

ZONING COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

1. **FILE NAME:** Minnesota United Soccer Stadium **FILE #:** 16-057-512
 2. **APPLICANT:** MUSC Holdings, LLC **HEARING DATE:** July 28, 2016
 3. **TYPE OF APPLICATION:** Variance (Planning Commission Review)
 4. **LOCATION:** 400 Snelling Avenue North, north side of St. Anthony between Snelling and Pascal
 5. **PIN & LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** 342923320003, Section 34 Township 29 Range 23 Subject to Highway 392 and with easements in Document 1356037, and except the north 697 38/100 feet of part south of University Avenue, the west 820 35/100 feet of part of west 1/2 of southwest 1/4 northerly of St Anthony Avenue and east of Snelling Avenue in Section 34 Township 29 Range 23
 6. **PLANNING DISTRICT:** 13 **PRESENT ZONING:** T4
 7. **ZONING CODE REFERENCE:** §61.202(b), §61.601, §66.331(d), and §66.342(b) (3)
 8. **STAFF REPORT DATE:** July 21, 2016 **BY:** Kady Dadlez
 9. **DATE RECEIVED:** July 14, 2016 **60 DAY DEADLINE FOR ACTION:** September 12, 2016
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- A. **PURPOSE:** Variance of minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for a soccer stadium (1.0 FAR required; 0.19 FAR proposed), and variance to allow surface parking on a separate lot that may not be shared with another use.
- B. **PARCEL SIZE:** The development site for the soccer stadium project is approximately 17 acres in size, including a temporary parking lot proposed west of the stadium. Site area for this development includes a vacant parcel (9.8 acres) owned by the Metropolitan Council (formerly the site of a Metro Transit "bus barn") and an additional adjacent parcel (approximately 7 acres) north and east of the Metropolitan Council parcel which is owned by RK Midway LLC (owner of the Midway Shopping Center).
- C. **EXISTING LAND USE:** The soccer stadium development site is part of the larger 34.4 acre Snelling-Midway Redevelopment Site and includes the Midway Shopping Center and the vacant "bus barn" parcel. The shopping center is a mixed commercial use and occupies the northern portion of the property. The vacant site of the former Metro Transit "bus barn" occupies most of the southern portion of the Snelling Midway site, with the exception of an approximately five-acre surface parking lot, immediately east of the Metro Transit property. This property is owned by RK Midway, the shopping center owner. The subject property is bordered by two major arterial roads, Snelling Avenue on the west and University Avenue on the north. The southern side of the area is bordered by St. Anthony Avenue, a westbound frontage road to Interstate 94. The eastern side is bordered by Pascal Street.
- D. **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**
 - North: A variety of commercial uses along University Avenue (T2 north side, T4 south side).
 - East: Big box retail uses in a T4 district.
 - South: Interstate I-94, one and two family residential uses in an RT1 district and a variety of commercial uses along Snelling Avenue in a B3 district south of I-94.
 - West: A variety of commercial uses in a T3 district along Snelling and residential uses in an RM2 district.
- E. **ZONING CODE CITATION:** Pursuant to §61.202(b) the Planning Commission may act as the Board of Zoning Appeals and grant variances from the regulations of the code related to site plan approval when considered by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission shall grant variances in accordance with the findings for variance per §61.601. §66.331(d) requires a minimum FAR of 1.0 in light rail station areas in T4 districts.

§66.342(b)(3) regulates the placement of surface parking and states that a surface parking may be located on a separate lot provided that surface parking is not permitted as the principal use of a lot unless it is shared among multiple businesses or uses.

- F. **HISTORY/DISCUSSION:** The Metropolitan Council's 10 acre "bus barn" property at the Snelling-Midway site was announced in October, 2015, as the preferred location for a new Major League Soccer stadium by the Minnesota United FC. The balance of the superblock, bounded by I-94, Snelling and University Avenues, and Pascal Street, is owned by RK Midway and contains the Midway Shopping Center and several smaller commercial buildings. RK Midway indicated its intention to work with Minnesota United FC on a master plan for redevelopment of the entire superblock. S9Architecture from New York City was hired as the master plan designer and Populous from Kansas City was hired as the stadium architecture firm. The stadium site plan is the first phase of the master plan redevelopment.
- G. **DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:** The Union Park District Council had not provided a recommendation on the variance application at the time the staff report was written.
- H. **FINDINGS:**

1. The applicant proposes to construct a 20,000 seat Major League Soccer (MLS) stadium which will be home to the Minnesota United MLS soccer team, along with streets, open spaces, and two surface parking lots. A permanent surface parking lot with about 116 spaces is proposed at the southeast corner of the project site. A temporary surface parking lot with about 220 spaces is proposed west stadium along Snelling Avenue. The stadium will have retail space associated with team merchandising. In addition to stadium food service, the stadium may include a craft brewer with taproom. The soccer stadium development site will occupy the southern half of the Snelling-Midway Redevelopment Site. This site is included in the Snelling-Midway Redevelopment Site Master Plan and will be designated T4M (Master Plan) upon approval of the master plan by the City Council.

Stadium: The applicant states that floor area ratio is not a useful measure for the stadium due to the open air nature of the structure. When calculating the floor area ratio only the enclosed area is used; the open air portion of the stadium above the soccer pitch is excluded from the calculation. The floor area ratio calculation views the stadium structure like a donut with a large hole in the center. The stadium architect calculated the floor area ratio as follows: $108,570/555,850 = 0.195$ (108,570 square feet of enclosed space on the main concourse, club, and suite levels divided by 555,850 square feet of lot area, 12.76 acres).

Parking Lot: The applicant states that the proposed surface parking lot at the southeast corner of the site will serve the stadium and the retail space associated with team merchandising. The ultimate programming for the lot is not known, other than for use during stadium events. They add that shared use of the surface lot is logical. However, their programming design is not far enough along to include other uses in the stadium that might share the use. Further, future arrangements may be made to allow uses developed in subsequent phases of the Snelling-Midway master plan redevelopment to share the parking in the surface lot.

2. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the Snelling-Midway master plan, stadium site plan, and zoning clarification amendment at its meeting on July 8, 2016 after conducting a public hearing on these items on June 10, 2016. The staff report for the stadium site plan was prepared in early June. As project plans developed, staff subsequently identified the need for variance of the minimum floor area ratio

requirement for the stadium and a variance of the Traditional Neighborhood standards regarding location of a surface parking facility associated with the stadium use. As noted, in §61.202(b) the Planning Commission may act as the Board of Zoning Appeals and grant variances. Since the variances needed were not identified and a subject of the Planning Commission public hearing on June 10, 2016, a separate public hearing for the variances is required.

3. Section §61.601 states that the Planning Commission shall have the power to grant variances from the strict enforcement of the provisions of this code upon a finding that:

- a) *The variances are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code.* This finding is met. The variances are in keeping with the general purpose and intent of the zoning code.

Stadium: The concept of floor area ratio is a way of addressing the intensity of use of property. Applying the concept of floor area ratio is not a useful measurement in the case of an open air stadium. By its nature, the stadium has limited enclosed area for calculation of floor area ratio but is nonetheless a robust structure regarding massing and intensity of use which is the desired objective of the master plan for this area.

Parking Lot: The proposed parking lot at the southeast corner of the site is the only surface lot in the master plan. It will serve the stadium and the retail space associated with team merchandising. The applicant states that it is logical for there to be shared use of the lot in the future and anticipates discussions to that end once the programming design is finalized. However, the programming design is not far enough along at this stage; hence the need for the variance at this time.

- b) *The variances are consistent with the comprehensive plan.* This finding is met. The proposed stadium and surface parking lot at the southeast corner of the site are included in the Snelling-Midway Redevelopment Site Master Plan and are consistent with the comprehensive plan, including the Snelling Station Area Plan.
- c) *The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provisions; that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provisions. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.* This finding is met. The proposed stadium development and off-street parking lot are reasonable uses of the property.

Stadium: The uniqueness of the stadium structure makes compliance impractical. The floor area ratio calculation for an open air stadium leaves out much of the area of the stadium since it is not covered, making it difficult to achieve the minimum 1.0 FAR. The minimum floor area ratio requirement in the Traditional Neighborhood district relates to achieving a traditional urban form. The proposed stadium is a unique structure with a design that presents practical difficulties in meeting the provision.

Parking Lot: The programming design for the stadium is not as far along as the structural design. The applicant believes that shared use of the surface parking lot is logical and anticipates the lot will be shared in the future. A variance is needed at this time to allow construction plans to proceed.

- d) *The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.* This finding is met. The stadium, future mixed use developments, and introduction of public streets and open space anticipated with the master plan for the area, and the uniquely large site adjacent to a freeway, present unique challenges for the redevelopment of the site that are circumstance not created by the landowner.
- e) *The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located.* This finding is met.

Stadium: The master plan for this area and the proposed zoning amendment for outdoor sports and entertainment, if approved by the City Council, permit an outdoor sports stadium on the property.

Parking Lot: A surface parking facility at this site is a permitted use in the T4 zoning district where the property is located. The requested variances will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district.

- f) *The variances will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.* This finding is met. The variances will allow the urban village envisioned in the Snelling Station Area Plan and the vision for the Snelling-Midway Redevelopment Site Master Plan to proceed.

I. **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the above findings, staff recommends approval of the variance of minimum floor area ratio for a soccer stadium (1.0 FAR required 0.19 FAR proposed), and variance to allow surface parking on a separate lot that may not be shared with another use, subject to the following additional conditions:

1. Final plans approved by the Zoning Administrator for this use shall be in substantial compliance with the plan submitted and approved as part of this application.
2. The surface parking lot at the southeast corner of the site shall become a shared use facility as programming design for the stadium is finalized and/or subsequent phases of the master plan development proceed.



APPLICATION FOR ZONING VARIANCE
 Department of Safety and Inspections
 375 Jackson Street
 Suite 220
 Saint Paul, MN 55101-1806
 General: 651-266-9008
 Fax: (651) 266-9099

Zoning office use only

File Number: 16-057572

Fee: \$

Tentative Hearing Date: 7-28-16

Section(s)

City agent 7-12-16

PD: 13

34292332008-0003

APPLICANT

Name NATE PEARSON Company TEGRA GROUP
 Address 801 NICOLLET MALL SUITE 1850
 City MINNEAPOLIS ST MN Zip 55402 Phone 612-360-6872
 Email NPEARSON@TEGRAGROUP.COM Fax
 Property Interest of Applicant (owner, contract purchaser, etc) OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE
 Name of Owner (if different) MN UNITED, NICK ROGERS Phone 612-584-8989

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Address / Location 400 N. SNELLING
 Legal Description (attach additional sheet if necessary) SEE ATTACHED
 Lot Size APPROX. 17 ACRES Present Zoning T4 Present Use VACANT + SHOPPING
WITH TEMP. PARKING CENTER
 Proposed Use MLS STADIUM

Variance[s] requested: SEE TWO VARIANCE REQUESTS BELOW. THE STADIUM IS PART OF THE MASTER PLAN AND MEETS ACHIEVEMENT

Supporting Information: Supply the necessary information that is applicable to your variance request, provide details regarding the project, and explain why a variance is needed. Duplex/triplex conversions may require a pro forma to be submitted. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

1. SEC 66.331(a) FAR (FLOOR AREA RATIO)
 THE NEW STADIUM IN ITS DESIGN AND INTENT IS OPEN AIR WITH LIMITED ENCLOSURE, MAKING THE FAR CALCULATION NOT A USEFUL MEASUREMENT.
2. SEC 66.342(b)(3) PLACEMENT OF PARKING
 VARIANCE REQUEST FOR ADJACENT PARKING LOT AND ITS LOCATION WITHIN 300' OF STADIUM. LOGICAL FOR A SHARED USE AND WOULD ANTICIPATE NEW DISCUSSIONS RESURFACING, NEGATING THE VARIANCE. NEED TO FINALIZE OUR PROGRAMMING DESIGN.

Attachments as required:

☒ Site Plan

☒ Attachments

☒ Pro Forma

Applicant's Signature

Date

7-12-16

4/4/2016 4:27:42 PM

PROPOSED SITE



RK MIDWAY



S9ARCHITECTURE

POPULOUS

MIDWAY, ST. PAUL, MN
APRIL 18, 2016
(REVISED MAY 24, 2016)
22

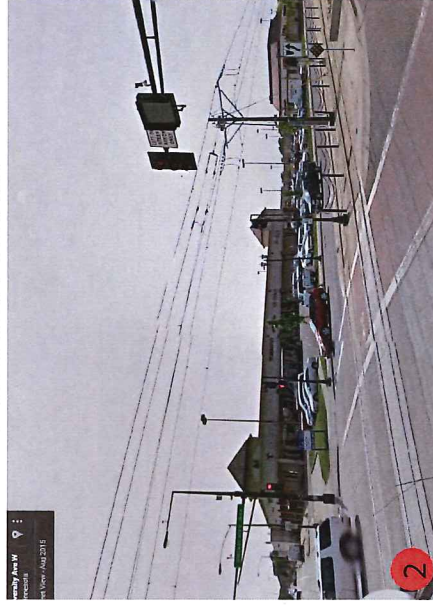
THIS CONCEPTUAL STUDY IS FOR PLANNING PURPOSE ONLY. SITE SPECIFIC INFORMATION SUCH AS SURVEY, EXISTING CONDITIONS, ZONING REQUIREMENTS MUST BE VERIFIED.

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

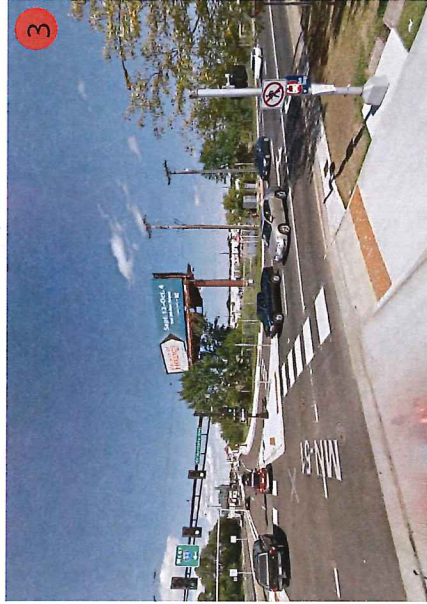
NORTHWEST CORNER



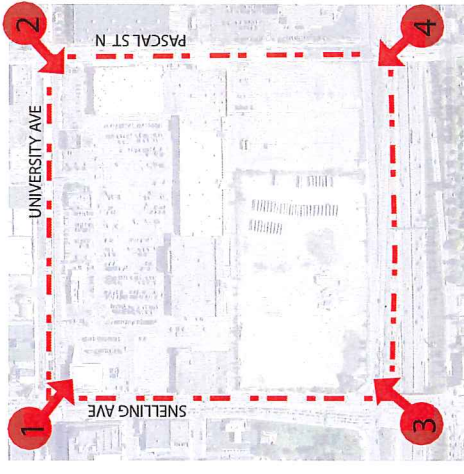
NORTHEAST CORNER



SOUTHWEST CORNER



SOUTHEAST CORNER



EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

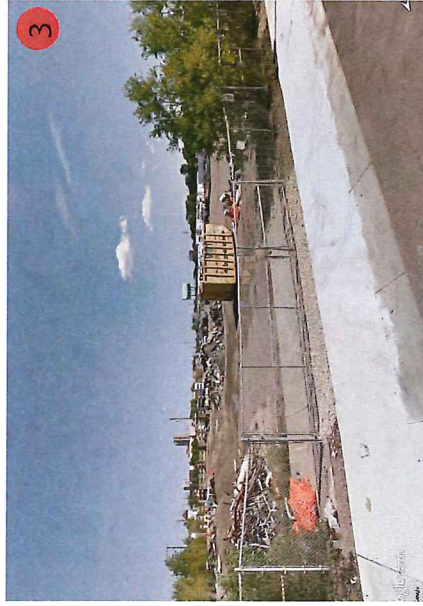
UNIVERSITY AVENUE



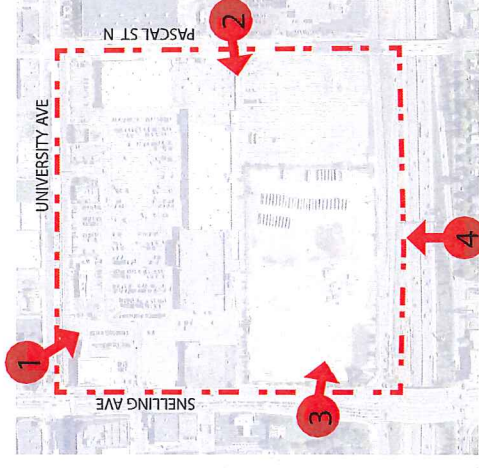
PASCAL STREET



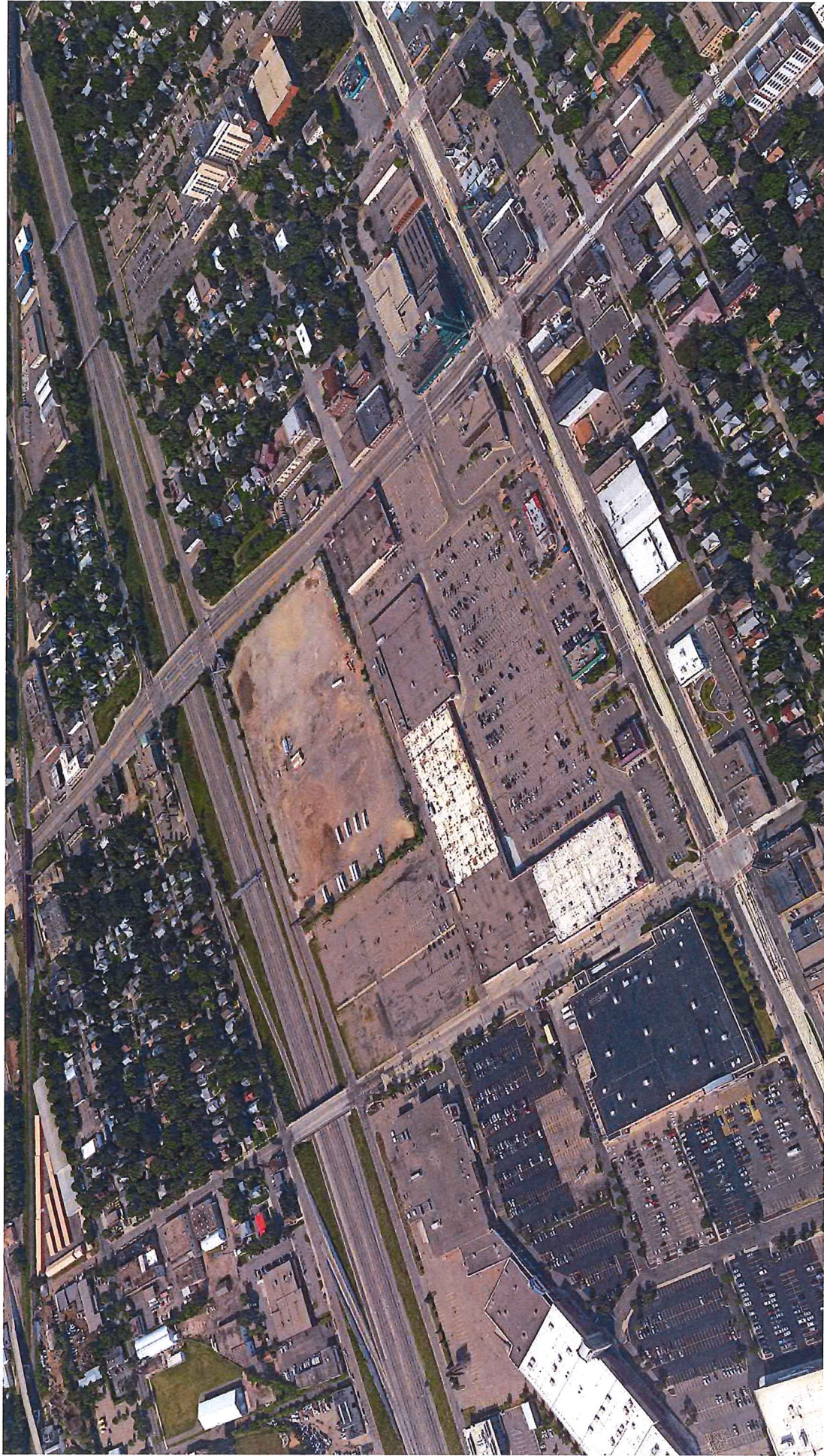
SNELLING AVENUE



I-94



CURRENT SITE



RK MIDWAY

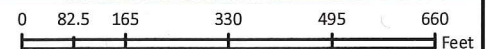
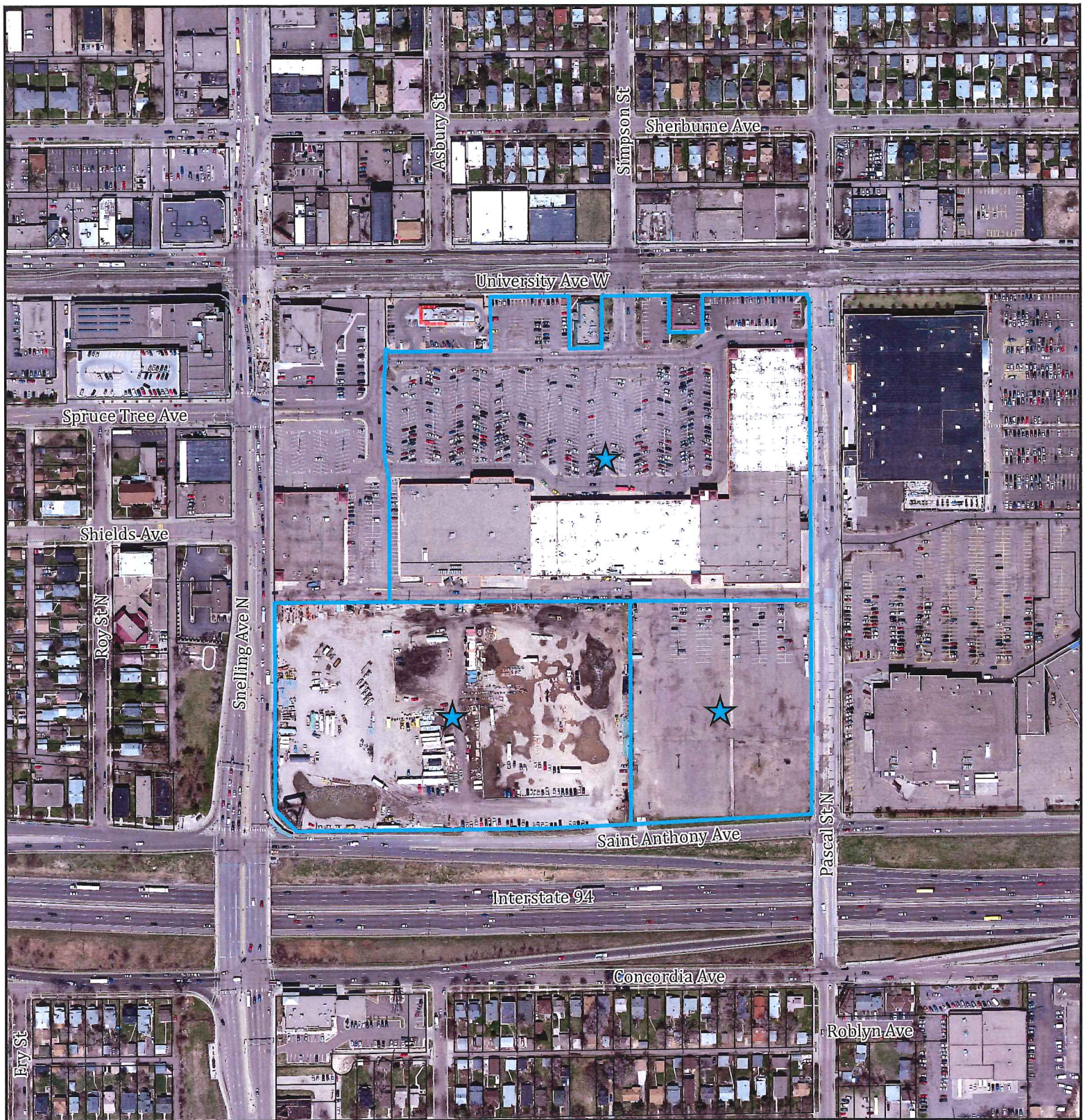


S9ARCHITECTURE

POPULOUS

MIDWAY ST. PAUL, MN
APRIL 18, 2016
(REVISED MAY 24, 2016)

THIS CONCEPTUAL STUDY IS FOR PLANNING PURPOSE ONLY. SITE SPECIFIC INFORMATION SUCH AS SURVEY, EXISTING CONDITIONS, ZONING REQUIREMENTS MUST BE VERIFIED.



FILE NAME: MLS Stadium 2

Aerial

Subject Parcels

APPLICATION TYPE: PC-Variance

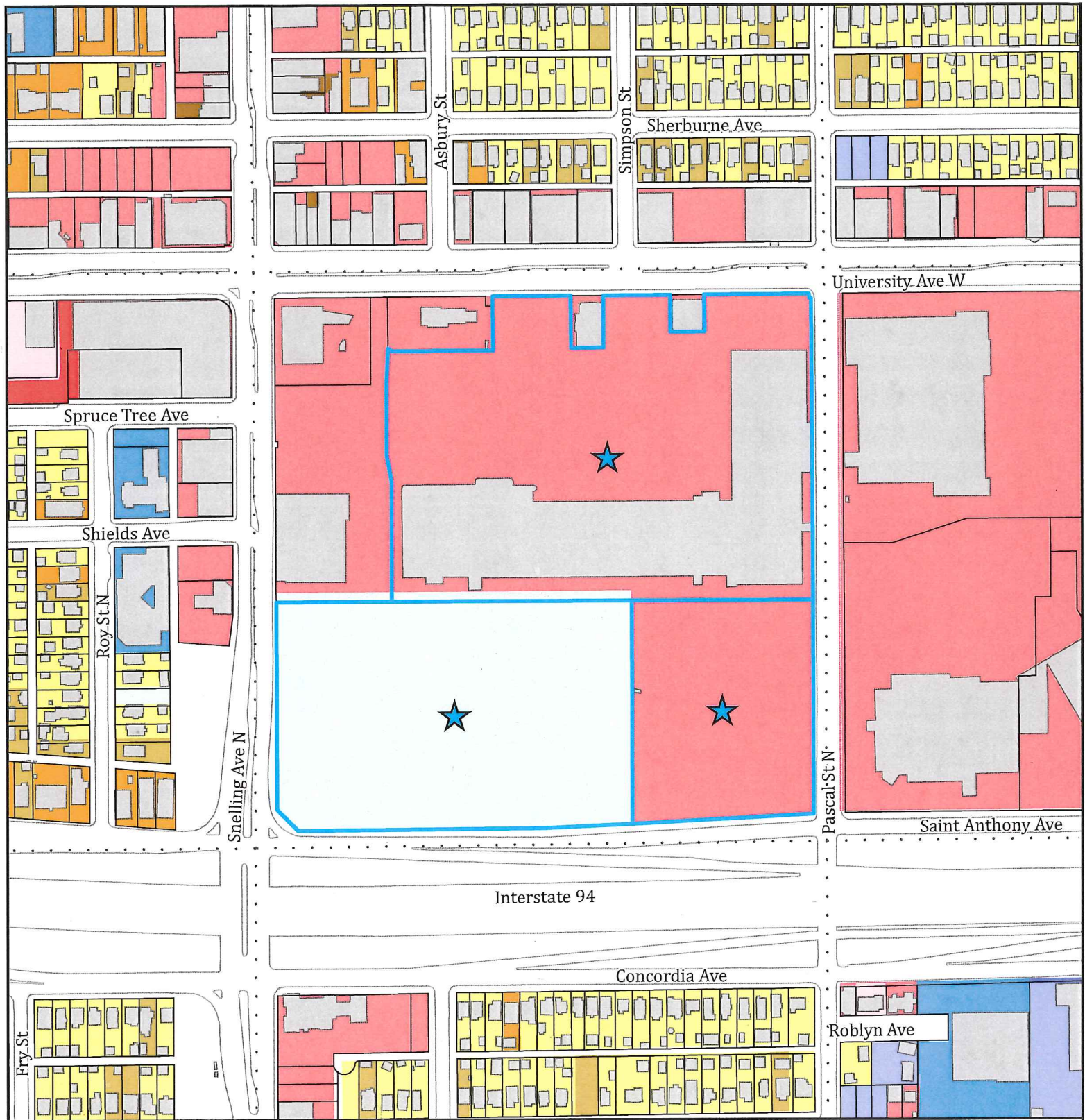
FILE #: 16-057512 DATE: 7/14/2016

PLANNING DISTRICT: 13

ZONING PANEL: 14

Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development and Ramsey County





FILE NAME: MLS Stadium 2

APPLICATION TYPE: PC-Variance

FILE #: 16-057512 DATE: 7/14/2016

PLANNING DISTRICT: 13

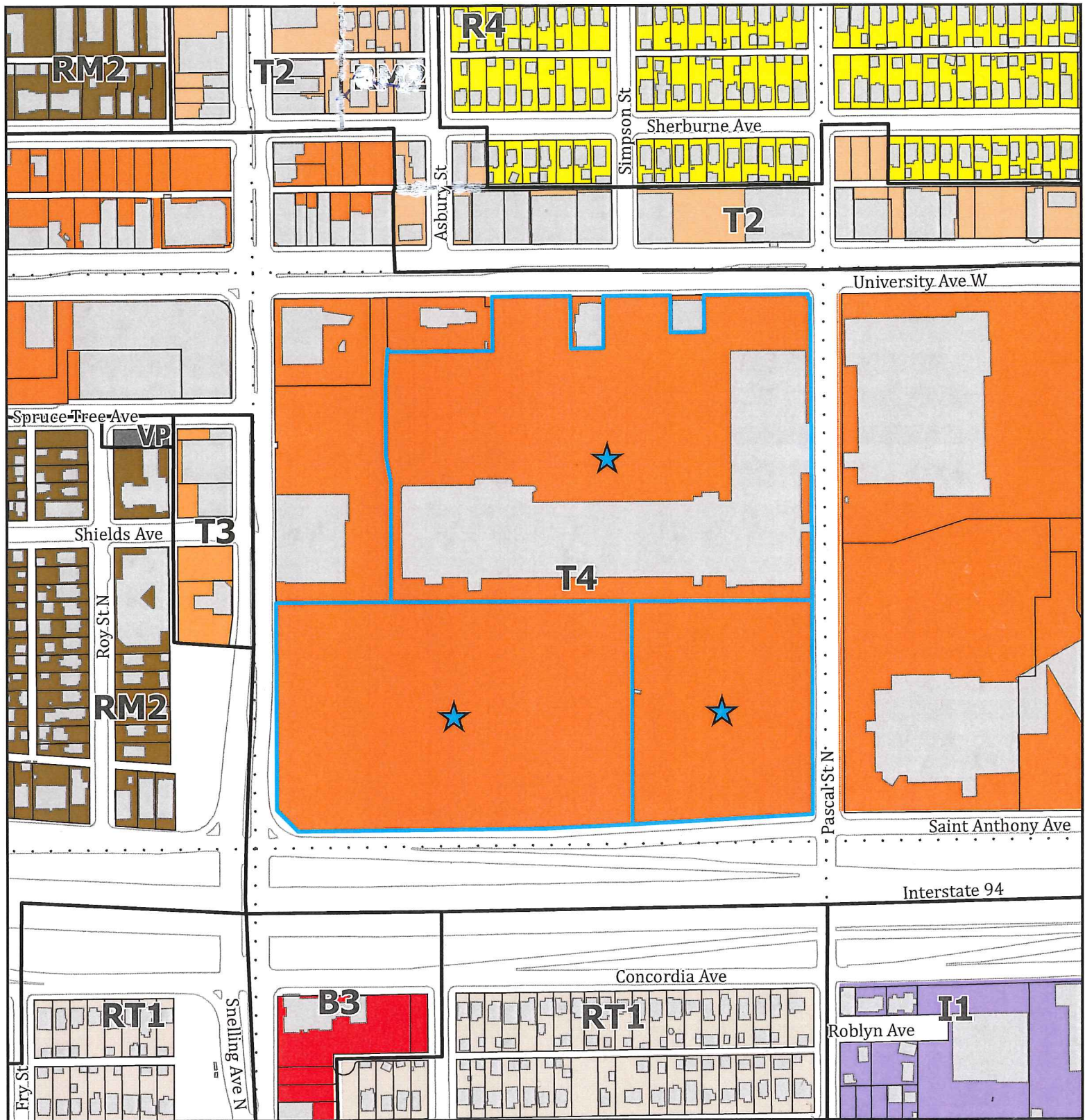
ZONING PANEL: 14

Land Use

- Single Family Detached
- Single Family Attached
- Multifamily
- Office
- Retail and Other Commercial
- Mixed Use Residential
- Mixed Use Industrial

- Mixed Use Commercial and Other
- Industrial and Utility
- Institutional
- Undeveloped
- Subject Parcels
- Section Lines





FILE NAME: MLS Stadium 2

APPLICATION TYPE: PC-Variance

FILE #: 16-057512 DATE: 7/14/2016

PLANNING DISTRICT: 13

ZONING PANEL: 14

Zoning

Subject Parcels

· · · Section Lines

R4 One-Family

RT1 Two-Family

RM2 Multiple-Family

T2 Traditional Neighborhood

T3 Traditional Neighborhood

T4 Traditional Neighborhood

B3 General Business

I1 Light Industrial

VP Vehicular Parking

