Central Corridor/TN Zoning Study Overview

Spring 2010

Purpose: The direction for the Central Corridor/TN zoning study came out of the *Central Corridor Development Strategy* (CCDS) and the creation of the Central Corridor Overlay District. It was determined during the CCDS process that the City's toolbox of existing zoning districts and requirements would not facilitate the type of development envisioned for University Avenue, where the goal is to have higher density development, a reduced demand for parking and more of a pedestrian- and transit-oriented environment. The zoning study was initiated by the Planning Commission resolution that also directed the development of station area plans for the stations along the University Avenue portion of the light rail line.

The Central Corridor Overlay District, which is in place now, was designed to provide interim requirements along the Central Corridor route until there was adequate time to undertake a more comprehensive study. The City's existing mixed use zoning districts, Traditional Neighborhood (TN) 1, 2, and 3, generally would facilitate the type of development that is desired along University Avenue. However, these districts are not a perfect fit and there is a need for some revisions to the requirements to provide better tools to facilitate the type of development envisioned in the City's adopted plans for Central Corridor. The TN districts were first added to the Zoning Code in 2004, and are used in several locations throughout the city. Given the City's six year experience with the TN districts, this study is also an opportunity to tweak the existing regulations in these districts so they better meet the goal of facilitating good, mixed use development wherever these districts are used in the city.

Involvement: The study is being led by Department of Planning & Economic Development staff in collaboration with staff from the departments of Safety and Inspections, Public Works, Parks, and the Design Center. An evaluation of existing zoning district regulations, the frequency of variances, and development feasibility of possible new requirements are being considered in developing the study recommendations. Staff is engaging in an informal public process to obtain input and feedback from the community prior to presenting staff recommendations to the Planning Commission for formal public hearing.

Timeline: The goal is to have the study completed, and a new ordinance adopted with the necessary changes to the regulations by the end of 2010. The process of considering rezoning of individual properties would follow in the second phase of the study and be completed by the second quarter of 2011, prior to the expiration of the Central Corridor Overlay District on June 20, 2011.

Process:

Key components of the study will include:

Phase I – Amendments to Zoning Regulations

- Evaluation of existing districts.
- Identification of potential issues.
- Identification of best practices to facilitate pedestrian and transit-oriented development.
- Discussion of proposed regulations internally with City staff, Planning Commission, Mayor and Councilmembers.
- Informal public review and comment period, including meetings with community organizations, developers, and business and property owners.
- Refinement of staff recommendations based on input.
- Presentation to the Planning Commission for formal public hearing.
- Recommendation by the Planning Commission to the Mayor and City Council.
- Public hearing and final adoption by the City Council.

Phase II – Property Rezoning

- Determining the study area for property rezonings.
- Developing parcel-specific recommendations for appropriate zoning classifications, given the adopted CCDS and station area plans.
- Community and property owner input into proposed property rezonings.
- Planning Commission review and public hearing.
- Review and adoption by the City Council.

Major topics or issues the study will address:

- Review experience with existing TN1-TN3 districts
- Potential creation of a TN4 district to allow more density and greater mix of commercial uses in some locations
- Evaluation of appropriate uses: auto-oriented uses; drive-throughs; industrial uses
- Minimum and maximum floor area ratio (FAR) requirements
- Minimum and maximum building heights
- Building setbacks and resulting sidewalk width
- Parking requirements: review of overlay requirements vs. citywide requirements
- Location of parking
- Landscaping/screening of parking
- Requirements for architectural treatment of parking ramps
- Treatment, design standards, maintenance and use of alleys
- Establishment of a minimum standard for interior or private sidewalks
- Building relationship to public realm: transparency at the street-level (window transparency and door placement)
- The use of inclusionary zoning to produce affordable housing
- Outdoor seating – how to facilitate/plan for
- Treatment of plazas and open space, and presence of public art
- Other public realm/streetscape requirements (trees, sidewalks, etc.)

For more information, go to www.stpaul.gov/centralcorridor and click on Central Corridor Zoning Study.