

ZONING COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

1. **FILE NAME:** Scheffer Recreation Center **FILE #:** 17-221-608
 2. **APPLICANT:** City of St. Paul Parks and Recreation **HEARING DATE:** January 4, 2018
 3. **TYPE OF APPLICATION:** Conditional Use Permit with Modification & Variance
 4. **LOCATION:** 230 Como Avenue (237 Thomas Ave), SE corner at Galtier St.
 5. **PIN & LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** 362923110053, Dawsons Subdivision of Block 3 Subj to Rd; Vac St Accruing & Fol. Part of Ne 1/4 of Sec 36 Tn 29 Rn 23 S of Lot 3 Blk 29 Lafonds Add, N of Nl of Thomas Ave E of El of Galtier St & W of Wl of widened Marion St. also Lot 3 Blk 29 Lafonds Add & Lots 1 through 13
 6. **PLANNING DISTRICT:** 7 **PRESENT ZONING:** RT2
 7. **ZONING CODE REFERENCE:** § 65.235, §§ 61.501; 61.502; 61.601; 61.202(b)
 8. **STAFF REPORT DATE:** December 28, 2017 **BY:** Jamie Radel
 9. **DATE RECEIVED:** December 13, 2017 **60 DAY DEADLINE FOR ACTION:** February 11, 2018
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- A. **PURPOSE:** Conditional use permit for replacement and expansion of the recreation center building with a modification to the condition for access from a thoroughfare, with variances of required parking spaces (22 required, 20 proposed) and front setback (25 ft. required, 18 ft. proposed).
- B. **PARCEL SIZE:** 148,539 sq. ft. (3.3 acres)
- C. **EXISTING LAND USE:** Parks/Rec. Facility
- D. **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**
 - North: Commercial and industrial
 - East: Commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential
 - South: Multifamily residential
 - West: Mix of multifamily and single-family residential
- E. **ZONING CODE CITATION:** §65.235 lists specific standards and conditions for noncommercial recreation uses; §61.502 allows for modifications of specials conditions; §61.501 lists general requirements for all conditional uses; §61.202(b) authorizes the planning commission to grant variances when related to permits; and 61.601 lists required findings for variances.
- F. **PARKING:** Zoning Code § 63.207 requires a minimum of 24 vehicle parking spaces for this use (23,551-square-foot noncommercial recreation use; parking standard of one vehicular space 1,000 square foot of gross floor area). Under §63.210(b), up to ten percent of required vehicle parking may be substituted for bicycle parking provided that the use installs secure bicycle parking. For every four bicycle spaces installed, one required vehicle park space may be eliminated. There will be 20 secure bike parking spaces, thus a required number of vehicle parking spaces is reduced to 22.
- G. **HISTORY/DISCUSSION:** This site has been used as a park space since at least 1921, and the existing Scheffer Recreation Center was built in the 1970s. This parcel has been zoned RT2 townhouse residential district since 1975.
- H. **DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:** District 7 has not provided a letter at the writing of this report.
- I. **FINDINGS:**
 1. The Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation is requesting a conditional use permit for a noncommercial recreation use at 230 Como Avenue (237 Thomas Avenue) in order to construct a new 23,551-square-foot recreation center to replace the aging facility currently located at this site. This is expected to be a two-phased project with the new community center being built

during the initial phase and the demolition of the existing structure and improvement to the outdoor areas will take place in the second phase. This phasing allows for continuity of services at this site while construction is taking place. As currently designed, the site will include a new building located parallel to Como Avenue with a driveway and parking lot off Galtier Street, directly across from LaFond Avenue. A playground and sports fields will fill the remainder of the site.

2. §65.235 list standards that noncommercial recreation uses must satisfy:

(a) *The proposed site for any of the uses permitted here in shall have at least one (1) property line abutting a major thoroughfare (in definition), and the site shall be so planned as to provide principal access directly to said major thoroughfare:* This condition is not met. While this site abuts Como Avenue and Marion Street, both B-Minor arterials, primary driveway access is from Galtier Street. The applicant has requested a modification of a special condition under §61.502.

(i) *Section 61.502 states: "The planning commission, after a public hearing, may modify any or all special conditions, when strict application of such special conditions would unreasonably limit or prevent otherwise lawful use of a piece of property or an existing structure and would result in exceptional undue hardship to the owner of such property or structure; provided, that such modification will not impair the intent and purpose of such special condition and is consistent with the healthy, morals and general welfare of the community and is consistent with reasonable enjoyment of adjacent property.* Allowing for the modification of §65.235(a) as its strict application would unreasonably limit otherwise lawful use of this property, and its modification does not impair the intent and purpose of the condition. Ramsey County does not support the addition of a cut for driveway access from either Como Avenue or Marion Street as there is access to the site from a local street. This requested modification does not impair the intent and purpose of this requirement as the site is in close proximity to the county road network.

(b) *All yards shall be landscaped in trees, shrubs and grass. All such landscaping shall be maintained in a healthy condition. There shall be no parking or structures permitted in these minimum yards, except required entrance drives and those walls used to obscure the use from abutting residential districts:* This condition is met subject to completion of the second phase of this project, which includes landscaping and park improvements. The Parks and Recreation Department's plan includes constructing a new playground, a football/soccer field, and other sports area with sidewalks for site circulation. The plan shows trees plantings and grass areas being replaced. Parking is not located in the minimum yard setback areas.

(c) *Whenever a swimming pool is constructed under this subparagraph, said pool area shall be provided with a protective fence six (6) feet in height, and entry shall be provided by means of a controlled gate:* This finding is met as it is not applicable to this project. As planned, this facility does not include a swimming pool.

3. §61.501 lists five standards that all conditional uses must satisfy:

(a) *The extent, location and intensity of the use will be in substantial compliance with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and any applicable subarea plans which were approved by the city council.* This condition is met. The future land use map guides this area as Mixed Use Corridor and Established Neighborhood. A community center is an appropriate use in both of those land use categories. In addition, the Park's Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan speaks to improvements to recreation centers. Policy 5.4 states "Renovate and upgraded low- and moderate-quality existing facilities that fall outside the service areas of high-quality

facilities of the same type.” The Thomas-Dale District 7 Planning Council Area Plan supports “providing recreation opportunities that reflect the diversity of cultures, ages, and resources” and requests that sports such as soccer be accommodated at facilities within the district.

- (b) *The use will provide adequate ingress and egress to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.* This condition is met. This project has its driveway access off of Galtier Street. This will prevent possible stacking of cars on Como Avenue, which is a busy arterial street with a diagonal configuration with two cross streets on the east and west boundaries of this site.
 - (c) *The use will not be detrimental to the existing character of the development in the immediate neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety and general welfare.* This condition is met. The development of a new community center to replace the existing recreation center and will not be detrimental the existing character in the immediate area or endanger the public health, safety and general welfare.
 - (d) *The use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.* This is a built-out area of the City. The replacement of the existing recreation center building with the new community center building will not impeded the normal and orderly development of surrounding properties.
 - (e) *The use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located.* This condition is met subject to variances of the minimum parking and front yard setback requirement.
5. 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 plan for this site works within the constraints of the site, including its irregular shape, to develop onsite parking and provide a reasonable front yard setback while balancing the need to maximize a variety of activities on limited park land.
 - (b) *The variances are consistent with the comprehensive plan.* This finding is met. The Parks Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan supports maximizing uses within existing park space. A nine percent reduction in the parking for this facility and a 28 percent reduction in front yard setback will not negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood. This area is well served by transit, and it is expected that many patrons will be from within walking distance or be taking transit to this community center.
 - (c) *The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with these provisions; that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.* This finding is met. Due to the irregular shape of this site and the location of Lafond Avenue, there is practical difficulty in design a site that allowed for the placement of the building in a way that could accommodate the desired recreation mix. Thomas-Dale District 7 Planning Council Area Plan supported the development of soccer facilities at this site. To achieve the desired community outcome for this enhanced facility, football/soccer field must be located in the southwest corner of the site to have sufficient space to meet the dimensional requirements of this facility. To minimize the parking variance, the building needed to encroach into the required front yard setback.
 - (d) *The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.* This finding is met. Due to the shape of the site and appropriate location of a drive way (across from Lafond Avenue), the creation of of two additional parking spaces would require a significant reduction in the amount of land available for park programming. The front yard setback issues are created due to attempting to minimize the parking

variance.

(e) *The variances will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located.* This finding is met. This use is a conditional use in the RT2 zoning district.

(f) *The variances will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.* This finding is met. The facility is providing new onsite parking that is not available with the existing building, and will be establishing new block face on Como Avenue that will improve the visual impact on existing development.

J. **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the above findings, staff recommends approval of the conditional use permit for replacement and expansion of the recreation center building with a modification to the condition for access from a thoroughfare, with variances of required parking spaces (22 required, 20 proposed) and front setback (25 ft. required, 18 ft. proposed) subject to the following additional condition:

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.



CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION

Department of Planning and Economic Development
Zoning Section
1400 City Hall Annex
25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102-1634
(651) 266-6589

Zoning office use only
File # 17-221608
Fee 1470.00
Permit Hearing Date 1-4-18

PD = 7

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APPLICANT

Name Chris Stark
Address 400 City Hall Annex, 25 West Fourth Street
City Saint Paul St. MN Zip 55102 Daytime Phone 651-266-6419
Name of Owner (if different) City of St. Paul, Department of Parks & Recreation
Contact Person (if different) _____ Phone _____

PROPERTY LOCATION

Address / Location 230 Como Ave, St. Paul, MN 55103 (future); 237 Thomas Ave. (current)
Legal Description Block 20, Dawson's Third Addition
Current Zoning RT2
(attach additional sheet if necessary)

TYPE OF PERMIT: Application is hereby made for a Conditional Use Permit under provisions of
Chapter 66, Section 221, Paragraph _____ of the Zoning Code.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Explain how the use will meet all of the applicable standards and conditions. If you are requesting modification of any special conditions or standards for a conditional use, explain why the modification is needed and how it meets the requirements for modification of special conditions in Section 61.502 of the Zoning Code. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

The City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department is applying for a Conditional Use Permit for the construction of a new Scheffer Recreation Center to replace the existing facility on the same property. Despite its high use by the community, the current building is old, undersized, and the lowest rated recreation center in the City of St. Paul Parks and Recreation Systems Plan. Improving the City's recreation centers and increasing their social and physical offerings is part of the comprehensive plan and a priority goal of this project. The new facility will be built along Como Avenue, a major thoroughfare for the neighborhood in an RT2 district across from an I1 zoning district. Two variances are requested as described on the following page.

Required site plan is attached

Applicant's Signature [Signature] Date 12/11/17 City Agent pdd
12/11/17



APPLICATION FOR ZONING VARIANCE

Department of Planning and Economic Development
Zoning Section
1400 City Hall Annex
25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102-1634
(651) 266-6589

Zoning office use only

File number: _____
Fee: \$ 300,00
Tentative hearing date: _____
Section(s): _____
City agent _____

APPLICANT

Name CHRIS STARK Company PARKS & RECREATION
Address 25 W. 4th ST. SUITE 400
City ST. PAUL State MN Zip 55402 Daytime Phone 651-266-6419
Property interest of applicant (owner, contract purchaser, etc.) OWNER, PROJECT MANAGER
Name of owner (if different) _____

PROPERTY

Address/Location _____
Legal description _____
(attach additional sheet if necessary)
Lot size _____ Present Zoning _____ Present Use _____
Proposed Use _____

Variance[s] requested:

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

SEE ATTACHED.

Attachments as required: Site Plan Attachments Pro Forma

Applicant's signature [Signature] Date 12/13/17



DESIGN FOR LIFE
 230 COMO AVE ST PAUL, MN 55108
 TEL: 612.222.1234
 FAX: 612.222.1235
 www.jlgarchitects.com



PRELIMINARY
 NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE

JLG ARCHITECTS
 230 COMO AVE ST PAUL, MN 55108

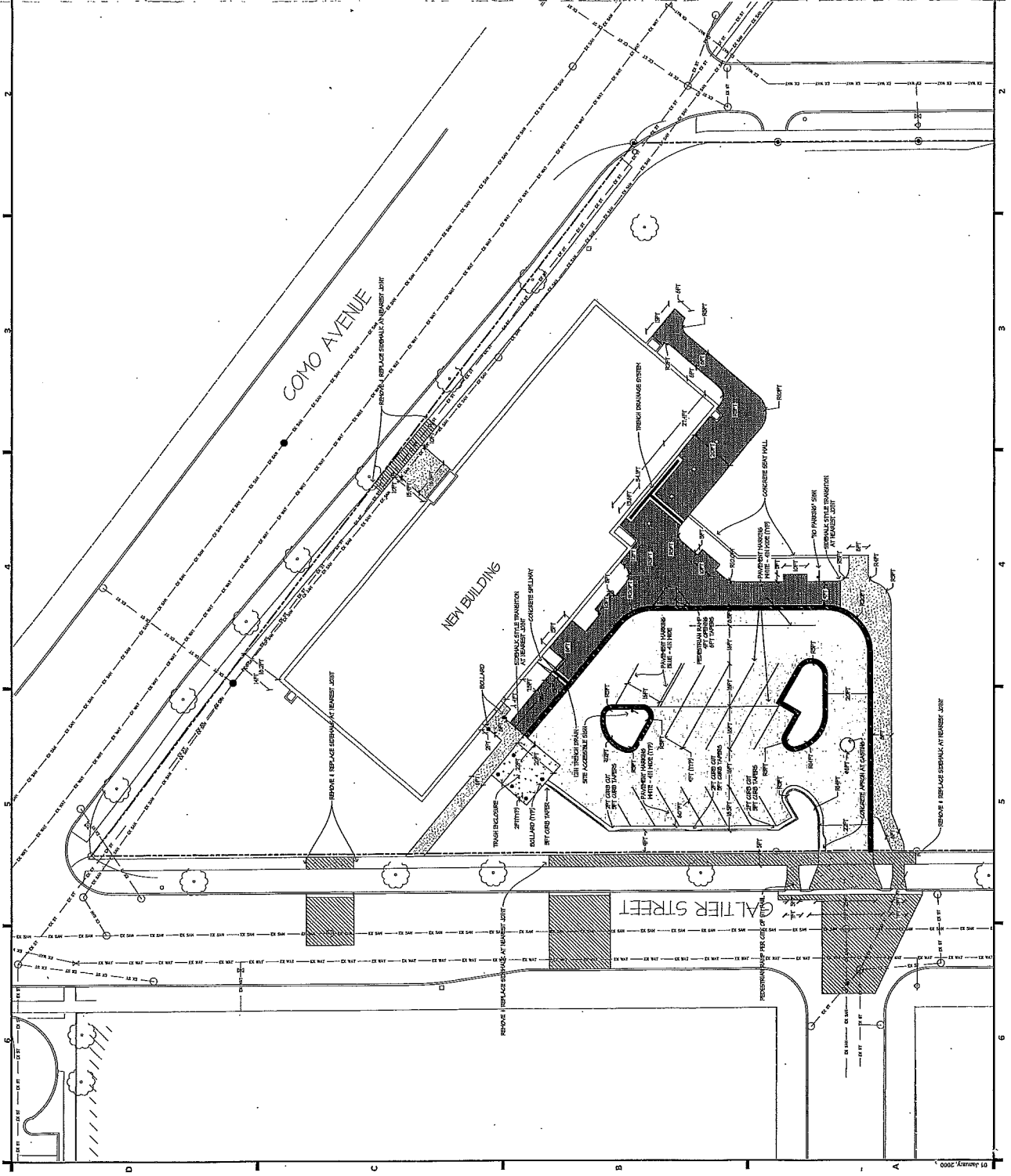
DATE: 7/14/17
 PROJECT: SCHEFFER COMMUNITY CENTER
 CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS
 SHEET: 168.47

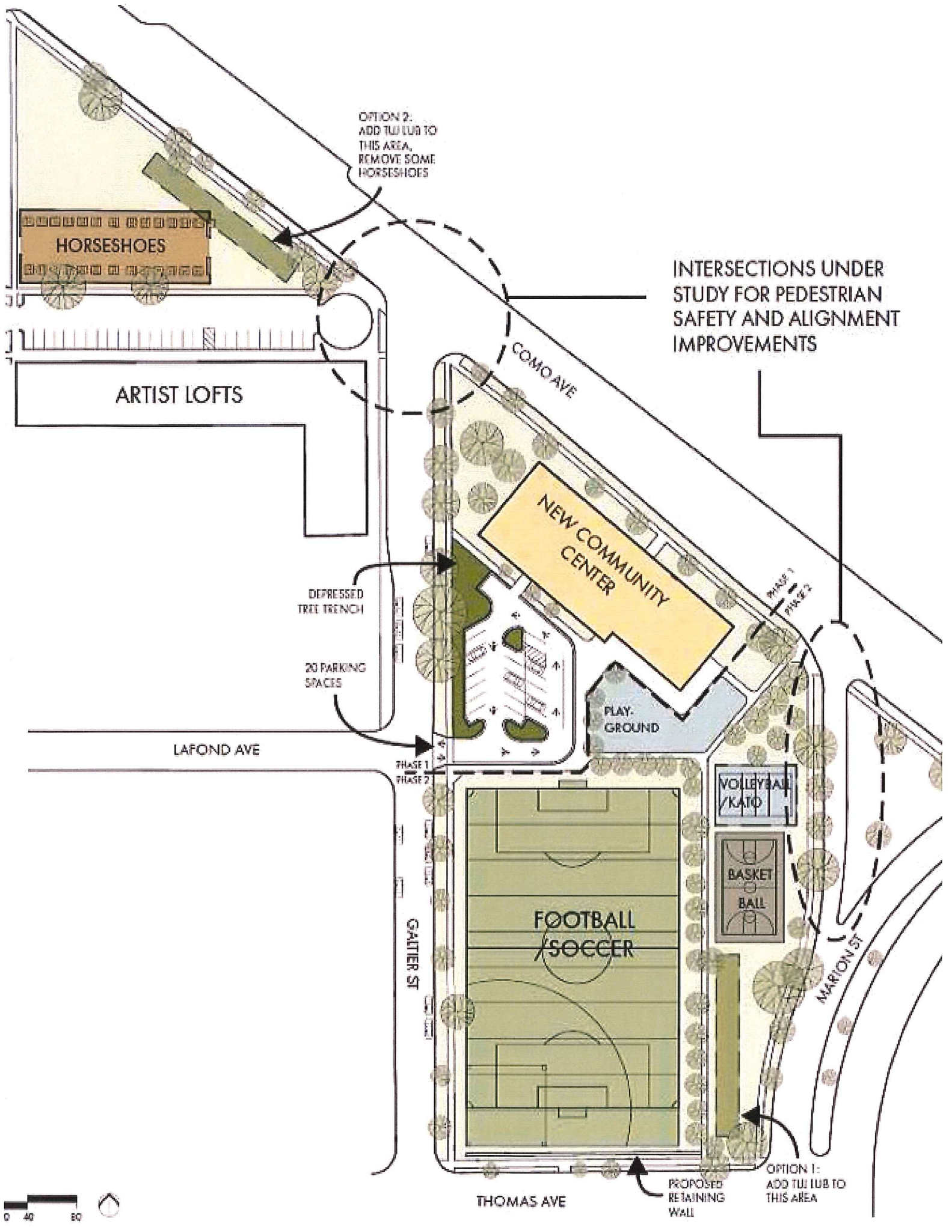
C101
 SITE PLAN

- LEGEND:**
- ASPHALT PAVEMENT - BASE BID
 - CONCRETE PAVEMENT - ALTERNATE BID
 - ASPHALT PAVEMENT - CITY OF ST. PAUL SPECIFICATIONS
 - CONCRETE PAVEMENT - CITY OF ST. PAUL SPECIFICATIONS
 - CONCRETE SIDEWALK - CITY OF ST. PAUL SPECIFICATIONS
 - CONCRETE PAVEMENT
 - CONCRETE SIDEWALK
 - CONCRETE SIDEWALK - PRESERVATIVE
 - CONCRETE CURB AND GUTTER - IN-SLURRY
 - CONCRETE CURB AND GUTTER-OUTLEIGH
 - TRENCH DRAIN
 - SITE SIGNS
 - BULLDOZ

PLAN NOTES:

1. ALL NEW CONSTRUCTION SHALL BE PER THE LATEST EDITIONS OF THE STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR ROAD AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION, AS APPLICABLE TO THIS PROJECT.
2. CONCRETE PAVEMENT PER DETAIL W0202.
3. CONCRETE SIDEWALK PER DETAIL W0202.
4. PATTERNOED CONCRETE SIDEWALK PER DETAIL W0202.
5. PREPARED JOINTS IN CONCRETE SHALL BE PER DETAIL W0202.
6. SEE ACCESSIBLE PATH PER DETAIL W0202.
7. PREPARED JOINTS PER DETAIL W0202.
8. CONCRETE CURB & GUTTER PER DETAIL W0202.
9. CURB TAPER PER DETAIL W0202.
10. CONCRETE APPROX AT CURB PER DETAIL W0202.
11. TRENCH DRAINAGE SYSTEM PER DETAIL W0202.
12. BULLDOZ PER DETAIL W0202.
13. CONCRETE SPILLWAY PER DETAIL W0202.





OPTION 2:
ADD TUJ / IUB TO
THIS AREA,
REMOVE SOME
HORSESHOES

INTERSECTIONS UNDER
STUDY FOR PEDESTRIAN
SAFETY AND ALIGNMENT
IMPROVEMENTS

HORSESHOES

ARTIST LOFTS

COMO AVE

NEW COMMUNITY
CENTER

DEPRESSED
TREE TRENCH

20 PARKING
SPACES

PLAY-
GROUND

LAFOND AVE

PHASE 1
PHASE 2

PHASE 1
PHASE 2

GALTER ST

FOOTBALL
/ SOCCER

VOLLEYBALL
/ KATO

BASKET
BALL

MARLON ST

THOMAS AVE

PROPOSED
RETAINING
WALL

OPTION 1:
ADD TUJ / IUB TO
THIS AREA



Scheffer Recreation Center Conditional Use Permit Application, Variance Requests

Parking Variance

There is no off-street parking at Scheffer Recreation Center currently; however, this project includes a new off-street parking lot of 20 stalls. Zoning code 63.207 requires 1 parking stall for every 1,000 square feet of area for a community center, which equates to 24 parking stalls for a project of this size. A parking count reduction is allowed by zoning code 63.210(b) which notes that bicycle parking may be substituted for up to 10% of off-street parking. The new facility is 23,551 sf and ten bicycle parking stalls will be provided. This reduces the required off street parking count to 22 stalls from 24. As a result, a variance of 2 stalls is requested, from 22 off-street stalls required to 20 off-street stalls provided. The variance is necessary due to the size and shape of the site, if more parking stalls were provided it would reduce the size of the football/soccer playing field beyond the minimum required for youth sports. Youth football and soccer are among the primary activities at Scheffer. In addition, there is space for 22 cars parallel parked on Galtier St., adjacent to the property, and 11 additional off-street parking stalls at the Como Avenue Horseshoe Courts park across the street.

Setback Variance

At this location Como Avenue has a required setback distance of 25 feet from the property line. To maximize the site functions of the park, including providing a youth football/soccer field and off-street parking, this project has a setback of 18 feet and requests a variance of 7 feet. The 18-foot setback provides the clearance needed from the existing sanitary sewer lines that run parallel to Como Ave. If a 25-foot setback were provided, the football/soccer field would not meet the dimensions needed for youth games and the site would be unable to continue as a host for these youth sports. The width of the building is dictated by the dimensions of the basketball court in the gymnasium inside. In addition, the 18' setback provides a comfortable pedestrian experience and maintains the visibility of the building. The industrial buildings across from the park in the I1 district have almost no setback along Como Avenue.

Dubruiel, Paul (CI-StPaul)

From: Stark, Christopher (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 10:04 AM
To: Dubruiel, Paul (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Scheffer Variance Requests

Hi Paul, Here are some comments regarding the variance requests for the Scheffer Community Center that we talked about yesterday. Some responses are very similar for each variance since they are both balancing the constraints of the shape of the property and the programming at the park and recreation center. Please let me know if you have any questions.

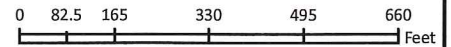
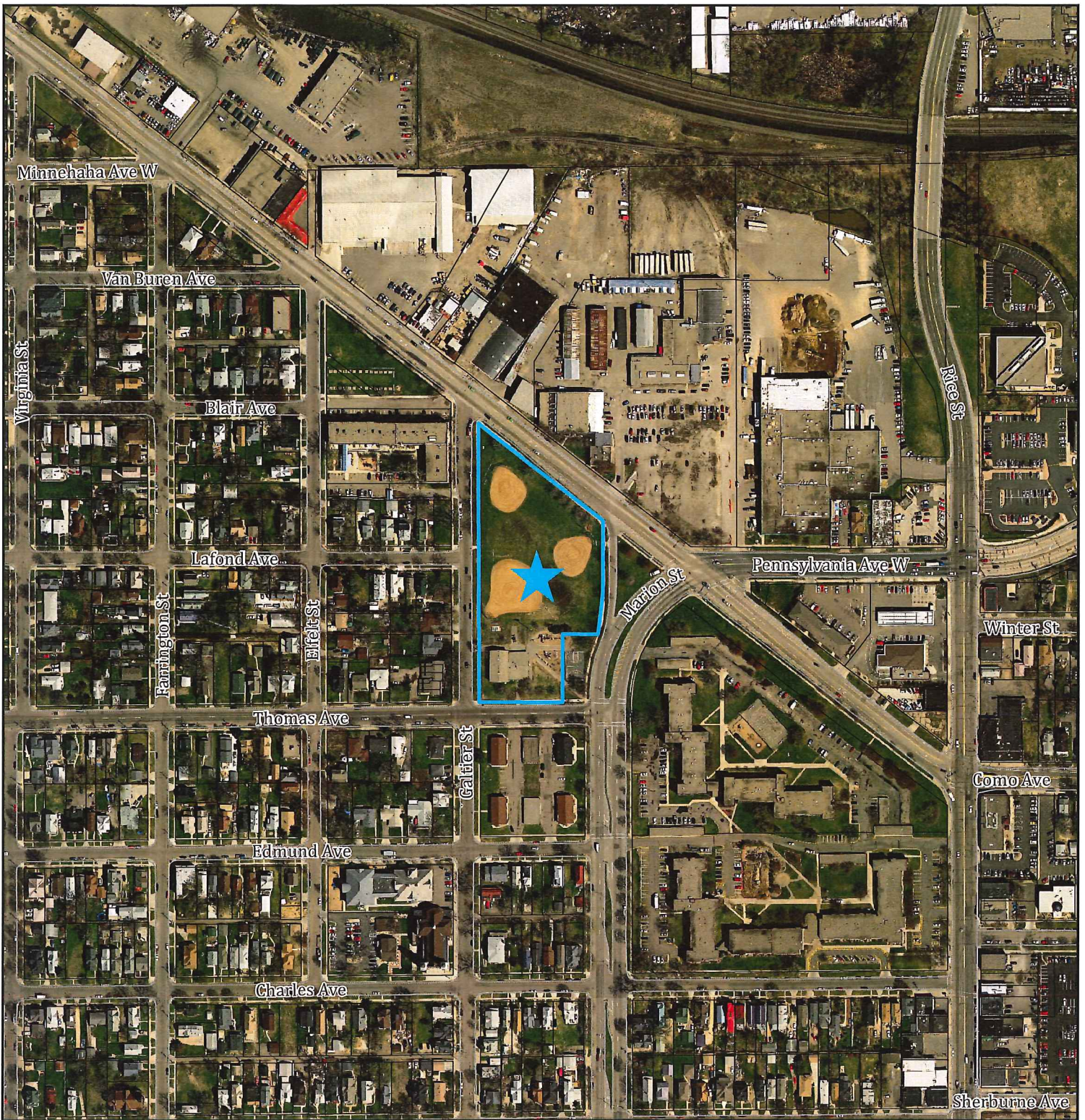
Parking Variance – 22 off-street parking stalls are required by zoning code, 63.207, with reductions provided by bicycle parking per 63.210. 20 off-street parking stalls are provided.

1. Zoned RT2, this project is adding 20 parking stalls to a site that currently has zero. The project site and building design maximized programming and parking accommodations as much as possible. Adding additional parking would limit the programming of the site and building. The new lot provides parking stalls closer in proximity than the current building provides. There are also 20 additional on-street parking spots available on the park side of Galtier St.
2. The Comprehensive Plan calls for maximizing recreation spaces in the City. Adding more parking would mean the fields would no longer be large enough to accommodate the youth sports leagues that are hosted at the site.
3. The site has an unusual shape due to the angle of Como Ave. on the north side. The parking lot was located to give the new building exposure along the busy Ramsey County roads, Como and Marion, but allow for a safer approach on the quieter streets. The building's size is significantly influenced by the gymnasium inside and the park layout is a result of the football/soccer field space.
4. The goal of the project is to expand offerings and programming at Scheffer, which the design is accommodating. Adding additional parking would limit the recreational and social spaces in the new building and park. The park is located along major bus lines and a bike lane along Como., and we expect many visitors to Scheffer to arrive by alternative modes of transportation in addition to cars.
5. Recreation Centers and parks are allowable in this zoning district.
6. Keeping this property a park and improving the facilities will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood, but is expected to beautify and increase the use of the park.

Setback Variance – 25 foot setback from the property line is required. 18 foot setback from property line is provided.

1. There is a large setback along Como avenue because it is considered a parkway. This 18-foot setback will meet the requirements of the sewer easement along the property boundary, and be substantially larger than the setback of the I1 zoning properties across Como Ave., which have little to no set back.
2. Improving recreation centers and increasing their social and physically active offerings is part of the comprehensive plan.
3. The project site has an unusual shape, maximizing the interior programming, exterior field space and parking has pushed it closer to the property line. Although 18 feet from the property line, it is still 31 feet from the street curb. Because Como Avenue is a parkway, it has a larger than typical setback requirement.
4. The setback challenge is a result of the unusual shape to the park and the programmatic requirements of the youth sports hosted at Scheffer park.
5. Recreation centers and parks are permitted in this RT2 zoning district.
6. This recreation center and park is consistent with the current use of the property and will improve the quality and aesthetics of the programming.

Christopher Stark
Architect, LEED AP



FILE NAME: Scheffer Community Center

Aerial

APPLICATION TYPE: CUP

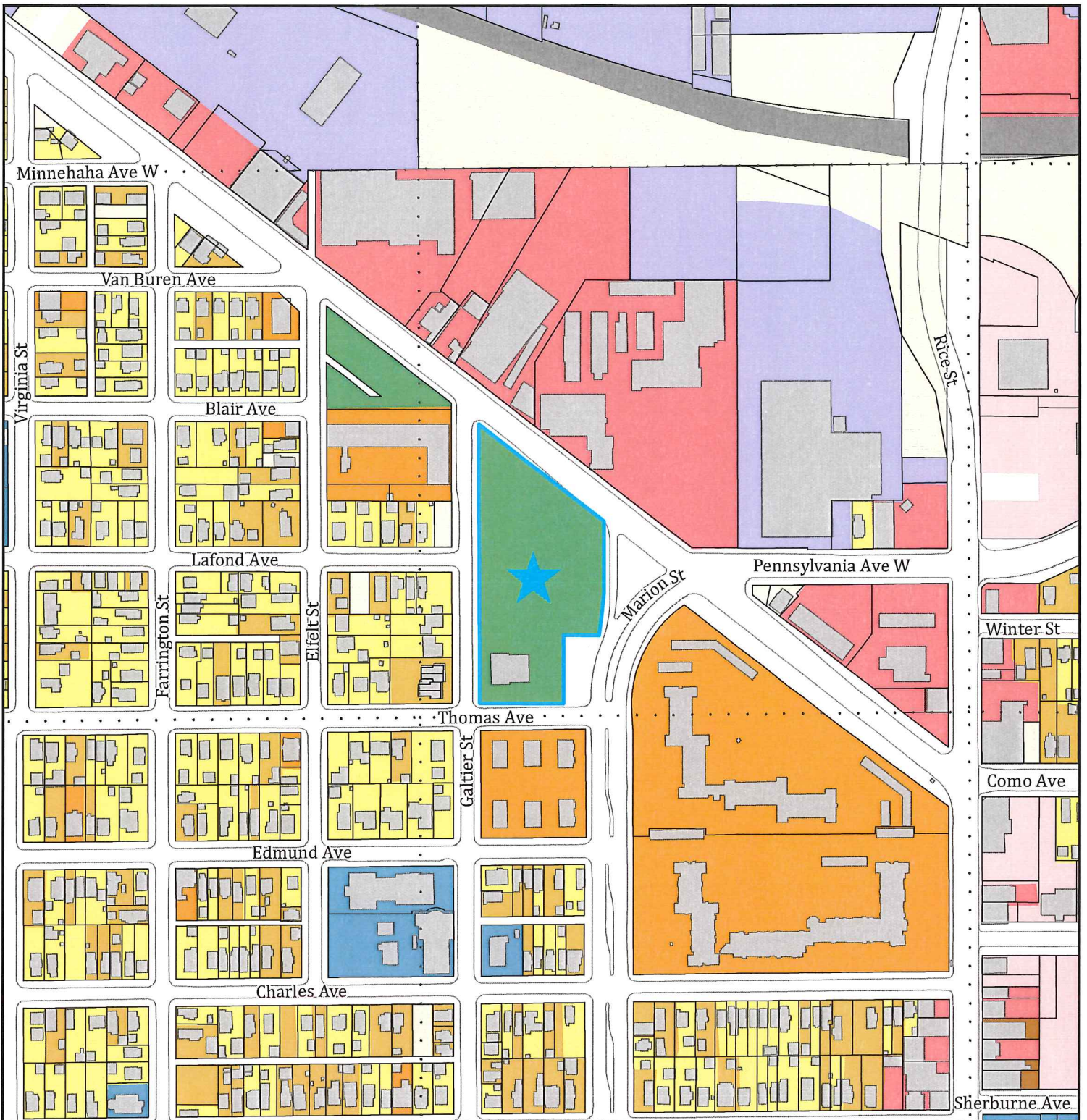
 Subject Parcels

FILE #: 17-221608 DATE: 12/13/2017

PLANNING DISTRICT: 7

ZONING PANEL: 9





FILE NAME: Scheffer Community Center

APPLICATION TYPE: CUP

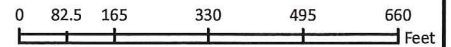
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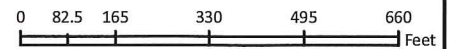
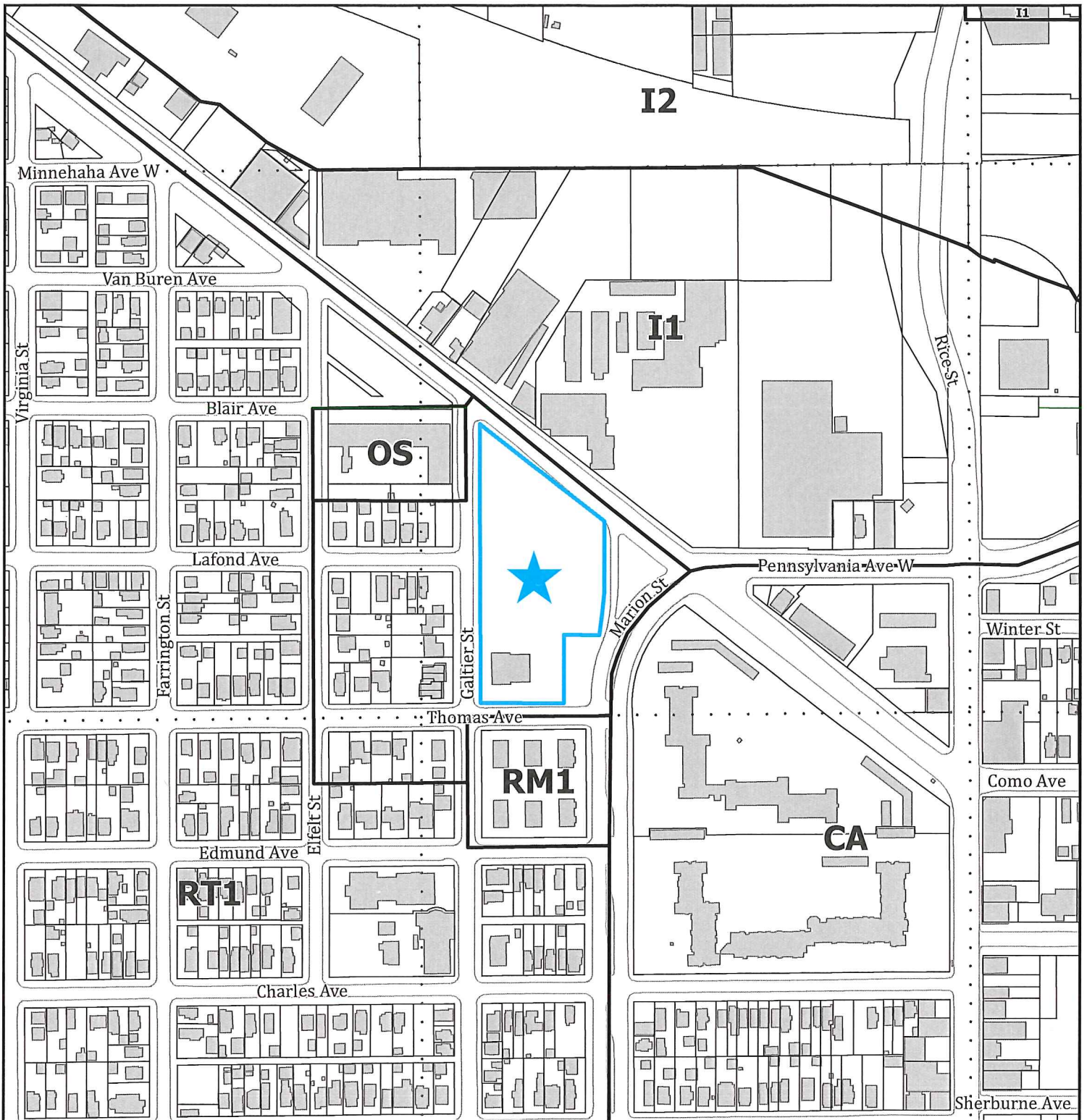
PLANNING DISTRICT: 7

ZONING PANEL: 9

Land Use

- Single Family Detached
- Single Family Attached
- Multifamily
- Office
- Retail and Other Commercial
- Mixed Use Residential
- Industrial and Utility
- Institutional
- Park, Recreational or Preserve
- Railway
- Undeveloped
- Subject Parcels
- Section Lines





FILE NAME: Scheffer Community Center

Zoning

APPLICATION TYPE: CUP

 Subject Parcels

FILE #: 17-221608 DATE: 12/13/2017

 Section Lines

PLANNING DISTRICT: 7

ZONING PANEL: 9

