

East Grand Avenue Overlay District Zoning Study

Advisory Committee

Meeting #2: November 28, 2022

Notes:

1. Results from Meeting #1 Exercises

- Michael Lamb (consultant) distributed handouts to in-person attendees and sent handouts to virtual participants (see Attachment 1).
- The Advisory Committee completed introductions and reviewed the topics of future meetings.
- Michael reviewed the results from the first meeting exercises, including what committee members stated they would like kept and changed on Grand Avenue as well as the takeaways from the continuum statements exercise (see Meeting #1 Notes).
 - Michael highlighted that most committee members were interested in keeping small, local businesses; walkability and accessibility; mix of uses; and smaller-scale brick buildings.
 - Michael highlighted that most committee members were interested in changing/improving the corridor's beautification (i.e., tree canopy) and connection to Saint Paul, pedestrian/bicycle environment and safety, parking (i.e., inconsistently available and needed along the corridor, too many surface parking lots), housing affordability and supply, and transit frequency.
- Michael referred to *Grand Avenue the Renaissance of an Urban Street* as a useful resource (<https://www.amazon.com/Grand-Avenue-Renaissance-urban-Billie/dp/0878391053>).
- The Advisory Committee discussed high-level policy decisions and the implications of the Overlay, as well as the limited supply of housing available to renters.

- An Advisory Committee member mentioned that the committee should be weary of terms like “character” and “sensitive development”. These terms have historically been used to keep underrepresented minorities out of certain neighborhoods, so it is important to acknowledge the coded language and change it to ensure the Advisory Committee is inclusive.

2. Real Estate Market 101 Presentation (with guest Grant Martin, Loci Consulting)

- Grant Martin (guest speaker) introduced himself as a market research consultant and mentioned that he completed the *Comparative Retail Node Analysis* for the Summit Hill Association in March 2021.
- Grant began by asking discussion questions to the Advisory Committee, including:
 - What is your definition of “market”?
 - Do you consider markets to be effective?
 - How is the real estate market unique?
- Grant presented on the real estate market (see Attachment 2) and discussed the *Comparative Retail Node Analysis*.
 - Grant identified some of the strengths of Grand Avenue as having a strong brand and identity and a unique mix of historic houses and buildings. Grant identified some of the weaknesses of Grand Avenue as being not well connected to regional transportation options, being a reasonably elongated corridor (i.e., challenging for walkability), and having several aging commercial buildings.
 - Some of Grant’s other conclusions include:
 - Development of stand-alone retail is financially difficult; urban retailers are looking to integrate brick and mortar locations with online platforms; certain urban locations experience fluctuations of retail interest (e.g., Uptown, North Loop, etc.).
 - Upon review of comparison development projects in Saint Paul from 2015-2020, Grant concluded that the general scale and size of projects have increased due to increasing costs (e.g., projects typically had heights from 5-7 stories with 125-185 units).
 - Some information in the March 2021 *Comparative Retail Node Analysis* may be slightly dated when compared to the latest economic trends, including inflation, the recovery of brick and mortar stores as the pandemic improves, hybrid work, etc.

3. Comprehensive Plan Overview

- Michael began by mentioning some of the history of Grand Avenue, including how the corridor had approximately 250 businesses in the 1930s, with approximately 147 businesses today.
- Michael provided an overview of the Comprehensive Plan.
 - The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan was adopted in November 2020.
 - East Grand Avenue is in the mixed-use land use designation with a neighborhood node. These areas of Saint Paul are envisioned to have a balance of jobs and housing within walking distance to one another, as well as easy access to transit. Development is typically compact and dense, with a mix of uses to serve a neighborhood's daily needs.

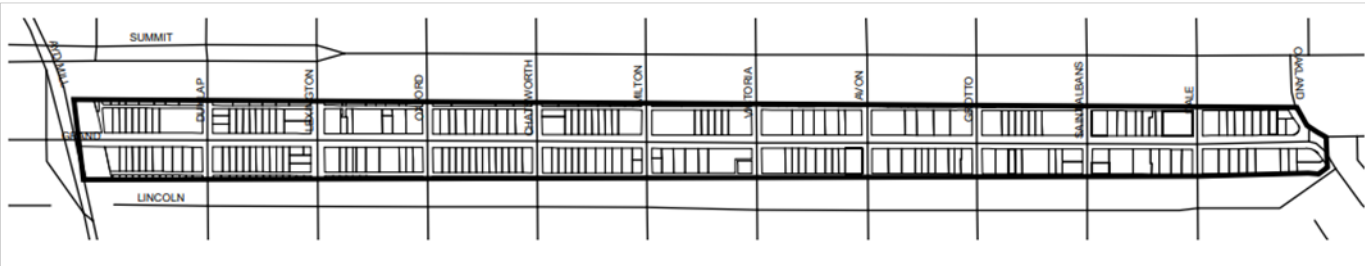
4. Zoning 101 and Current Zoning Standards Presentation

- Michael provided a brief overview of zoning, including what zoning is and how zoning decisions are made.
 - The East Grand Avenue Overlay District was adopted in 2006. It provides regulations on building size, height, and design.
 - There are several zoning districts that sit "underneath" the Overlay. The most predominant underlying zoning districts are RM2 medium density multiple-family residential, BC community business (converted), and B2 community business.
 - RM2 establishes a height limit of 50' while BC and B2 have height limits of 30'. The Overlay establishes a height limit of 30'-40' depending on the land use. Because the Overlay standard is more restrictive than the RM2 standard, this is an example of when the Overlay would supersede a base zoning district.

5. Schedule

- Committee members stated that January 9, 2023, will be the best date for the next meeting, with January 23, 2023, tentatively planned for the following meeting.

East Grand Avenue Overlay Zoning District *Advisory Committee*



Handout #1 | November 28, 2022

- Alex Peeper
- Ari Parritz
- Brian Wenger
- Bridget Allan Ales
- Carolyn Robertson
- Chad Miller
- Dan Marshall
- Dominic Ciresi
- Elysia Gallo
- Ian Ball
- Kathryn Olmstead
- Sara Joy Proppe
- Zack Farrell

Keep – name three things about Grand Ave that you would keep

Small businesses (B2) small scale
 Businesses that can serve all ages and many functions: hardware, liquor, medical, restaurants, etc.
 Small businesses and restaurants
 Local businesses
 Business community
 Small local businesses
 Small businesses
 mom and pop shops
 local owners
 unique businesses
 eclectic businesses
 minority owned businesses
 Restaurants and shops
 Yummy restaurants and fun shops
 Active storefronts
 Affordable rental rates for retail tenants

accessibility for people with disabilities
 walkability
 Walkability
 walkability
 Accessibility

Variety of housing affordability
 Housing mix
 Mixed use neighborhood
 mixed use
 mix of commercial and residential
 diversity of housing types and rental levels
 current blend of retail and residential

Character and small scale (less than 3 story)
 Three story brick buildings
 historic character of buildings
 historic character of buildings with more maintenance
 Vintage occupied buildings
 Current size of traditional buildings

Parking that invites customers from outside the walkable distance (re: lot behind Bread & Chocolate)
 Bus service
 Bus stops/access

Tree and greenery
 Street trees

Change- name three things about Grand Ave you would change

Fix the street and sidewalk
 Change the tax structure to allow start-up restaurants and businesses
 Streetscape, infrastructure and trees
 Lack of benches, flowers, beautification of Ave, more wayfinding
 Tree canopy (we need it back asap; local businesses would gladly help to fund stump removal and replace the trees sooner than on the city s schedule

Better walking and biking safety
 More customers and pedestrian space
 Pedestrian safety
 More “friendly” outdoor meeting/seating
 Sidewalks and storefronts that allow for more outdoor café seating

Surface parking lots with frontage on Grand Ave
 Parking adjacent to the street
 Eliminate permit parking on side streets
 Parking requirements
 Change parking to better options
 Help residents who have alleys that bookend Grand Ave – they need help with excess trucks, parking, etc.
 Too many cars
 Traffic calming on Grand
 More parking behind businesses
 Surface parking lots
 Need parking regulations – need to recognize that growth on one property needs to be balanced with effect on adjacent properties

Eliminate overlay
 Zoning gamble
 Building height limits
 Less large scale buildings
 Get rid of modern ugly looking buildings
 Development limiting policies (like EGAOD) that concentrate property tax burden on the small businesses and affordable housing buildings that can least afford it

Affordability
 Affordability
 Lack of affordable housing

Lack of transit
 Transit options (more buses and other options for winter)
 Increase bus frequency
 Add turn lane green light on Grand from Lexington

Lack of safe biking
 Add pocket parks
 Hire a BID _____

Recognition that Grand is not the focus; it is part of the broader community and is effect on those areas needs to be balanced with any change on Grand

Rate each statement and rank to the level you agree with: 3 = agree; 2 = mostly agree; 1= somewhat agree

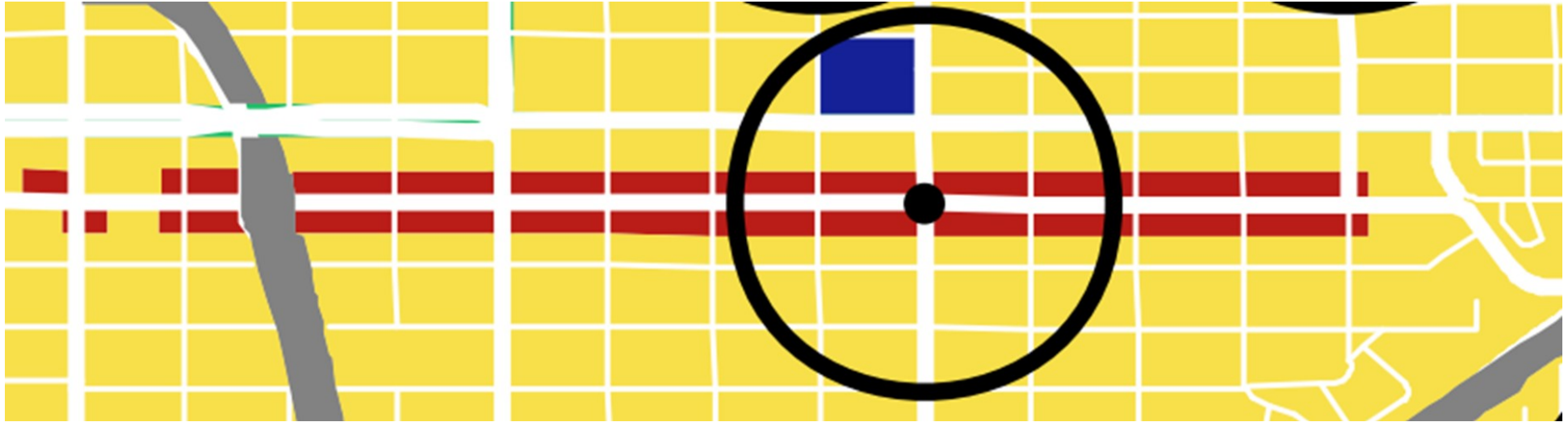
Money is more important than happiness	3L	2L	1L	1R	2R	3R	Happiness is more Important than money
I feel safe walking along and crossing Grand Ave	3L	2L	1L	1R	2R	3R	The Ave needs amenities to make walking safer
Grand Ave has a unique identity that should be valued and protected	3L	2L	1L	1R	2R	3R	Grand Ave needs help with updating its image and identity
The physical character and charm of the Avenue is its biggest strength	3L	2L	1L	1R	2R	3R	The mix of commercial and residential uses is its biggest strength
Walkability should be prioritized over vehicular traffic and parking	3L	2L	1L	1R	2R	3R	Traffic speed and parking are problems that need attention
Grand needs more sensitive development	3L	2L	1L	1R	2R	3R	Grand needs more development regulation
I wish there were more affordable housing Grand Ave	3L	2L	1L	1R	2R	3R	Housing choices and prices on Grand are good for the area

Real Estate Market Presentation



Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes, spanning the width of the page.



Land Use Categories and Neighborhood Node Locations

-  Downtown
-  Mixed-Use
-  Urban Neighborhood
-  Semi-Rural
-  Industrial
-  Major Parks and Open Spaces
-  Civic and Institutional
-  Transportation

-  Neighborhood Nodes
(Size of circle does not indicate extent of Node.)

What is Zoning?

State law authorizes a city zoning ordinance as a tool to implement a comprehensive plan. Zoning is a method of establishing a land use pattern by regulating the way land is used by landowners. A zoning ordinance has area standards that regulate the size and location of buildings and structures in the city. Comprised of text and a map, most zoning ordinances also typically divide a city into various zoning districts, and set standards regulating uses in each district. “Area standards” are rules that constrain the size and location of building and other structures. These typically include rules about building location and size, including height, width and bulk; and the percentage of lot space that may be occupied, and required yards or open spaces. Other standards might be performance standards such as related to density, parking or lighting.

For each district, a zoning ordinance typically sets forth uses that are allowed in each district and the performance standards that must be met. The allowed uses often are set forth in lists or use tables. Allowed uses typically include permitted uses, accessory uses and conditional uses.

- A permitted use is generally the principal use of the land or building, and is allowed without a public hearing.
- An accessory use is an allowed use located on the same lot, subordinate or accessory to permitted use.
- A conditional use is a use that is allowed after a public hearing only if the landowner meets the general and specific standards as set forth in the zoning ordinance. The more specific and clear the standards set forth in the ordinance, the easier it will be to administer .

Zoning Authority—Minnesota Cities

462.357 OFFICIAL CONTROLS: ZONING ORDINANCE. Subdivision 1. Authority for zoning, and the uses of land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, agriculture, forestry, soil conservation, water supply conservation, conservation of shorelands, as defined in sections 103F.201 to 103F.221, access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems as defined in section 216C.06, flood control or other purposes, and may establish standards and procedures regulating such uses.

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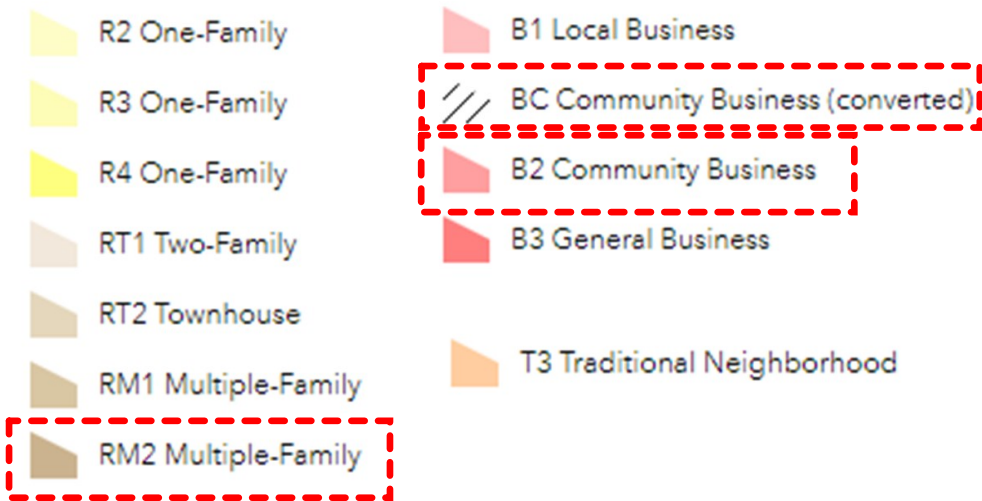
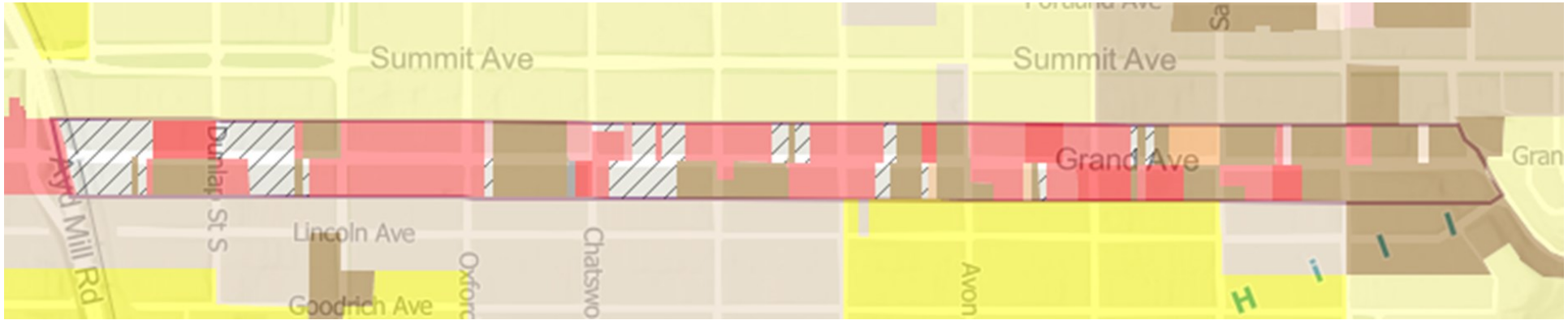
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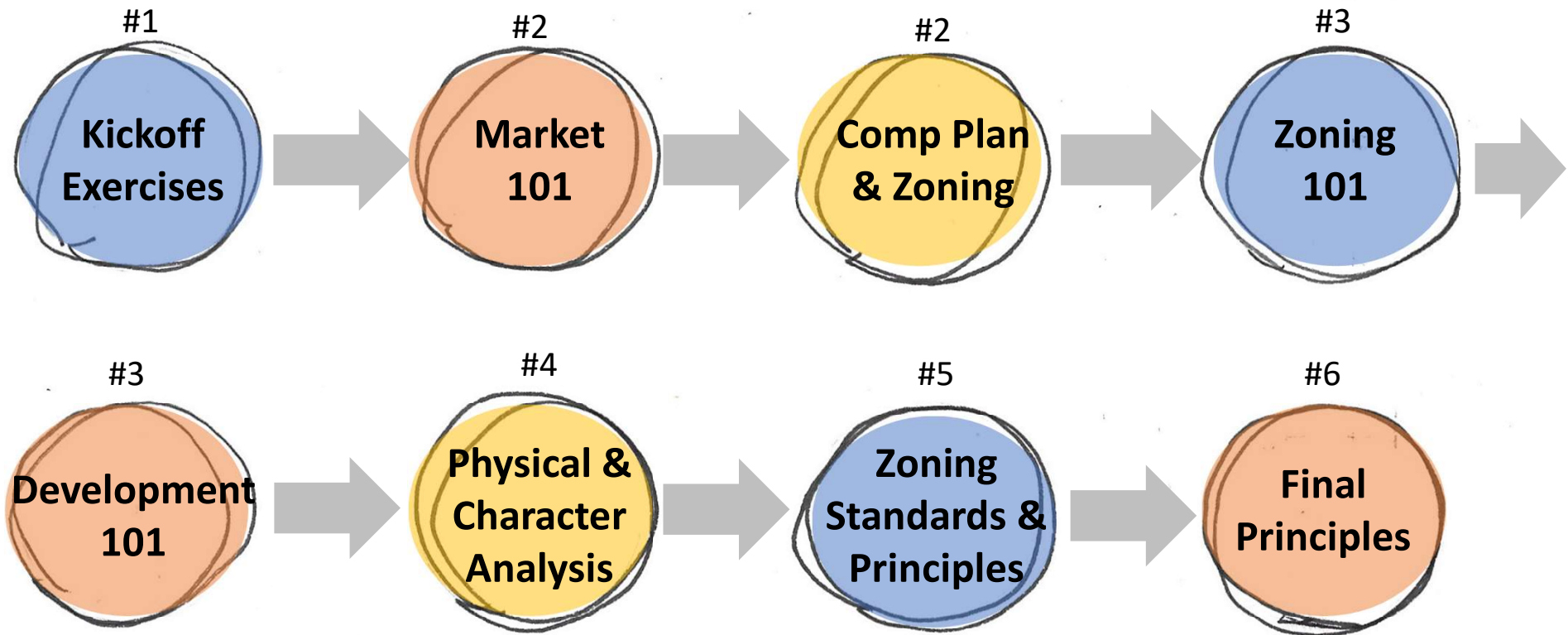
Sec. 66.413. Intent, BC community business (converted) district. The BC community business (converted) district is a business district expressly for existing residential structures in commercial areas, which will permit the operation of businesses which do not generate large amounts of traffic and at the same time will retain the visual character of the building forms and open space associated with residential uses. This includes a limited height on buildings and front and side yards. It is further the intent of this district to provide parking for employees who work in buildings which are converted from residential to business use.

Sec. 66.414. Intent, B2 community business district.
 The B2 community business district is intended to serve the needs of a consumer population larger than that served by the "local business district," and is generally characterized by a cluster of establishments generating large volumes of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Sec. 66.216. Intent, RM2 medium-density multiple-family res. district.
 The RM2 medium-density multiple-family residential district is designed for multiple-family residential and supportive, complementary uses. Its intent is to foster and support pedestrian- and transit-oriented residential development and provide for infill housing to meet a variety of housing needs.

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Committee Milestone Path

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Active storefronts
Affordable rental rates for retail tenants

Walkability

accessibility for people with disabilities
walkability
Walkability
walkability
Accessibility

Mix of uses

Variety of housing affordability
Housing mix
Mixed use neighborhood
mixed use
mix of commercial and residential
diversity of housing types and rental levels
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Historic character & scale

Character and small scale (less than 3 story)
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Pedestrian environment

Better walking and biking safety
More customers and pedestrian space
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Parking issues

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Affordability

Affordability
Affordability
Lack of affordable housing

Transit & movement

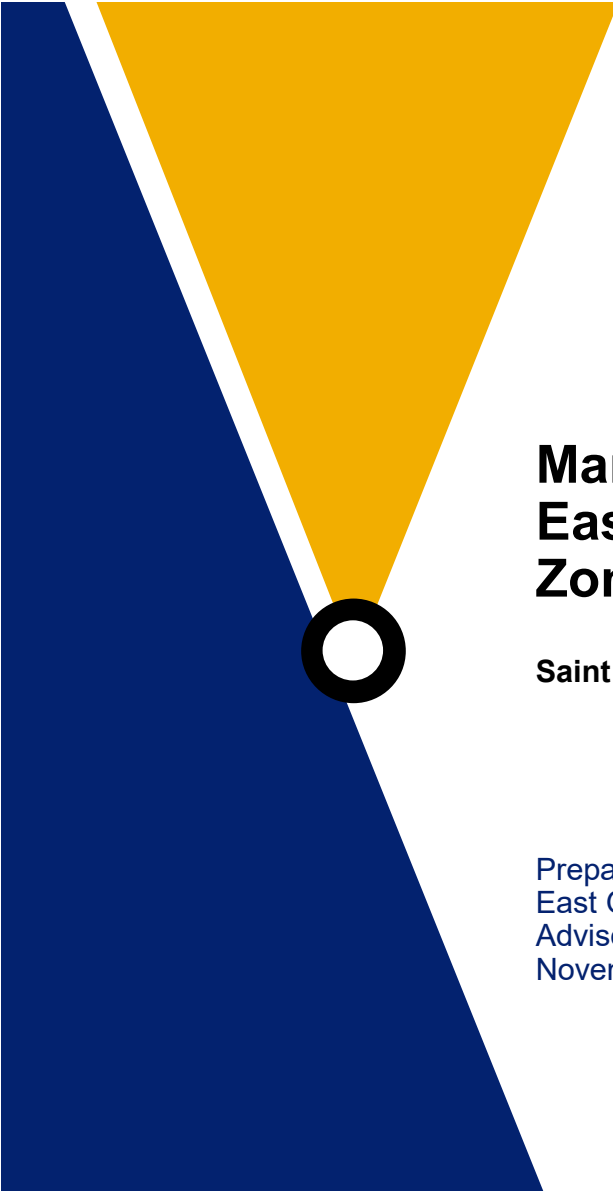
Lack of transit
Transit options (more buses and other options for winter)
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Market Research Discussion for East Grand Avenue Overlay District Zoning Study

Saint Paul, Minnesota

Prepared for
East Grand Avenue Overlay District Zoning Study
Advisory Committee
November 28, 2022



What is a Market? Who are the players in the real estate market?

Financial providers

- Investors
- Banks
- Funds
- Government agencies

Real estate service providers

- Property managers
- Brokers
- Contractors
- Consultants

Regulators

- City government
- State government
- Federal government

Real estate developers

- Large and small development companies
- Construction companies
- Non-profits
- Governments agencies

Owners

- Individuals and families
- Corporations
- Developers
- REITs
- Non-Profits
- Government agencies

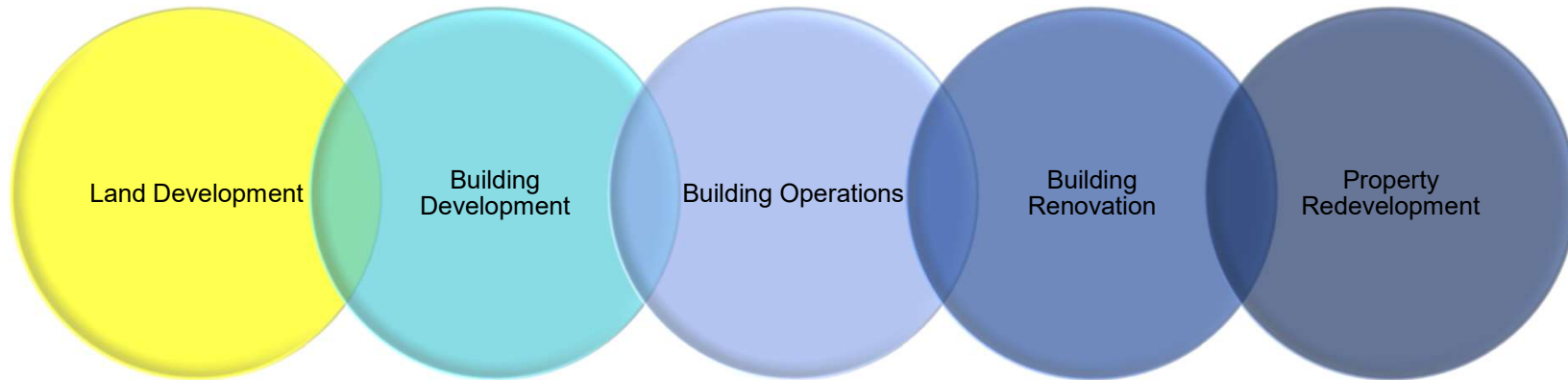
Real estate users

- Homebuyers
- Renters
- Retailers
- Industrial businesses
- Office users





The real estate development cycle



Source: Adapted from The Real Estate Development Matrix, CCIM



Why do real estate market research?

“Large fortunes have been made and lost in real estate development, and the goal of market analysis is to minimize the risks and maximize opportunity to developers and investors by providing analysis that is timely and accurate as possible.”

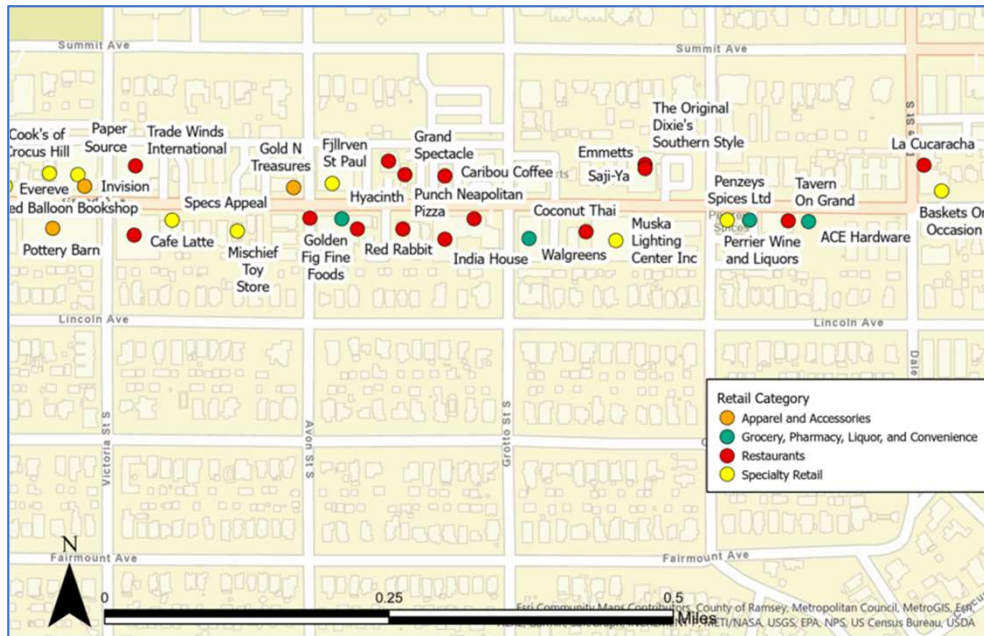
-- Adrienne Schmitz
*Real Estate Market
Analysis*
ULI

Key Questions for Market Analysis

- What is the size of the market for a real estate project or real estate use?
- How quickly will a project sell or lease-up?
- What are the right prices or rents that will support the investment in the project?
- How should a project be planned or designed to make it most attractive to the market?



Comparative Retail Node Analysis—Grand Avenue—March 2021 Study



Strengths

- Grand Avenue has a brand
- Unique with historic homes and commercial buildings unlike other areas
- Legacy as an upscale retail area.
- Compared to other retail nodes in the Metro Area, on-street parking is relatively convenient
- Close to demand drivers that are attractive to retailers—downtown Saint Paul, the Xcel Energy Center, and institutions of higher education

Weaknesses

- Not well connected to the Metro Area's transportation infrastructure
- It is a long retail node
- Parking can be a challenge during busy times
- Many commercial structures that are becoming obsolete



Key Broker and Developer Interview Themes from March 2021 Study

1. Grand Avenue is a unique retail node with assets that will continue to make it successful
2. Urban retailers are looking for creative ways to reach their customers, both through brick-and-mortar space and online
3. Parking on Grand Avenue works well, generally
4. But changes in the way restaurants and retail conduct business will transform parking needs
5. Developing stand-alone retail space is difficult financially—market rents do not support development
6. Consumers and landlords love small businesses and want them to succeed
7. Attracting and keeping small businesses on Grand Avenue can be a challenge
8. Other than serving as a cheerleader and coordinating stakeholders, there are no easy solutions for the district council





Key Broker and Developer Interview Themes from March 2021 Study

1. Mixed-use projects can be a way to create marketable restaurant and retail space on Grand Avenue
2. In some cases, cities have required multifamily projects to include commercial space, and fitting that space can be difficult
3. More residential units and taller building heights are often necessary to make the financials work
4. Providing parking for residents and businesses can be a challenge
5. Mixed-use projects with affordable housing could be an option for smaller scale projects, but the financing these projects can be difficult





Projects under construction, approved, and planned have been increasing size and scale (Data is from March 2021 Study)

Completed Projects	Projects In Construction, Planned or Proposed
<p><i>Average Number of Units</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 128 	<p><i>Average Number of Units</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 185
<p><i>Average Number of Height of Building</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 	<p><i>Average Number of Height of Building</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7
<p><i>Average Square Footage of Commercial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,650 	<p><i>Average Square Footage of Commercial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13,733
<p><i>Average Units per Acre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 107 	<p><i>Average Units per Acre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 215
<p><i>Average Square Footage of Commercial per Unit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125 	<p><i>Average Square Footage of Commercial per Unit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73



What has changed since the March 2021 Study?

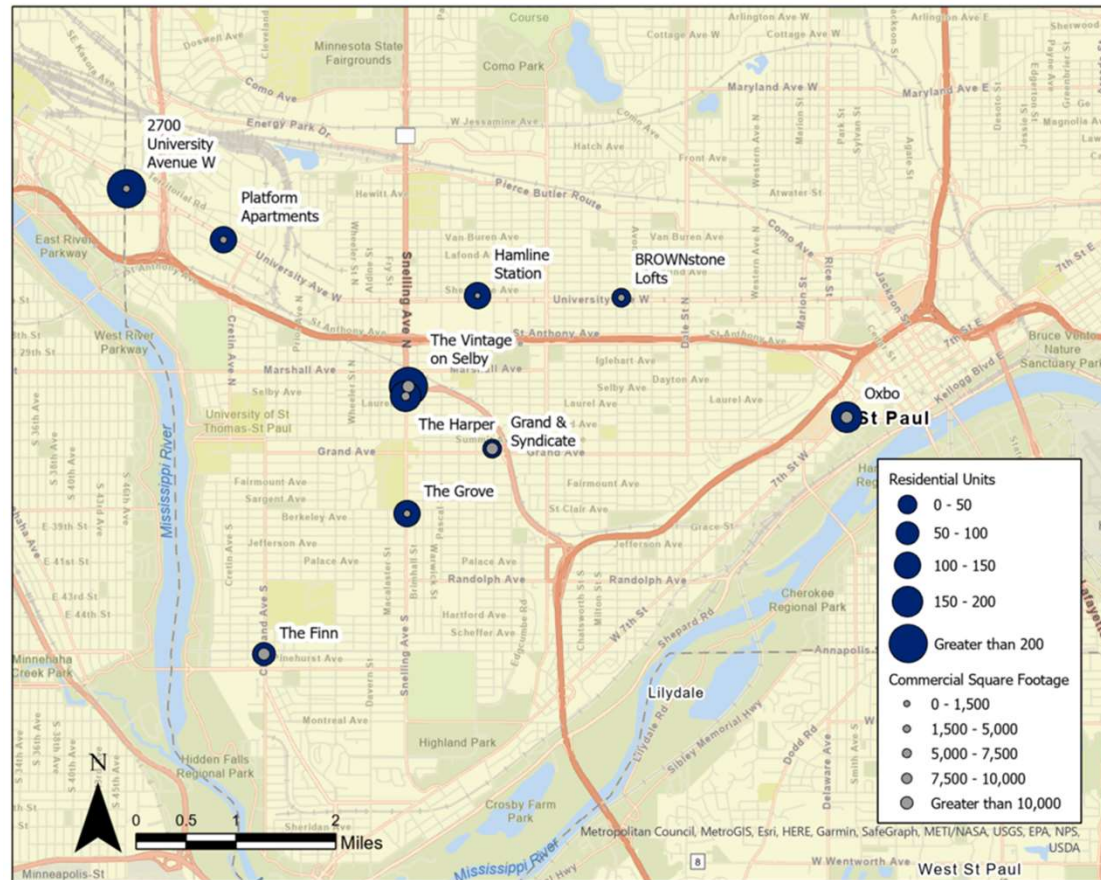
1. Inflation
2. Recovery of the retail market
3. Return to brick-and-mortar consumer spending
4. Continuing inventory and supply chain challenges
5. Significant increase in demand for-sale housing market
6. More challenges for housing affordability—both for-sale and rental
7. Hybrid work trend continues
8. Continued cost challenges for new real estate development—all types
9. New construction projects have been put on hold
10. Recession fears



Projects from March 2021 Study

Completed Projects, 2015-2020

- There were 10 completed mixed-use projects near Grand Avenue between 2015 and 2020

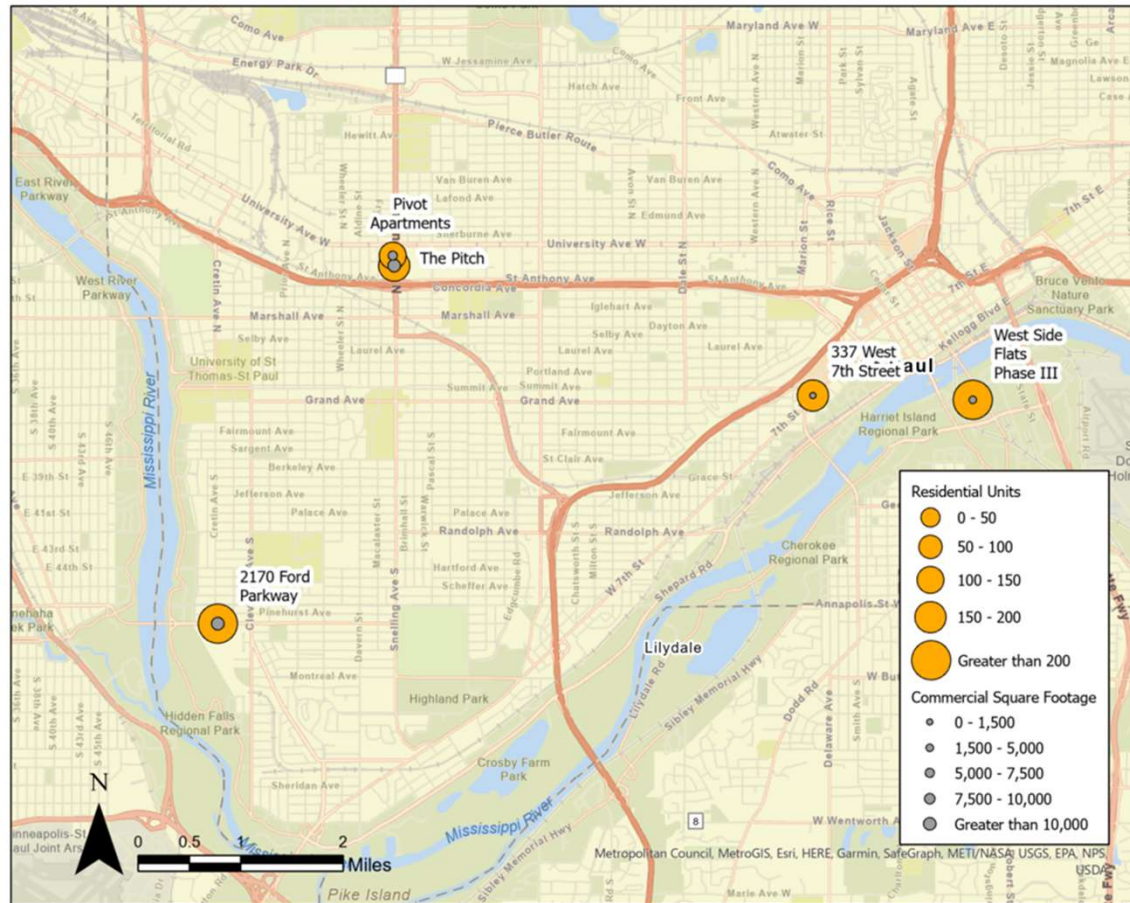




Projects from March 2021 Study

Projects Under Construction

- There are five projects under construction

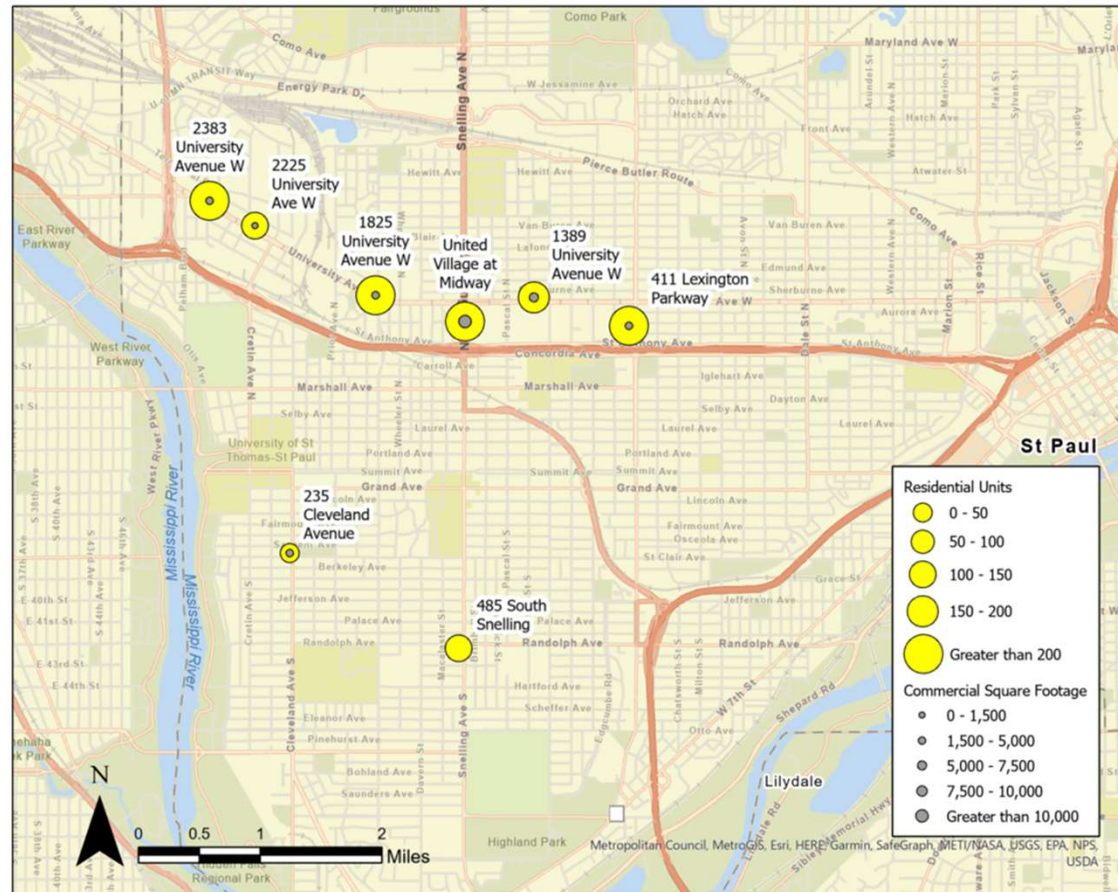


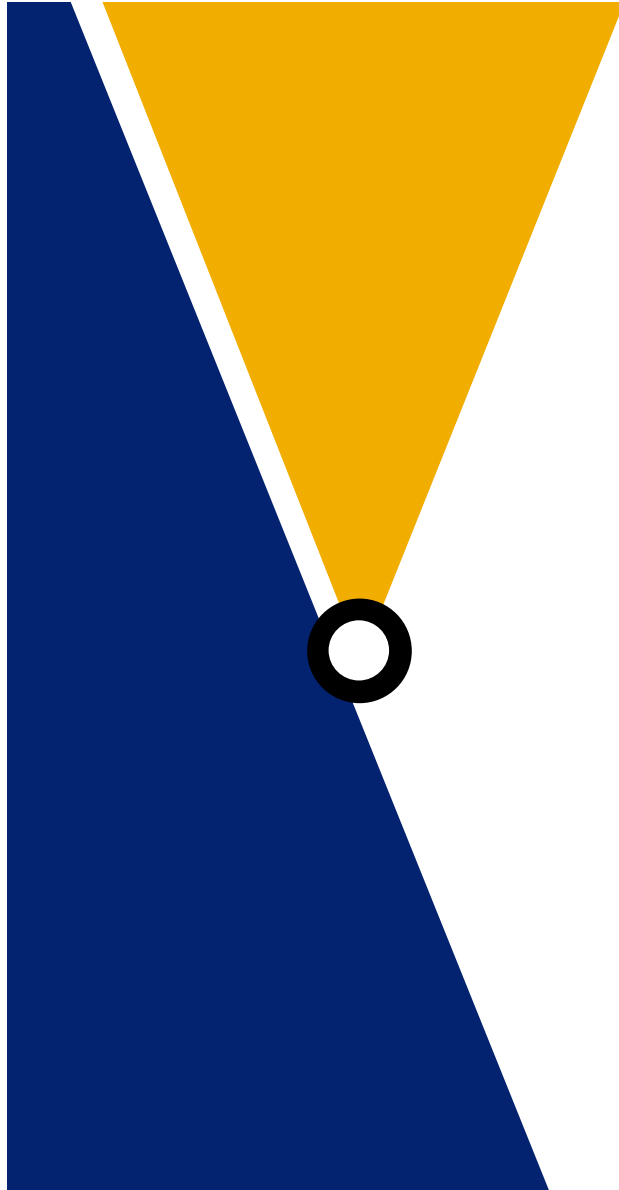


Projects from March 2021 Study

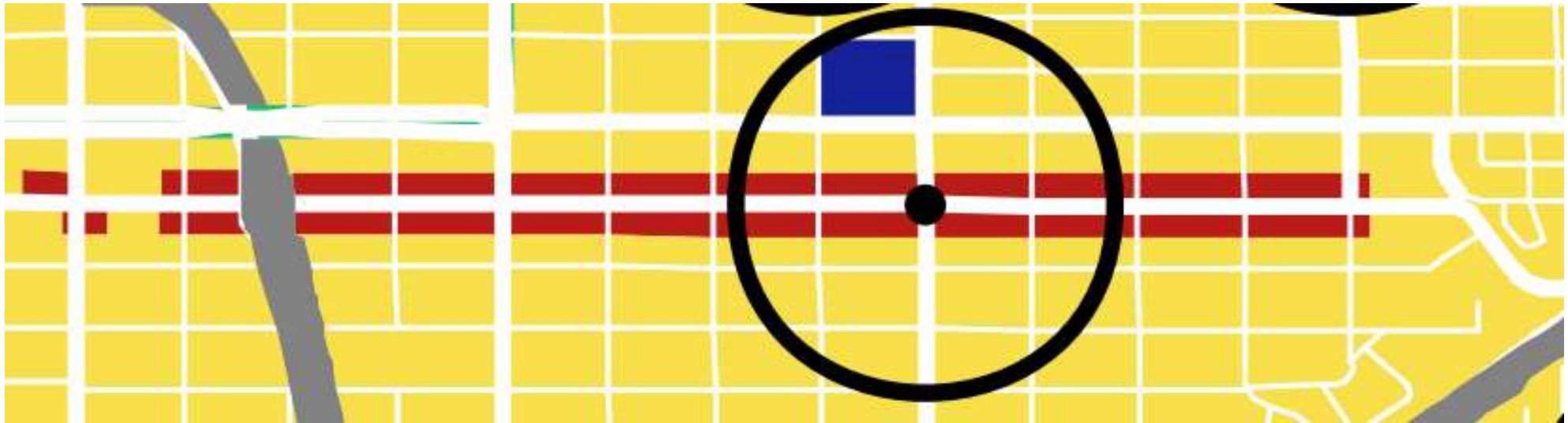
Projects that are Planned or Proposed

- There were nine projects planned or proposed














Questions?



Land Use Categories and Neighborhood Node Locations

-  Downtown
 -  Mixed-Use
 -  Urban Neighborhood
 -  Semi-Rural
 -  Industrial
 -  Major Parks and Open Spaces
 -  Civic and Institutional
 -  Transportation
-
-  Neighborhood Nodes
(Size of circle does not indicate extent of Node.)

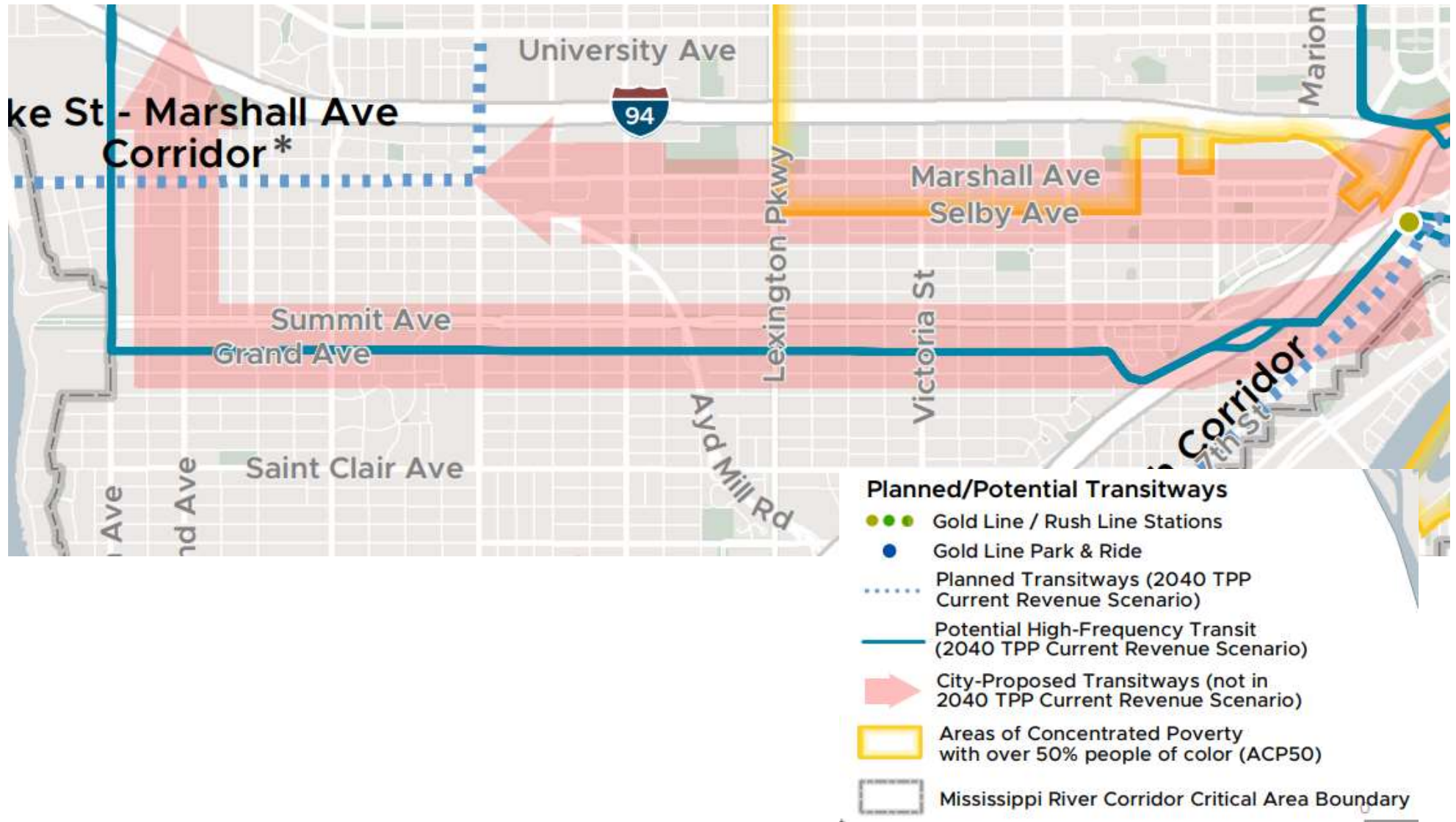
Urban Neighborhoods are primarily residential areas with a range of housing types. Single family homes and duplexes are most common, although multi-family housing predominates along arterial and collector streets, particularly those with transit. Multi-family housing, schools, neighborhood parks, religious institutions and cemeteries may also be scattered throughout Urban Neighborhoods. Limited neighborhood serving commercial may also be present, typically at intersections of arterial and/ or collector streets. Urban Neighborhood is the largest land use area in Saint Paul.

Mixed-Use

Mixed-Use areas are primarily along thoroughfares well-served by transit. The main distinguishing characteristic is a balance of jobs and housing within walking distance of one another. Historically, these areas developed in easily-accessible locations, and they will continue to be the most dynamic areas of Saint Paul. These areas are vital for the ongoing growth and economic development of the city by providing the highest densities outside of downtown.

Neighborhood Nodes

Neighborhood Nodes are compact, mixed-use areas that provide shops, services, neighborhood-scale civic and institutional uses, recreational facilities and employment close to residences. They may be neighborhood centers, transit station areas or urban villages, and have often developed adjacent to major intersections or at former street car stops. Neighborhood Nodes serve a neighborhood's daily needs, including access to food; reduce public infrastructure disparities; improve livability; and accommodate growth. Neighborhood Nodes are denser concentrations of development relative to the adjacent future land use categories. Neighborhood Nodes foster an equitable system of compact, mixed-use and commercial centers across the city to increase access to community services (such as health care) and businesses, and support pedestrian oriented neighborhoods.



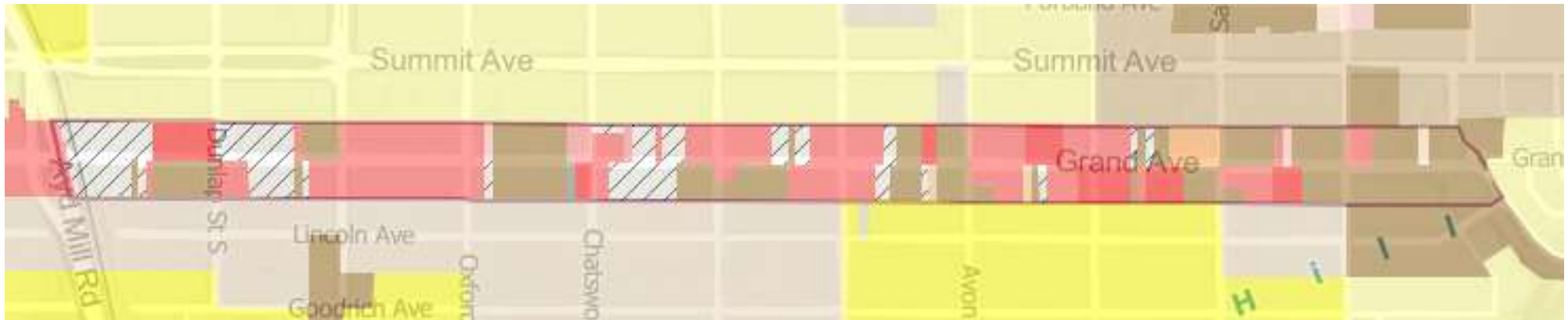
What is zoning?


Zoning is a set of laws regulating how property is used and the size and location of buildings on a lot. It includes both written regulations and maps showing the different zoning classifications in the city. In Minnesota, state law allows cities to have zoning ordinances and sets parameters for the local regulations. Saint Paul's zoning code is online at www.stpaul.gov/code. Look under Part II Legislative Code and then under Title VIII along the left side of the screen.

Who in the City makes zoning decisions?

The authority to make zoning decisions is divided among the Zoning Administrator, the Board of Zoning Appeals, the Planning Commission, and the City Council.

- The Zoning Administrator is the city staff person in the Department of Safety and Inspections responsible for interpreting and enforcing the zoning code. Zoning administration staff coordinates the [site plan review process](#), among other responsibilities.
- The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) has seven members (including one alternate) who are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. They make decisions on zoning variances and review appeals of Zoning Administrator decisions.
- The [Planning Commission](#) is a group of 21 members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council to advise them on planning issues. They make zoning decisions on conditional use permits, nonconforming use permits, and (less frequently) determinations of similar use. The [Zoning Committee](#), a seven-member committee of the full commission, holds public hearings on these cases and then makes recommendations for the full commission's action.
- The [City Council's](#) main role in zoning is to review and adopt zoning text and map amendments and to hear appeals of BZA and Planning Commission decisions. Requests to change the zoning of individual properties have public hearings before the Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission and the City Council. The City Council makes the final decision. The City Council also approves plats.



- | | |
|--|---|
|  R2 One-Family |  B1 Local Business |
|  R3 One-Family |  BC Community Business (converted) |
|  R4 One-Family |  B2 Community Business |
|  RT1 Two-Family |  B3 General Business |
|  RT2 Townhouse |  T3 Traditional Neighborhood |
|  RM1 Multiple-Family | |
|  RM2 Multiple-Family | |

•**Sec. 67.601. - Establishment; intent.**
 •The **EG East Grand Avenue Overlay District** is established as shown on the official zoning map accompanying this code to provide design standards and building height, size, and footprint limits, and to reduce the shortage of parking in the east Grand Avenue area.

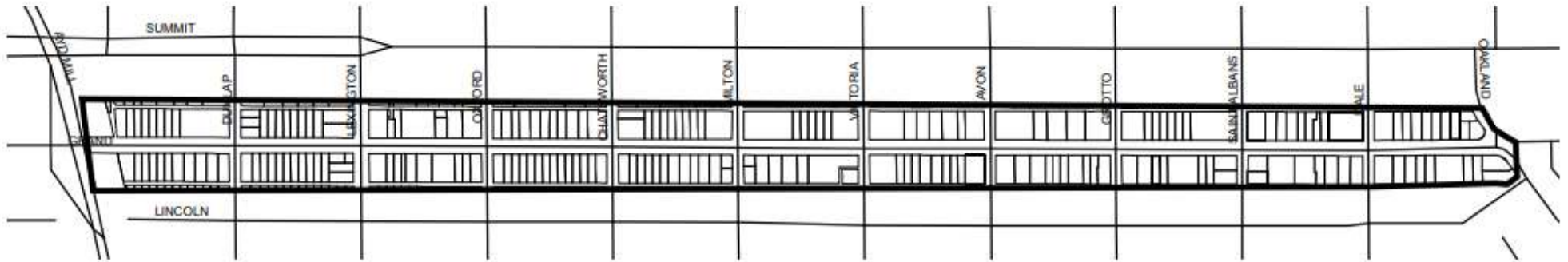
Sec. 66.413., BC community business (converted) district. The BC community business (converted) district is a business district expressly for existing residential structures in commercial areas, which will permit the operation of businesses which do not generate large amounts of traffic and at the same time will retain the visual character of the building forms and open space associated with residential uses. This includes a limited height on buildings and front and side yards. It is further the intent of this district to provide parking for employees who work in buildings which are converted from residential to business use.

Sec. 66.414., B2 community business district.

The B2 community business district is intended to serve the needs of a consumer population larger than that served by the "local business district," and is generally characterized by a cluster of establishments generating large volumes of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Sec. 66.216., RM2 medium-density multiple-family res. district.

The RM2 medium-density multiple-family residential district is designed for multiple-family residential and supportive, complementary uses. Its intent is to foster and support pedestrian- and transit-oriented residential development and provide for infill housing to meet a variety of housing needs.



East Grand Avenue Overlay District

•Sec. 67.602. - Standards and regulations.

(a) *Design standards.* The TN2 design standards in [section 66.343](#) apply.

(b) *Building regulations.*

(1) The maximum building footprint shall be twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet.

(2) Total building size, above ground, shall be limited to seventy-five thousand (75,000) square feet, including parking.

(3) Building height shall be limited to three (3) stories and to thirty (30) feet for commercial buildings, three (3) stories and thirty-six feet (36) for mixed commercial-residential mixed use buildings, and three (3) stories and forty (40) feet for residential or institutional buildings. No additional height based on setbacks is allowed.

(c) *Parking.* The provision in section 63.204(a) that exempts a change in use to a new use that requires five (5) or fewer spaces more than the existing use from providing the additional spaces shall not apply.

East Grand Avenue Overlay Zoning District *Advisory Committee*



Alex Peeper
Ari Parritz
Brian Wenger
Bridget Allan Ales
Carolyn Robertson
Chad Miller
Dan Marshall
Dominic Ciresi
Elysia Gallo
Ian Ball
Kathryn Olmstead
Sara Joy Proppe
Zack Farrell