



East Grand Avenue Overlay District Zoning Study

Advisory Committee

Meeting #1: November 9, 2022

Notes:

1. Committee Introductions

- Committee members introduced themselves
 - Committee members represent a range of ages, genders, affiliations, and perspectives, including nearby homeowners, renters, business owners/operators, developers, design professionals, Summit Hill Association members, and others
- Committee members described the one attribute they most appreciated about Grand Avenue; responses included the following (numbers indicate attributes that were supported by multiple members):
 - Walkability (+1)
 - Diversity
 - Convenience (+2)
 - Beauty
 - Reliability (+1)
 - Public transit access
 - Destination/uniqueness/preciousness
 - Historic character (+1)
 - Balanced place/mix of land uses
 - Intergenerational
 - Scale
 - Opportunity

2. Roles and Responsibilities: Advisory Committee, Staff and Consultant

- Michael Lamb (consultant) discussed the Advisory Committee member selection process
 - Members were selected to achieve a diversity of ages, genders, affiliations, and perspectives
 - Michael made the final decision on the 13-member committee, with support from the City's Planning and Economic Development Department and the Summit Hill Association
 - A Committee member mentioned that the Committee members are not representative of all demographics and perspectives in Saint Paul or the neighborhood, and the Committee members need to remember that as they serve on the Committee
- The Advisory Committee's primary focus is to develop guiding principles for the City to consider when making Zoning Code text amendments to the East Grand Avenue Overlay District
- The Committee is advisory
- City staff clarified their role
 - During Advisory Committee meetings, City staff will attend and be available for questions, but will defer to Michael as the meeting facilitator
 - City staff is working on other technical analyses to contribute to the Zoning Study, including analyses of zoning, market factors, development, and case studies
 - City staff would like to ensure the East Grand Avenue Overlay District aligns with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan

3. Scope of Work

- Michael provided a high-level overview of planning and zoning, including a brief discussion of the East Grand Avenue Overlay District regulations; Michael mentioned that more education will be provided at future meetings
- A Committee member asked for clarification on what an overlay district is; Michael and City staff clarified that a zoning overlay applies in addition to underlying zoning standards; overlays are applied in areas that require unique development standards; overlays supersede underlying zoning standards if they are more restrictive
- A Committee member asked why the Committee and Zoning Study is focused only on East Grand Avenue as opposed to the entire Grand Avenue corridor; Michael and City staff clarified that the Advisory Committee is part of the Zoning Study of the East Grand Avenue Overlay District, which only applies to the 11 blocks between Ayd Mill Road and Oakland Avenue

4. Schedule

- Committee members stated that November 28, 2022 will be the best date for the next meeting, with November 30, 2022 as an alternate
- City staff will verify meeting logistics before confirming the date with the Committee

5. Issues and Concerns— 'Brainstorming' Exercise

- Committee members participated in an exercise where Michael went around the room and asked members to state one issue or concern they have with Grand Avenue; Michael repeated this several times until all key issues and concerns were communicated
- Issues and concerns described by community members included the following (numbers indicate issues/concerns that were supported by multiple members):
 - Losing Ash trees
 - Lack of infrastructure maintenance (e.g., sidewalks, roads, snow shoveling, etc.)
 - Buildings that are too large/tall (+1)
 - Scale and character
 - Affordability (+3)
 - Lack of housing supply/housing crisis
 - Pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicle conflicts and safety
 - Active accessibility
 - Empty storefronts/retail space
 - Excessive number of surface parking lots that front Grand Avenue and degrade pedestrian experience
 - Perception that it is difficult to park/lack of business access
 - Local business employees not being able to park nearby employers
 - Maintaining local businesses/lack of affordable commercial, restaurant space
 - High number of national chain stores
 - Property tax burdens
 - Lack of business organization
 - Legacy of Grand Old Days
 - Pockets of crime
 - Accessibility for people living with disabilities

6. Keep & Change Exercise

- Committee members filled out an index card with three things they would like to keep on Grand Ave and three things they would like to change about Grand Ave (*responses still to be summarized, notes will be updated in mid-November*)

7. Continuum Statements Exercise

- Committee members filled out a handout with continuum statements, where they were asked to choose how much they agree with certain statements in one row of a table (*responses still to be summarized, notes will be updated in mid-November*)
- This exercise is intended to be a high-level, ice breaking, brainstorming activity to ask participants about zoning and development priorities