

city of saint paul  
planning commission resolution  
file number 21-41  
date August 20, 2021

WHEREAS, Zoning Code § 61.801(b), based on Minnesota Statutes § 462.357, Subd. 4, provides that amendments to the Zoning Code may be initiated by the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, on September 17, 2017 the City Council commenced the redevelopment phase of Ford Motor Company’s former Twin City Assembly Plant (“Ford Site”) by adopting the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan (“Master Plan”) and adding new ordinances to the zoning code under Leg. Code §§ 66.900 to 66.950 (“Ford Ordinances”) which, under Leg. Code § 66.911, are “designed specifically for the Ford site for use with the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan, which provides additional standards for specific building types and standards to address sustainability objectives”; and

WHEREAS, the Ford Ordinances and the Master Plan established various standards for each zoning district within the Ford Site, now branded as “Highland Bridge,” to facilitate, with other policy objectives, a balance in building mass and transition space to public rights-of way through the application of so-called “area” standards, which include building setbacks, building lot coverage and open space lot coverage, building mass, density and floor area ratio standards for each Ford Site zoning district; and

WHEREAS, following the adoption of the Master Plan and the Ford Ordinances, as permitted under Leg. Code § 66.952, the documents have been thrice amended; first on April 10, 2019, second on September 19, 2019, and again on May 6, 2020; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Leg. Code § 66.952, the Ford Site “master developer” was also required to prepare a plat of the Ford Site which was subsequently submitted and approved by the City on November 20, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Ford Site plat effectively divided the Ford Site into 36 development parcels and also dedicated to the public various land parcels deemed necessary for public rights-of-way and park and open space areas within the Ford Site as envisioned under the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, with the adoption of the Master Plan, Ford District ordinances and Ford Site plat, the Ford Site master developer, together with its sub-developers, have begun to submit Ford Site development proposals which were reviewed by City planning and zoning staff against the Master Plan standards and the Ford District ordinances; and

moved by Holst  
seconded by Grill  
in favor 12  
against 3 (Kantner, Rangel Morales, Risberg)

WHEREAS, City planning staff review of the initial development applications caused them to determine that the regulations of Lot Coverage by Open Space and Green Roof Areas as Open Space, envisioned under present Master Plan standards and their associated Ford Site ordinances, presented difficulties in evaluating and applying them to development applications and, with the certain knowledge that future development applications will be forthcoming, planning staff recommend that amendments to these standards be considered in light of these difficulties; and

WHEREAS, for example, City planning staff note that it is difficult to implement the Lot Coverage by Open Space and Green Roof Areas as Open Space concepts under the Master Plan with other Master Plan area regulations which are applicable to building setbacks, floor area ratios, lot coverage by buildings, and design standards intended to set a “soft edge” between private buildings and public sidewalks in order to create a comfortable and attractive pedestrian environment within the Ford Site as envisioned under the Master Plan, with actual site-specific conditions like parcel size or topography; and

WHEREAS, City planning staff further advise that the Master Plan’s vision for Functional Green Roofs as a means to improve stormwater management, reduce greenhouse gases, reduce urban heat island effect, and promote sustainable and efficient energy use is compromised by a lack of specificity in the language of the Master Plan for calculating bonuses; and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2021 the City Council passed RES-21-686 asking Planning Commission to initiate a study of amending the Ford Site Master Plan as it relates to Open Space Lot Specific Standards

WHEREAS, City planning staff propose the following amendments to the Master Plan and the Ford Site zoning ordinances to address these present difficulties when future development applications are received by staff for review:

1. Remove the term “Open Space” from the Master Plan as it pertains to privately owned development parcels and lots and remove the definition of Green Roof Areas as Open Space. This amendment would not impact publicly owned park and open space parcels and lots dedicated to the City via the November 20, 2019 Ford plat.
2. Add the definition for “*lot coverage*” from the Zoning Code to Master Plan Chapter 5 entitled “Building and Lot Terminology.”
3. Amend the Master Plan’s current incentive language for Green Roofs in Chapter 4: Zoning - Districts and General Standards, as follows:

#### Lot Coverage Bonus for Green Roof Areas

Projects that provide Functional Green Roof can receive a 1% lot coverage by buildings bonus for every 1% of Functional Green Roof provided by the project, up to a maximum 10% lot coverage by buildings bonus.; and amend the definition of Functional Green Roof as follows:

Functional Green Roof Area shall be defined as area atop ~~surface on~~ a building, open to the sky and air, ~~which is surfaced~~ with soil and living plant materials for the purpose of retaining rainwater and absorbing heat from sunlight. The depth of substrate and planted material shall be at least two (2) inches.

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee, on June 2, 2021, forwarded its recommendation to the Planning Commission for initiation of a zoning study for Zoning Code amendments corresponding to proposed amendments to the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on July 23, 2021 and the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee of the Saint Paul Planning Commission, having reviewed the public hearing testimony and a memorandum containing analysis provided by staff, provided a recommendation for consideration by the Saint Paul Planning Commission; and WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Planning Commission, having reviewed the public hearing testimony and the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee's recommendation, finds the proposed text amendments to be supported by the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Saint Paul Planning Commission, under the authority of the City's Legislative Code, that the proposed amendments to the Legislative Code and to the Master Plan are recommended for approval by the Mayor and Council of the City of Saint Paul.