

Dear Zoning Committee;

As a nearby resident and member of the Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association (LBNA), I strongly oppose the re-zoning of 83 Douglas to RT2 designation.

The 2008 housing crisis created countless foreclosures that threaten the area's viability. The LBNA organization work tirelessly with the Fort Road Federation and the City of Saint Paul, through the *Invest Saint Paul* program, to change area's housing stock back into owner- occupied homes. A new zoning designation for 83 Douglas would be a step backwards in all the strides this area has made in the last ten years.

83 Douglas is located along a stretch where there are no other RT2 designations. The lots along the west side of Douglas Street are predominantly R4 with the exception of one - assigned RT1. By supporting 83 Douglas to be rezoned as a RT2, you are allowing for significant increase residential use types (up to four-family dwelling), which does not respect the character of the existing housing structure.

A permanent change to the zoning of 83 will have a lasting effect on the neighborhoods character which is already under pressure of gentrification.

Brittney Schuller
22 Douglas St.

From: [brandon flesher](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Concerning ZF#21-309-362, 83 Douglas Rezoning
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 11:54:45 AM

Greetings.

My name is Brandon Flesher and I live at 239 Goodrich Avenue in St. Paul. The email is concerning the proposed Rezoning of 83 Douglas from R4 one-family to RT2 townhouse residential. As a previous email I submitted concerning this proposed change I am opposed to the proposed changes. The changes would add to the density of the area that is already suffering from congestion. Parking in the area is already a premium that is only compounded when a local business has a special event and/or something is going on at the Xcel center. Parking is not enforced, which is reiterated by other neighbors who have stated that they have also called about a violation and parking enforcement does not show. The area has become a parking lot for non resident and not the residents who live on the streets.

I have been told that area is evolving, which is true, but it is not a natural evolution. The city has rezoned properties to accommodate business, or investments, that are fundamentally changing a quiet residential area to a parking lot. The area has been sacrificed.

Thank you
Brandon Flesher

Sent from my iPad

From: [jeffrey austin](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 83 Douglas Rezone
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 2:20:01 PM

St. Paul Planning Commission,

I live and work around the corner from the proposed rezoning site. I am not in favor of a multi unit (more than 2) on this site. This is a residential area primarily consisting of single family, owner occupied homes, and the lot is not large enough to reasonably accommodate more than 2 units with parking. We have worked very hard over the 20 years I have lived in the neighborhood to encourage owner occupied, single family residences and duplexes and I don't think this plan fits in with our neighborhood vision. We have also been experiencing major parking issues in the neighborhood, and adding this many more units on this small lot, likely with no off-street parking, will only add to the congestion and problems.

Thank you for listening to the neighbors and for your consideration. Regards,

jeffrey austin
457 W. 7th St.
651-270-6643

From: [Jessica](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Cc: [Joe O'Brien](#)
Subject: 83 Douglas Rezoning Testimony
Date: Monday, December 6, 2021 1:59:37 PM

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> Hello

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> We are the homeowners at 75 Douglas St and we would like to provide the following testimony for 21-309-362, 83 Douglas Rezoning, 83 Douglas St, between Harrison Ave and Sturgis St, R4, District Council 9, Ward 2 (Michael Wade, 651.266.8703) scheduled for the November 4 Zoning Committee of the Saint Paul Planning Commission:

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> We are the immediate neighbors of 83 Douglas St and we have several overwhelming concerns over the rezoning of 83 Douglas St. When we bought our home in 2013, this part of Little Bohemia was plagued with homes in foreclosure and all of the elements that go along with that - squatters, violence, theft property damage, etc.. Since then, there has been a valiant, and largely successful, movement to rehab these homes and move this part of the neighborhood towards single family, or owner occupied multi-family dwellings. This has become an affordable, family centric neighborhood and I believe that rezoning 83 Douglas St to an absentee landlord will jeopardize this.

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> It is important to us, and our neighbors that we keep this forward momentum. Unlike it sounds in the Staff Report, this lot is not a direct neighbor to the Salvation Army or the businesses on West 7th. Rather, their direct neighbors are single family homes as well as several rental properties. The fact that our section of this neighborhood incorporates the Salvation Army, several absentee landlord rental units and the business district of West 7th is not a reason to allow yet more 4 or more family units that are not owner occupied to be built. It is, in fact, even more of a reason that these properties that are zoned for single family homes need to be protected.

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> Parking is another situation that needs to be discussed. This is an area where parking the parking situation is already stressed. While the lot is across the street from a parking lot, it is not a public lot. It is parking for a restaurant that has been in existence for more than 80 years. Though the Staff Report states that there is alley access, that is not true. There is an easement, essentially a long driveway that is shared by 4 properties that dead ends at 83 Douglas.

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> We have met with Charles a few times about this project both individually and with a group of neighbors. During these meetings, we were able to express our concerns that the project and the rezoning could bring to our neighborhood and offer suggestions of ways he can achieve his goals without rezoning. In addition to items already mentioned, these concerns included having unsupervised transient housing, whether the size of the lot (and sewer) can reasonably accommodate the number of families being proposed and what will happen when the property reverts to the sole use of Charles. What is the most disturbing is that he does not have a plan in place and has been unable to answer any of the very valid concerns of the neighbors or to try to find an acceptable compromise with the neighbors.

>

> Thank you for your consideration

> Jessica Minczeski

> Joe O'Brien

> 75 Douglas St

> St. Paul 55102

From: [Naomi Austin](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: File # 21-309-362 Rezoning Hearing for 83 Douglas Street
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 2:57:28 PM

Dear Zoning Committee:

My name is Naomi Austin, I live at 90 Garfield Street in the Little Bohemia neighborhood of West Seventh.

83 Douglas is within the boundaries of the Little Bohemia neighborhood, and I cannot support Mr. Stephen's request for a variance changing 83 Douglas from R4 to RT2.

Little Bohemia, like many inner city neighborhoods, is under constant pressure. Remaining one of Saint Paul's oldest residential neighborhoods in the city is a top priority.

Several neighbors met with Mr. Stephens on site, and Mr. Stephens attended the last bimonthly meeting of our local neighborhood group, Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association. He pointed out that the east side of Douglas Street does have DeGidio's parking lot, a Victorian townhouse, two turn of the 20th century fourplexes, and the back of the Salvation Army's playground. However, I must note that the west side of Douglas, where Mr. Stephens proposes to build, is made up of single family houses for all three blocks.

Little Bohemia already deals with a major homeless population. Our proximity to Dorothy Day, Freedom House, The Salvation Army, the hospital system, the freeway ramps and our small park and bike path means there are frequent interactions between neighbors and the homeless. These interactions include dealing with public urination and defecation, excessive trash, drug deals and usage, finding needles and drug paraphernalia in the park, encampments popping up and other activities that affect the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Mr. Stevens' desire to rezone 83 Douglas to RT2 to build transitional short term homeless housing would only further institutionalize homelessness in the neighborhood.

And without having a better understanding of exactly what Mr. Stephens' long term plans are for this permanent change in zoning to 83 Douglas I cannot support the change from R4 to RT2 and would prefer Mr. Stephens works within the confines of the existing R4 zoning.

Thank you,

Naomi Austin
90 Garfield Street, Saint Paul
651-225-4995

From: [sharon.lynch](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: File #21-309-362 Rezoning Hearing for 83 Douglas Street
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 5:01:15 PM

December 7, 2021

From: Sharon Lynch
63 Douglas Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

To whom it may concern:

I live at 63 Douglas Street, two doors north of 83 Douglas Street. This neighborhood is referred to as Little Bohemia.

I am strongly opposed to the zoning change, from R₄ to RT₂, being requested by Charles Stephens, and to the cluster of small homes for temporarily housing of homeless veterans. The program would be funded and managed by Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV).

This neighborhood had many homes in foreclosure after the 2008 mortgage problem. With the vacant homes came squatters, vandalism, break-ins, theft, drug use, trash, etc. The Fort Road Federation was able to purchase many of the homes and successfully rehab them. The neighborhood residents also worked hard to bring Little Bohemia to the popular, thriving neighborhood it is today.

About 10 years ago, this neighborhood was rezoned in an effort to return it to its original state- mostly single-family, owner-occupied homes. This is why I am so opposed to the zoning change. While the property is an empty lot at this time, there was a single-family home on the property that burned down some time ago. It is a part of the area that was rezoned and could again house a single-family home.

I would like to point out some issues concerning this property

- Charles Stephens has repeatedly referred to being across from a parking lot. This is the lot for DeGidio's restaurant, a restaurant that has been in operation at that site for 88 years! DeGidio's has been very supportive of the Little Bohemia neighborhood.

- He also makes frequent mention of the Salvation Army. It is not within view of 83, but is the other side of the restaurant.

- The west side of Douglas is residential. All homes to the north on that side of Douglas are single-family, owner-occupied homes. One is in the process of being rehabilitated, brought to its original, 1880s footprint.

- The neighborhood to the west of 83 Douglas is residential, mostly single-family homes. This is shown on the maps included in the zoning application packet.

- The alley Dr Stephens referred to is actually an access for utility vehicles. If the MACV program, with parking spaces on the long side of the property occurs, would there not have to be an upgrade to that access? It would not be right for other homeowners to be charged for an upgrade for the use of those temporarily housed at the 83 Douglas homes.

- Parking is a significant problem on Douglas. On many evenings, you can see autos circling, looking for a non-existent parking spot.
- If this program did develop, the short-term residents would not have supervision/support on the property.
- Because of the proximity to Dorothy Day center, Freedom House, Salvation Army, there is fear that temporarily housing homeless individuals in the neighborhood would bring more such programs and/or increase the number of homeless individuals to the neighborhood. And, again, there would not be support staff on the premises.
- Per Mr. Nguyen, the MACV representative, the homes would be the property of Dr. Stephens at the end of 10 years. Dr Stephens has offered no plans for the end of the program if it occurs.
- Dr Stephens could back MACV's program providing the same services on a smaller scale (2 homes) without rezoning the property.

In closing, we neighbors feel rezoning of the property at 83 Douglas Street from R4 to RT2 would be the first step to an undesired and unwanted change of our neighborhood.

Thank you,

Sharon Lynch

63 Douglas Street

Saint Paul, MN 55102

612-998-4224

sondouglas@hotmail.com

From: [Jamie Stolpestad](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Cc: [Noecker, Rebecca \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [Richard Holst](#)
Subject: 83 Douglas Street Rezoning - File #21-309-362: testimony in support of rezoning
Date: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 2:00:15 PM

I am writing in support of the rezoning of 83 Douglas Street from R-4 to RT-2.

Too much of St. Paul is restricted to just a single-family home, and this is the major contributor to the city's housing crisis. We need more homes, for more people, in more places. But for that to happen, we need to continue to update and modernize zoning designations and rules so more land can be developed for more housing.

This is a perfect location for multi-family housing development. It is within a short walk of a major public transportation corridor. It is within walking distance of a range of amenities and service providers. It is easily accessed by a wide network of major roads and highways. Much of the land immediately adjacent to the parcel and nearby already allow multi-family developments. And recent zoning decisions set a clear precedent that more housing development should occur in this corridor.

There are a few existing neighbors who do not want change. I think that is a normal human instinct, and I respect their opinions. But it is important that we consider the greater public good. St. Paul can't collect enough tax revenue to pay for roads, schools and other services based just on the current population and property base. We need more investments, and a lot more investments in housing, to make a vibrant city. And to allow such investments, we need to decide where new housing should go. In my view, it is without question a good idea to allow multi-family development at 83 Douglas. That parcel is large and has been sitting vacant for years - largely because its land use has been overly restricted.

And from personal experience and professional expertise, I can assert that there is not a parking problem in that area, there are no impediments to providing sufficient water and sewer utilities to the lot, and there is an alley clearly shown on the county land records that accesses an area that could be used for any desired off-street parking serving a new development (although it's worth noting that off-street parking is not needed in practice or per code).

Finally, I think people who rent their housing are just as good people as those who had the luck and the privilege and the good timing to be able to buy their housing many years ago. I'm a fan of home ownership, but certainly don't want to penalize anyone or restrict housing choices because people rent and /or can't afford to own their housing.

Thank you for making the right decision for the future of St. Paul by allowing more homes to be developed in this neighborhood.

Jamie

Jamie Stolpestad
Partner, YardHomes
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From: [Melissa Wenzel](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: 21-309-362 83 Douglas Rezoning: Support
Date: Thursday, December 9, 2021 12:49:58 PM

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my support in rezoning 83 Douglas Street to accommodate living accommodations for more residents in a smart and limited approach, especially if they provide homes for veterans at risk of homelessness. Previously living in Ward 2 and now Ward 7, I know that there's a severe affordable housing shortage across the city, as exemplified when I bike to and from the two wards regularly and bike by those who are homeless living along the river. I know there are concerns of large developments going on in single-family housing neighborhoods, but it's my understanding that is NOT happening through this zoning request.

Thank you for making decisions that do impact the local community, but at the betterment of others in other parts of our city. We do better when we all do better.

Sincerely,

Melissa Wenzel
613 Burlington Road
Saint Paul, MN 55119