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**DATE:** November 20, 2014  
**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Neighborhood Planning Committee  
**SUBJECT:** Draft *West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines*

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### **BACKGROUND**

In November 2012, the Saint Paul Planning Commission initiated an update of the 2001 *West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines*, authorized the creation of a community task force to guide preparation of the plan update, and initiated a zoning study for a portion of the planning area. The primary goals of the *Plan* update were to: 1) review the urban design and land use directions in the 2001 *Plan*; 2) explore stormwater management opportunities in more detail, particularly incorporating green infrastructure; 3) anticipate impacts of proposed development on the sanitary sewer system; and 4) include land east of Robert Street that had been the subject of the controversial Bridges of Saint Paul proposal in 2005-2006.

The City issued a Request for Proposals in October 2012 for a consultant to assist City staff in updating the *Plan*. HKGi of Minneapolis was selected to lead a multi-disciplinary team and began work in December 2012. A community task force (CTF) was appointed in January 2013, with Commissioner Betsy Reveal as chair. The CTF met from February 2013 through April 2014. In addition, a project management team (PMT) comprising City staff from Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Safety and Inspections, and PED; and the Director of the Saint Paul Design Center was created to guide the work of the consultants. The PMT met throughout the planning process.

### **ISSUES PRECIPITATING AN UPDATE OF THE 2001 WEST SIDE FLATS MASTER PLAN**

Four issues were at the forefront of the Plan update: 1) urban design and land use; 2) stormwater management; 3) sanitary sewer capacity; and 4) anticipated development pressure east of Robert Street.

#### Urban design and land use

After 10+ years of using the 2001 *Master Plan*, City staff wanted to explore whether it could provide the right type and level of direction in a time of changing markets and limited public funding capacity. While the fundamental urban design goals and principles in the *Master Plan* (relating to height and density gradients, the street and block pattern, and the proposed open space network) have stood the test of time, City staff wanted to take a fresh look at some of the land use and development assumptions, and explore whether a more general, flexible regulatory approach is a better fit for the West Side Flats Urban Village.

#### Stormwater management

City staff experience with the *Master Plan* since 2001 has shown the importance of more detailed stormwater management planning to inform urban pattern, building configuration, street design, density, and the design and function of public spaces. In addition, innovations in

stormwater management, and the increased interest in stacked-function, green infrastructure call for a new look at the opportunities for more visible (bio-oriented) approaches.

#### Sanitary sewer

The original *Master Plan* did not consider the impact of proposed development on sanitary sewer capacity or demand. Consequently, over the life of the *Plan*, the impact of each development proposal on the sanitary sewer system has been evaluated on a case-by-case basis. City staff wanted to avoid either a “first-come, first-served” allocation of sanitary sewer capacity, or a situation where later development phases pay disproportionately for improvements to the sanitary sewer system.

#### Expansion of planning area

Experience with the Bridges of Saint Paul project, as well as the City’s recent work on the *Great River Passage Master Plan*, have shown the need to plan for a larger area along the West Side riverfront. The planning area was extended to the east, to include the area bounded by Robert Street, Lafayette/Hwy. 52, Plato Boulevard and the river. The expanded planning area also includes Riverview Industrial Park.

### **PLANNING PROCESS**

The update of the *West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines* consisted of several opportunities for community engagement. In addition to the CTF noted above, which met 11 times over 13 months, the project team hosted:

- four stakeholder meetings, organized by issue/theme
- a two-day design workshop, with the CTF, PMT and consultant team
- two developer roundtables, to keep the Plan grounded in market reality
- two listening sessions, to engage underrepresented groups
- two community Open Houses
- regular updates with the Riverfront, Development and Land Use Committee of WSCO
- a City web site
- Open Saint Paul, where on-line surveys helped reach a larger audience

More detail on each of these techniques is included on pgs. 9-11 of the draft *Plan*. In August 2014, the WSCO (West Side Community Organization) board voted to send the CTF draft of the *Plan* to the Planning Commission to begin the formal adoption process.

### **THE DRAFT PLAN**

The draft as proposed by the Community Task Force is attached. The Vision and Guiding Principles underlie the strategies and development guidelines.

#### The Vision: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Riverfront Urban Village

The West Side Flats will emerge as a thriving riverfront urban village that connects the larger West Side community to the Mississippi River and downtown Saint Paul. With its unique location in the Mississippi River floodplain, the presence and movement of water will be reflected in land use patterns, street design, building massing, stormwater features, and public realm design. The West Side Flats will have strong physical and visual connections to the river’s edge and bluffs, walk/bike-friendly streets, a well-designed network of public spaces, restored natural systems, urban neighborhood design, a complementary mix of high-quality and human-scaled buildings, a variety of housing types and public art. The West Side Flats will recapture its identity as a place that welcomes and integrates a broad mix of people, cultures

and destinations into a vibrant mixed-use community. By restoring a more balanced mix of neighborhood, business and natural systems, it will be a model for economic, environmental and social sustainability. The employment-oriented district will continue to provide high-paying commercial/industrial job opportunities for the region and local residents, as it evolves into a more diverse, higher-intensity, and visually attractive business district over time.

#### Guiding Principles

1. Integrate a broad **mix of complementary land uses** throughout the neighborhood that offer people opportunities for living, working, commerce, entertainment and recreation.
2. Promote a **diverse mix of housing types** that welcome residents of all ages, incomes, household types and cultural backgrounds.
3. Re-establish an urban neighborhood **block and street pattern** that provides urban-scale development parcels, a robust network of attractive public streetscapes, and increased connectivity for all transportation modes.
4. Create a **prominent public realm** that links the Riverfront Esplanade, bluffs, parks, open spaces and streets into a green space framework; provides opportunities for community gathering and public art; and connects to the regional system of trails, parks and open spaces.
5. Sensitively **integrate stormwater runoff** into the neighborhood's green infrastructure system of streets, public open spaces and private yards as a valuable natural resource, visual asset and unique neighborhood identity element.
6. Provide a balanced, convenient, safe and comfortable **network for movement** within, to and from the neighborhood, including walking, biking, vertical circulation (e.g. bluffs to flats, levee to water), driving and transit.
7. Encourage a **variety of building heights and massing**, while preserving important views and creating new views of the river, bluffs and community landmarks.
8. Create an **urban ecology** that balances sustainable urban and natural systems, including tree canopy, green streets, native vegetation, and cleanup of contaminated soils.
9. Improve the business functionality, land use diversity and visual character of the **commercial/industrial employment** district east of Robert Street to provide high-paying job opportunities (especially for West Side residents) and complement the larger West Side Flats neighborhood.
10. Support community **cultural development** opportunities that reflect and respond to the larger West Side neighborhood's past, present and future, engaging artists and creative communities in all phases of West Side Flats redevelopment.
11. Create a **unique and welcoming public edge** along the riverfront that invites walking, cycling and gathering places for all in all seasons.
12. **Engage all members** of the West Side community in on-going plan implementation.

From the Vision and Guiding Principles, the *Plan* recommends strategies for:

land use	transit
urban design and sustainability	parks and open spaces
streets	green infrastructure
pedestrian and bike circulation	public art

The layering of all of these Plan elements comes together in the Illustrative Plan:



### Development Guidelines

The development guidelines are intended to assist the community, property owners, developers, design professionals and City staff as they reinvest in and design development projects, public spaces and public infrastructure. They are in addition to the T3 and IT district design standards. As a set of guidelines rather than requirements, they are intended to provide direction for future development, while leaving room for individual expression and flexibility. The development guidelines address the following elements:

- streets
- site development
- buildings
- parking
- stormwater/water quality
- utilities
- public art

### Implementation

Chapter 7 addresses implementation. Rezonings are recommended, as is a development phasing plan. In general, the rezonings comprise expanded use of T3M (rezoning 4 parcels from I1 to T3M and 8 parcels from T3 to T3M), and rezoning 22 parcels from I1 to ITM. The “M” designation means that the parcels will be covered by the *West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines*.

### Appendix: Stormwater and Sanitary Sewer System Analysis

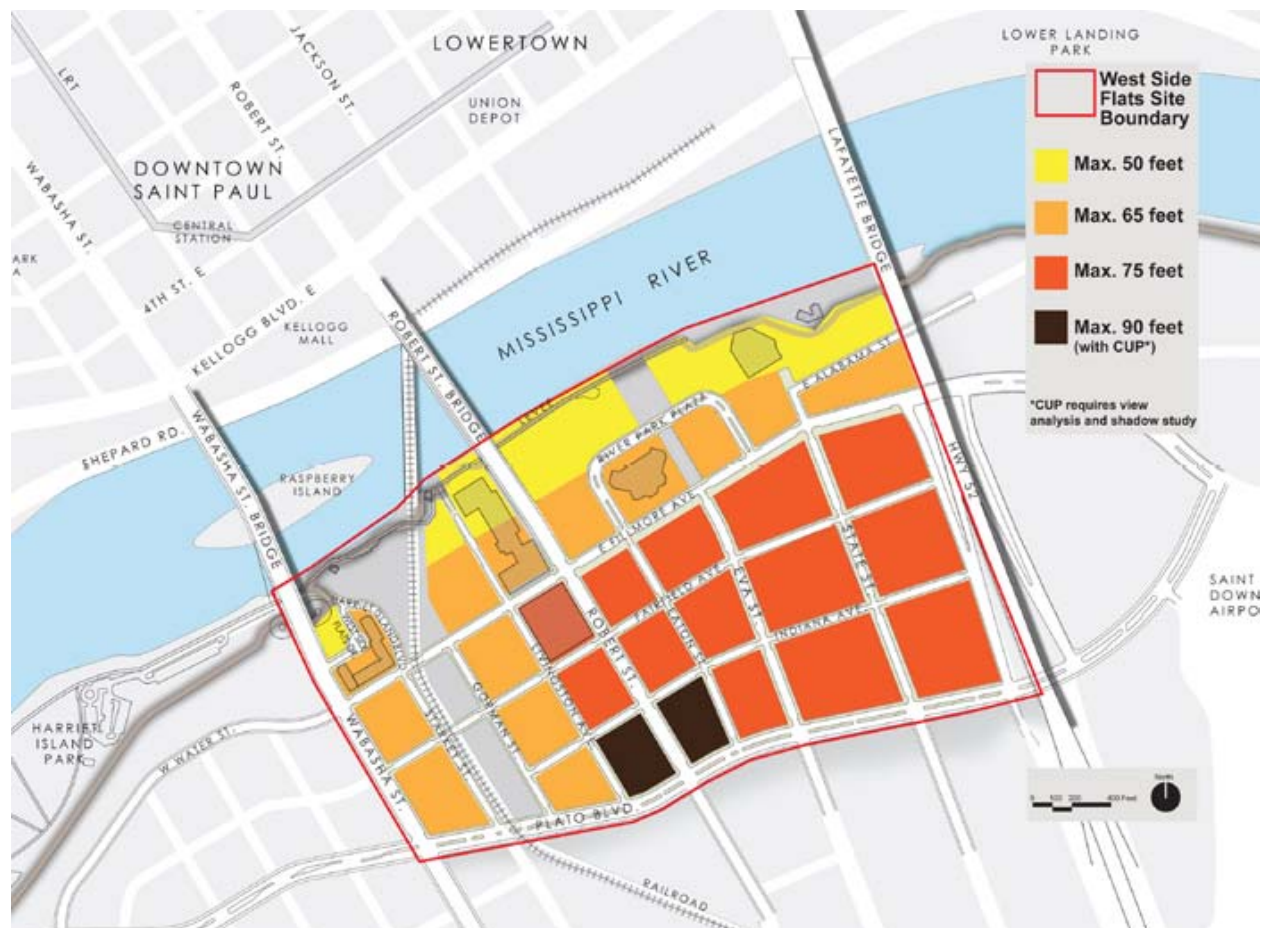
The more detailed analyses of the stormwater and sanitary sewer systems on the West Side Flats are included in a technical Appendix. This information is intended to inform future decisions regarding development density, street design, management and treatment of stormwater on public and private land, and sanitary sewer system upgrades.

## KEY ISSUES

A wide range of opportunities and issues was addressed during the 16-month planning process. Two issues became more prominent towards the end of the process: proposed building heights (related to proposed rezonings) and the street network proposed for Riverview Industrial Park.

### Building heights

The main concern was the impact of proposed building heights on views of the Mississippi River Valley, and on the ability to “read” and understand the unique location of the Flats within a larger floodplain surrounded by bluffs. The task force originally recommended acceptable maximum building heights up to 100’ and 125’ in specific locations. At the request of the Friends of the Mississippi River, the issue was reopened at the very end of the task force process, which led to an April 2014 community forum on height and impacts on views, and a revised recommendation from the CTF. The acceptable maximum heights proposed are shown below.



Street and block pattern in Riverview Industrial Park

Towards the end of the planning process, the Saint Paul Port Authority raised a concern regarding the proposed street and block pattern in Riverview Industrial Park – the portion of Riverview that is within the planning area is bounded by Robert Street, Fillmore Avenue, Highway 52 and Plato Boulevard. The Port is concerned that the size of the proposed blocks would be too small to accommodate new industrial development, and that industrial tenants would not only see no benefit from new streets and sidewalks, but the prospect of assessments to fund street infrastructure would discourage any future industrial development. The CTF considered the Port's concerns, but retained its recommendation to build a connected street network as redevelopment occurs; the draft *Plan* proposes this for Phase IV, which is likely 20-30 years out.

**PROPOSED REZONINGS AND ZONING TEXT CHANGES**

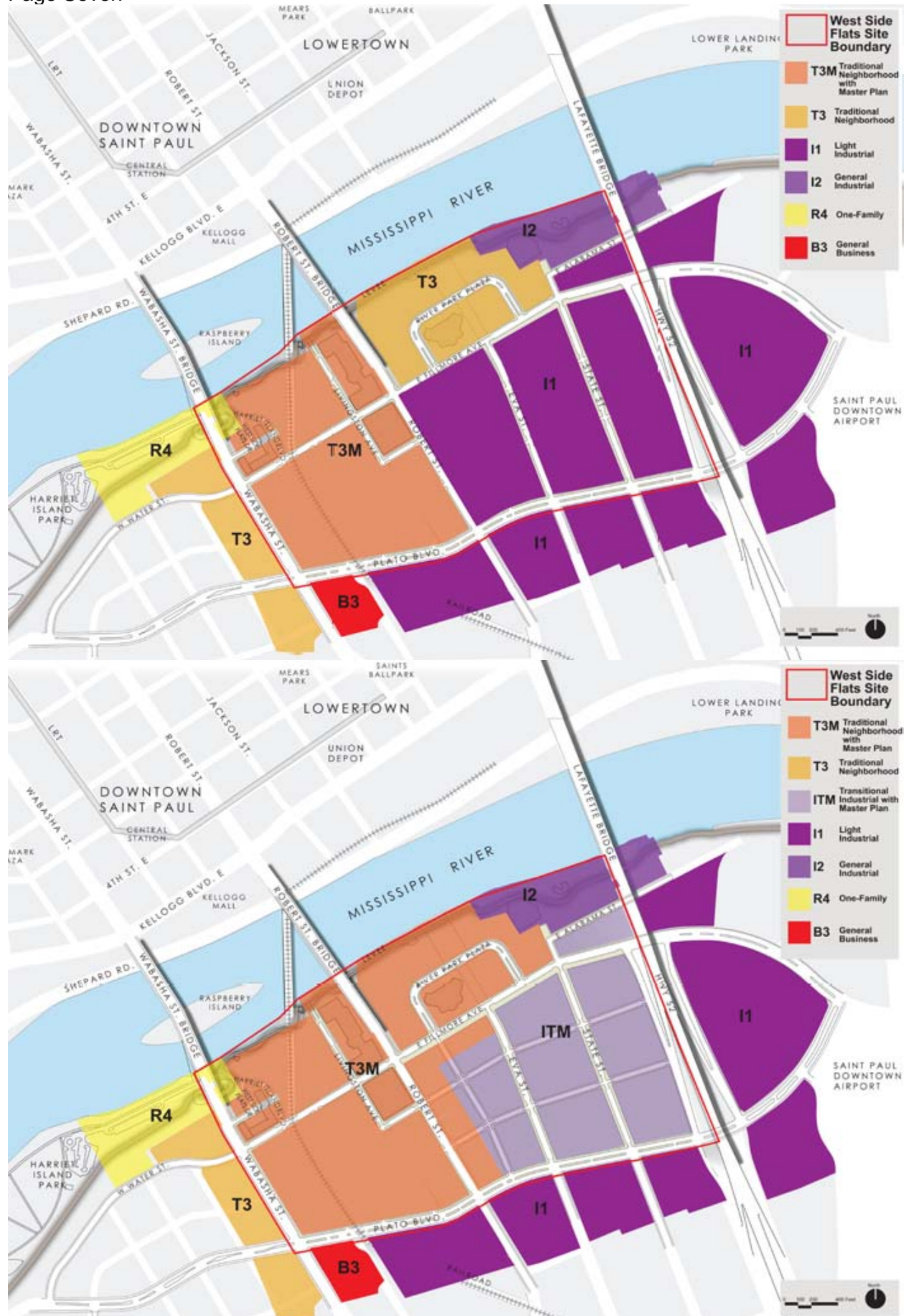
In order to implement the vision, guiding principles and development guidelines contained in the updated *West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines*, 34 parcels are recommended for rezoning:

- 4 parcels (one owner) from I1 to T3M
- 8 parcels (one owner) from T3 to T3M
- 22 parcels (16 owners) from I1 to ITM

In addition, text amendments are proposed to the T district dimensional standards table (Sec. 66.331) and I district dimensional standards table (Sec. 66.531) to reflect the acceptable maximum building heights shown on Figure 5.4 of the *West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines*. The proposed text changes are shown in Attachment 2.

As far as staff has been able to determine (through Ramsey County tax files and Certificates of Occupancy), no non-conforming uses will be created with the rezonings. PED staff held an informational meeting on November 5, 2014 with owners of parcels affected by the proposed rezonings to give them general background on the draft *Plan*, explain why rezonings are being proposed, and answer questions about the impact of the rezonings on current land use. Four business owners attended, all located within the industrial area. The primary concern was the impact of the proposed streets and parks on existing businesses, especially where future street and parks would run through or totally remove an existing business. In response to these concerns, staff made some minor changes to the draft *Plan* to clarify that new streets and parks will be built only as redevelopment occurs. Staff also added anticipated timelines for implementation of each phase to make it clear that redevelopment in Phase IV (the industrial area) is 20-30 years out.





**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

The Neighborhood Planning Committee recommends the Planning Commission release the December 5, 2014 draft of the *West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines*, proposed rezonings and proposed text amendments for public review, and set a public hearing for January 30, 2015.

Attachments:

1. *West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines*, December 5, 2014
2. Proposed changes to Sec. 66.331 Density and Dimensional Standards table for T Districts



**ATTACHMENT 2**  
**PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT OF CHANGES PROPOSED TO IMPLEMENT**  
**UPDATED WEST SIDE FLATS MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**  
**DECEMBER 5, 2014**

**Sec. 66.331. Density and dimensional standards table.**

Table 66.331, traditional neighborhood district dimensional standards, sets forth density and dimensional standards that are specific to traditional neighborhood districts. These standards are in addition to the provisions of chapter 63, regulations of general applicability. Where an existing building does not conform to the following requirements, the building may be expanded without fully meeting the requirements as long as the expansion does not increase the nonconformity.

Table 66.331. Traditional Neighborhood District Dimensional Standards

<i>Building Type by Zoning District</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>Lot Size Minimum (per unit)</i>		<i>Building Height (feet)</i>		<i>Yard Setbacks (feet)</i>		
	<i>Min. - Max. (a)</i>	<i>Area (sq. ft.) (a)</i>	<i>Width (feet)</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Front Min.-Max.</i>	<i>Side Min.</i>	<i>Rear Min.</i>
<b>T1</b>								
1-family dwelling	6 - 12 units/acre (b)	3500 (b)	30	none	35 (e)	15 – 25 (i)	(k)	15
2-family/townhouse	8 - 20 units/acre (b)	2000 (b)	20	none	35 (e)	10 – 25 (i)	(k)	15
Multifamily	10 - 25 units/acre (b)	1700 (b)	n/a	none	35 (e)	10 – 25 (i)	(k)	(k)
Nonresidential or mixed use	0.3 - 1.0 FAR	n/a	n/a	none	35 (e)	0 - 25	(k)	(k)
<b>T2</b>								
1-family dwelling	6 - 12 units/acre (b)	3500 (b)	30	none	35 (e)	15 – 25 (i)	(k)	15
2-family/townhouse	8 - 20 units/acre (b)	2000 (b)	20	none	35 (e)	10 – 25 (i)	(k)	15
Multifamily	FAR as for mixed use	n/a	n/a	none	35 (e), (f)	10 – 25 (i)	(k)	(k)
Nonresidential or mixed use	0.3 - 2.0 FAR with surface parking and 0.3 - 3.0 FAR with structured parking (c)	n/a	n/a	none	35 (e), (f)	0 – 10 (j)	(k)	(k)
<b>T3</b>								
1-family dwelling	8 - 12 units/acre (b)	3500 (b)	30	25	35 (e)	15 – 25 (i)	(k)	15
2-family/townhouse	10 - 20 units/acre (b)	2000 (b)	20	25	35 (e)	10 – 25 (i)	(k)	15
Multifamily	0.5 - 3.0 FAR (d)	n/a	n/a	25	45 (e),(g),(l)	10 – 25 (i)	(k)	(k)
Nonresidential or mixed use	0.5 - 3.0 FAR (d)	n/a	n/a	25	55 (e),(g),(l)	0 – 10 (j)	(k)	(k)
<b>T4</b>								
Multifamily	0.5 min. FAR (d)	n/a	n/a	25	75 (e), (h)	10 – 25 (i)	(k)	(k)
Nonresidential or mixed use	0.5 min. FAR (d)	n/a	n/a	25	75 (e), (h)	0 – 10 (j)	(k)	(k)

Min. - Minimum

Max. - Maximum

FAR - Floor Area Ratio

n/a - not applicable

Notes to table 66.331, traditional neighborhood district dimensional standards:

(a) In calculating the area of a lot that adjoins a dedicated public alley, for the purpose of applying minimum lot area and maximum density requirements, one-half the width of such alley adjoining the lot shall be considered part of the lot. The minimum FAR applies to new buildings. The minimum FAR does not apply to the creation or reconfiguration of lots, or to removal of buildings. For a new building on a zoning lot where an existing building will remain, or where the new building and its associated parking and landscaping will cover only part of the site and leave the rest of the site open for an additional building, minimum FAR may be calculated based on the area of the site covered by the new building and its associated parking and landscaping. Public gathering areas, landscaped areas at least twenty (20) feet wide preserved for future development between the public right-of-way and parking, and land dedicated to the city as public right-of-way may be approved by the planning administrator as counting toward meeting the minimum FAR.

(b) Units per acre is calculated based on net acreage. Density based on units per acre must be calculated for parcels of an acre or more in size. For smaller parcels, the maximum number of units may be calculated based upon minimum lot size per unit.

In calculating the area of a lot for the purpose of applying lot area and density requirements, the lot area figure may be increased by three hundred (300) square feet for each parking space (up to two parking spaces per unit) within a multiple-family structure or otherwise completely underground. Parking spaces within an above-ground parking structure, except for those on the top level, may also be used for this lot area bonus. The maximum number of units possible on a lot using this lot area bonus can be calculated using the formula  $X = L \div (A - 600)$ , where  $X$  = maximum units allowed,  $L$  = lot area in square feet, and  $A$  = required lot area per unit in square feet. A site plan showing parking layout and dimensions shall be required when applying for this lot area bonus.

(c) Floor area ratio (FAR) shall be prorated upon the percentage of required parking that is provided as structured parking. A minimum FAR of 0.5 is required in light rail station areas. Thirty (30) percent of the floor area of structured parking within, above, or below the principal structure may be counted toward meeting the minimum FAR.

(d) 1.0-3.0 FAR in light rail station areas for lots more than twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet in area, with no maximum FAR in T4. The floor area of structured parking above or below space used for principal uses, up to an amount equal to the floor area of the principal uses, may be counted toward meeting the minimum FAR. For lots more than twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet partly in a light rail station area, minimum FAR shall be prorated upon the percentage of the lot in a light rail station area.

(e) Except in the river corridor overlay district, height of structures may exceed the maximum if set back from side and rear setback lines a distance equal to additional height. Structures shall be no more than twenty-five (25) feet high along side and rear property lines abutting RL-RT2 residential districts; structures may exceed this twenty-five (25) foot height limit if stepped back from side and rear property lines a distance equal to the additional height.

(f) A maximum height of forty-five (45) feet may be permitted with a conditional use permit.

(g) Except in the river corridor overlay district and within light rail station areas between Lexington Parkway and Marion Street, a maximum height of ninety (90) feet may be permitted with a conditional use permit. Structures shall be stepped back one (1) foot from all setback lines for every two and one-half (2½) feet of height over seventy-five (75) feet. A shadow study may be required for a conditional use permit application to help determine the impact of the additional height.

(h) Additional height may be permitted with a conditional use permit. Structures shall be stepped back one (1) foot from all setback lines for every two and one-half (2½) feet of height over seventy-five (75) feet. A shadow study may be required for a conditional use permit application to help determine the impact of the additional height.

(i) Where at least fifty (50) percent of the front footage of the block is built up with principal structures, the minimum front yard setback for new structures shall be the average setback of the existing

structures, or the normal setback requirement in the district plus half the amount the average setback is greater than the normal setback requirement, whichever is less. Existing structures set back twenty (20) percent more or less than the average shall be discounted from the formula. The minimum front yard setback shall not exceed the maximum front yard setback requirement. Sixty (60) percent of the front facade must fall within the maximum setback. For local heritage preservation sites, the standard may be modified to comply with the preservation program and design review guidelines.

(j) For properties fronting on University Avenue between Marion and Emerald Streets a minimum four (4) foot front yard setback is required. The four (4) foot setback shall be either landscaped or paved. If paved (preferred), the property owner may provide a permanent easement to the City to provide additional sidewalk space. An additional six (6) feet may be added to provide an outdoor activity zone, pedestrian seating or amenities, resulting in a building setback of ten (10) feet. For local heritage preservation sites, the standard may be modified to comply with the preservation program and design review guidelines.

(k) No side or rear yards are required along the interior lot lines except as otherwise specified in the building code; provided, that if walls of structures facing such interior lot lines contain windows or other openings, yards of not less than six (6) feet shall be provided. Side and rear yards of at least six (6) feet shall be required when a nonresidential use adjoins a side yard of a residential property. These setback requirements from interior lot lines shall be waived when an easement agreement is recorded as to the affected properties. Proof of such recorded easement shall be provided at the time of application for a building permit. The recording of the easement agreement shall be interpreted to mean that the following intents and purposes of these setback requirements are met: adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property; sufficient space for maintenance of the building from the same lot; and prevention of damage to adjoining property by fire or runoff from roofs. The setback shall be a minimum of thirteen (13) feet from the centerline of an adjoining alley.

(l) For the T3M Upper Landing area bounded by Chestnut Street, Spring Street, Smith Avenue and the Mississippi River, In developments for which a master plan was adopted by the city council as of August 23, 2001, and for which there was a signed, approved redevelopment agreement with the housing and redevelopment authority of the city as of August 23, 2001, a maximum height of sixty-five (65) feet may be permitted without a conditional use permit, and a maximum height of one hundred (100) feet may be permitted with a conditional use permit, provided that such developments, to the extent reasonably possible, follow the design guidelines of the "Sustainable Decisions Guide for City Facilities" or other sustainable development guidelines. For the T3M Victoria Park area generally bounded by W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Otto Avenue, Shepard Road and Montreal Way, In developments for which there was a signed, approved redevelopment agreement with the housing and redevelopment authority of the city as of March 17, 2004, a maximum height of seventy-five (75) feet may be permitted with a conditional use permit. For the T3M West Side Flats area generally bounded by Wabasha Street, Plato Boulevard, Highway 52 and the Mississippi River, the maximum permitted building heights shall be as shown on Figure 5.4 of the West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines adopted by the city council on \_\_\_\_\_, 2014; for the parcels on the northeast and northwest corners of Robert Street and Plato Boulevard, a maximum height of seventy-five (75) feet may be permitted without a conditional use permit, and a maximum height of ninety (90) feet may be permitted with a conditional use permit. The planning administrator or planning commission may require a shadow study and/or view analysis for a conditional use permit application to help determine the impact of the additional height.

#### **Sec. 66.531. Density and dimensional standards table.**

Table 66.531, industrial district dimensional standards, sets forth density and dimensional standards that are specific to industrial districts. These standards are in addition to the provisions of chapter 63, regulations of general applicability.

Table 66.531. Industrial District Dimensional Standards

<i>Zoning District</i>		<i>Height Maximum</i>	<i>Yard Setbacks Minimum (feet)</i>		
		<i>Feet</i>	<i>Front</i>	<i>Side</i>	<i>Rear</i>
<b>IT</b>	Transitional Industrial	50 (a),(b), <u>(g)</u>	0 (c),(d),(f)	(e),(f)	(e),(f)
<b>I1</b>	Light Industrial	50 (b)	0 (c),(d),(f)	(e),(f)	(e),(f)
<b>I2</b>	General Industrial	75 (b)	0 (c),(d),(f)	(e),(f)	(e),(f)
<b>I3</b>	Heavy Industrial	75 (b)	0 (c),(d),(f)	(e),(f)	(e),(f)

Notes to table 66.531, industrial district dimensional standards:

- (a) Buildings exceeding this height limit, to a maximum height of seventy-five (75) feet, may be permitted with a conditional use permit.
- (b) The height of the structure may exceed the maximum building height allowed in the district provided the structure is set back from all exterior property lines of the parcel a distance equal to the height which said structure exceeds the maximum building height allowed in the district.
- (c) On those lots or parcels, or portions of lots or parcels, where the frontage adjoins or is directly across a street from a required front yard in any use district other than an industrial or VP vehicular parking district, the front setback requirements of said abutting districts shall apply.
- (d) On those lots or parcels, or portions of lots or parcels, which adjoin a right-of-way line of a parkway, the required setbacks from the parkway right-of-way line shall be equal to that required for residential uses in effect along the parkway right-of-way or twenty-five (25) feet, whichever is greater. The following parkways and portions of parkways are excluded from this setback requirement: Ford Parkway (from Kenneth Street to Finn Street and north side between Finn Street and Mississippi River Boulevard), Gannon Road, and Lexington Parkway (from Pierce Butler Route to the nearest Burlington Northern Railroad tracks).
- (e) No side or rear yards are required except as specified in the building code, and except that side and rear yard setbacks of at least six (6) feet shall be required where an industrial district adjoins a side yard in an adjacent residential district.
- (f) Loading and unloading shall not be permitted in any required front, side or rear yards.
- (g) For the ITM West Side Flats area generally bounded by Robert Street, Plato Boulevard, Highway 52 and the Mississippi River, the maximum permitted building heights shall be as shown on Figure 5.4 of the West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines adopted by the city council on \_\_\_\_\_, 2014; for the parcel(s) on the northeast corner of Robert Street and Plato Boulevard, a maximum height of seventy-five (75) feet may be permitted without a conditional use permit, and a maximum height of ninety (90) feet may be permitted with a conditional use permit. The planning administrator or planning commission may require a shadow study and/or view analysis for a conditional use permit application to help determine the impact of the additional height.