic situation here now than there was with the previous coffee drive through, so any historical argument is unhelpful
 - Traffic would likely be limited to right turns in and right turns out, creating incentives for U-turns and increasing safety risk
 - "This WILL cause vehicular backups, not to mention bike/ped conflicts, on Snelling."
2. The proposal is inconsistent with the urban area
 - The concept is incompatible with goal of walkability
 - The concept is a suburban model that does not belong in the city
 - This is a prominent corner that should be used to reflect the immediate community
 - "The drive through doesn't serve our neighborhood, it serves people passing through it in a car."
3. The proposal is inconsistent with current zoning and planning
 - We should not grant a variance to a business that directly controverts the zoning of the corridor; there is no compelling reason to deviate from zoning that requires higher density
 - The concept favors a car culture, not a balance with bikes and pedestrians

- The majority of the parcel would be used for cars: ingress, egress, drive through, and parking, which is not its highest and best use
 - The Vintage development allegedly supports biking and pedestrian traffic, and this is clearly contrary to that goal
4. The proposal interferes with other modes of transit
- Increased pedestrian traffic in the area is not compatible with a drive through
 - Vehicle backup on Snelling's northbound right lane will interfere with the BRT. The stop at Dayton, right within that lane, is less than a block from this location.
 - Vehicles constantly pulling in and out would interfere with the bike lane on Marshall.
 - "Those in favor of this clearly don't walk or bike this neighborhood."
5. A drive through is not workable in this location
- The expectation is that it would be fast and easy, which would be difficult to attain in this congested intersection; people already avoid Snelling because of traffic congestion
 - A drive through will generate a much larger volume of traffic moving in and out than another type of business would
 - Idling cars are a large source of pollution, and a drive through just encourages more cars idling in line
 - Additional curb cuts will erode our sidewalks and walkable spaces, making it harder to connect the Selby and University areas.
6. Starbucks is not desirable in this location
- We have several other good locally-owned coffee shops nearby
 - There is already a Starbucks nearby

Selected quotes:

"It's a horrible plan. At the corner of two busy streets, next to a mixed-use redevelopment and only two short blocks from the busy shops at Snelling and Selby, with a recently completed Marshall bike lane and soon a Snelling BRT, the best we can do is a 1-story drive-thru that doesn't even come close to meeting basic size requirements in the zoning? REALLY?"

"I didn't actually think it was possible to create a scenario where this 2-block area could be more congested with traffic, and less pedestrian friendly. I now see how to do it. If we continue down this road, Snelling/Selby will be like Lake/Hennepin in feel and culture."

"Frankly, I'd rather see a vacant property for a couple years until a serious proposal that reflects TN zoning intent comes along."

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Michael Sonn** <sonn.michael@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 2, 2015 at 12:54 PM

Subject: Snelling Starbuck's drive-thru

To: "julie@unionparkdc.org" <julie@unionparkdc.org>

Cc: "russ.stark@ci.stpaul.mn.us" <russ.stark@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, Brian Quarstad <bquarstad@gmail.com>, "ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us" <ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Julie,

I'm writing for myself as a neighbor and citizen, but I am currently on the MGCC transportation and co-chair of the St Paul Bicycle Coalition. I'm concerned about the proposed drive-thru on Snelling for several reasons, but I fully recognize the neighborhood's desire to finally have a development at this location.

I wasn't able to attend the last meeting but I've heard that the city and developer, while conducting their traffic studies, did not take bicycle traffic into account. This is very concerning considering that Saint Paul just unanimously adopted the Saint Paul Bike Plan and is currently implementing it city-wide. Also, Marshall now has lanes extending from the river to the west and Lexington to the east.

I also have concerns about who this business will be serving. With the current Starbucks at Snelling & Selby, we have a great neighborhood resource. However, this new location will be geared towards commuters that are just using Snelling to cut-thru our neighborhood.

On this same note, I have grave concerns about traffic patterns. A vast majority of these customers will be going north and south on Snelling. This means they will want to continue in that direction when they complete their transaction. A forced right turn onto Marshall will not be respected. These drivers will want to get back to the Snelling intersection to continue on Snelling and won't go several blocks out of the way to get back on course.

I understand that there will be a pork-chop type island to force a right turn onto Marshall. However, people will either drive over this or pull a quick U-turn. This means that drivers will not be looking for cyclists as they search for a break in car traffic.

Finally, we now have the Green Line several blocks to the north, several bus lines, and the soon to be completed A-Line. The last thing we should build here is a car-centric business when the city and region are investing and implementing in so much alternate transportation. Development will come, the area is already in high demand and it will only increase.

Thank you,
Mike
1458 Wellesley Ave

Julie Reiter, UPDC Executive Director

Anne White, UPDC board member and Land Use Committee Chair

Dai Thao, Ward 1 Councilperson

Russ Stark, Ward 4 Councilperson and president St. Paul City Council

I'm writing in regard to the Starbucks drive through that is proposed for Snelling and Marshall Avenues and my opposition to variances to allow this to happen.

First I'd like to be clear that I am not opposed to Starbucks and find their location at Snelling and Selby an asset to the community. I live at 1549 Ashland and am active with the UPDC Land Use Committee and have been very involved in the past three years on issues of traffic, and pedestrian/bicycle safety issues around Snelling Avenue.

As to Ryan Co. and their plan to build a drive-through at Snelling and Selby, I am very opposed to this idea and voted against it in the LUC meeting and was somewhat surprised by the vote. I believe it was 8-5 for the variance. In past meetings (although we never called a vote) opposition seemed to be strongly against a suburban type drive-through in an area that we have been working very hard to make more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

I think Tony Barranco and Ryan Co. have done a great job in the past of gathering neighborhood feedback. I have worked with Tony on a number of projects and he's done a great job with managing issues around the Vintage on Selby and the Whole Foods that will be the anchor tenant. I even agree with Tony that this is a somewhat problematic property with the size and borders surrounding it. But Ryan Co. purchased the property with eyes wide open understanding those difficulties. I believe they can do better than a drive-through coffee shop.

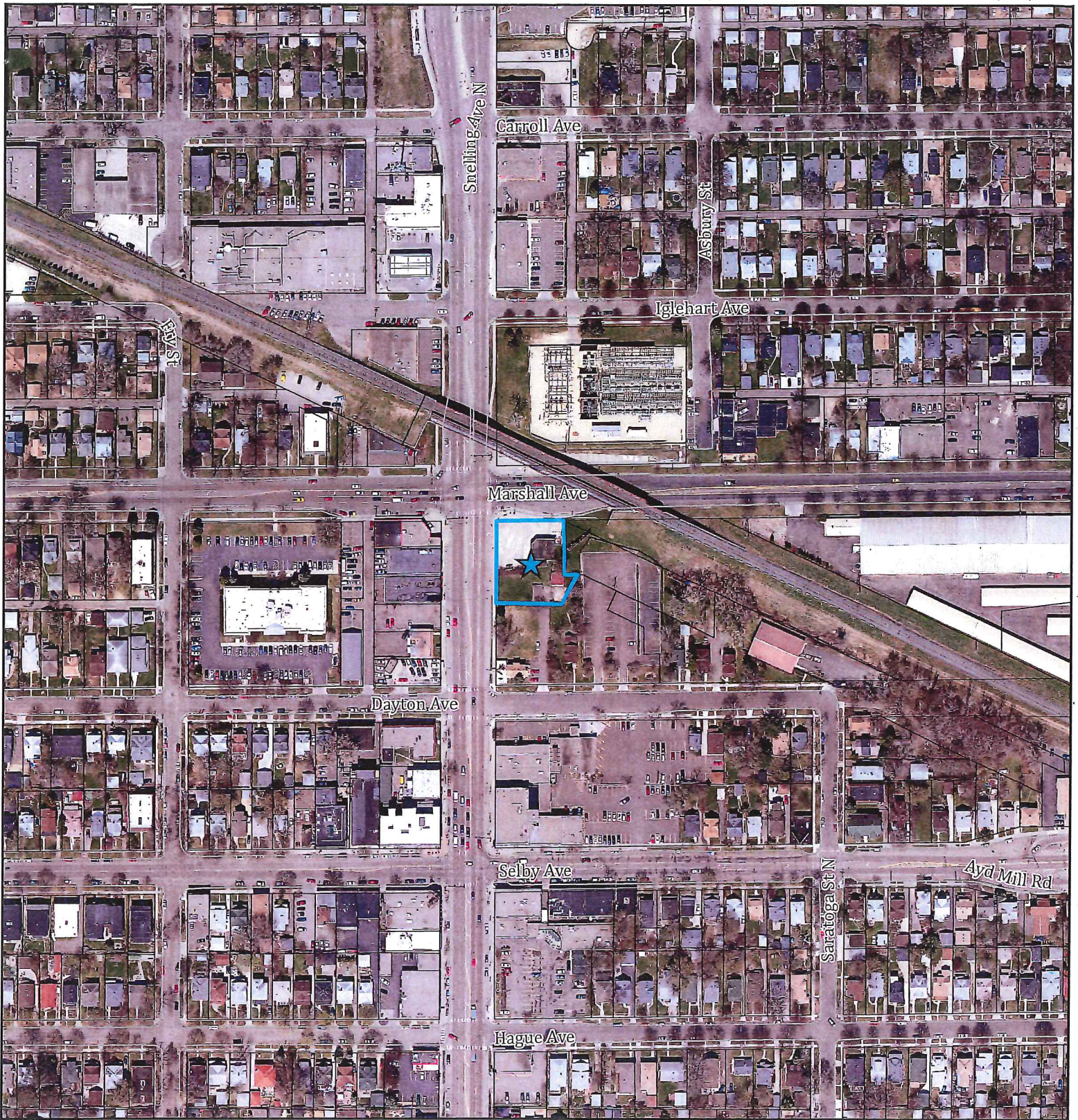
Giving a variance for a drive-through is something we will not be able to take back in the years to come as we have learned with the Taco Bell on North Snelling. While this would most likely not be a late night issue, this traffic pattern of cars trying to exit on Snelling while other cars are crossing paths and trying to pull into the drive through lane will undoubtedly be problematic. It will almost surely cause issues for pedestrians and additional noise and pollution with anxious drivers idling their cars as they are backed up on Snelling to the south or at the least, through the parking lot. The Caribou Coffee at Cedar and Minnehaha Parkway has this backup issue in the mornings and they have a much clearer route around the store for their drive-through.

I also have concerns about the bike lanes on Marshall and how drivers anxiously trying to get on their way to work will yield to those bikers. I am also concerned about drivers attempting U-turns after being forced to turn right onto Marshall with the newly designed curved curb cut which is in the current plan. While I think a right hand turn only on Marshall is the best plan, it will still divert a lot of traffic through the bike lane and very likely into a U-turn to get back on to Snelling. This could be a problem not only for bikers eastbound but also cars and bikes traveling westbound as they drop over the hill just to east of Snelling.

I'm sure a drive-through will be convenient for some resident neighbors. However, this will mainly be an asset to commuters passing through our city from Ayd Mill to I-94. Do we really want to make this sacrifice for our local pedestrians, bikers and public transit users who live in the neighborhood and are choosing or are forced to use alternative forms of transportation besides cars? I ask everyone to consider if this is really the message we want to be sending out.

Regards,

Brian Quarstad
1549 Ashland Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
Mobile: 651.485.5241



0 82.5 165 330 495 660 Feet

FILE NAME: Starbucks (234 Snelling N.)

Aerial

APPLICATION TYPE: CUP w/variance

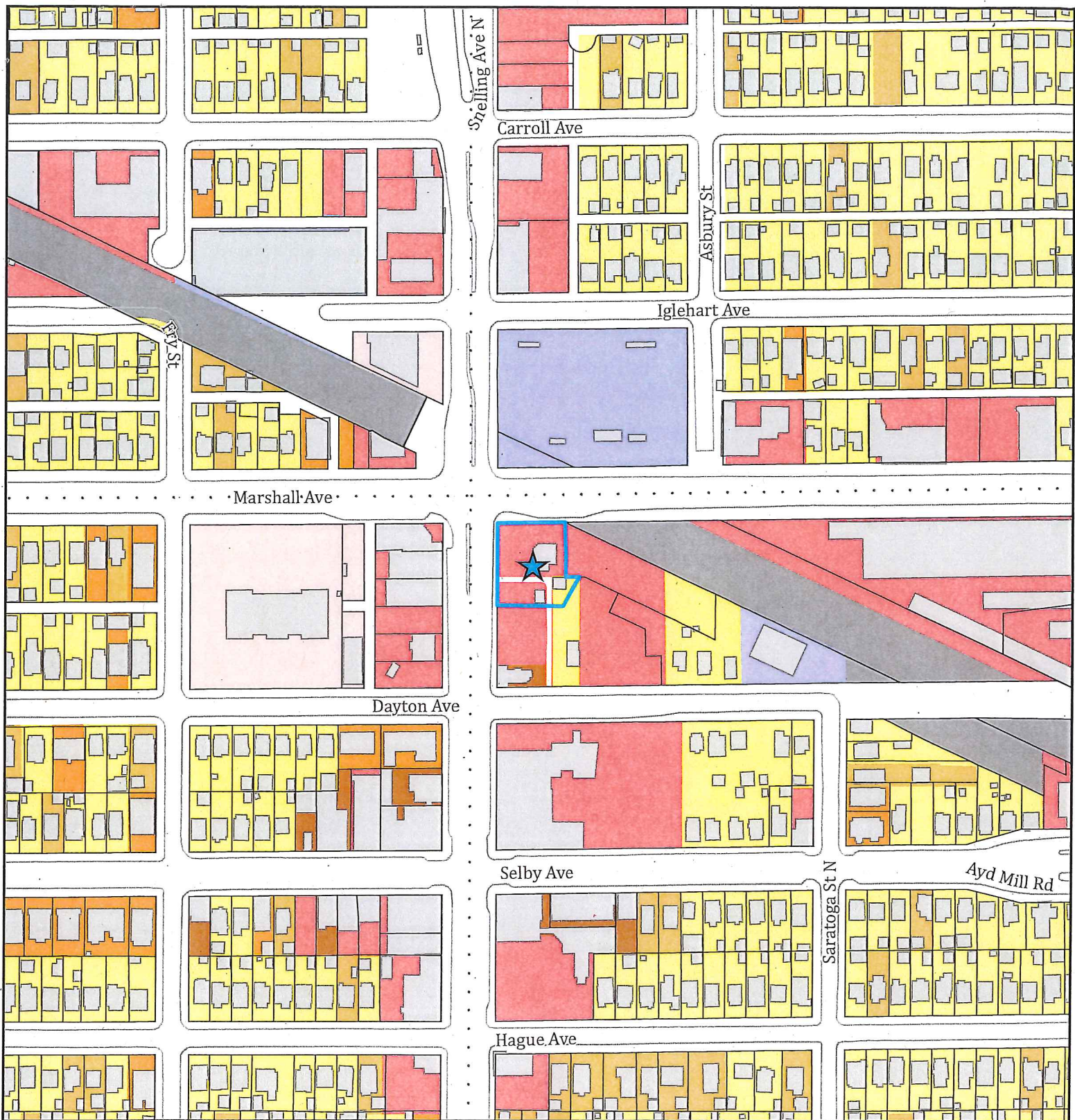
 Subject Parcels

FILE #: 15-152287 DATE: 8/20/2015

PLANNING DISTRICT: 13

ZONING PANEL: 14





FILE NAME: Starbucks (234 Snelling N.)

APPLICATION TYPE: CUP w/variance

FILE #: 15-152287 DATE: 8/20/2015

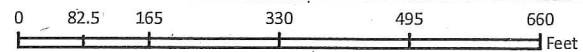
PLANNING DISTRICT: 13

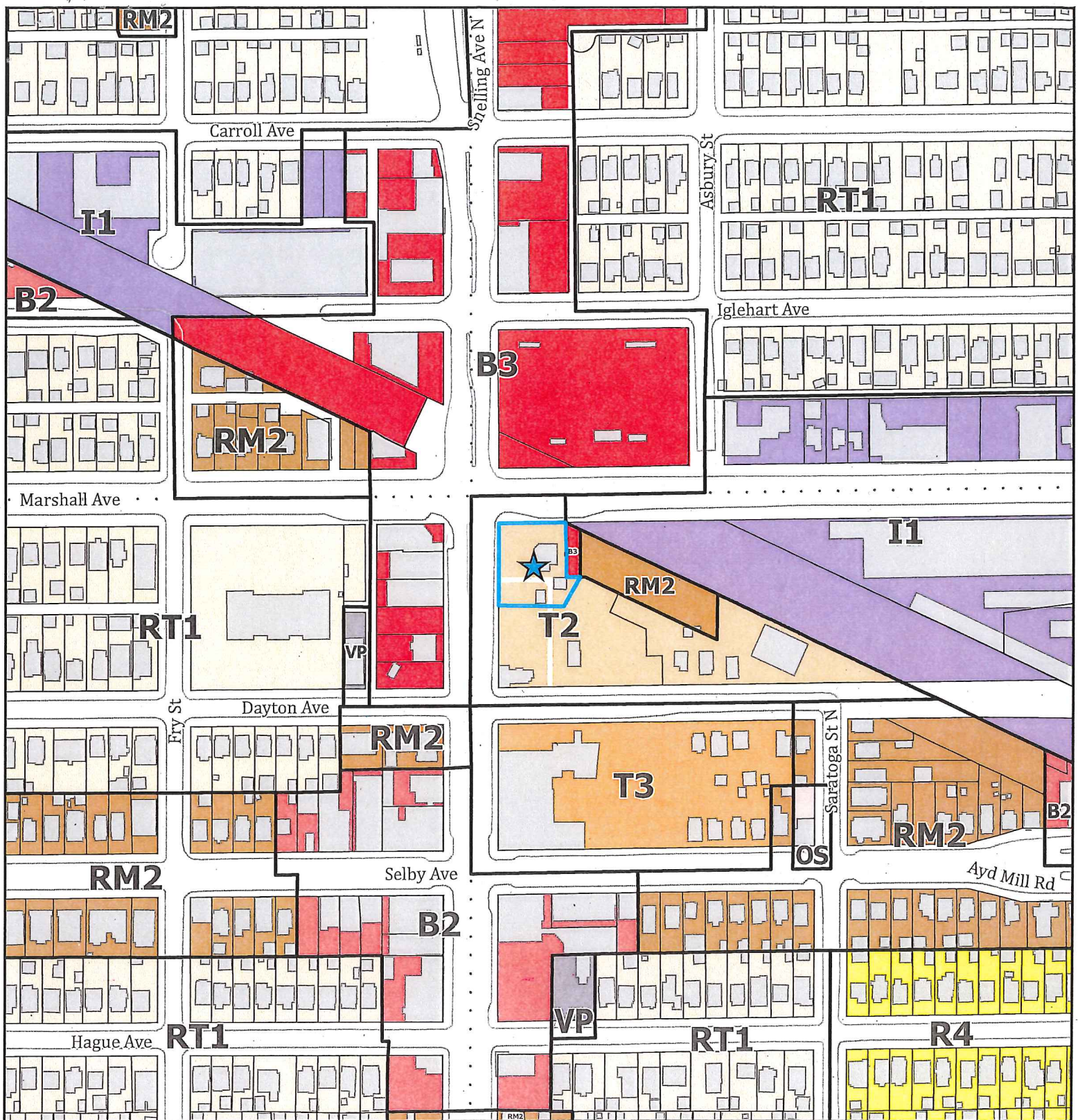
ZONING PANEL: 14

Land Use

- Single Family Detached
- Single Family Attached
- Multifamily
- Office
- Retail and Other Commercial
- Mixed Use Residential
- Industrial and Utility

- Railway
- Subject Parcels
- Section Lines





FILE NAME: Starbucks (234 Snelling N.)

APPLICATION TYPE: CUP w/variance

FILE #: 15-152287 DATE: 8/20/2015

PLANNING DISTRICT: 13

ZONING PANEL: 14

Zoning

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| R4 One-Family | B3 General Business |
| RT1 Two-Family | I1 Light Industrial |
| RM2 Multiple-Family | VP Vehicular Parking |
| T2 Traditional Neighborhood | Subject Parcels |
| T3 Traditional Neighborhood | Section Lines |
| OS Office-Service | |
| B2 Community Business | |

