

East Grand Avenue Overlay District Zoning Study

Advisory Committee

Meeting #3: January 9, 2023

Notes:

1. Process Updates

- The Advisory Committee, Michael Lamb (consultant), and City staff completed introductions and reviewed the topics of previous and future meetings.
- Committee members stated that February 6, 2023, will be the best date for the next meeting, with February 27, 2023, planned for the following meeting.

2. History and Context of Grand Avenue

- Michael provided an overview of the history of the streetcar in the Twin Cities.
 - Streetcar routes were extensive, allowed travel across the metro area, and were important to the development patterns of cities.
 - Twin City Rapid Transit System served 226 million passengers annually at its peak.
- Michael provided an overview of the history of Grand Avenue.
 - Saint Paul's 1922 Zoning Code zoned properties adjacent to Grand Avenue as commercial; the City completed a large-scale rezoning effort in 1972 and was interested in rezoning most of the properties adjacent to Grand Avenue as residential; after considering community input, the City agreed to a mix of zoning districts and land uses along Grand Avenue.
 - 1920s: during prohibition, the sale of illegal alcohol was prevalent at businesses along Grand Avenue.
 - 1930s: 133 businesses were listed as active; Grand Avenue was known as "automobile row" and it was common to have services (e.g., drugstore, grocery store) on each block.
 - 1953: The streetcar system was shut down and replaced with a bus system.

- 1970s: events like the Grand Meander and Grand Old Days took place to celebrate the neighborhood; Grand Avenue was attracting new businesses and had an influential trade market with average family incomes, which was higher than other parts of Saint Paul; businesses on Grand Avenue were mostly owner-occupied and most residential buildings were owned by absentee landlords (i.e., rental properties).
 - 1990s: Grand Avenue was mainly a residential street with apartments and commercial buildings.
 - 2019: an article was written about Grand Avenue business closures.
- Committee members discussed Grand Avenue's business closures, the cyclical and changing nature of commercial corridors, and decisions that were made by the government that negatively impacted neighborhoods (e.g., construction of I-94 devastating the Rondo neighborhood).

3. Microscale Analysis

- City staff provided information about the East Grand Avenue Overlay District (EGAOD), including a summary of underlying zoning districts, lot sizes, standards, history, and *2040 Comprehensive Plan* policies that relate to development along Grand Avenue.
- A Committee member shared their experience from when the 2006 *District 16 Neighborhood Plan* and EGAOD were developed, recalling that the EGAOD was intended to reduce the possibility of national chain stores overtaking Grand Avenue businesses.
- Committee members asked about the applicability of the EGAOD and underlying zoning districts; City staff clarified that the EGAOD applies as an extra layer of regulation and the most restrictive standard applies if duplication exists between the EGAOD and the underlying zoning district.
- City staff clarified the scope of the EGAOD Zoning Study: changes to the underlying zoning districts are not within the approved scope, but changes to the EGAOD are within the approved scope.
- City staff clarified that Minnesota State law requires the Zoning Code to be consistent with the *2040 Comprehensive Plan*.
- City staff presented the microscale analysis, which involved in-person documentation of the built environment, including building size and placement, frontages, parking placement, and other design elements.
 - City staff analyzed 10 sites (5 house-scale and 5 block-scale); key information and measurements were presented in a table.
 - A Committee member asked why the analysis, which focuses on existing conditions, was conducted if the goal of the Zoning Study is to implement the *2040 Comprehensive Plan*, which potentially calls for increased development intensity along Grand Avenue; the Committee member reminded the Committee that the EGAOD has not delivered new development; City staff reminded Committee members that this Zoning Study includes a careful balance of many factors; City staff have heard that the community considers Grand Avenue unique, so staff deemed it necessary to analyze existing

conditions to better understand those unique attributes with the intent of considering those attributes when drafting Code text amendments consistent with the *2040 Comprehensive Plan*.

- A Committee member mentioned that the microscale analysis is not a perfect representation of all development along Grand Avenue; for example, there is a six-story building on Grand Avenue that was not accounted for.
- Committee members discussed project feasibility considerations, including necessary building height for projects to be feasible; a Committee member mentioned the 695 Grand project as an example that required five stories; project feasibility is dependent on many aspects, including construction method, parking, and inclusion of commercial space.

4. Physical Conditions and Qualities

- Michael provided information about zoning (controls building envelope and placement on a lot), frontage (defines how the building relates to the public realm), and the street/streetscape.
- Michael reviewed results from the first meeting exercises, including what the Committee members would like kept and changed on Grand Avenue.
- Michael presented photos of Grand Avenue development for discussion, including:
 - Desirable elements in residential development (variable shapes and sizes, consistent materials (brick)) and commercial development (diverse frontages and storefronts, some consistency in materials (brick) but also retail tenant variation, parking lot screening); and
 - Questionable elements (parking lots and loading docks accessed from Grand Avenue, signs covering up windows, blank façades, etc.).
- Committee members asked about the City's next task, case study research, and recommended prioritizing the review of successful corridor examples regardless of the regulatory framework imposed on it; Committee members reminded City staff that corridors can be successful without overlays, so reviewing corridors without overlays is important; Committee members stated that case studies should have similarities to Grand Avenue in terms of corridor length (i.e., Grand Avenue is a long corridor, so case studies should be applicable to long corridors); a Committee member suggested corridors in St. Anthony Park and Stillwater as examples.
- Michael discussed next steps for the Advisory Committee meetings.



East Grand Avenue Overlay

Zoning District

Advisory Committee

January 9, 2023

Meeting #3

- Review where we are in the process, goals and objectives
- Zoning 101, Part II
- Discuss history and context of Grand Avenue (character, built form, frontage, etc.)
- Review ‘micro-analysis’ of the corridor by the city (if ready)
- Discuss essential qualities of the avenue
- Discuss how to interpret values, conditions and qualities into physical standards

Schedule & Next Meetings

Meeting #4 (Jan 23, 2023)

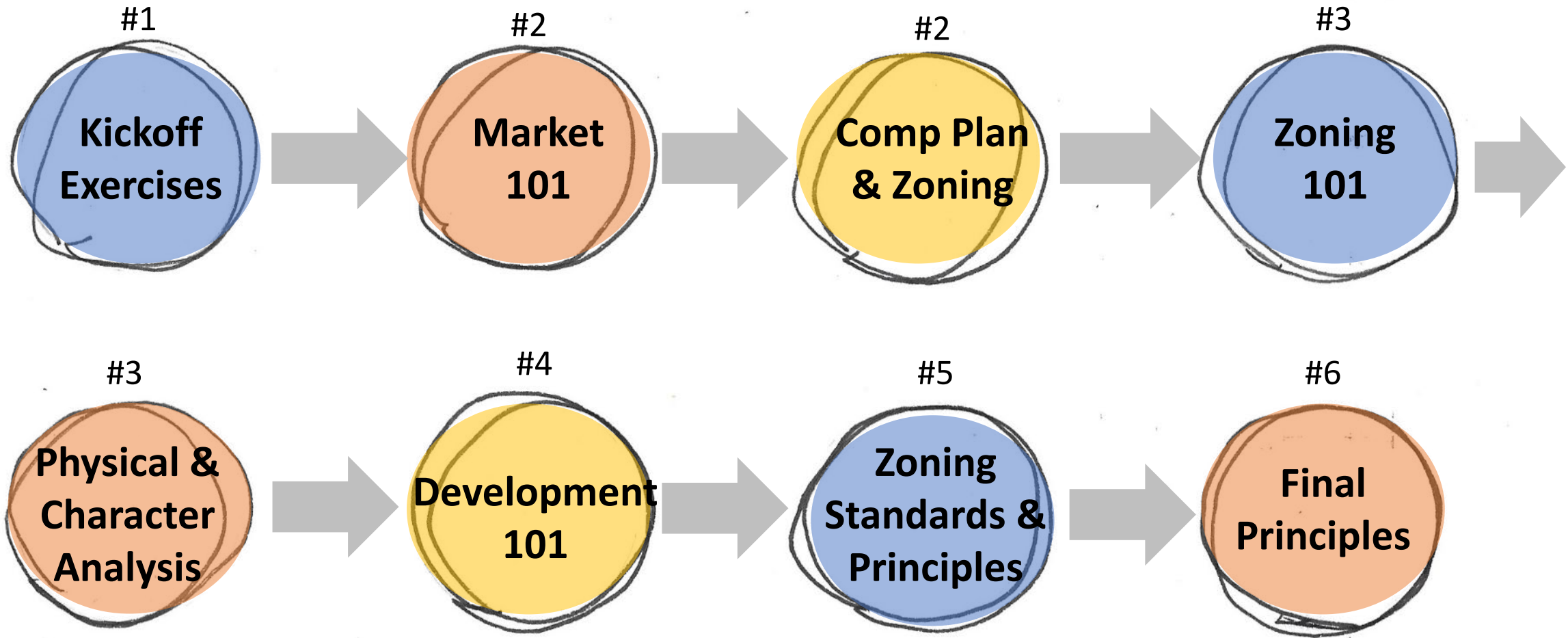
- Development 101 presentation (with guest speaker Beth Pfeiffer, Assembly MN)
- Initial discussion of broad-based principles

Meeting #5 (Feb 8?)

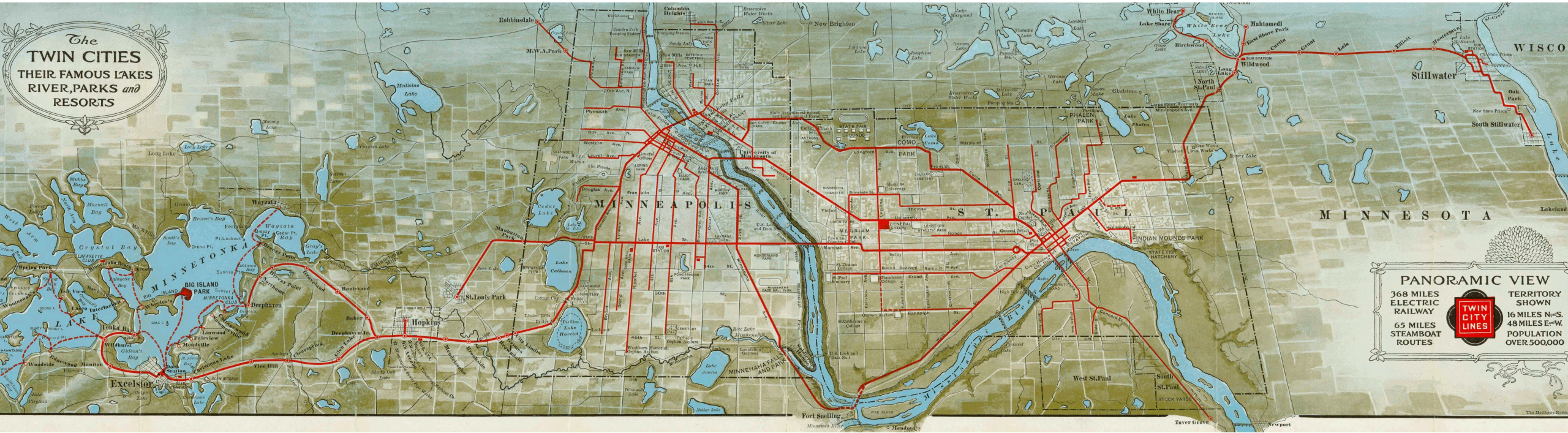
- Affordable Housing 101 presentation (Dominic Mitchell, Saint Paul Public Housing; 30 minutes)
- Draft recommendations for updating zoning

Meeting #6 if needed (Feb 22?)

- Refine principles and publish recommendations



Committee Milestone Path





1865—Saint Paul = 12,976 pop.; Minneapolis = 4,607 pop.

1880's - Saint Paul pop. boomed: 41,473 (1880) to 133,156 (1890)

1872—St. Paul Street Railway Company was formed; private business was operated at a loss until bondholders foreclosed

1874—Only 2 blocks of Grand Avenue has been developed

1883—St. Paul Railway Company continued to lose money; bought by Thomas Lowry of Minneapolis; he grew the horse drawn system to 159 cars but continued to lose money

1887—He built a steam operated cable car but still was not profitable; Lowry combine the two systems which became the Twin City Rapid Transit System electrified streetcar

1922—At peak of the system it served 226 million passengers



1900's—from the bluff to Lexington was filled with housing; originally a residential street but soon included apartments and commercial buildings

1920's – Prohibition and illegal alcohol sales became a major business

- Coal, ice and milk were delivered daily

1930's –

- City directory listed 133 businesses on the Avenue
- Grand was know as “automobile row”
- Common to have a drugstore or grocery store each block

1940's – WWII created a housing shortage in the area

1953 – Streetcar was shut down for bus system

1950's/60's/70's – highway, riots on Selby, declining property and values on Selby and Grand



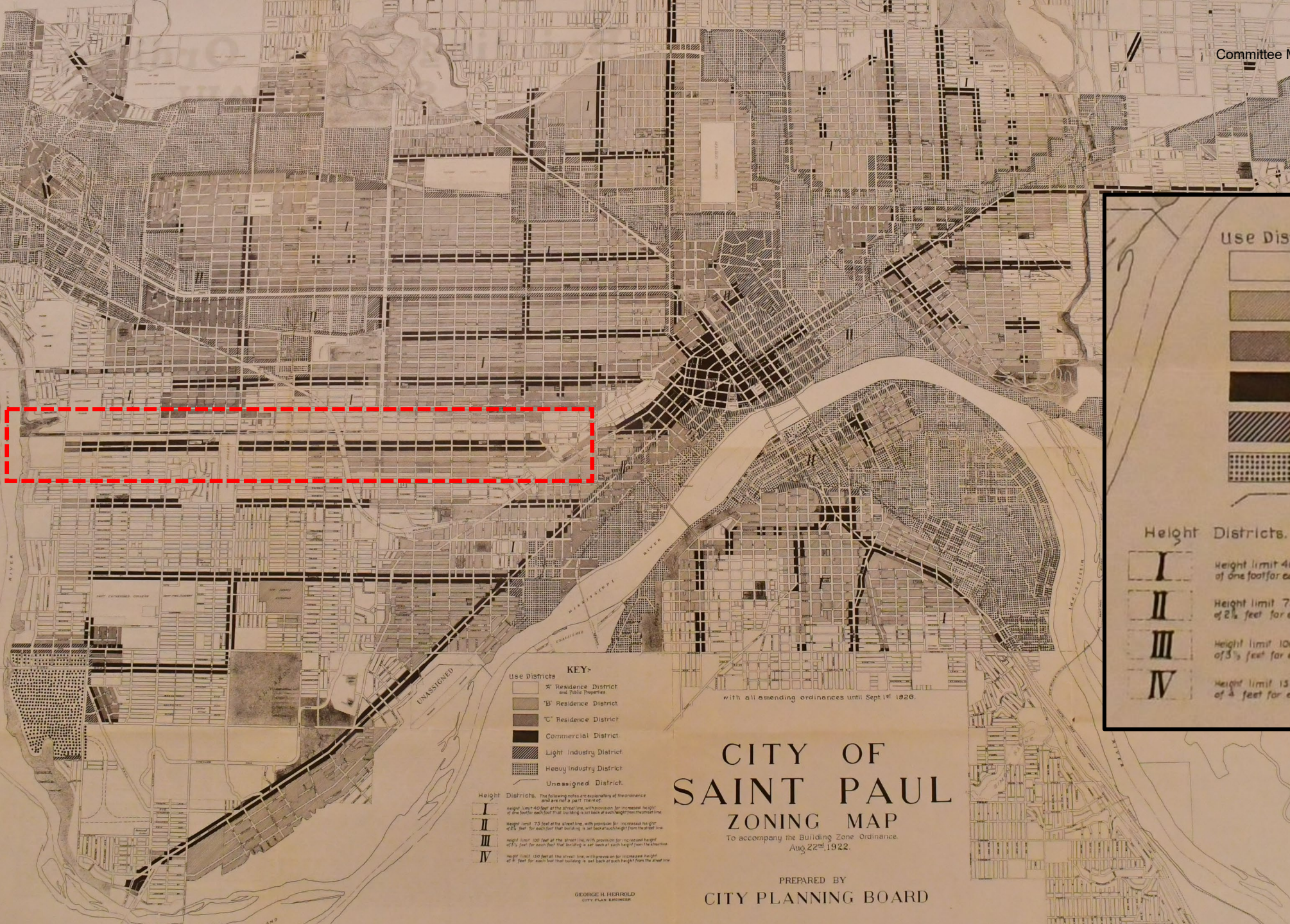


1970's – dining outdoors was not considered “proper public behavior”

1973 – ‘Grand Meander’ created to highlight businesses the first Saturday of December

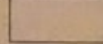
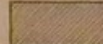

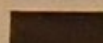

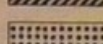
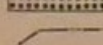
1973 – Summit Hill Historic District was designated

1974 – ‘Grand Old Days’; 250,000 attendees







KEY:-

Use Districts

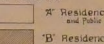
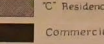
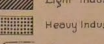
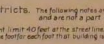
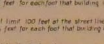
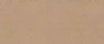

-  'A' Residence District and Public Properties.
-  'B' Residence District.
-  'C' Residence District.
-  Commercial District.
-  Light Industry District.
-  Heavy Industry District.
-  Unassigned District.

Height Districts. The following notes are explanatory of the ordinance and are not a part thereof.





-  Height limit 40 feet at the street line, with provision for increased height of one foot for each foot that building is set back at such height from the street line.
-  Height limit 75 feet at the street line, with provision for increased height of 2 1/2 feet for each foot that building is set back at such height from the street line.
-  Height limit 100 feet at the street line, with provision for increased height of 3 1/2 feet for each foot that building is set back at such height from the street line.
-  Height limit 150 feet at the street line, with provision for increased height of 4 feet for each foot that building is set back at such height from the street line.

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with all amending ordinances until Sept. 1st 1926.

CITY OF SAINT PAUL

ZONING MAP

To accompany the Building Zone Ordinance.
Aug. 22nd 1922.

PREPARED BY
CITY PLANNING BOARD

GEORGE W. HERRFIELD
CITY PLANNING BOARD



1972 – City wide rezoning effort

- **City wanted to rezone most of Grand from commercial to residential**
- **Business community opposed**
- **Macalester College agreed to do a study and found out:**
- **More businesses than most people realize and about 1/3 had plans to expand**
- **Grand was attracting more businesses each year**
- **Median age of new business owners was 32**
- **Average family income in the trade area was higher than national avg and one of highest in the Twin Cities**
- **Issues: lack of parking, perception of crime, building maintenance, lack of commercial buildings**
- **Businesses were mostly owner occupied; most residential on the Avenue owned by absentee landlords**
- **Resulted in city agreeing to a “mixed-use street” that included business and residential districts**

Empty storefronts fuel concern about future of St. Paul's Grand Avenue

Task force to study whether vacancies reflect normal churn, or a new normal.

By James Walsh Star Tribune | MAY 21, 2019 — 10:06AM



LEILA NAVIDI - STAR TRIBUNE

A wave of store closings on Grand Avenue, a historic St. Paul commercial corridor, has raised questions about the street's continued vitality.

— First came the business closings. Traditions. Bonfire. D'Amico & Sons. Creative Kidstuff. Then came the near-death of Grand Old Day, the 45-year street festival that was canceled and resuscitated in the span of a week in April.

“People love Grand Avenue, so they’re constantly worried about its health,” he said. “Every 10 years or so, there is some big problem and people get nervous. ... The truth is, people have come and gone all the time.”

- David Lanegran



“The city is the largest man-made artifact in human history. It is a political association manifest as a collective work of architecture built over time. A city contains two orders: a Political Order and an Economic Order.

The Political Order is a framework of common elements owned collectively. The Economic Order consists of individually owned parcels and their occupants within that collective framework.”

—**Douglas C. Allen, 2013.**

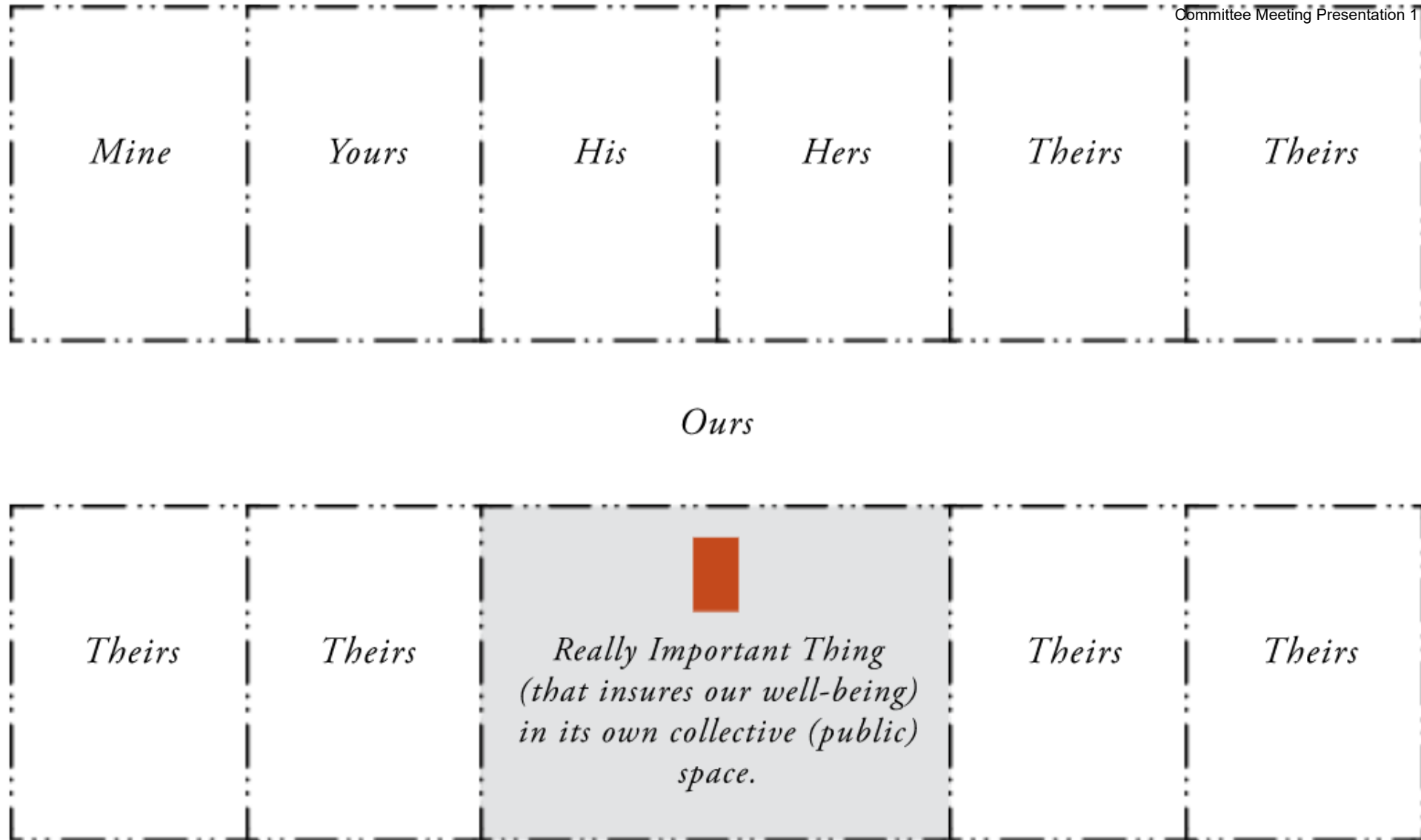
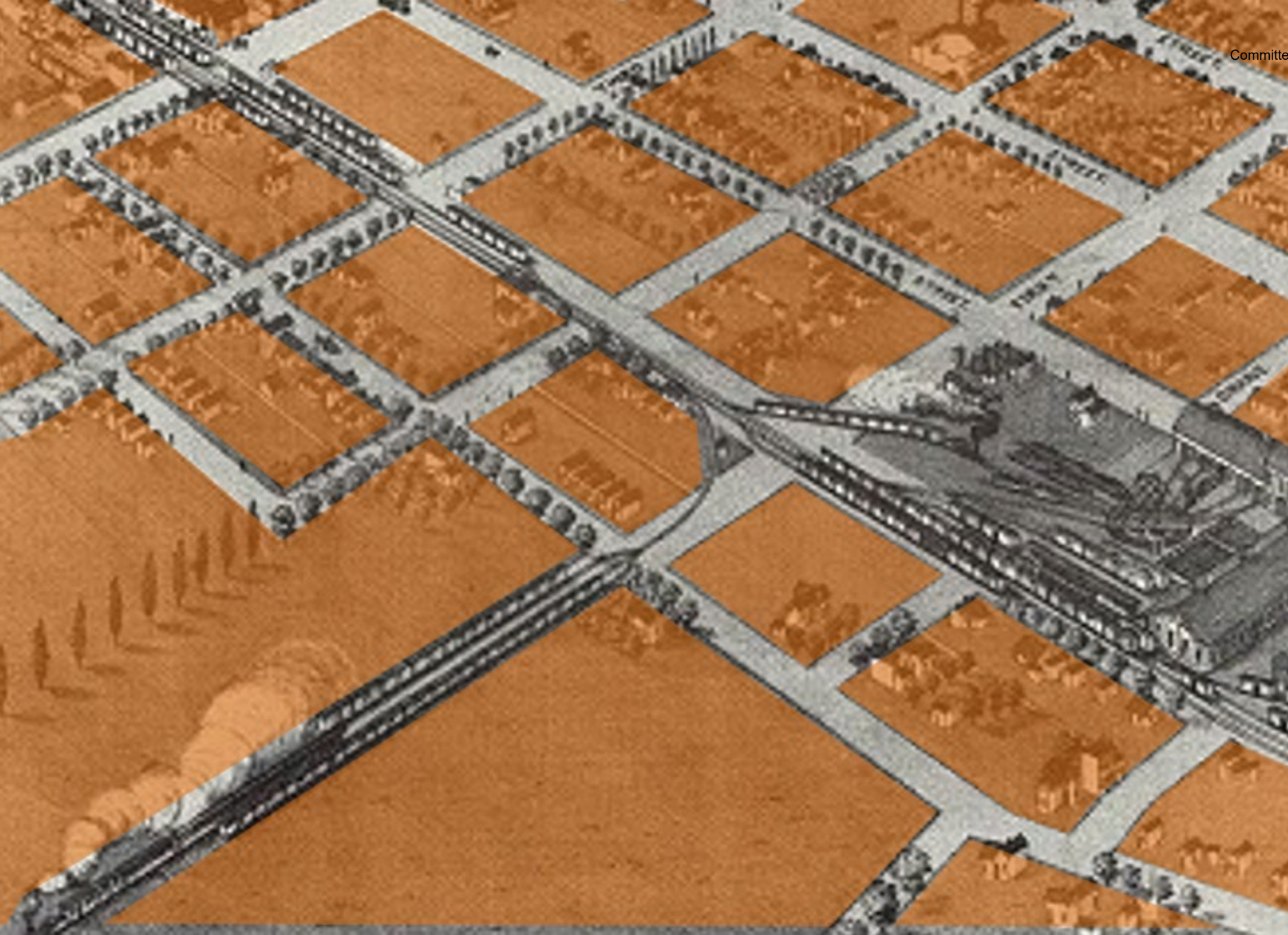


Figure 1. Diagram of Political and Economic Orders

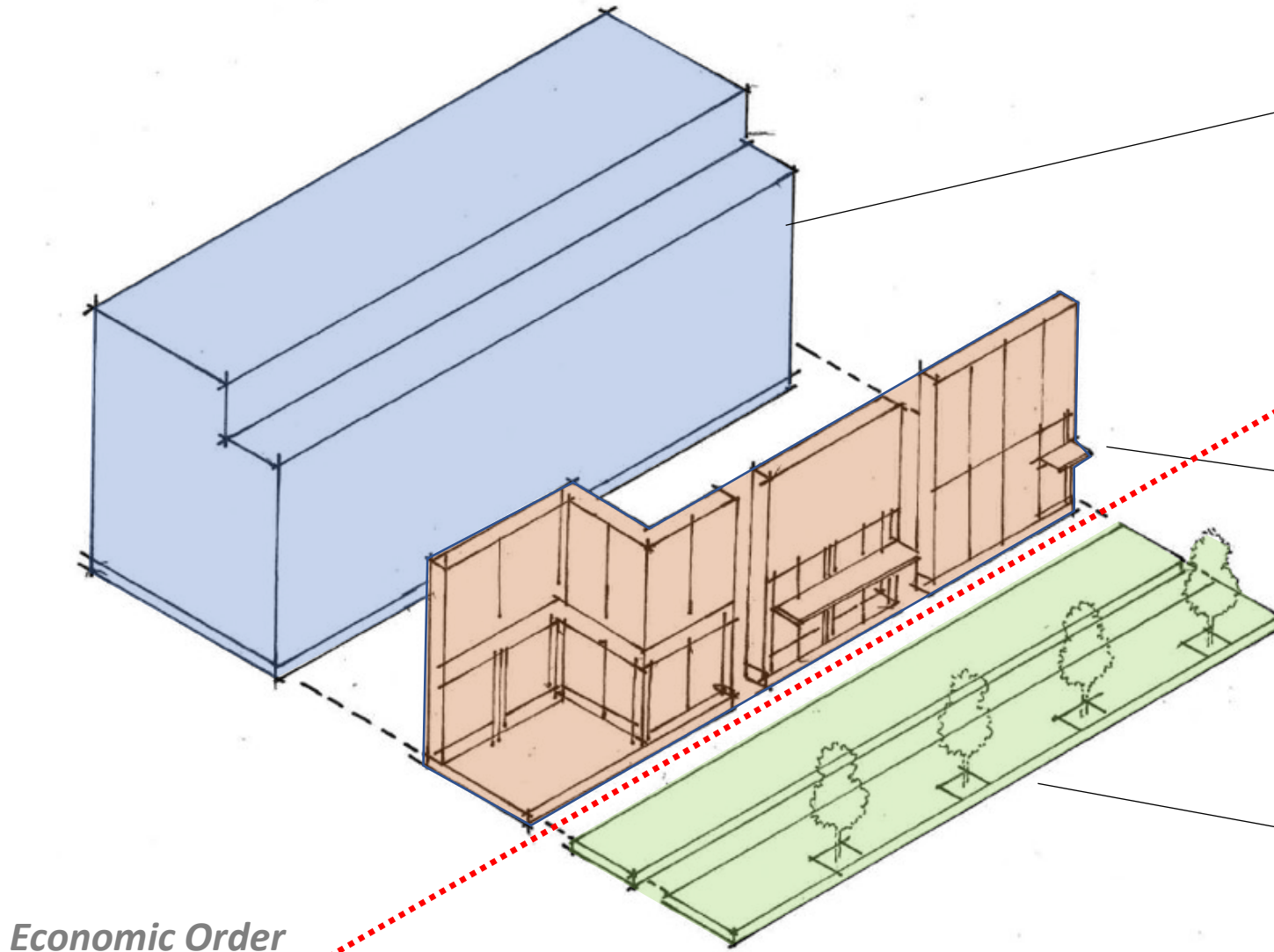


Topeka, KS

Zoning – controls lot arrangement such as lot size, use, building height, floor area ratio, yard/setbacks, some design and parking standards

Frontage – defines how a building (storefront, stoop, porch, etc.) relates to the street & public realm; typically not regulated by the zoning code

Street & Streetscape – is not regulated by the zoning; variety of funding sources that Public Works/City Forester maintains



Economic Order

Political Order

Traditional neighborhood district design standards

Land use diversity. (2)

Transitions to lower-density neighborhoods. (3)

Block length. (4)

Compatible rehabilitation and reuse. (5)

Use established building facade lines. (6)

Buildings anchor the corner. (7)

Front yard landscaping. (8)

Building facade continuity. (9)

Building facade articulation. (10)

Building height - treatment of 1-story buildings. (11)

Definition of residential entries. (12)

Entrance location. (13)

Door and window openings - minimum and character (14)

Materials and detailing. (15)

Screening of equipment and service areas. (16)

Interconnected street and alley network.

On-street parking. (18)

Parking location and design. (19)

Residential garage location. (20)

Parking lot lighting. (21)

Entrance location for transit access. (22)

Street trees. (23)

Sidewalks.

Small, local businesses

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

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
current blend of retail and residential

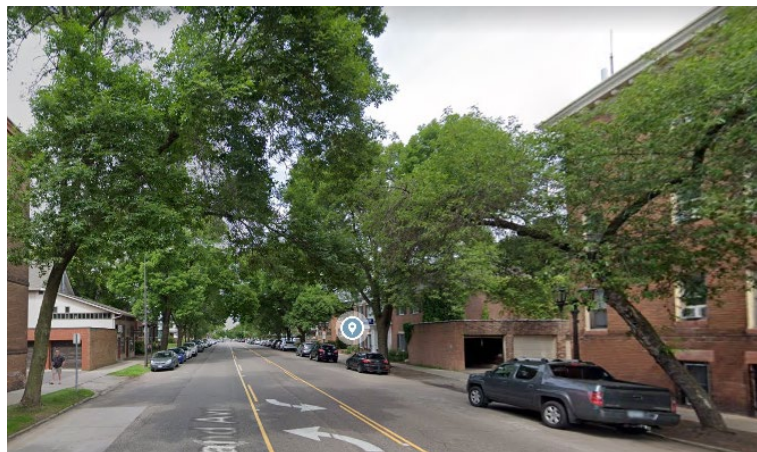
Historic character & scale

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

- Small scale
- Size of buildings
- Active storefronts
- Mix of retail and housing
- 3 story brick buildings
- Street trees/greenery
- Beautiful
- Historic character
- Walkability

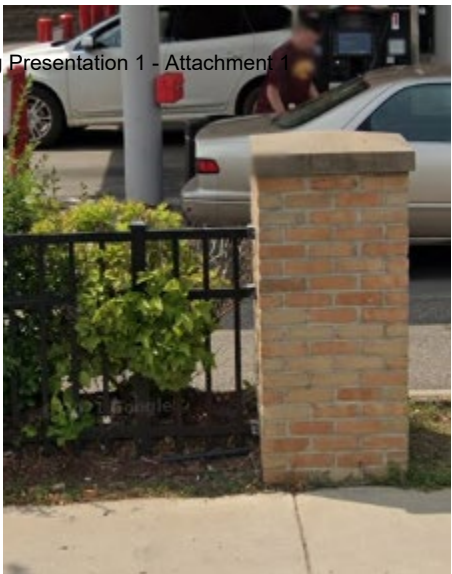


WALKABILITY
 DIVERSITY
 CONVENIENT
 BEAUTIFUL
 RELIABLE +
 FAST TRANSPORT
 DESTINATION
 HISTORIC
 CHARACTER
 PREVIOUS
 PLACE
 BALANCED
 PLACE
 SCALE
 INTER-GENERATIONAL
 OPPORTUNITY

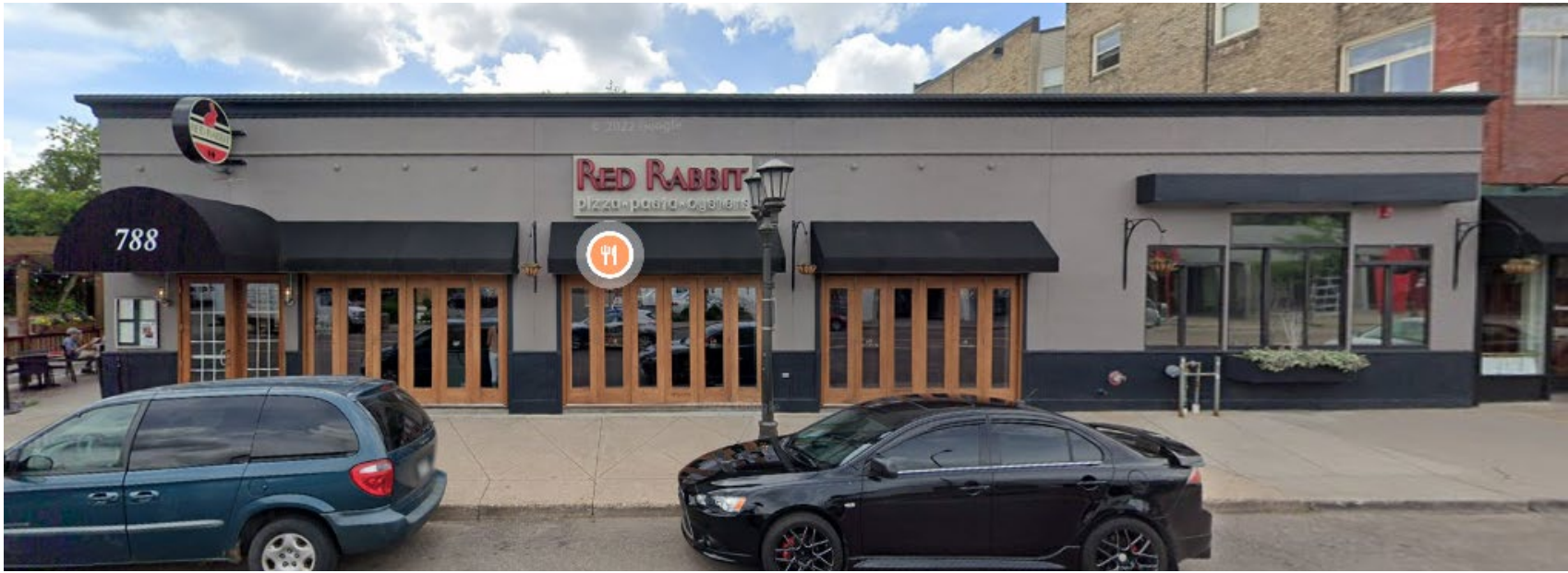
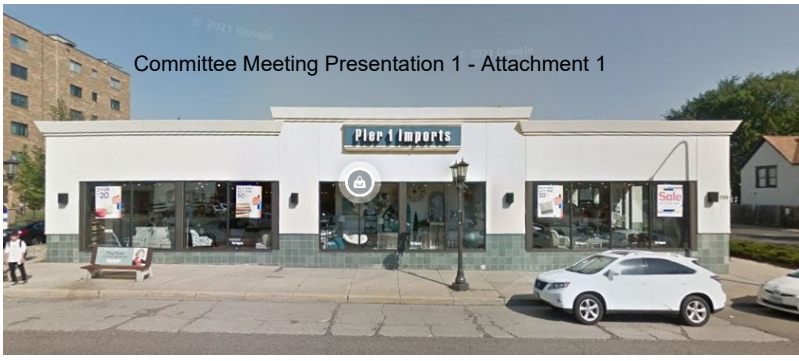


Committee Meeting Presentation 1 - Attachment 1

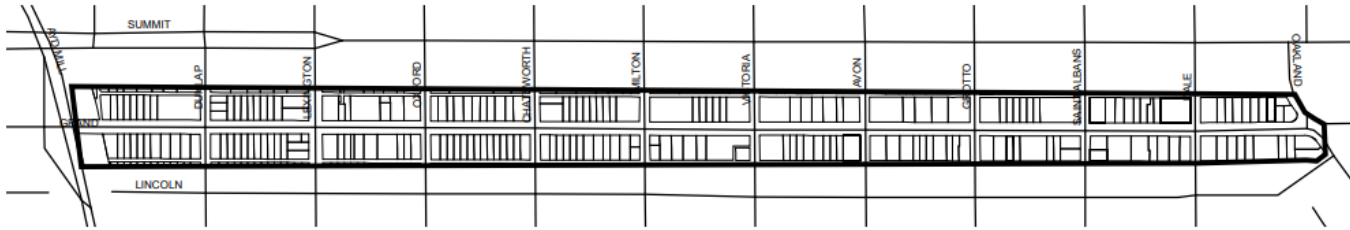












East Grand Avenue Overlay

Zoning District

Advisory Committee

January 9, 2023

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- Review where we are in the process, goals and objectives
- Zoning 101, Part II
- Discuss history and context of Grand Avenue (character, built form, frontage, etc.)
- Review ‘micro-analysis’ of the corridor by the city (if ready)
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Microscale Analysis Takeaways



Background





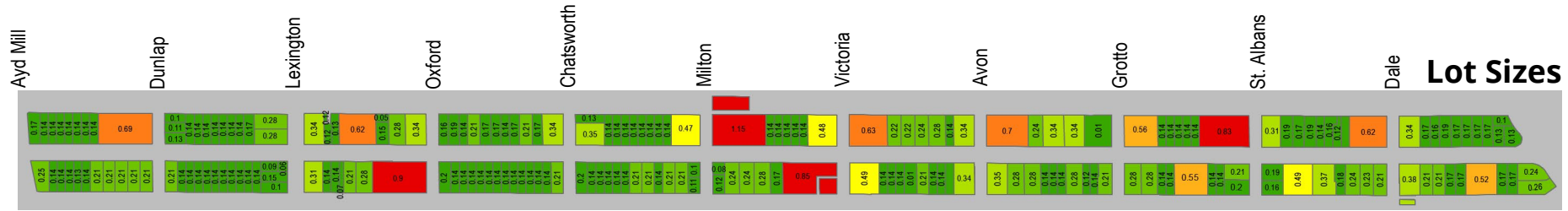
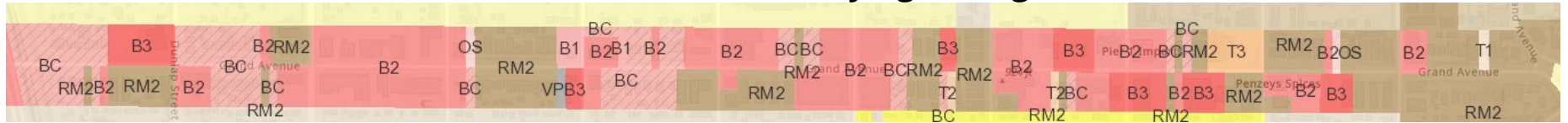
East Grand Avenue Overlay District (EGAOD)

Committee Meeting Presentation 2 - Attachment 2

East Grand Avenue Overlay District – Ayd Mill Road to Oakland Ave/Lincoln Ave



Underlying Zoning – RM2, B2, BC, B3, T2, B1, OS, T3, VP



- Less than or equal to 0.2 acres
- 0.21-0.3 acres
- 0.31-0.4 acres
- 0.41-0.5 acres
- 0.51-0.6 acres
- 0.61-0.7 acres
- 0.71 acres or greater



East Grand Avenue Overlay District (EGAOD) Standards

Committee Meeting Presentation 2 - Attachment 2

Sec. 67.602. Standards and regulations

- Max. building footprint: **25,000 sq. ft.**
- Max. total building size above ground: **75,000 sq. ft. (including parking)**
- Height limits (no additional height is allowed based on setbacks)
 - Commercial buildings: **3 stories / 30 ft.**
 - Residential/institutional buildings: **3 stories / 40 ft.**
 - Mixed use (commercial/residential): **3 stories / 36 ft.**
- Traditional Neighborhood 2 (T2) design standards apply
- Dated parking provision that should have been removed

Sec. 66.343. - Traditional neighborhood district design standards.

Guidelines	T1	T2	T3	T4
1. Land use diversity			✓	✓
2. Transitions to lower-density neighborhoods		✓	✓	✓
3. Block length		✓	✓	✓
4. Compatible rehabilitation and reuse	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Use established building facade line	✓	✓	✓	
6. Buildings anchor the corner	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Front yard landscaping	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Building facade continuity		✓	✓	✓
9. Building facade articulation - base, middle and top	✓	✓	✓	✓
10. Building height - treatment of 1-story buildings	✓	✓	✓	✓
11. Definition of residential entries	✓	✓	✓	✓
12. Entrance location	✓	✓	✓	✓
13. Door and window openings - minimum and character	✓	✓	✓	✓
14. Materials and detailing	✓	✓	✓	✓
15. Screening of equipment and service areas		✓	✓	✓
16. Interconnected street and alley network		✓	✓	✓
17. On-street parking		✓	✓	✓
18. Parking location and entrance design	✓	✓	✓	✓
19. Residential garage location	✓	✓	✓	✓
20. Parking lot lighting		✓	✓	✓
21. Entrance location for transit access	✓	✓	✓	✓
22. Street trees	✓	✓	✓	✓
23. Sidewalks	✓	✓	✓	✓



2/15/06: Adoption of Resolution 06-166 (2006 D16

Neighborhood Plan Summary and initiation of zoning study for the east Grand Avenue commercial district to consider a zoning overlay district)

- G10 Scale and Height Limits. Adopt limitations of the height and scale on new buildings on East Grand Avenue in an overlay district...
- G3 Design Standards. Adopt TN2 design standards for East Grand in an overlay district...

7/12/06: Adoption of Resolution of 06-651 (Zoning Code Sec. 67.601 Establishment; intent. and Sec. 67.602 Standards and regulations.)

- **Sec. 67.601.** Establishment; intent. The EG East Grand Avenue Overlay District is established...to **provide design standards and building height, size, and footprint limits...**
- **Sec. 67.602.** Standards and regulations. (a) Design standards. The TN2 design standards in Sec. 66.343 apply. (b) Building regulations...

Why was it established?

- Not well documented
- Moderate the pace of redevelopment
- Maintain the historic neighborhood character
- Concerns for chain/big box stores displacing local businesses
- "There was and **continues to be a strong desire to manage spillover effects in what was already an established, relatively dense streetcar corridor, to retain the neighborhood's human scale and walkability, to foster local ownership while discouraging big box chain store tenants.**" - Summit Hill Association, 2021



EGAOD and the Comprehensive Plan

Committee Meeting Presentation 2 - Attachment 2

- **LU-1.** Encourage transit-supportive density and direct the majority of growth to areas with the highest existing or planned transit capacity.
- **LU-5.** Encourage flexible building design to ensure ongoing functionality and viability, and to respond to new market opportunities.
- **LU-7.** Use land use and zoning flexibility to respond to social, economic, technological, market and environmental changes, conditions and opportunities.
- **LU-9.** Promote high-quality urban design that supports pedestrian friendliness and a healthy environment, and enhances the public realm.
- **LU-10.** Activate streetscapes with active first-floor uses, street trees, public art, outdoor commercial uses and other uses that contribute to a vibrant street life.
- **LU-27.** Provide for land use change and rezoning of land adjacent to Mixed-Use areas to allow for commercial redevelopment and/or expansion fronting arterial and collector streets.
- **LU-28.** Support pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and visual interest through commercial building design.
- **LU-29.** Ensure that building massing, height, scale and design transition to those permitted in adjoining districts.
- **H-8.** Encourage creativity in building design and site layout.
- **H-46.** Support the development of new housing, particularly in areas identified as Mixed Use, Urban Neighborhoods, and/or in areas with the highest existing or planned transit service, to meet market demand for living in walkable, transit-accessible, urban neighborhoods.
- **H-47.** Encourage high-quality urban design for residential development that is sensitive to context, but also allows for innovation and consideration of market needs.

Microscale Analysis





Microscale Analysis – What is it?

- Involves documenting existing building form, massing, and design (in person, in the field)
- Prioritizes built environment over land use
- Informs Zoning Code development standards

Address	576 Grand Ave	622 Grand Ave	769 Grand Ave	800 Grand Ave	827 Grand Ave	850 Grand Ave	867 Grand Ave
Zoning	RM2	RM2	B3	B2	RM2	B2	B2
Description	Multi-unit building	Multi-unit building	Small-scale main street building (Punch Pizza)	Medium-scale main street building (Bruegger's Bagels)	Multi-unit building	Small-scale main street building (Café Latte)	Small-scale main street building (JW Hulme)
Lot/Site							
Area (measure, sf)	7,405.20	9,147.60	14,810.40	15,246	10,454.40	21,344.40	20,908.80
Area (acre)	0.17	0.21	0.34	0.35	0.24	0.49	0.48
Width (measure, ft)	49	64.5	102.8	99.3	67.2	141	140
Width, Sidewalk (measure)	4'	13'	13'	12' Front, 5' Side	5'	13'	13'
Width, Front Walkway (measure)	6'	8'	-	-	6'	-	-
Parking Placement (describe)	Rear off alley (at least 4 space)	Rear off alley (6 spaces)	Rear and Side	-	Rear off alley (at least 4 spaces - stacking appears to also be allowed for total of 8)	-	Rear
Vehicular Access (describe)	Alley	Alley	Primary Street	Side Street	Alley	-	Side Street
Adjacent Uses/Context (describe)	Residential (SFH, Fourplex, Duplex)	Residential (Multiplexes)	Commercial, Office, Residential	Commercial, Residential	Residential, Office	Commercial, Retail, Mixed-Use (Residential), Structured Parking	Commercial, Retail, Structured Parking

Example Documentation Sheet



Microscale Analysis Documentation Sites

Committee Meeting Presentation 2 - Attachment 2

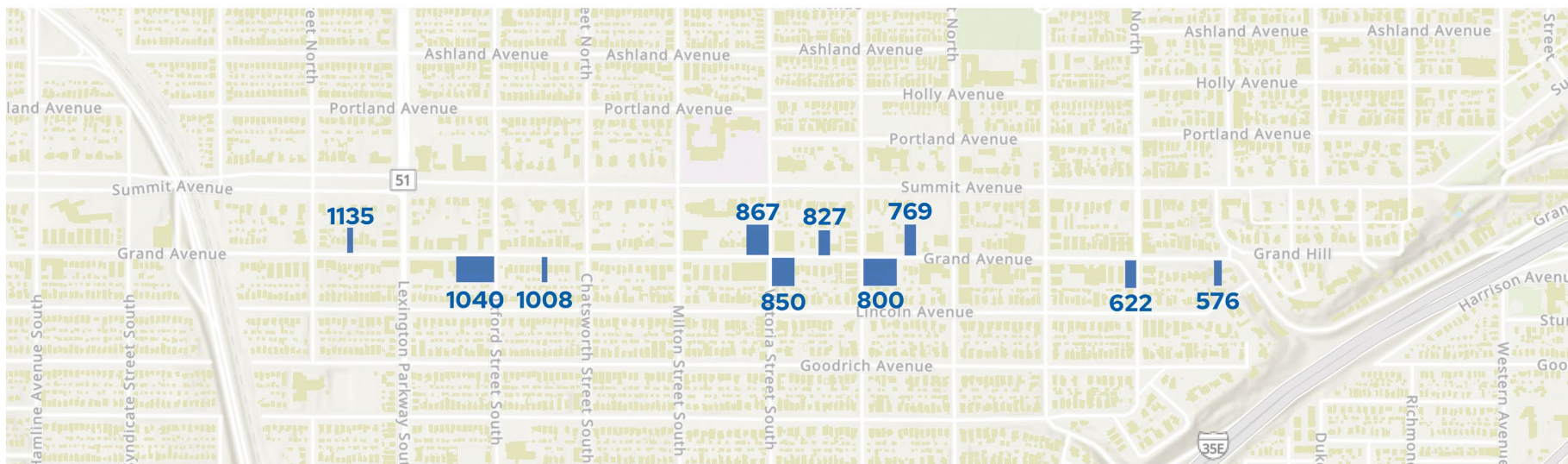
10 Sites

5 House-Scale

*(multi-unit buildings, duplexes,
residential/office conversions)*

5 Block-Scale

*(commercial/retail buildings/
vertical mixed-use buildings)*



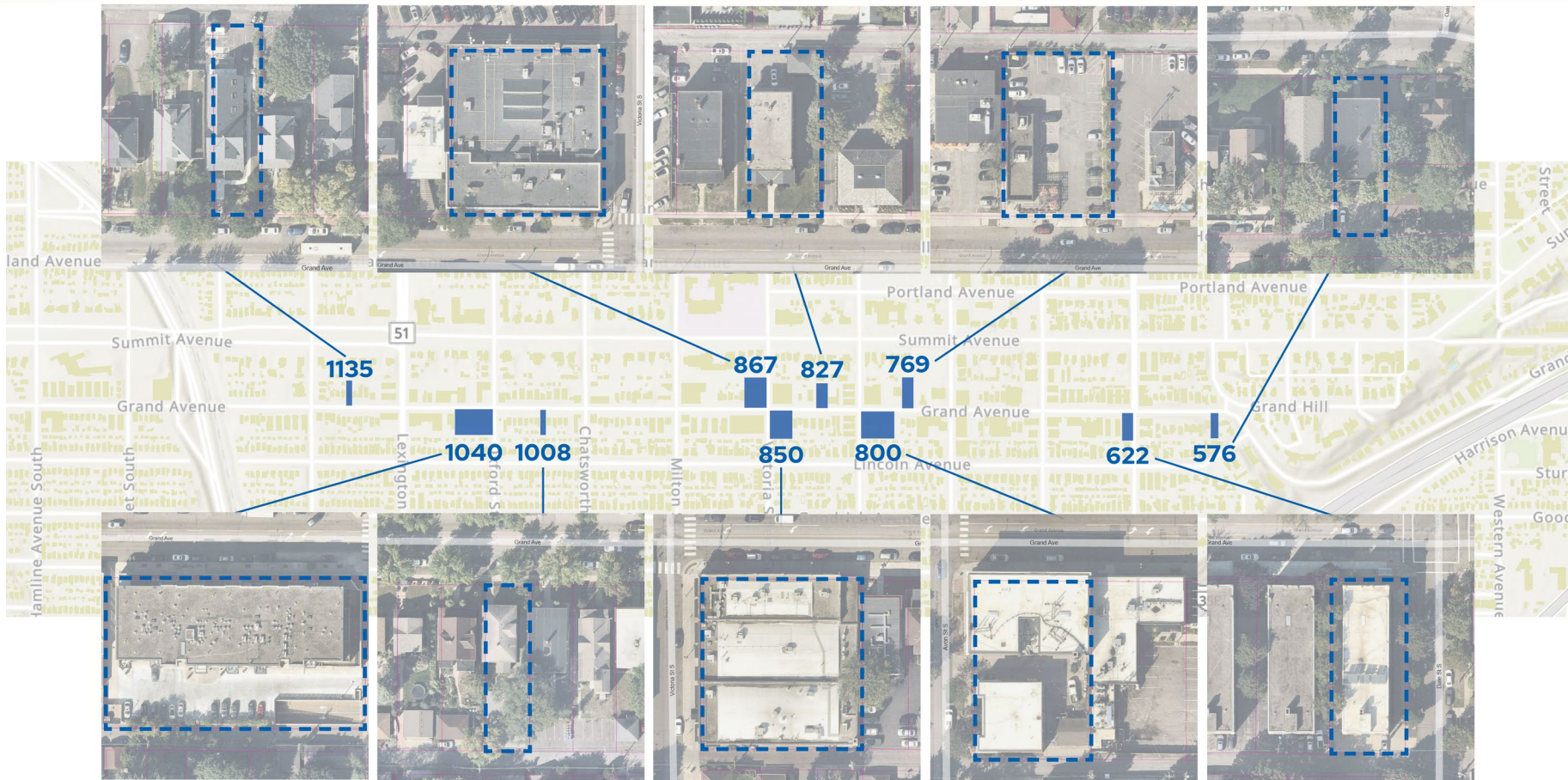
Documentation Site Map





Microscale Analysis Documentation Sites

Committee Meeting Presentation 2 - Attachment 2





Microscale Analysis Documentation Sites

Committee Meeting Presentation 2 - Attachment 2





Microscale Analysis Documentation Sites

10 Sites

5 House-Scale

(multi-unit buildings, duplexes, residential/office conversions)

5 Block-Scale

(commercial/retail buildings/vertical mixed-use buildings)

Average Lot Size

<10,000 sq. ft.

>10,000 sq. ft.

Average Bldg. Width

36 ft.

129 ft.

Average Bldg. Depth

83 ft.

107 ft.

Average Bldg. Footprint

2,988 sq. ft.

13,803 sq. ft.

Average Bldg. Height

Variable, ranged from 1-4 stories with 2.2 avg.

Average Front Setback

21 ft.

3 ft.

Transparency

40%

80%

Average Density (res.)

51 du/ac.

N/A

Parking Placement

Located predominantly in rear



Takeaways

Based on microscale analysis, EGAOD could include standards* for:

- Height
- Stepbacks
- Transparency
- Frontage types
- Building types
- Parking placement

**Note: these preliminary ideas are based solely on the microscale analysis and not necessarily representative of proposed text amendments*

Discussion

