



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6655
Facsimile: 651-228-3314

Date: May 8, 2013

TO: Neighborhood Planning Committee

FROM: Josh Williams, City Planner (266-6659)

SUBJECT: West Grand Zoning Study: public hearing testimony review and final recommendations

Background

A public hearing regarding the recommendations of the West Grand Zoning Study was held at April 19th Planning Commission meeting. Copies of all written comments received, comments posted to Open Saint Paul, as well as a summary of oral testimony taken from the meeting minutes, are attached. Please note that one additional letter of testimony, received on April 22nd and so not previously provided to Planning Commission members, is included.

Public Hearing Testimony

In general, testimony from neighborhood residents supported the recommendations of the study, but with further reductions in maximum allowed height, and elimination of density bonuses for providing structured parking. Both the need for design standards and a change to the definition of a dormitory were also raised as concerns. Finally, a number of commenters said that lack of parking was a problem.

Graham Merry, the developer of the building currently under construction at 2124 Grand, testified against the study recommendations. He stated that he believed that the proposed density controls would make it financially impossible to build structured parking and render redevelopment economically unfeasible. A copy of a basic pro forma, provided by Mr. Merry at the request of staff, is attached. Also attached is a spreadsheet which shows number of units which would be allowed for a three-lot parcel (approximately 120 x 150) under the proposed changes to RM2 density and dimensional standards.

Additional Information

Discussion at the April 24th NPC meeting did not yield consensus among committee members regarding the study. In order to allow the City Council to act before the moratorium expires, the NPC must act to forward a recommendation regarding the study to the full Planning Commission. Based on the discussion on the 24th, and to help facilitate that outcome, staff have pulled together the following information on items of discussion from the April 24th meeting:

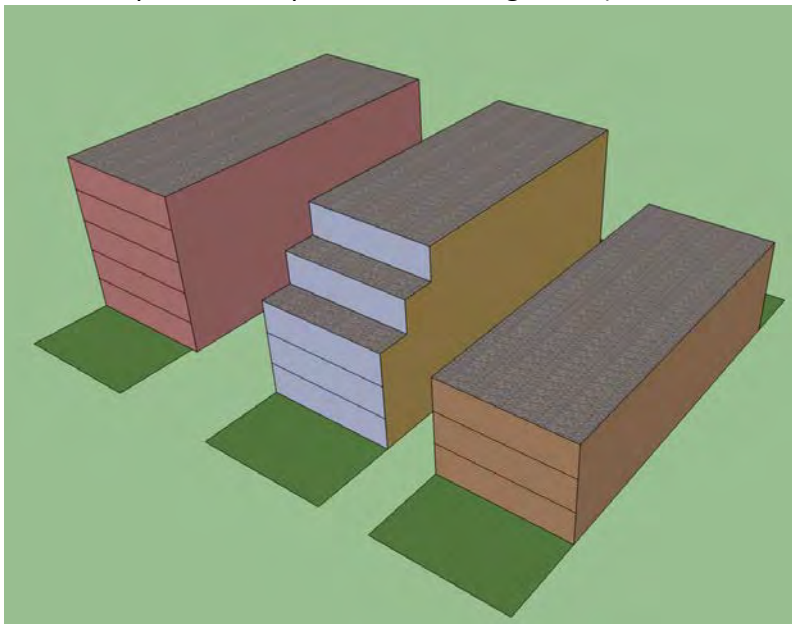
Regarding the potential for recommendations of zoning changes beyond the study area boundaries: The study is tied to a 1-year moratorium on multifamily development greater than 40 feet in height within the study area. The legislative direction given by the City Council in putting in place the moratorium and requesting the study was that there is a unique set of circumstances in the area of the moratorium/zoning study. The study and the Planning Commission recommendation for zoning changes, if any, should reflect this intent. However, it would be appropriate for the Planning Commission to identify what further study of related issues may be warranted.

Parking: Parking, or the lack thereof, was identified by a number of speakers at the public hearing as a point of concern. The western portion of the study area falls within residential permit parking districts number 21 and 22. The Planning Commission, in approving the site plan for 2124 Grand, limited the ability of future residents to obtain on-street parking permits. It is not clear whether this has lessened the concern of area residents about the potential impact on parking, nor, as the building is not yet occupied, what the actual impact will be or the effectiveness of limiting permits in mitigating this impact. Anecdotally, Mr. Merry has expressed concerns about being able to lease the 40 stall of off-street parking being constructed at 2124 Grand. There may be some prospective student residents who, being able to live very close to the UST campus, choose not to have a car. On the other hand, on-street parking is already in high demand in the area, presumably due in large part to students and UST employees who do not wish to pay for parking provided on the UST campus.

Because multifamily housing is an of-right use in the RM2 district, there is not necessarily an opportunity for the Planning Commission to consider parking impacts of all potential projects nor a mechanism for requiring conditions of approval in regard to parking. Given this, the best option for limiting the impact of a development on on-street parking supply is to put in place development standards. Potential approaches are to require that all off-street parking associated with a development is leased before on-street parking permits may be issued to residents of the development, placing a restriction on the number of permits issuable per unit, or both. These options of course require that a residential permit parking district be in place. Absent such a district, as on the eastern end of the study area, the only tool available to address the stated concern may be to increase off-street parking requirements.

In regard to the density bonus a developer can earn in exchange for building structure parking, staff does not recommend elimination. Structured parking provides many benefits over surface parking, but it is expensive to build. Removing the incentive provided by the density bonus would have a negative impact on the quality and character of residential development.

Rear set-backs/proximity to single family residential: There have been indications, based on public hearing testimony and other conversations with neighborhood residents, that part of the concern with taller and higher density development in RM2 districts is the proximity to single-family houses. The zoning study recommended an overall cap 45 feet and four stories on the height of buildings for RM2 districts within the study area. One alternative approach would be to reduce maximum heights at the rear setback line (or at a distance from the rear property line), and provided for increasing height as the distance from the rear property line increases, similar to how building height is regulated in T districts. Such an approach would allow for further restricting height nearest to smaller-scale single family development, but with less overall impact on the potential building mass (and thus, to some degree, density) on the



RM2 zoned property. The graphic to the left shows a rear view of buildings with a 30 ft height (A), 30 ft at rear setback with an additional foot of height for each foot of setback (B), and at the current allowed maximum height of 50 feet (C).

A second alternative would be to simply increase the rear yard requirement to move building mass farther

away from adjacent single-family residential. In order to protect the street feel, the front setback remain as is. As a result, this second option would result in decrease total potential building mass. For example, increasing the setback to 45 feet would have the affect of removing the three- and four-story portions at the rear of building B in the graphic.

Definition of Dormitory: Several individuals testifying at the public hearing suggested that the the building under construction 2124 is in reality, a dormitory, and that the city should change the definition of dormitory in the zoning code—which states that a dormitory must be organized and owned by an educational institution—in recognition of this fact. The full definition of dormitory from the zoning code:

Sec. 65.190 - Dormitory

A building designed for or used as group living quarters for students of a high school, college, university or seminary, organized and owned by a high school, college, university or seminary.

Standards and conditions:

- (a) In residential and TN1 traditional neighborhood districts, a conditional use permit is required for off-campus dormitories.
- (b) The use must be within two hundred fifty (250) feet of the campus of the institution it serves, for a college, university, seminary or other such institution of higher learning as established in a conditional use permit. In RL—R4 residential districts, the use shall be on the campus.
- (c) The yard requirements for multiple-family use in the district apply when the use is not located on a campus established in a conditional use permit

Removing the requirement the educational institutional ownership clause from the definition would likely lead to difficulties in administering the ordinance. Design intent may be hard to objectively demonstrate, and for a large multi-unit building, enforcement of a definition based on the characteristic of the residents being students would likely present substantial difficulties.

REQUESTED COMMITTEE ACTION

Forward current or modified study recommendations, with recommendation for action, to Planning Commission for May 17th meeting.

Impact of Proposed Changes to Minimum Lot Area/Unit Requirements

Lot Area (sq. ft.)	Unit Size (no. of bedrooms)	Minimum Lot Area/Unit (sq. ft.)**	Parking Bonus (Adjustment to Lot Area/Unit, in sq. ft.)	Effective Minimum Lot Area/Unit (sq. ft.)	Units	Total Residents*
19200	4	2000	-600	1400	13.71	52
19200	3	1750	-600	1150	16.70	63
19200	2	1500	-600	900	21.33	42

*current minimum lot area/unit is 2,000 sq. ft. for all units

** assumes 1 person per bedroom



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April 18, 2013

Scott Tempel
City of Saint Paul
Planning and Zoning
25 West Fourth Street, Suite 1400
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Re: West Grand Zoning Study

Dear Scott:

The Macalester Groveland Community Council encourages input from all community members – residents, business owners, students at our colleges and others. Much like this Commission, the Community Council takes a position only after discussion open to all stakeholders and consideration by two levels within the Council. We begin with debate open to all before the appropriate committee, in this case, Housing and Land Use Committee. The Committee's recommendation is then reviewed by our Board of Directors and subsequently shared with the City. We sometimes struggle to coordinate the timing of our process with that of city agencies and commissions.

We recognized differences of both vision and implementation regarding the future of West Grand Avenue. Consequently, Macalester Groveland Community Council partnered with Macalester College, University of Saint Thomas and West Summit Neighbors' Advisory Committee, with support from St. Paul's Planning & Economic Development staff, to retain the Local Initiatives Support Corporation which had developed the Corridor Development Initiative process, a community development visioning process. LISC facilitators and collaborating architects and developers led three very large community meetings through discussions and resulting development guidelines. We have submitted a copy to you.

With the guidelines in hand, our Housing and Land Use Committee debated two motions in a public meeting. The first would modify the City staff report recommendations for mid-block development of West Grand Avenue by:

- imposing a 35' height restriction, matching that of the adjacent established neighborhood,
- remove the density bonus for inclusion of structured parking
- include design standards that reflect and are compatible with the results of the CDI report in the recommendation

The motion resulted in a tie vote which, after being broken by the chair, passed.

The second motion considered by the Committee dealt with the commercial intersections included in the city staff study. It supported for the Commercial Analysis and Recommendations set forth in the March 8 West Grand Avenue Zoning Study Released by the Neighborhood Committee of the Planning Commission. This motion passed with a strong majority.

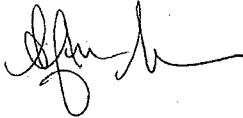
Both motions will be reviewed by the Macalester Groveland Board of Directors at our May 9 meeting, well before your May 17 vote. Of course, we will inform you of the outcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joel Clemmer".

Joel Clemmer
Board President

Afton Martens

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Afton Martens".

Afton Martens
Executive Director

Macalester-Groveland Development Goals

Final

February 27, 2013

Macalester (Mac) -Groveland is an established developed neighborhood in western Saint Paul that extends east from the Mississippi River to the Summit Hill neighborhood. The neighborhood is a rich mix of single family homes and apartments with corner stores and vibrant commercial corridors. The Summit Avenue Historic District, with magnificent mansions from the late 1800s, flanks the northern border of the neighborhood. In recent years Grand Avenue has developed into a nationally recognized commercial street, with a mixture of national retailers and local vendors. An abundance of colleges and universities, including the University of St. Thomas, Macalester College, and Saint Catherine University, are a vital part of the neighborhood. The influence of academia and college life is felt throughout the neighborhood, offering residents an array of cultural, athletic, and musical opportunities. Scenic pedestrian and bicycle trails stretch throughout Mac-Groveland, in particular along the Mississippi riverfront.

The neighborhood is an integral part of a growing ethnically and economically diverse St. Paul. We are also a reflective community committed to long term impact and perspective.

In 2013 the Macalester-Groveland Community Council invited the Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) / Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) to facilitate a series of community workshops to explore development scenarios along the two major arteries of Grand and Snelling Avenues. The CDI workshops provided an opportunity to further inform the City of St. Paul's zoning study for West Grand Avenue. These development guidelines are the result of the community workshops, and serve to inform the future development of the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood.

Assets:

The Macalester-Groveland neighborhood in St. Paul is

- Centrally located and easily accessible to both downtowns, fixed rail and high frequency transit, and to the international airport (without the noise)
- A community that supports diversity and desires to provide a range of housing options for its residents;
- Supported by an active, engaged community composed of residents, businesses and institutions;
- Home to exceptional educational opportunities, including public schools, charter schools, private schools, and higher education institutions.
- Rich with historic character and charm;
- A highly livable community with environmental sensitivity.

Development Goals

We are generally supportive of developments that respond to these guidelines.

We reserve the right to revisit these guidelines periodically. The Housing and Land Use committee of MGCC will use these goals for a tool for evaluating potential development. We are open to development that helps us as we evolve demographically and is responsive to the socio-economic changes within the city of St. Paul.

Goal 1: Strengthen Neighborhood Assets and Character

- A. Adhere to design standards that reinforce a connected, walkable, mixed-use, sustainable neighborhood, with a pedestrian-oriented and human-scale streetscape, and promote high-quality design, materials and construction.
- B. Create opportunities to live, work, learn, play – the spectrum of elements for a healthy community.

- C. Create flexible shared community work and meeting spaces.
- D. Provide for a range of housing types and affordability to meet the needs of all people throughout their life and changing lifestyle needs, including the needs of empty nesters, independent seniors, and young families.
- E. Enhance the intergenerational opportunities in the community.
- F. Strengthen the vitality of the area through moderate density and diverse commercial and residential uses.
- G. Encourage businesses that are locally owned and serve the needs of the community.
- H. Maintain the historic character of the community, preserving its role as a unique and significant place within the city.
- I. Utilize universal design principles that can respond to changing demographic needs and anticipate innovative ways to address the dynamic and changing needs of residents.
- J. Encourage a diversity of architectural designs that preserve the aesthetic appearance and appeal of the neighborhood with appropriate scale and mass to the surrounding buildings.
- K. Include green space or pocket parks to enhance the natural environment.
- L. Enhance a sustainable neighborhood by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy; minimize waste through recycling, backyard composting, curbside composting; and strengthen access to public transportation.
- M. Provide space for learning about the arts.
- N. Encourage collaborative participation in community development by colleges, churches and others.
- O. Maintain and enhance the tree canopy.

Goal 2: Create connections to parks, schools and other amenities

- P. Enhance connections to the river, business districts, and transit by creating walkable and bikeable areas and routes.
- Q. Provide bicycle racks and other bicycle infrastructure elements along Grand and Snelling Avenues. Incorporate bicycle parking with all new developments.
- R. Create engaging pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, especially along Grand, Summit and Snelling Avenues' commercial areas.
- S. Encourage cost effective, user friendly alternative modes of transportation as alternatives to auto travel.
- T. Reduce automobile traffic through the neighborhood and encourage the redesigning of the road for green spaces (e.g. Snelling Avenue's landscaped median near Macalester College).
- U. Creatively address the issues of parking in the neighborhood.

Goal 3: Encourage Development of Mixed Use / Mixed Markets

Support was expressed for:

- A mix of housing types to provide for a range of housing needs and income levels (e.g. seniors, students, young families, etc.)
- Compact development along major corridors that incorporates a mix of uses (commercial, residential, office, intergenerational housing, etc.)
- Flexible space that can adapt as needs change.
- Locally owned businesses and strengthening opportunities for residents to live and work in the area.
- Working with developers willing to consider varied ownership models (e.g. Co-ops)
- Encourage public private partnership for infrastructure (e.g. shared parking, storm water management)

- Where appropriate encourage higher density at the intersections, and lower-scale density at the mid-block (imagine a suspension bridge effect), offering the opportunity for growth while recalling the historic character of the neighborhood that residents value.
- Encourage reinvestment in rehabilitation of existing buildings.
- Consider phased development and uses to increase flexibility for properties to be enhanced over time.
- Welcome developers and businesses that operate with equity principles of hiring and wages.

2166 Lincoln Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105

April 12, 2013

Re: West Grand Avenue Zoning

To: Members of the Saint Paul Planning Commission

We participated in the Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) workshops during which 70 to 100 citizens gave up several evenings in a good-faith effort to articulate what type of development they hoped to see on West Grand in the future. We have carefully reviewed its report, and although it is not phrased in specific zoning language, we agree with the guiding principles of development it outlines and believe it captures the general sense of what the community wanted. In particular, we find these points relevant to the zoning review currently underway:

- A range of housing types to meet the needs of all people throughout the lifespan.
- Moderate density and diverse residential and commercial use.
- Universal design principles to meet the needs of aging populations.
- Diversity of architecture to preserve aesthetic appearance and appeal of the neighborhood with appropriate scale and mass to surrounding buildings.
- Green space and maintaining the tree canopy.
- Creative parking solutions for the neighborhood.
- Working with developers willing to consider varied ownership models.
- Investing in rehabilitation of existing buildings.

We have also studied the City Planning staff's report and recommendations for West Grand zoning changes. It thoughtfully addresses the current issue of demand for student housing and the need to rezone so as to avoid development of a whole block of five-story, 80- student private dorms.

We support the reductions in unit density recommended by the planners to 2000 square feet for four-bedroom apartments and to 1750 square feet for three-bedroom apartments, reducing density by about 25 percent. The 80 young adult students who are moving in to the Grand Finn building next fall will greatly increase human density on that block. Any additional development, if it should occur, should be significantly less dense. And according to the CDI principles above, future development should serve people throughout the lifespan and should be built with appropriate scale and mass to surrounding buildings. The Grand Finn building does not fit these principles. It also eliminated significant green space and the tree canopy when excavation began.

Unlike the staff's recommendation, we do not believe a density bonus should be provided for constructing structured parking but structured parking should be required. Parking in area 22 is already a serious problem and more development will add to that. If the city is serious about transit-oriented development (TOD) along West Grand to eventually connect to the light rail on University, then new development should cater to people who do not depend on cars. Development for University of Saint Thomas (UST) students is not necessarily TOD since they walk to class from Grand Avenue and tend to drive their cars everywhere else.

We support reducing height limits to prevent construction of additional five story buildings but would go further than what the staff recommended--four stories and 45 feet--to three stories and 35 feet. Here is the reason: In 2004 the city, the neighbors and UST agreed by means of the Conditional Use Permit that UST would have a 40 feet height limit on the north side of Grand between Cretin and Cleveland to build a residential village. This height limit was agreed upon to provide a transition zone from campus to the mostly single family homes on Lincoln Avenue and the rest of the neighborhood. To be consistent with that transition concept, the south side of Grand directly abutting homes on the north side of Lincoln should step down further to 35 feet, not jump up to 45 feet. Specifically, we support a height limit of 35 feet and three stories. As the zoning report now stands, future private developers will be permitted to pierce that transition zone—which even UST was not allowed to do. This is a substantial inconsistency and a serious violation of a good planning philosophy.

We believe UST has some responsibility for this whole problem. Had they built the residential village on the north side of West Grand as planned, the demand for private high rise student dorms would not likely exist today.

We understand that those of us most strongly advocating lower density on these two blocks are regarded by some as self-interested not-in-my-backyard types who oppose denser development because we live alongside it. There's probably little point in denying that one's immediate interests can color one's views, but this logic cuts both ways: can those so eager for increased density honestly say that their views are not shaped by their distance from it? Furthermore, the Grand Finn building is not appropriate in scale and mass even for West Grand. Now that the fifth story is framed you can see that it towers over all the other buildings on West Grand.

You should know that the Grand Finn building is already destabilizing our immediate neighborhood. Three families on the north side of the one block of Lincoln adjacent to the project have moved or are in the process of trying to sell and move as a direct result of the Grand Finn building. We love our neighborhood and most of us have invested heavily in our homes. We are alarmed that this developer was allowed to have such a negative impact on our neighborhood's quality of life. We ask that you do what you can to limit further damage to our neighborhood. This is how blight begins.

This developer cannot see past building more student dorms to maximize his profits at the expense of the neighborhood's quality of life and cannot see the value of the CDI design principles we were asked to develop at the workshops. We are counting on you to look more broadly and to support zoning changes that will require lower heights, lower density, and more diverse use of Grand Avenue properties as they become available in the future. We are asking you to preserve neighborhood balance.

Sincerely,

Brian and Cheryl Fogarty
Inside Ward 4

April 20, 2013

Dear Josh and Donna,

Re: Further thoughts on the Grand Avenue Zoning Study

What does the neighborhood want along this Zoning Study Avenue?

Last year during the Student Housing Overlay District public hearings, the neighbors adopted this phrase for their yard signs: Preserve Neighborhood Balance. This phrase is still appropriate for the present Grand Avenue Zoning Study. Neighbors want building height limits of 35 feet; enclosed or underground parking; a greater mix of owner occupied buildings such as condos, co-ops or triplexes; attractive facades that blend with and complement the existing surrounding buildings.

The year 1961

1. About 2500 male students were enrolled at the St. Thomas College, most rooming on campus.
2. St. Thomas Military Academy shared the campus with the college: STMA students from out of state were housed on campus.
3. The campus boundaries were Cretin, Summit, Cleveland and Selby.
4. The St. Paul Seminary occupied what is now known as the South Campus with an abundance of green space and a quiet atmosphere.
5. Merriam Park and Macalester Groveland had a healthy, balanced mix of owner/renter occupied homes, duplexes and apartment buildings.
6. There was no permit parking.

By the year 2013

1. Approximately 7,560 coed students are enrolled at the St. Paul Campus of the University of St. Thomas, triple the number of students on campus from 1961; about 2,700 live on campus; approximately 1,750 live within a mile of campus; another 1,750 live greater than a mile from campus.
2. St. Thomas Military Academy has moved to Mendota, MN
3. The campus boundaries extend from the north side of Grand Avenue, to Cleveland Avenue on the east, to Selby Avenue on the north and Cretin Avenue of the west. The area of the St. Paul Seminary, with a few exceptions like the chapel and the residence for retired priests, are now considered UST South Campus, greatly increasing foot traffic and parking traffic in the immediate surrounding areas. In addition to the above, two residences on Summit east of Cleveland as well as two residences on Portland across from campus are grandfathered into the UST campus boundaries.
5. Parts of Merriam Park have reached the "the tipping," point, the point at which the neighborhood has the potential to lose a healthy balance. The goal of the passing

the Student Housing District Overlay Ordinance last year was to maintain the existing balance.

6. Permit parking extends in all directions around the University of St. Thomas, with additional permit parking added in this past year.

7. WSNAC (the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee) was formed and has been active in the neighborhood issues.

What have the neighbors been doing during these changing times?

Neighborhood WSNAC members have worked tirelessly with the following persons, City leaders and departments: the neighbors; UST; the UST students; landlords; the City Council; the City Planning Department; the Department of Safety and Inspections; the Western District police and the City attorney's office to keep this neighborhood safe, attractive, vibrant and stable. In this past year the neighbors have reached out, held construction meetings, and requested a weekly construction update with the present dorm builder Graham Merry and his team to keep the neighborhood safe and functioning while this dorm is being constructed.

What are the neighbors asking for?

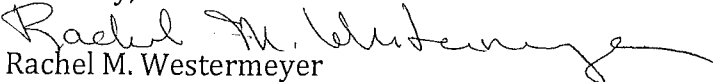
We are asking for the next tool we need in our toolkit i.e. that you place a 35 foot limit on building heights, lower building occupancy densities as well as address the parking issues that accompany new buildings in this area.

Why?

We want to preserve neighborhood balance!

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Rachel M. Westermeyer

1935 Summit Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55105

West Grand Avenue Zoning Study

The City Staff recommendation for restricted building height and density on RM2 parcels should be supported. In addition, the Planning Commission may consider restricting building heights to no more than 40 feet or three and one half stories rather than the recommended 45 feet or four stories. The City Staff recommendation for more flexible T2 zoning for commercial corners should be rejected.

The basis for both arguments is that West Grand Avenue exists in an area that is already developed at high density and intensity of use at and surrounding the University of St. Thomas and should be protected from further dense development, additional population pressure, and additional traffic and traffic safety issues.

West Grand Avenue is an "Institutional Corridor"

The present discussion regarding rezoning of West Grand Avenue is being conducted in the context of City of St. Paul Residential Corridor development.

The facts on the ground are that West Grand Avenue is not a Residential Corridor but an "Institutional Corridor" due to the already existing high-density development and intensive land use made by the University of St. Thomas (UST). In addition, just east of the area of interest is high-density institutional use by Macalester College. UST has over 7000 students in attendance together with faculty, staff, and visitors. The physical plant of UST includes dense construction of academic and residential buildings up to 65 feet in height, stadiums that attract crowds of spectators, facilities for meetings and receptions for both the University and the public, a student center, and athletic and recreational buildings of massive size compared to residential construction.

Grand Avenue does not terminate at the west end in a Mississippi River green space but rather at the entrance to the parking garage and surface parking facilities of the University, where approximately 1000 vehicles can be accommodated every day as students, employees, and visitors come and go from the campus. This avenue, together with the cross streets of Cretin and Cleveland avenues, forms a complex for transportation access to this educational institution. This, or these, avenues are not in this region "residential" corridors running through neighborhoods of otherwise single-family homes and duplexes. More than that, Cretin and Cleveland Avenues are major transportation corridors for residents south of UST all the way to Highland Park.

The facts on the ground are that the west end of Grand Avenue is already a highly developed location far exceeding the concept of a residential corridor in overall density of construction, population and traffic. Aside from the presence of the University, existing buildings are predominantly two and one-half to three and one-half story apartments that already approach or exceed the residential densities recommended by current planning objectives.

It is already decided policy that the University of St. Thomas operates under a conditional use permit that caps the student attendance at 8000 students and that restricts building heights on the

blocks bounded by Summit, Cleveland, Grand, and Cretin at 40 feet. This is in recognition of the high density and intensive use of land on the adjoining land areas of the University and the need to reduce that impact at the boundaries between the campus and residential neighborhoods. At the time those agreements were reached there was and remains an unnoticed disconnect between those standards and the existing unrestricted RM-2 classification on Grand Avenue with a 50 foot height limit. That disconnect should be repaired and is repaired in the City Staff recommendation, at least with a matching 40 foot height restriction.

Another fact on the ground is that current proposed development on West Grand Avenue is not a commercial response to multiple use "residential corridor" development but rather a commercial response to a monolithic market demand for student housing driven by UST. The vision anticipated by the conditional use permit process for use of the restricted blocks mentioned above was and is that there would be housing for up to 450 students on that University property. Up until now and for the foreseeable future UST is unable to manage financially the construction of these accommodations. Construction currently underway or proposed for private parcels on Grand Avenue is for student dormitories housing 80 students each, six of which would have to be built to accommodate the 450 students envisioned to the north. In effect, the actual construction that would occur on Grand Avenue in the absence of restricted zoning constitutes expansion of intensive institutional driven development and not residential corridor development.

Given these conditions, facts on the ground, the Planning Commission should advise the City Council to adopt the reduced building height and increased density restrictions recommended by City Staff in the report under current consideration. In fact, a further restriction in building heights to no more than 40 feet might be advised.

There is an additional recommendation from City Staff that is before the Planning Commission. The recommendation is for change of B2 and/or BC zoning on corner parcels at Cleveland and Fairview Avenues to T2 zoning. The purpose is increased flexibility in development that would possibly result in increased density and higher buildings at corridor intersections. This is a bad idea because the domination of this area by high-density use at UST together with high traffic demands, pedestrian safety issues, and parking issues means that additional density would be undesirable. This outweighs possible benefits that might be offered by more flexible development opportunities and perceived design guidelines that increase density at corridor intersections. The intersections of Cleveland Avenue with Grand Avenue and Summit Avenue are already traffic bottlenecks. Pedestrian safety crossing Cleveland Avenue toward UST is a recognized significant problem. There is also work in progress to manage pedestrian crossing and bicycle commuter traffic along Cretin across Grand and Summit and down River Road. All of these problems will be exacerbated by additional density and further bottlenecking of this "not residential" corridor if rezoning to T2 is approved.

In conclusion, the actual nature of this location in the City of St. Paul is such that the Planning Commission should recommend acceptance of density and building height limitations to R2 zoning mid-block but should oppose additional density enabled by changing to T2 zoning at commercial intersections.

Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)

From: Rachel Westermeyer <weste065@umn.edu>
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2013 12:22 PM
To: Drummond, Donna (CI-StPaul); Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Rachel Westermeyer; Stark, Russ (CI-StPaul); Henningson, Samantha (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Copy of WSNAC position on the West Grand Avenue zoning study

Hi Donna and Josh,

Tomorrow I will testify on behalf of WSNAC. I have attached a copy of the motion passed at the April 9, 2013 WSNAC board meeting.

Thank you.

Rachel M. Westermeyer
WSNAC co-chair

"The West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee recommends the adjustment of the Residential Dimensional and Density Standards set forth in the March 8 West Grand Avenue Zoning Study released by the Neighborhood Committee of the St. Paul Planning Commission, with the exception that the maximum height be 35 feet and that structured parking allowances not be permitted; and the request that design standards that reflect, and are compatible with, the results of the Corridor Development Initiative conducted the MGCC, WSNAC and other organizations, be included in the recommendation."

Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)

From: Tammy Thomas <tammywthomas@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2013 9:51 PM
To: Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Grand Avenue Zoning-Please add to your report
Attachments: image (1).jpeg; image (2).jpeg; photo (1).JPG

Josh,

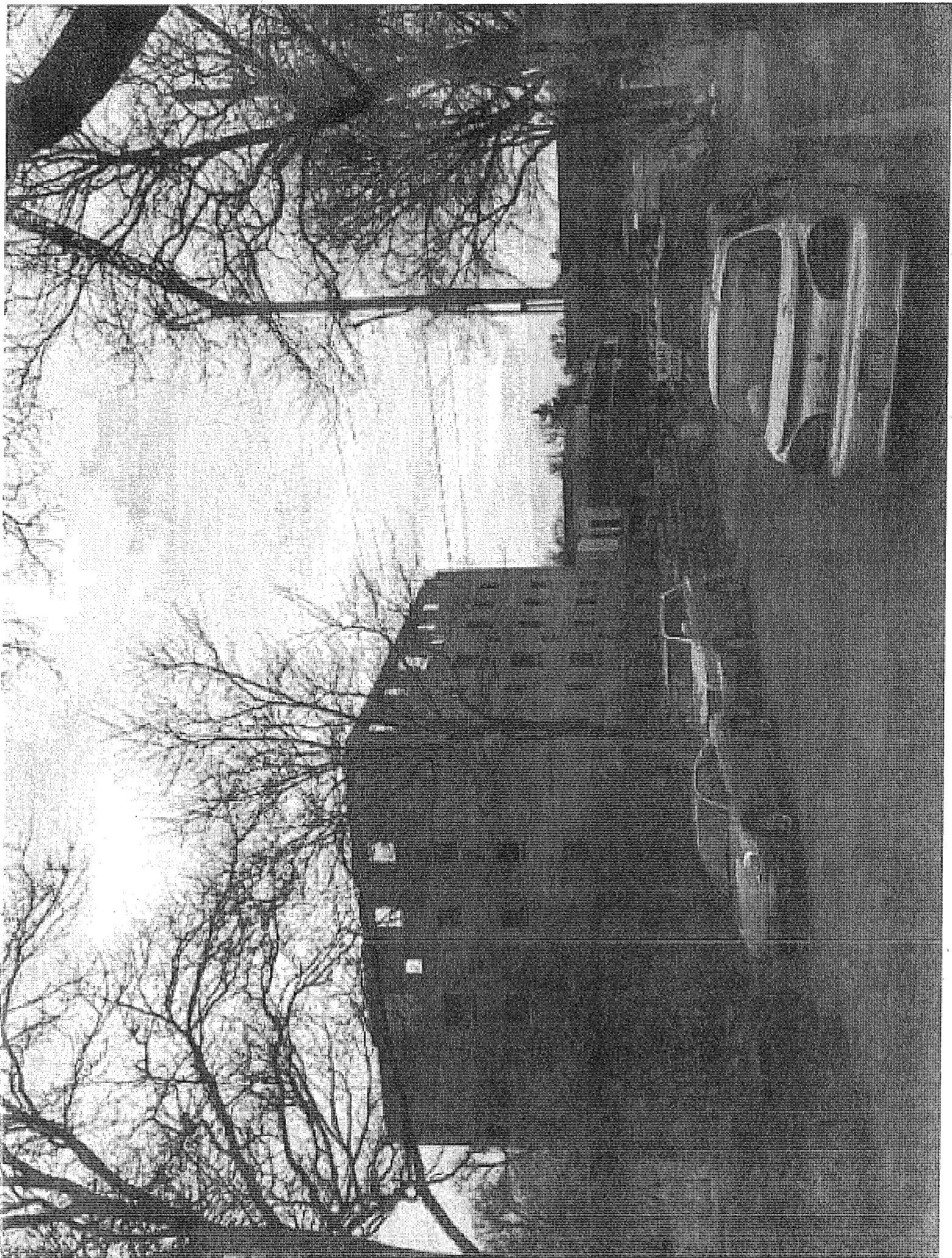
My name is Tammy Thomas. Please add my name to your growing list of neighbors who are strongly in opposition to the proposed building plans for West Grand Avenue. What is currently happening on the corner of Grand and Finn is a blight on the entire street and the neighborhood surrounding it. Appearances speak louder than words. Please look at the attached photos- not on a drawing, or on a computer, but in person. The photos show the behemoth building currently under construction I live 50 feet from. Is this proper balance for a neighborhood?

A zoning and planning commission has the difficult job of sorting through the facts, and doing what is best for our city. To ignore the beauty of Grand Av and what it means to St Paul, and fill this end of the street with oversize buildings assisting only one segment of society, is in direct opposition to good planning. Diversity and balance should be the goal. I would hope that your decision making is based not on tax advantages to the city but on advantages to the people of the city. These are the people who are open to change, but in an appropriate way.

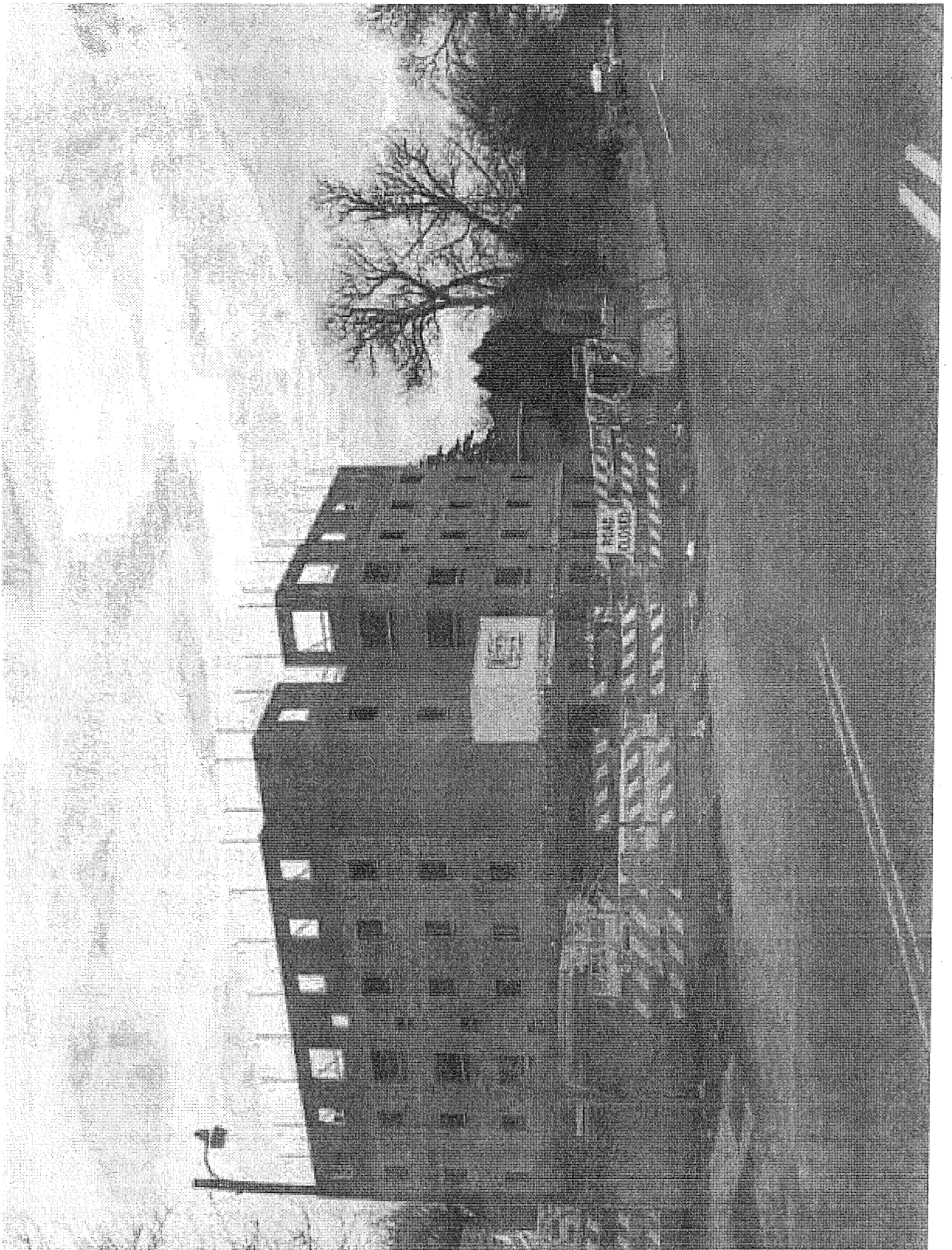
I completely support the housing and land use committees recommendations.

Thank you,

Tammy Thomas







Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)

From: Cheryl Fogarty <fogartybriancher@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2013 2:53 PM
To: Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Merry's comments at WSNAC

Josh,

Graham Merry attended the WSNAC meeting this week to enter into the discussion of the West Grand zoning study.

He made some outrageous statements, I thought, but wanted to let you know so that when he testifies at the planning commission and City Council you can refute them.

He said your recommendations for larger apartments and lowered height to 45 feet would actually amount to a 70% reduction in density and would make it impossible for him to build.

Of course, he can't fathom building anything but rental apartments for students. When I submitted my recommendations for zoning changes--same as the MG HLU resolution--(which actually reflect the Neighbors United point of view) he said that I am effectively proposing decreasing density by 100%. He also said that as the older apartment buildings on West Grand "crumble" and need to be replaced your zoning recommendations will make it impossible for anyone to build something new. I know he is wrong but I don't know how to argue with his "math".

Hope you do.

Cheryl Fogarty

Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)

From: jlm.nuessle@juno.com
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 9:23 PM
To: Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Zoning Code Changes for Grand Avenue

Mr. Williams,

My wife and I have lived in our home at 2081 Lincoln Avenue for the past thirty-eight years. We love our home and would love to stay in it for many years to come. Seeing a five story private dorm being built within a block of our home at Grand and Finn is very concerning to us. We ask that you support the proposed zoning provisions for height and setback requirements for Grand Avenue, including the provision to address private dormitories.

We have seen good neighbors who would be living in the shadow of the current building being constructed put their homes up for sale, which is very discouraging. If changes are not made to prevent more of these structures from being built, the neighborhood as we know it will cease to exist.

We appreciate your support to save our residential neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Jim and Loretta Nuessle
2081 Lincoln Avenue
(651) 690-5284

Woman is 53 But Looks 25

Mom reveals 1 simple wrinkle trick that has angered doctors...

<http://thirdpartyoffers.juno.com/TGL3131/511c58fb9e24b58fb2c56st04duc>

Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)

From: Kirk Wythers <kirk.wythers@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 4:10 PM
To: Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)
Subject: no more dorms!

Josh,

I am writing to support the idea of reasonable, thoughtful and lasting multi use development on Grand Ave. As we approach the end of the zoning study, it is my hope that regulations can be put in place that eliminate the possibility of more 5 story private dorms on Grand Ave. As the city inevitably moves to increase density along corridors like Grand Ave, it is my hope that development is suitable for multi use (i.e. 3 story designs attractive to single professional, young families, and retirees. Not the blatant St. Thomas dormitory design that effectively allows St Thomas to expand their campus boundary for free. I don't know what the future will hold for institutions like Thomas as we pass the boomer bubble and the population of college age individuals shrinks, but I'd like to think that what we build today, will have some appeal 20 years from now.

Thank you,

Kirk Wythers
2096 Lincoln Ave

Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)

From: Paul McCormick <st.paulmc@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 2:45 PM
To: Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Zoning Study

Mr Williams

I wanted to submit my comments on current moratorium with regard to the development at Finn and Grand .

- I appreciate the efforts of the City Council for the 2 sessions for discussion of future development
- West Saint Paul is currently working and could serve as a model for Urban Neighborhood nationwide.
- The current 5 story apartment building that is projected to house predominantly students threatens this balance
- The future increased need for city revenue should include a mix of solutions including increased taxes for increased utilization of city services in addition to the reliance only on increased density.
This could include consideration of new taxes on the Universities. I would also support increased private property taxes in exchange for density restrictions
- Promoting other development including alternative transportation corridors ,green space,and housing development restrictions leading to mixed housing and small businesses could raise more future revenue by growing neighborhoods versus the potential for declining tax base with predominant single predominant demographic (students)

Sincerely,
Paul McCormick
2126 Lincoln Ave
Saint Paul,MN 55105
651-698-7854

Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)

From: Kelly MacGregor <macgregor@macalester.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 1:48 PM
To: Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul); #CI-StPaul_Ward4; Henningson, Samantha (CI-StPaul)
Subject: my thoughts regarding zoning changes on Grand Avenue

Hello Josh and Russ -

As a resident of Mac/Groveland and a nearby neighbor of the development at Grand/Finn, I am writing to urge you to consider rezoning west Grand and limit the size and height of buildings allowed. My husband I and I have small children, both work nearby, and participate fully in the life and workings of the neighborhood (including attending neighborhood meetings, posting on Open St Paul, going to community council meetings, etc.). We care deeply about our neighbors and moved here partly because of the colleges and what they add to the community. We feel very strongly that allowing 80 college students (which is what is currently being built) and then allowing possibly hundreds more to move on to a 1 block stretch will effectively destroy balance in our area. While we understand there is financial incentive for developers and the City, what happens when parents can't or won't pay for private dorms? what happens in 10 years when they are no longer 'new'? Who will live in them? St. Thomas and their students will 'win'; and the neighbors will absolutely lose in this scenario. The issue of foot and car traffic is a huge one as well, and must be addressed with this zoning plan as well. Our blocks are effectively becoming the buffer zone around St. Thomas, rather than Grand acting as a transition, and it is utterly unfair to us. We have been policing behavior, and private dorms are going to make this problem worse. I will also note that we had our house assessed (for refinancing purposes) before and after the Grand/Finn apartment construction project began; our home value dropped >15% over a 6-month period. My sister has been looking to buy a home, and her realtor told her not to buy in our area because of the student apartments and problems they expected because of them.

We are asking you to strongly limit this sort of development in our area, and consider the needs of the residents that make the neighborhood what it is. I would think St. Thomas AND the City would want to do its part to keep the surrounding neighborhood strong and 'on board'. Please change the zoning in the area to help us and keep us in the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Kelly MacGregor
2128 Lincoln Avenue

Kelly MacGregor
Geology Department
Macalester College
1600 Grand Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105
(651) 696-6441

Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)

From: Flannery Delaney <flannerydelaney@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 12:09 PM
To: Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Grand Avenue zoning

Hi Josh,

Just want to register my support of the adoption of new zoning provisions, including the new provisions to limit large buildings to 4 stories or less and not allow any buildings that will serve as "private dormitories." Thanks for all that you do for the city of St. Paul. It's a great place to live and we cannot let institutional giants like St. Thomas ruin our neighborhoods.

Thanks, Josh.

Flannery Delaney

Summary of oral testimony from 4/19.2013 Planning Commission public hearing on the recommendations of the West Grand Zoning Study.

1. Ms. Rina Cooper a former resident of Lincoln Avenue supported the recommendation to change the current RM2 zoning for the properties on Grand Avenue, but stated she would like to see the height rezoned to a maximum of 40 feet, in keeping with the maximums for St. Thomas and the standards in the East Grand overlay. The Planning Commission should consider the cumulative impact of development that uses the maximum allowed by RM2. A 3-story building maximum with a 40 foot limit would give the neighborhood a chance of absorbing the cumulative density successfully. She encouraged the Planning Commission to support the rezoning, lower the density, lower the height, and promote growth in a manner that is good for the city. (Ms. Cooper also submitted a written statement).
2. Mr. Graham Merry, owner and developer of the building at 2124 Grand Avenue testified against the proposed rezoning. (Mr. Merry distributed a sheet explaining the reasons that he is opposed to the proposed rezoning). He state that a decrease in density from existing zoning makes underground structured parking cost prohibitive. Structured parking typically costs \$25,000-\$30,000/space. For a small project with bedrock and ground water conditions on Grand Avenue, structured parking costs \$40,000/space. Projects developed under the proposed zoning changes with decreased density will not be able to afford underground parking and will not make use of the structured parking bonus. The result is a significantly greater decrease in density than intended by rezoning. The greatest concerns of neighbors are total height and parking. The proposed rezoning effectively discourages developers from incorporating underground parking by decreasing development size to a point where structure parking is cost prohibitive. This is the goal of the community and of the city, encouraging underground parking and removing vehicles from street parking; consider rezoning to 4-stories/45 ft. as proposed to satisfy the community's desired decrease in height while allowing the lot area requirement and total density to remain unchanged. The result will be a shorter building more pleasing to the neighbors that maintains the necessary density to make underground parking and the associated density bonus needed for scaled development possible. With these proposed guidelines, development will not happen and that is not what the city wants. '

Commissioner Oliver asked if Mr. Merry has compared this section of Grand to any other section in the city as far as apartment development or a comparable city for development.

Mr. Merry replied yes he has compared it extensively to Minneapolis.

Commissioner Oliver stated that some of the other east-west streets north and south of Grand Avenue have similar areas of RM2 zoning sharing an alley with small single family houses. He asked if Mr. Merry is aware of any other set up like that in any of the sites he's looked at?

Mr. Merry is not familiar with any other set ups with that same zoning, but that he thinks that the part of this project that bothers the neighbors most is the height, more than density and parking. He thinks that there is potential for 4-story buildings that would look substantially lower and more consistent with the neighborhood that can then be wider, which is what's been proposed, but only if the overall density isn't decreased so that the shorter wider buildings generate enough revenue to afford underground parking and achieve the goal of the city to get cars off the street. He also stated that a better approach, rather than limiting 3- and 4-bedroom units, would be to leave a 1500 sq. ft. lot area requirement for 3- and 4-bedroom units and reward developers who do smaller bedroom units with a 900 sq. ft. lot area requirement for 1 and 2 bedroom units. The demand in this neighborhood is for young adult renters, it's not for senior housing, it's not for condos and it's not for townhomes. His building is designed for what the demand is and developers build for what the demand is.

Commissioner Spaulding said that there is a proposal to rezone several of the corners on the commercial node from B2 to T2. Commissioner Spaulding asked whether Mr. Merry did any review of that aspect of the proposal or if he has any thoughts on those rezonings.

Mr. Merry replied that the approach should be extrapolated beyond to the six main intersections around St. Thomas formed by Marshall Avenue, Summit Avenue, and Grand Avenue with Cretin and Cleveland. But looking at those intersections, there is not a single developable corner. In an ideal setting, if building a new city, higher development at corners is a great idea but in reality the corners that are present in this neighborhood are already developed at such a high value that they will not be able to be purchased to do housing development.

Commissioner Ward commented that Mr. Merry is spot on as far as what the intended outcome is based on the zoning amendments as proposed; he has reviewed the area extensively, he's punched the numbers and looked at what can be done and it's next to impossible. He agrees with a lot of Mr. Merry's findings but that is not what they're here to do today. They are there to look at the potential of rezoning and implementing the

proposed plan way going forward. Commissioner Ward concluded by asking of Mr. Merry: If the proposed zoning changes are passed, what will you do to make something work that is both acceptable to the community and economically viable?

Mr. Merry replied that he was not sure; he is in a difficult position that other developers are not in. Other developers that have not purchased land in this neighborhood yet have the luxury of walking away when this bad zoning gets passed. Having already has invested in land there; he has a choice between losing the money he's invested in land he hasn't been able to develop or trying to develop a building that loses less money that he will lose if he walks away from the land. He ends up a loser either way. He thinks developers will say that this is one more reason not to enter Saint Paul.

Commissioner Perrus stated that they are not making any decisions today, their job is to listen to the thoughts from the community and take that information back to have further conversation about the proposal. They've had discussions about this prior to the public hearing, and it's great to hear all the comments on both sides

3. Ms. Cheryl Fogarty, 2166 Lincoln: As a resident in the area, she participated in the Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) workshops, wherein citizens make an effort to articulate what type of development they hope to see on West Grand in the future. She agrees with the guiding principles of development it outlines, and thinks it captures the general sense of what the community wants. She supports the reductions in unit density recommended by staff, but does not believe a density bonus should be provided for constructing structured parking. Structured parking should be required. Parking in [residential permit parking area] 22 is already a serious problem and more development will add to that. She supports reducing height limits to prevent construction of additional 5-story buildings, but would go beyond the staff recommendation. The City, neighbors and University of St. Thomas (UST) agreed by means of a conditional use permit that UST would have 40 feet height limit on the north side of Grand between Cretin and Cleveland. This height limit was agreed upon to provide a transition zone from campus to the single family homes on Lincoln Avenue and the rest of the neighborhood. To be consistent with that transition concept, the south side of Grand directly abutting homes on the north side of Lincoln should step down further to 35 feet not jump up to 45 feet. They support a height limit of 35 feet and maximum 3-story buildings. As the zoning stands, future private developers will be permitted to pierce that transition zone which UST was not allowed to do; this is a substantial inconsistency in city policy.

Also, the Grand/Finn building is not appropriate in scale and mass for West Grand; now that the fifth story is framed it can be seen that it towers over all the other buildings on West Grand (pictures distributed to Planning Commission members). The building is already destabilizing the immediate neighborhood: three families on the north side of Lincoln

adjacent to the project have moved or are in the process of trying to sell, as a direct result of the Grand/Finn building. They love their neighborhood and most of them have invested heavily in their homes. They are alarmed that the developer was allowed to have such a negative impact on their neighborhood's quality of life. They ask that the city to do what can be done to limit further damage to their neighborhood. This is how blight begins.

The developer [Graham Merry] cannot see past building more student dorms to maximize his profits at the expense of the neighborhood's quality of life and cannot see the value of the CDI design principles that they were asked to develop at the workshops. Residents are counting on the city to support zoning changes that will require lower heights, lower density, and more diverse use of Grand Avenue properties as they become available in the future. A letter from Brian and Cheryl Fogarty was received before the public hearing.

Commissioner Oliver noted that last year there was a controversy about students taking over houses in the neighborhood, and now that a multifamily building is under construction there are complaints about that too. In light of this, he asked Ms. Fogarty what she suggests is the answer regarding providing housing for the thousands of students in the neighborhood.

Ms. Fogarty said that they have houses in the neighborhood and they have systems in place for neighbors and students to work together, and an ordinance in place so that there aren't a lot more duplex houses turned over to student rentals. There are limits to the number of students that can live immediately close to St. Thomas. Putting them in less dense buildings, lower in height on the north side of Grand that does not abut the neighbors in the single family homes on Lincoln on the Southside of Grand is the best option. Also the University should have a role in the discussion as well.

4. Mr. David Redmond, a resident on Lincoln Avenue east of Cleveland Avenue: The recommendation for restricted building height and density on RM2 parcels should be supported. The Planning Commission may consider restricting building heights to no more than 40 feet or three and one half stores rather than the recommended 45 feet or four stories. The recommendation for more flexible T2 zoning for commercial corners should be rejected. The basis for both arguments is that West Grand Avenue exists in an area that is already developed a high density and intensity of use at and around the University of St. Thomas (UST), and should be protected from further dense development, additional population pressure and additional traffic and safety issues. The west end of Grand Avenue is already a highly developed location far exceeding the concept of a residential corridor in overall density of construction, population and traffic. Existing buildings are predominantly

two and one-half to three and one-half story apartments that already approach or exceed the residential densities recommended by current planning objectives.

UST operates under a conditional use permit that caps the student attendance at 8,000 students [note: enrollment is capped at 8,750 student] and restricts building heights on the blocks bounded by Summit, Cleveland, Grand, and Cretin at 40 feet [note: the 40-ft height limit only applies to buildings fronting Grand; buildings on the Summit frontage may be higher]. These restrictions are in recognition of the higher density and more intensive use of land on the adjoining UST campus, and the need to reduce that impact at the boundaries between the campus and residential neighborhoods. There remains a disconnect between those standards and the existing RM2 classification on Grand Avenue with a 50 foot height limit. That disconnect should be repaired and is repaired in the proposed zoning changes, at least with in regard to matching the 40 foot height restriction. The Planning Commission should advise the City Council to adopt the reduced building height and increased density restrictions recommended by the West Grand Zoning Study. A further restriction in building heights to no more than 40 feet might be advised. The recommendation to change B2 and /or BC zoning on corner parcels at Cleveland and Fairview Avenues to T2 zoning is a bad idea because the domination of this area by high density use at UST together with high traffic demands, pedestrian safety issues, and parking issues means that additional density would be undesirable. These negative impacts outweigh possible benefits that might be offered by more flexible development opportunities and design guidelines that increase density at commercial intersections. Pedestrian safety crossing Cleveland Avenue toward UST is a recognized problem. There is work in progress to manage pedestrian crossings and bicycle commuter traffic along Cretin, across Grand and Summit, and down River Road. All of these problems will be exacerbated by additional density and further bottlenecking of this "not residential" corridor if rezoning to T2 is approved.

The nature of this location in the City of Saint Paul is such that the Planning Commission should recommend acceptance of density and building height limitations to R2 zoning mid-block but should oppose additional density enabled by changing to T2 zoning at commercial intersections. A two-page letter was received from Mr. Redmond before the public hearing.

Commissioner Ward commented that Mr. Redmond keeps referring to this as an institutional use, and even though it is an institution Commissioner Ward thinks of UST as a business. The students don't go there just because, and the people that work there don't work for free, they get paid and are there are there in order to support what goes on campus. The Planning Commission and needs to consider what the neighborhood and city will be like 30-40 years from now. There are going to be more people, more traffic and so they have to think about what they can do in order to mitigate, plan and move forward. And all of this together is what they have to look at.

Mr. Redmond stated he agreed with that conclusion. The need is to not let things get out of control around the boundaries of UST to a point where it is unmanageable.

Commissioner Oliver asked Mr. Redmond if he sees a significant difference between this section of Grand and the section of Marshall Avenue between Cleveland and Fairview, and if Mr. Redmond thinks that the changes being considered here should be applied on Marshall as well.

Mr. Redmond replied that he found Commissioner Oliver's point valid, and that you can take any of the avenues that bound UST or that lead to it and you certainly going to have some other issues about what should be done and how it should be done.

5. Mr. Joel Clemmer, President of the Macalester Groveland Community Council (D14) gave a report on the D14 review of the zoning study findings and recommendations, which is not yet completed. When the study began, D14 wanted to take a broader look and invited the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to help guide them through a visioning process for the neighborhood, with support from UST, Macalester College, the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee and the city. LISC facilitators and collaborating architects and developers led three large community meetings which resulted in development guidelines. Using the guidelines to help inform their discussion, the D14 Housing and Land Use Committee held a public meeting regarding the zoning study findings and recommendations. The committee voted 4-3 (tie-breaking vote cast by Chair) to support the proposed RM2 changes but further restricting building height to a 35 foot maximum, removing the density bonus for inclusion of structured parking, and including design standards that reflect and are compatible with the results of the Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) development guidelines. The committee also voted with a strong majority to support the proposed rezoning of properties to T2 traditional neighborhood. The committee motions will be reviewed by the Macalester Groveland Board of Directors at their May 9th meeting, and City staff will be notified of the outcome well before the May 17th vote at the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Nelson stated that earlier in his testimony, Mr. Clemmer had mentioned the idea that he would encourage higher density, and that it sounded like Mr. Clemmer meant higher density from what currently exists, as opposed to what current the zoning might allow. He asked Mr. Clemmer if this understanding was correct.

Mr. Clemmer replied that it was correct in general terms.

Commissioner Oliver inquired whether the motion to remove the density bonus for structured parking applied only to 'mid-block' development or throughout the study area.

Mr. Clemmer replied that that motion was in regard only to 'mid-block' development.

Commissioner Oliver said so structured parking would be allowed as you get closer to the corners.

It was clarified that the term 'mid-block' referred to those areas outside of the commercial nodes at Cleveland and Fairview. Mr. Clemmer also provided written testimony before the public hearing.

6. Mr. Ed Martell, a resident of Goodrich Avenue. Mr. Martell stated that from a project development standpoint he was concerned with the lack of control. He is not against change in general but he is against unmanaged change. Mr. Martell had a meeting with several of the neighbors and they identified some major concerns. There were eleven things brought up, and they all seemed to come around density, parking, quality of life type crimes, and the impact on property values. They want to maintain the property values of existing homes as well as develop Grand Avenue in a responsible way.
7. Mr. Marc Manderschied, an attorney and resident of Goodrich Avenue. Mr. Manderschied stated that he thinks that the issue in front of them is one that can be summarized by asking the question of what level of increased development and density is appropriate for West Grand Avenue. What this primarily comes down to when thinking about the value which is already in the existing apartment buildings is "what ought to replace houses on Grand Avenue?" If you drive down Grand Avenue what you will see is that from Snelling Avenue West other than Macalester and St. Thomas nothing new has been built except Mr. Merry's building in the last 40-50 years. Currently there is only one 6-story building, only one 5-story building on Grand Avenue, and everything else that exists on Grand Avenue at this point in time from its development as a streetcar corridor is 4-stories or less. The majority of the structures are 3 ½ stories or are 2 stories. Grand Avenue's character is buildings set primarily in the range of 3 stories; he is asking the City to be smart on this, do smart development.
What is allowed under current zoning are levels of density and housing much greater than allowed for UST on the north side of the street. The recommendations for changing to T2

zoning at the intersection of Cleveland and Grand will allow for much more development than has ever been allowed there previously. Significant change that is going to occur, and it ought to mirror the development that is going to be allowed for St. Thomas on the north side, 40-foot, three-story type buildings.

Mr. Manderschied continued by stating that the issue of dormitories had not been addressed. He noted that under current city code (Section 65.190) the only place that you have a dormitory is on a university, college, and seminary campus where a building is built for students and either owned or developed by the university etc. But what Mr. Merry is building is really a dormitory; it is being built as and is being marketed as a dormitory. That last clause in Section 65.190 should be removed and the City needs to come to grips with the fact that we now have private dormitories. He asked that the Planning Commission support a rezoning of this area which provides for an increase in density relative to existing use, but less than allowed under the existing zoning. Nothing has been built along the stretch of Grand Avenue under the existing zoning. So changing the zoning to allow for smart development over what is there now is the way to go.

8. Mr. Doug Hennes, Vice President for the University and Government Relations at St. Thomas. St. Thomas decided that they would not take apposition on the City staff's recommendations. They supported and participated in the CDI process. Their long term plan is to add housing on campus, including a residential village. The conditional use permit that the City approved in 2004 restricts them to height limits of 40 feet as well as 450-475 beds on the blocks bounded by Cretin, Summit, Cleveland, and Grand. They currently have between 150-175 students living on those blocks. Also under the conditional use permit, they have an enrollment cap of 8,750 people on the Saint Paul campus, and today they have approximately 7,500. They don't anticipate any significant growth over the next several years primarily because of the difficult economic times, stiff competition both for undergraduates and graduate students, and change in demographics.

Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Hennes to repeat the number of the enrollment cap.

Mr. Hennes replied 8,750 is the allowed head count. Even if a part time student taking only one class counts.

Commissioner Merrigan asked if St. Thomas will be looking for non-traditional students to fill the facilities if traditional student enrollment goes down.

Mr. Hennes said that over the last decade undergraduate enrollment has grown and they have increased it because graduate enrollment has fallen so much. At their peak they were at around 6,000 graduate students but are probably down to 4,000 today mostly in Minneapolis. They believe that their near a maximum in terms of what they can reasonably expect to enroll because of the conditions out there.

Commissioner Nelson inquired regarding the current bed capacity overall at the University of St. Thomas.

Mr. Hennes replied around 2,700. Last fall about 44% of the undergraduate population lived on campus, and of the 56% off-campus, half lived within a mile of campus and the rest lived beyond that. They have added over 1,000 beds on campus since 1998 through the construction of the two apartment style buildings on the north end of campus, they also have converted houses on Grand Avenue to student housing.

Commissioner Oliver asked if UST has a waiting list for those beds or if they are fully subscribed?

Mr. Hennes said they are fully subscribed and typically there is not a waiting list. Right now their housing deposits are running about 100 students behind where they were a year ago.

9. Ms. Rachel Westermeyer representing West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee (WSNAC) read the WSNAC's recommendations that they passed at their board meeting on April 9, 2013. "The WSNAC recommends the adjustment of the Residential Dimensional and Density Standards set forth in the March 8th Grand Avenue Zoning Study released by the Neighborhood Committee of the St. Paul Planning Commission, with the exception that the maximum height be 35 feet and that structured parking allowances not be permitted; and the request that design standards that reflect, and are compatible with, the results of the Corridor Development Initiative conducted [by] the MGCC, WSNC and other organizations be included in the recommendation." The board meeting was very long and they did not address commercial corners. A printed copy of the statement was provided to the Planning Commission in their packets.
10. Ms. Nancy Wacker a resident on Lincoln Avenue. In regards to [residential permit] parking area 22 which is between Cleveland and Cretin, there also are parking concerns on the other east side of Cleveland as well. Her concern with the zoning is that it dodged two big issues,

one being parking. On the Saint Paul web site it says that Saint Paul is the most livable city in America. And as we have this change are we going to live up to the name? She does not understand how the city evaluates if a development will have an impact on parking or not. Ms. Wacker would like to see parking more significantly addressed in the zoning changes. It is easier to take steps now rather than let the neighborhood go down and have things happen that bring change to the neighborhood and make it not as nice.

Commissioner Oliver asked about Ms. Wacker's opinion on the suggestion that the city eliminate the incentive for structured parking with the new apartment building.

Ms. Wacker said that she does not understand it, because if you say they put structured parking but then have more people then is there enough parking for the extra people that come because they put in that parking? When push comes to shove does it mean that there is more or less parking on the streets?

West Grand Zoning Study Recommendations

What do you think of the zoning changes recommended by the West Grand Zoning Study?

As of April 24, 2013, 12:06 PM, this forum had:

Attendees: 97

Participants: 8

Minutes of Public Comment: 24

4 participants posted comments

West Grand Zoning Study Recommendations

What do you think of the zoning changes recommended by the West Grand Zoning Study?

David Redmond inside Ward 4

April 16, 2013, 12:26 PM

West Grand Avenue Zoning Study

The City Staff recommendation for restricted building height and density on RM2 parcels should be supported. In addition, the Planning Commission may consider restricting building heights to no more than 40 feet or three and one half stories rather than the recommended 45 feet or four stories. The City Staff recommendation for more flexible T2 zoning for commercial corners should be rejected.

The basis for both arguments is that West Grand Avenue exists in an area that is already developed at high density and intensity of use at and surrounding the University of St. Thomas and should be protected from further dense development, additional population pressure, and additional traffic and traffic safety issues.

West Grand Avenue is an "Institutional Corridor"

The present discussion regarding rezoning of West Grand Avenue is being conducted in the context of City of St. Paul Residential Corridor development.

The facts on the ground are that West Grand Avenue is not a Residential Corridor but an "Institutional Corridor" due to the already existing high-density development and intensive land use made by the University of St. Thomas (UST). In addition, just east of the area of interest is high-density institutional use by Macalester College. UST has over 7000 students in attendance together with faculty, staff, and visitors. The physical plant of UST includes dense construction of academic and residential buildings up to 65 feet in height, stadiums that attract crowds of spectators, facilities for meetings and receptions for both the University and the public, a student center, and athletic and recreational buildings of massive size compared to residential construction.

Grand Avenue does not terminate at the west end in a Mississippi River green space but rather at the entrance to the parking garage and surface parking facilities of the University, where approximately 1000 vehicles can be accommodated every day as students, employees, and visitors come and go from the campus. This avenue, together with the cross streets of Cretin and Cleveland avenues, forms a complex for transportation access to this educational institution. This, or these, avenues are not in this region "residential" corridors running through neighborhoods of otherwise single-family homes and duplexes. More than that, Cretin and Cleveland Avenues are major transportation corridors for residents south of UST all the way to Highland Park.

The facts on the ground are that the west end of Grand Avenue is already a highly developed location far exceeding the concept of a residential corridor in overall density of construction, population and traffic. Aside from the presence of the University, existing buildings are predominantly two and one-half to three and one-half story apartments that already approach or exceed the residential densities recommended by current planning objectives.

It is already decided policy that the University of St. Thomas operates under a conditional use permit that caps the student attendance at 8000 students and that restricts building heights on the blocks bounded by Summit, Cleveland, Grand, and Cretin at 40 feet. This is in recognition of the high

West Grand Zoning Study Recommendations

What do you think of the zoning changes recommended by the West Grand Zoning Study?

density and intensive use of land on the adjoining land areas of the University and the need to reduce that impact at the boundaries between the campus and residential neighborhoods. At the time those agreements were reached there was and remains an unnoticed disconnect between those standards and the existing unrestricted RM-2 classification on Grand Avenue with a 50 foot height limit. That disconnect should be repaired and is repaired in the City Staff recommendation, at least with a matching 40 foot height restriction.

Another fact on the ground is that current proposed development on West Grand Avenue is not a commercial response to multiple use "residential corridor" development but rather a commercial response to a monolithic market demand for student housing driven by UST. The vision anticipated by the conditional use permit process for use of the restricted blocks mentioned above was and is that there would be housing for up to 450 students on that University property. Up until now and for the foreseeable future UST is unable to manage financially the construction of these accommodations. Construction currently underway or proposed for private parcels on Grand Avenue is for student dormitories housing 80 students each, six of which would have to be built to accommodate the 450 students envisioned to the north. In effect, the actual construction that would occur on Grand Avenue in the absence of restricted zoning constitutes expansion of intensive institutional driven development and not residential corridor development.

Given these conditions, facts on the ground, the Planning Commission should advise the City Council to adopt the reduced building height and increased density restrictions recommended by City Staff in the report under current consideration. In fact, a further restriction in building heights to no more than 40 feet might be advised.

There is an additional recommendation from City Staff that is before the Planning Commission. The recommendation is for change of B2 and/or BC zoning on corner parcels at Cleveland and Fairview Avenues to T2 zoning. The purpose is increased flexibility in development that would possibly result in increased density and higher buildings at corridor intersections. This is a bad idea because the domination of this area by high-density use at UST together with high traffic demands, pedestrian safety issues, and parking issues means that additional density would be undesirable. This outweighs possible benefits that might be offered by more flexible development opportunities and perceived design guidelines that increase density at corridor intersections. The intersections of Cleveland Avenue with Grand Avenue and Summit Avenue are already traffic bottlenecks. Pedestrian safety crossing Cleveland Avenue toward UST is a recognized significant problem. There is also work in progress to manage pedestrian crossing and bicycle commuter traffic along Cretin across Grand and Summit and down River Road. All of these problems will be exacerbated by additional density and further bottlenecking of this "not residential" corridor if rezoning to T2 is approved.

In conclusion, the actual nature of this location in the City of St. Paul is such that the Planning Commission should recommend acceptance of density and building height limitations to R2 zoning mid-block but should oppose additional density enabled by changing to T2 zoning at commercial intersections.

1 Supporter

Andrew Singer inside Ward 3

All comments sorted chronologically

As of April 24, 2013, 12:06 PM

April 12, 2013, 3:09 PM

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<http://www.peakdemocracy.com/1238>

West Grand Zoning Study Recommendations

What do you think of the zoning changes recommended by the West Grand Zoning Study?

I think the zoning issue has less to do with the size of the building than who is living in it. This is something the city zoning codes need to address. In the case of the 5-story apartment building being constructed at Grand and Finn, the building is designed like a dormitory, with bedrooms adjoining common areas and will, in fact, house 80 undergraduate students from Saint Thomas University with no Resident Advisers and no real supervision of any kind.

My wife and I lived next to a 4-unit, 2-story student apartment building on Portland Avenue for 7 years. At least once a week we'd have a major late-night noise issue. These included students blasting loud music, parties or loud drunken outdoor or open window conversations at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. They also included car alarms (once while two kids were actually in the vehicle having sex and wouldn't stop to disable the alarm), and vehicles coming and going at all hours of the night. There was also numerous drunk driving incidents, including drunk students hitting parked cars or one guy who passed out on the horn of his pickup truck before finally being pulled from the vehicle by a friend. There were also constant problems with garbage, sidewalk snow shoveling, pets and other basic responsibility issues. We'd start by politely talking to the students involved to try and get them to stop the offending behavior. When they didn't "get it", this would escalate to shouting and angry confrontations, and then (sometimes) to calling the police or the landlord and threatening a lawsuit. Just when some kind of mutual understanding was reached, a whole new crop of undergraduates would move in and we'd have to begin the process all over again. This is the reality of living next to undergraduate students. If the city allows it to grow and expand, it will gradually destroy one of Saint Paul's nicest neighborhoods. One need only look at the student slum areas around the University of Minnesota (or U.C. Berkeley, where my mother lives) to see what happens if large numbers of undergraduates are moved into off-campus residential houses and apartment buildings.

The city needs to create a zoning code that forces Saint Thomas to house more of its undergraduates on-campus, in dorms, where they can be supervised or where they are only annoying each other. The South Campus of Saint Thomas (south of Summit) is one giant surface parking lot-- one of the most under-utilized pieces of real estate on an American college campus. There is plenty of spaces for dorms and Saint Thomas could have these same developers build apartments on Saint Thomas real estate as opposed to putting them in quiet residential neighborhoods inhabited by professionals and families.

2 Supporters

Nancy Wacker inside Ward 4

April 4, 2013, 11:53 AM

I think that the revised zoning does not do enough to address parking. This neighborhood has long-standing parking issues as documented by its long history of permit parking. Even with permit parking, parking challenges on Lincoln and surrounding streets remain because many older apartment buildings on Grand were grandfathered in and do not provide parking for their residents even to the level required by current zoning. I think that any residential redevelopment along this portion of Grand that increases density beyond what is currently there should be required to provide tenant parking beyond what is currently required across the city of Saint Paul. I think this would be appropriate for any area with documented parking issues but is especially important in this neighborhood because, as the rezoning report indicates, redevelopment in this area targets college aged renters who are likely to have more cars than families would. Parking issues have a significant

West Grand Zoning Study Recommendations

What do you think of the zoning changes recommended by the West Grand Zoning Study?

effect on livability and neighborhood atmosphere. As St. Paul's website prides itself on being "the most live able city in America," it would seem appropriate that issues of livability should be addressed and protected as change occurs.

6 Supporters

Brian Fogarty inside Ward 4

April 3, 2013, 5:31 PM

We support the zoning recommendation to have West Grand remain RM2 and unit density requirements increased to 2000 square feet for a 4 bedroom apt and 1750 square feet for a 3 bedroom apt. We do not support the 4 story 45 feet building height but would support 3 story 35 feet building height. We do not support a "density bonus" for structured parking, although structured parking should be required since parking is very challenging in area 22 already.

Rationale: UST on the north side of Grand from Cleveland to Cretin has a 40 feet building height limit per the CUP because Grand Avenue is supposed to be the neighborhood's transition zone from the University. It is logical then that the south side of Grand should step down from that height as buildings approach the alley immediately abutting the Lincoln Avenue neighbors' back yards.

The 5 story Grand-Finn private student dorm currently under construction has made it clear that the neighborhood suffers under this type of development. One long term family has moved, another long term family is trying to sell, and a third is planning to sell and move, all on the north side of Lincoln between Finn and Cretin and all directly related to the Grand-Finn project. This is already destabilizing our block and will have a ripple effect on a previously stable neighborhood.

We support the development guidelines proposed in the CDI report such as the following:

- A range of housing types to meet the needs of all people throughout the lifespan.
- Moderate density and diverse residential and commercial use.
- Universal design principles to meet the needs of aging populations.
- Diversity of architecture to preserve aesthetic appearance and appeal of the neighborhood with appropriate scale and mass to surrounding buildings.
- Green space and maintaining the tree canopy.
- Creative parking solutions for the neighborhood.
- Working with developers willing to consider varied ownership models.
- Investing in rehabilitation of existing buildings.

6 Supporters
