

From: [Joe Keeley](#)
To: [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [*CI-StPaul PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#); [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Support for Dixies redevelopment
Date: Monday, June 28, 2021 2:04:48 PM

Dear City Planning and City Council,

I would like to express my significant support for the Dixies redevelopment project as proposed. I have joined all listening sessions and would like to commend the owner and developer for listening to the concerns and adapting to the requests including underground parking, use of historically appropriate materials and other expensive changes that they didn't have to accommodate. They did this in the face of consistent heckling from very passionate but dare I say disrespectful and immature opposing stakeholders.

Summit Hill and St. Paul in general needs to be a more friendlier place for investment. If we don't we will continue to lose investment to Mendota Heights, Edina and other more friendly places for developers and therefore lose our opportunity to increase our tax base and create density for local businesses to pull from. One thing that the last few years has taught us is that Grand Ave operates on the razor's edge between a thriving commerce district to live, shop and play and a "has-been" street of missed opportunities withering on the vine. Between losing a few proposed investment opportunities in recent years history (Lunds redevelopment comes to mind) and COVID creating many empty storefronts, we must be a place that welcomes investment and density or Grand Ave and Summit Hill as a whole will never meet its potential. There are so many communities that would beg for outside investment and we have a local family begging to invest tens of millions. Let us not get in our own way.

On a micro and personal level, my wife and I pay over \$27K per year in property taxes and we do so because we love St. Paul and all that it has to offer. However, for us particularly, if Grand ave does not continue to offer a wide range of attractive options that can only come with increased investment, we, like many of our friends have already done, may consider places that offer the same appeal (Edina, Wayzata) or different options that are close by (Mendota, Sunfish) for much less of a price tag.

Regards,

Joe Keeley
3 Crocus Hill
651-230-3889

From: [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: FW: Mark Abner, 968 Fairmount Ave 55105: Comment in favor of Dixie's proposal
Date: Monday, June 28, 2021 10:44:43 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Mark Abner <abner.mark2@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 10:43 AM
To: *CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary <PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Mark Abner, 968 Fairmount Ave 55105: Comment in favor of Dixie's proposal

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Hello,

I have owned in the Summit Neighborhood since 2001. I am in favor of the owners' proposal for the Dixie's On Grand site, provided there is underground parking for customers and residents. Our neighborhood needs to grow and modernize or else the Grand Avenue golden goose will die. While I'm at it, for the same reasons, I am in favor of the periodically-proposed Lund's/Byerly's at the corner of Grand and Avon or wherever they choose to put it. I know that many of my neighbors agree with me about bringing more convenient services and amenities to the general area, even if other very vocal residents seem to reflexively oppose every single advance that anyone wants to do. Thanks for your hard work to sort out the neighborhood's conflicting opinions.

Mark Abner

From: [Bob McClay](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Cc: [Carolyn McClay](#)
Subject: 695 Grand Ave. Project
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 2:08:25 PM

My wife and I reside at 670 Goodrich Ave., approximately two blocks from the proposed project. We view the project as a positive addition to our neighborhood and endorse it.

Best,

Bob and Carolyn McClay

Robert M. McClay
M^cCLAY · ALTON, P.L.L.P.
951 GRAND AVENUE
St. PAUL, MN 55105
FAX 651-290-2502
651-290-0301
bob@mcclay-alton.com

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From: drcleveland@comcast.net
To: [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [*CI-StPaul PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 695 Grand Ave. (Dixie's Development Proposal)
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:52:21 PM

I am a homeowner who has lived in the neighborhood for over 25 years. So long as the request is accompanied by a plan for sufficient underground parking with electric charging, I do not object to and in fact support the variance/rezoning request for the proposed development at 695 Grand Ave. Eventually we will have to sell our now too-large home. When that time comes, it would be nice to move to such a property. The proposed building will in my opinion not harm and instead would improve the neighborhood. Going forward, I believe for a variety of reasons that we should promote denser new housing within the city (accompanied if need be by reasonable changes in zoning rules or in the East Grand Avenue Overlay) and do less to encourage suburban sprawl.

Best regards,

David R. Cleveland
685 Linwood Ave.
Saint Paul, MN 55105-3514

From: [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand Avenue
Date: Monday, June 28, 2021 3:01:29 PM

From: Patricia Merwin <28pattym@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 2:42 PM
To: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand Avenue

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Good afternoon,

I am a resident of the area at 785 Goodrich Avenue, Patricia Ann Merwin. I would like to state that I am supporting the project at 695 Grand Avenue. As a resident, I understand that the Grand Avenue area requires development and a fresh look to bring the area up-to-date. I do not see any reason not to proceed with the proposed project. The Avenue is in desperate need of new businesses which require investment, outdoor seating spaces, underground parking, more lighting and so many other updates to lift the area so that folks want to shop and dine and live on Grand Avenue. This project at 695 Grand will be the beginning of redevelopment and trigger more investment in the area. We believe that doing less will send a signal to other investors to overlook Grand Avenue. Grand Avenue should be a showcase for the city with contemporary architecture (or contemporary historic styles), outdoor spaces, public art, blended communities along with the historic area. I feel the historic area should not eliminate or be privileged to exclude development in a business corridor of the city.

Thank you so much for considering my point of view.
All the best,

Patricia Ann Merwin

From: [Dan Marshall](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Cc: [Noecker, Rebecca \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Support for 695 Grand Ave Development
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 5:07:39 PM

To the members of the Saint Paul Planning Commission:

Our family business would like to express our enthusiastic support for Dixie's proposed multifamily development at 695 Grand Avenue, which is just down the street from us. This is exactly the type of investment Grand Avenue needs in order to remain vibrant and relevant.

As you know, the property requires rezoning to allow this development because of the East Grand Avenue Overlay, which we view to be harmful and inequitable public policy. Our city faces a growing budget shortfall due to insufficient tax base and a housing crisis leading to record homelessness. And our planet faces accelerating climate change. All three of these problems can be addressed by dramatically increasing urban residential density. We therefore believe we have a moral obligation to build density everywhere in the city, especially on commercial transit corridors like Grand Avenue.

Additionally, our city and nation are in the midst of a vast contraction of brick and mortar retail. We've been selling toys in Saint Paul for 23 years; when we first opened, we were one of 5 toy stores in the city. Now, we're the only toy store. Grand Avenue retail in general has also contracted dramatically and we now have many empty storefronts creating a sense of blight.

Building urban density helps address this problem as well. This project alone would bring 79 new families to Grand Avenue, all of whom would be within walking distance of our store and all the other shops and restaurants Grand Avenue has to offer.

We'd also like to commend the architects and owners of the Dixies property for designing a building that elegantly complements the character and scale of Grand Avenue. We believe this project will be one of the signature buildings in the neighborhood.

We urge you to support this project by granting it any zoning changes or variances it may require. We

also urge you to repeal the East Grand Avenue
Overlay so that Grand Avenue can turn a corner and
build a brighter future.

Thank you,

Abigail Adelsheim-Marshall, Millie Adelsheim, and
Dan Marshall,
owners of Mischief Toy Store
818 Grand Avenue

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email me @ dan@mischieftoy.com or dan@marshallwords.com

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email me @ dan@mischieftoy.com or dan@marshallwords.com

From: [Jake Scott](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Grand Ave
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 5:48:53 PM

Hi! I am writing to express my support for the housing project on grand Avenue At 695. Saint Paul should be doing everything It can to increase density and housing supply. Saint Paul would be a much more thriving city if we have more housing, especially more affordable housing.

Jacob Scott
333 Oneida St, St Paul, MN 55102

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Sent from Gmail Mobile

From: [Benjamin Ashley-Wurtmann](#)
To: [#CI-StPaul_Ward4](#); [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Support for multifamily housing on Grand Ave
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 5:59:04 PM

I am writing in support of the proposed development at 695 Grand Ave. Saint Paul is in dire need of more housing. Historically, higher income neighborhoods have successfully resisted new development, leading to more displacement in lower income neighborhoods. Changing from a surface parking lot to multifamily housing is a great outcome for this neighborhood.

Thank you,

Ben Ashley-Wurtmann
1661 Iglehart Ave, St Paul, MN 55104

From: [Mark Thieroff](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 695 Grand Ave
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 6:24:35 PM

I am writing to express my support for approval of the multifamily housing development proposed for this site. The climate and housing crises demand that we increase housing options and densities in St. Paul as quickly as possible.

Mark Thieroff
Chelmsford St.
St. Paul

From: [Rick Varco](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 695 Grand Ave
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 6:31:00 PM

Dear Planning Commission:

As a lifelong patron of Grand Ave, please approve the multi-family housing development on the Dixie's site at 695 Grand Ave. We need more housing to reduce rents, more jobs to employ construction workers, more dense buildings to reduce global warming, and a bigger tax base to invest in the city.

While a few self-interested people will try to use the power of government to keep housing scarce so their real estate portfolios stay artificially high, please put the needs of the many ahead of the few.

Everywhere else we have done projects like this, they have improved the city tremendously and people love them. Complaints about this project will disappear the day it breaks ground.

Rick Varco
2265 Youngman Ave. #208
St. Paul, MN 55116

Personal testimony, not on behalf of any organization.

Sent from my iPhone

From: trish.rice100@gmail.com
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Support for 695 Grand Avenue
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 7:11:27 PM

I support the development project at 695 Grand Avenue. We need new and updated housing and retail in our neighborhood.

Trish Rice
834 Summit Avenue #3
Saint Paul, MN 55105

From: [Ben Swanson-Hysell](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Development at 695 Grand Ave
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 7:29:01 PM

Hi Zoning Committee,

I'm writing in favor of the proposed mixed-use development for 695 Grand Ave. This project will add much needed density on a commercial and transit corridor.

Best,
Ben Swanson-Hysell
1315 Portland Ave, St Paul, MN 55104

From: [William Totten](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Support for Dixie's development
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 8:26:42 PM

I live at the corner of Laurel and Mackubin and fully support the redevelopment of the Dixie's site on Grand Avenue. We need housing. The proposed project fits into the neighborhood nicely.

Please pass my words of support on to the council.

Thank you.

Wil Totten
494 Laurel Ave.
651-472-2366

From: [Joe Weyer](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 695 Grand Avenue Project
Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 9:07:42 AM

To The Zoning Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support the 695 Grand Avenue Project. My name is Joe Weyer and I live in the 6 story building a block away at 745 Grand Avenue. My wife, Kathy and I moved here 9 years ago because we loved the feel of the area. We love the walkable neighborhood and close proximity we have to shopping, restaurants and services in the area. I have become concerned over the past few years with the trend in our neighborhood. It is sad to see the closed businesses and empty storefronts that are popping up all along Grand Avenue. With fewer people coming from outside of Saint Paul to visit, our local businesses need more housing density in our area to increase their customer base to survive. The project at 695 Grand is badly needed shot in the arm for our neighborhood.

Opponents of this project are citing the overlay district limiting building height to 3 stories as a reason to deny this project. It is way past the time to eliminate this overlay district completely. I wasn't living here when this was implemented, so for all I know it may have been started with good intentions to keep major chain stores out of the area. But for the past several years, I have seen this used time and again as a tool for the well to do in our area, who have the power and finances, to stop good projects and keep certain people out of our neighborhood. The overly district is exclusionary zoning. Why is it that our several block stretch of Grand Avenue is the only area in the city of Saint Paul that has this kind of restriction? Opponents of projects like this often cite the loss of the neighborhood charm and character. Again this is code for restricting and excluding others from our neighborhood. This is a good project that will bring badly needed housing to the city and the height will be shorter than the 6 story building that I live in a block away.

Cities are always changing one way or another. Here we have a good project with a local owner who has worked with the neighborhood to develop a quality building that will help revitalize our neighborhood. I fear that the alternative of denying projects like this is that we will see a further decline along Grand Avenue with more run down buildings and empty storefronts. We live in a major city and a 5 story building along a major commercial corridor is not out of line. I hope you will approve this project as it will bring much needed housing and breathe new life into our neighborhood.

Thanks for your consideration,

Joe Weyer
745 Grand Avenue. APT 202
Saint Paul, MN 55105

From: [Mary MM](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 695 Grand Ave proposal
Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 9:20:29 AM

Dear Zoning Committee Members,

I urge you to support the proposal for 695 Grand Avenue. It's a beautiful multi-unit residential and commercial building--so appropriate and so necessary for Grand Avenue and our community. I look forward to visiting the development when it's complete.

Mary Morse Marti
214 Exeter Pl, St Paul, MN 55104

From: [Cody Fischer](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 695 Grand Avenue
Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 10:52:03 AM

Dear Commissioners,

I strongly urge you to approve the zoning change, height CUP, variances and site plan submitted for the development of 695 Grand Avenue.

As a Grand Avenue homeowner and resident, I am passionate about ensuring a vibrant future for this commercial node and increasing housing density to provide greater access to it.

The proposed plan lays out an economically viable development that takes into consideration the character of the surrounding area, adds incremental density and land use intensity, and enhances pedestrian experience / urban fabric of the area.

My only suggested improvement for the plan would be to relocate the parking / loading access to the alley side of the building to eliminate the proposed curb-cut on Grand Avenue. This would improve safety and enhance the overall pedestrian experience on the block.

I understand the loading entrance was moved to Grand Avenue based on input from residents who share the alley, but it is my view that pedestrian safety and enhancing the quality of the public domain on Grand Avenue should take priority over the needs of the private users of the alley.

Whether or not moving the loading access to the alley is an option, I urge you to approve the site plan and requested zoning change, variances and CUP.

--

Cody Fischer
1995 Grand Avenue

From: [Ian Buck](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary; #CI-StPaul_Ward2](#)
Subject: In support of the 695 Grand project
Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 11:45:41 AM

Hello, I am writing in support of the 695 Grand project. This kind of mixed-use development is exactly what we need more of in our city, especially in pedestrian-friendly commercial corridors like Grad Ave. Really, I see almost nothing in this project not to like!

Ian R Buck
514 Thomas Ave W, St Paul, MN 55103

From: [Jeremy Stomberg](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 695 Grand Avenue
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 6:22:13 PM

Hello,

I am writing to give my opinion in favor of the "Dixie's" project at 695 Grand Avenue. It seems like it would be a far more efficient use of the space, with additional retail and residences added. It will be a boon for the rapidly evolving Grand Avenue.

Thank you,

Jeremy Stomberg

1056 Ryde Street
Saint Paul MN 55103

From: [Samuel McCarty](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Let my city grow.
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 6:57:19 PM

I would love to see more businesses grow and support a robust St Paul building code expansion to allow the city to grow.

Have a great day!

~Sammy McCarty

13418 Avila Avenue Rosemount MN

From: [Tommy](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 695 Grand Ave Development
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 7:29:33 PM

Please approve the requested variances for the 695 grand ave development.

I live on Linwood Ave between Chatsworth and Milton, and I believe we need density to continue growing and prospering as a neighborhood and as a city.

Thank you,
Tommy Fitzgerald

958 Linwood Ave, St Paul, MN 55105.

From: [Brian Baird](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 695 Grand Ave Development
Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 7:15:10 PM

Grand Avenue is a historic, iconic piece of our neighborhood and St Paul. I can see why people would want to live there. We should let them.

I support redeveloping 695 Grand.

From: [Jessica Nickrand](#)
To: [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#); [*CI-StPaul PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Support for 695 Grand Development
Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 1:57:16 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a homeowner living at 126 Victoria St. S., two blocks south of Grand Avenue, and I am writing **to strongly support the proposed development at 695 Grand Avenue**. I am aware that many of my neighbors are writing to oppose this development, stating that its height and size is not in line with its surrounding community. However, I am excited about a change to the zoning of this area and a challenge to the extremely restrictive EGOD guidelines so that our neighborhood can support more neighbors.

I recently bought a home in this neighborhood, only a mile south of where my family had rented in Rondo for years. Our newer home is a mile and a whole world apart. It is clear in so many ways who this neighborhood was built for, and how it intends to maintain its homogeneity. While I did not see a focus on affordable housing in the 695 Grand plan, my hope is that changing the zoning in this area opens the door to developers that can and will utilize city and state incentives that prioritize affordable housing for all.

Concerns about traffic issues are unfounded; if more people live in the neighborhood, more people will have access to the amenities of the neighborhood in walking distance, potentially even serving as a traffic reduction, and hopefully bringing more public transit to the area, generally.

I am sad that building height seems more important to my neighbors as a marker of our community's character rather than creating a neighborhood that has more places to live for everyone who wants to live here. To me, that's the neighborhood character we should be striving for.

I am happy to follow up on any of my comments if necessary, and provide any more information that could be of service.

Thank you for your time.

Best,
Jessica Nickrand, PhD
126 Victoria St. S., 2N
Saint Paul, MN 55105
jessica.nickrand@gmail.com
(734) 546-1582

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Jessica Nickrand, PhD
Pronouns: she/her/hers
Phone: (734) 546-1582
[LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#)

From: [Nick Borger](#)
To: [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#); [*CI-StPaul PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Statement of support for 695 Grand Development
Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 2:51:01 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a homeowner living at 126 Victoria St. S., two blocks south of Grand Avenue, and I am writing **to strongly support the proposed development at 695 Grand Avenue.**

As a lifelong Minnesotan who grew up in Linden Hills and now lives in Summit Hill, I have been blessed to spend the majority of my life in vibrant walkable communities. I know from experience and academic study that the best way to achieve and maintain these vibrant communities is to promote sufficient population density, which I believe will be best promulgated by developments like those proposed for 695 Grand and (hopefully) more affordable housing units.

I love getting out to walk in my neighborhood and seeing the hustle and bustle of my neighbors of varying ages, races, genders, and socio-economic statuses enjoying all the amenities that make me love the place where I live. More population density means more people frequenting the local establishments that are such an important part of our community, and my hope is that with even more neighbors the variety of amenities that will be within walking distance will continue to grow.

I hope this development, and more affordable housing developments in the future, are approved.

If you have any questions, I am happy to follow up as necessary.

Nick Borger

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Nick Borger

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From: [Pat Auran](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 695 Grand
Date: Thursday, July 1, 2021 7:17:14 AM

I am in full support of the project at 695 Grand Ave. Grand Avenue needs be revitalized and this is a good start.
Please support this project.

Sent from my iPhone