

ZONING COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

FILE NAME: 115 Plato Blvd. Rezoning (Farwell Yards)

FILE #: 22-035-950

APPLICANT: Corporate Associated Svcs Inc

HEARING DATE: April 7, 2022

TYPE OF APPLICATION: Rezoning

LOCATION: 115 Plato Blvd W, NE corner at Ohio Street

PIN & LEGAL DESCRIPTION: 062822430005; Robertsons Add To West St Paul Vac Sts & Alley Accruing & Fol; Blk 193 Irvines Add, Lying Nly Of Plato Blvd & In Robertsons Add Part Nly Of Plato Blvd Of Blks 193 & Blk 161

PLANNING DISTRICT: 3

EXISTING ZONING: IT (RC4)

ZONING CODE REFERENCE: § 61.801(b); § 66.300; § 68.240;

STAFF REPORT DATE: March 30, 2022

BY: Michael Wade

DATE RECEIVED: March 11, 2022

60-DAY DEADLINE FOR ACTION: May 10, 2022

- A. **PURPOSE:** Rezone from IT transitional industrial to T3 traditional neighborhood.
- B. **PARCEL SIZE:** 78,303 square feet (1.8 acres)
- C. **EXISTING LAND USE:** 4-story office and warehouse building
- D. **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**
 - North – Vacant varnish and warehousing buildings
 - East – Furniture warehouse building
 - South – Commercial scale fabric cleaning building; truck parking
 - West - Furniture manufacturer’s showroom facility
- E. **ZONING CODE CITATION:** §61.801(b) provides for changes to the zoning of property initiated by the property owner. § 66.300 describes Traditional Neighborhood Districts; § 68.240 describes the RC4 River Corridor Urban Diversified Overlay District.
- F. **HISTORY/DISCUSSION:** This site has been used for manufacturing and warehousing since the late 19th Century, including the Villaume Box and Lumber Company and the Minnesota Macaroni Company.

This rezoning application is intended to prepare for the demolition of the current warehouse building and construction of a new 45 to 50-foot high residential building with between 56-70 affordable apartments. This building is part of the Farwell Yards project, headed by developers Buhl Investors, LLC. Farwell Yards includes three current parcels: 115 Plato Boulevard, 150 Water Street to the north, and 102 Water Street to the northeast, all of which are currently zoned IT transitional industrial. Property owners are applying for both 115 Plato Boulevard and 150 Water Street to be rezoned to T3 to take advantage of the additional height allowance to avoid the requirement in the IT district that the first floor of a mixed residential-commercial building consist of 50% or more non-residential uses. (§ 65.143(a)) 150 Water Street is planned for demolition of the existing warehouse and varnish plant buildings and construction of a 221-unit mixed residential-commercial building.

102 Water Street, which houses the Farwell, Osmun, Kirk Building with artist production studios and self-storage, will retain its current IT zoning.

115 Plato boulevard is also zoned RC4 River Corridor Urban Diversified Overlay District, which provides additional limits to building height increases in the T3 zoning district.

As part of the Farwell Yards project, the developer will be required to establish a public street easement running northwest-southeast along a portion of Vacated Bidwell. This developer will be responsible for constructing public roadway along this portion of right-of-way, to be completed at an unknown later date along the remainder of Vacated Bidwell (currently owner by another entity).

In 2020, Public Works Sewer Utility division noted that there is no longer any sanitary sewer capacity in the area west of Wabasha Street, south of the river, north of the bluffs. PED Planning and Public Works Sewer Utility division have been working with the engineering firm S.E.H. to study sanitary sewer capacity and analyze upgrade options. The study team is entering the preliminary design phase, to be followed by a final design phase and construction of the upgrades. Permitting for the Farwell Yards construction projects will depend on the progress of these sewer upgrades. These upgrades include installation of a new lift station within a utility easement running through 115 Plato Boulevard. The developers are designing their building around this easement.

G. **DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:** The West Side Community Organization has not submitted a comment as of the writing of this memo.

H. **FINDINGS:**

1. The property owner is applying to rezone this property from IT transitional industrial to T3.
2. Buhl Investors, LLC is planning to demolish an existing warehouse and construct a multifamily building with 56-70 affordable apartments.
3. *The proposed zoning is consistent with the way this area has developed.*

This finding is met. The intent of T3 traditional neighborhood is to provide for higher-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented mixed-use development. It is intended for large sites that can include residential, commercial, civic and open space uses in close proximity to one another, or for smaller sites that will contribute to the above mix of uses within reasonable walking distance. Some residential developments in the area have been constructed recently, including: the 136-unit Cordelle apartments, nearby at 84 Water Street, built in 2019; the West Side Flats apartments at the corner of Wabasha and the river; and the 82-unit Verdant and 171-unit Scenic apartments, completed just this year. These projects have established the river's edge and lowlands area at large as a redeveloping mixed-use neighborhood. The seventy-five-foot-tall Farwell Osmun Kirk Building contains artist studios and storage space, with the potential addition of office space on the top floor, contributing to the mixed-use, non-industrial nature of the area. Just to the north is Harriet Island Regional Park, which would be complemented by the urban nature of the T3 zoning; southward across Plato are large T3-zoned parcels, including Ramsey County offices. Increased local population through residential-heavy mixed use development is expected to catalyze further retail and transit. Additionally, Metro Transit has identified the Rice-Robert corridor as their G-Line arterial bus rapid transit route, paving the way for increased transit-oriented development such as is provided for by T3 traditional neighborhood zoning.

4. *The proposed zoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*

This finding is met. The Future Land Use Map in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan designates this parcel Mixed-Use, which the Plan describes as “primarily along thoroughfares well-served by transit. The main distinguishing characteristic is a balance of jobs and housing within walking distance of one another.” The rezoning is also supported by the following policies:

Policy LU-1. Encourage transit-supportive density and direct the majority of growth to areas with the highest existing or planned transit capacity.

Policy LU-2. Pursue redevelopment of Opportunity Sites (generally sites larger than one acre identified as having potential for redevelopment) as higher-density mixed-use development or employment centers with increased full-time living wage job intensity, and the appropriate location for community services that are completely absent in the surrounding area (Map LU-3).

Policy LU-9. Promote high-quality urban design that supports pedestrian friendliness and a healthy environment, and enhances the public realm.”

Policy 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. (The planned development includes commercial space, a large outdoor recreational area that is meant to link conceptually to Harriet Island, and public art pieces.)

This parcel is within 1,300 feet of the West Side Flats Neighborhood Node.

Policy LU-31. Invest in Neighborhood Nodes to achieve development that enables people to meet their daily needs within walking distance and improves equitable access to amenities, retail and services.

The Housing Chapter also supports rezoning for such developments with these policies:

Policy H-16. Increase housing choice across the city to support economically diverse neighborhoods by pursuing policies and practices that maximize housing and locational choices for residents of all income levels.

Policy H-18. Foster the preservation and production of deeply affordable rental housing (housing affordable to those at 30% or less of AMI), supportive housing and housing for people experiencing homelessness.

According to Figure LU-4: 2040 Residential Land Use Density Ranges, Mixed-Use areas are meant to reach a base range of 20-75 units per acre, while Mixed-Use areas near Neighborhood Nodes are meant to reach a range of 50-200 units per acre.

This parcel is included in the 2003-adopted Harriet Island/District Del Sol Opportunity Site, which calls for the Harriet-Island area to transition from more mixed uses near Wabasha to more residential uses moving west along Harriet Island. Strategy LU3 of the West Side Community Plan, adopted 2013, supports “development that maintains the traditional urban form...”

5. *The proposed zoning is compatible with surrounding uses.*

This finding is met. Multifamily and mixed residential-commercial developments have increased across the lowlands area of the West Side in recent years, including the West Side Flats apartments, the adjacent Cordelle, and 2022 Scenic and Verdant apartments.

Harriet Island Regional Park sets the tone for a vibrant urban neighborhood, replacing the large industrial lots that are deterrents to a pedestrian-friendly urban fabric. South of Plato are government office and light industrial land uses.

- I. **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the above findings, staff recommends approval of the application to rezone 115 Plato Boulevard from IT transitional industrial to T3 traditional neighborhood.



REZONING APPLICATION

Department of Planning and Economic Development
Zoning Section
1400 City Hall Annex, 25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102-1634
(651) 266-6583

Zoning Office Use Only	
File #	_____
Fee Paid \$	_____
Received By / Date	_____
Tentative Hearing Date	_____

APPLICANT

Property Owner(s) Corporate Associated SVCS Inc

Address PO Box 803 City Eminence State IN Zip 46125

Email _____ Phone _____

Contact Person (if different) Peter Deanvovic Email pete@Buhlinvestors.com

Address 5100 Eden Avenue Suite 317 City Edina State MN Zip 55424

(Attach additional sheet if necessary to include all of the owners of at least 67% of the area of the property to be rezoned.)

PROPERTY INFO

Address/Location 115 Plato Blvd W

PIN(s) & Legal Description 062822430005

(Attach additional sheet if necessary.)

Lot Area 1.8 acres Current Zoning IT

TO THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL:

Pursuant to Saint Paul Zoning Code § 61.801 and Minnesota Statutes § 462.357, _____,

owner(s) of land proposed for rezoning, hereby petition(s) to rezone the above described property from a

IT zoning district to a T3 zoning district, for the purpose of:

Establishing +56 units of affordable housing at 30% AMI rent restricted levels within the context of the overall Farwell Yards redevelopment. Integral to this request is the broader Farwell Yards TIF district which will serve as the funding mechanism alongside accessing Unified bonding pool this summer to accommodate low income housing tax credits.

Attach additional sheets if necessary. Attachments as required: Site Plan Consent Petition Affidavit

If you are a religious institution you may have certain rights under RLUIPA. Please check this box if you identify as a religious institution.

Subscribed and sworn to before me

Date February 16, 20 22

Danette Langness
Notary Public

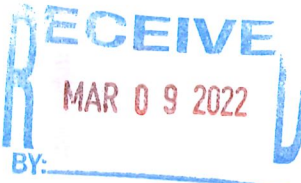
my commission expires 6/12/2022



Subscribed and sworn to before me

Date _____ 20 _____

Notary Public



By: [Signature]
Fee owner of property

Title: Counsel for Property Owner

By: _____
Fee owner of property

Title: _____



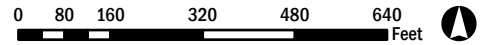
FILE #22-035-950 | AERIAL MAP

Application of Corporate Associated Svcs

Application Type: Rezone
 Application Date: March 11, 2022
 Planning District: 3

Subject Parcel(s) Outlined in Blue

 Parcel Boundaries



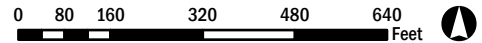
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FILE #22-035-950 | LAND USE MAP

Application of Corporate Associated Svcs

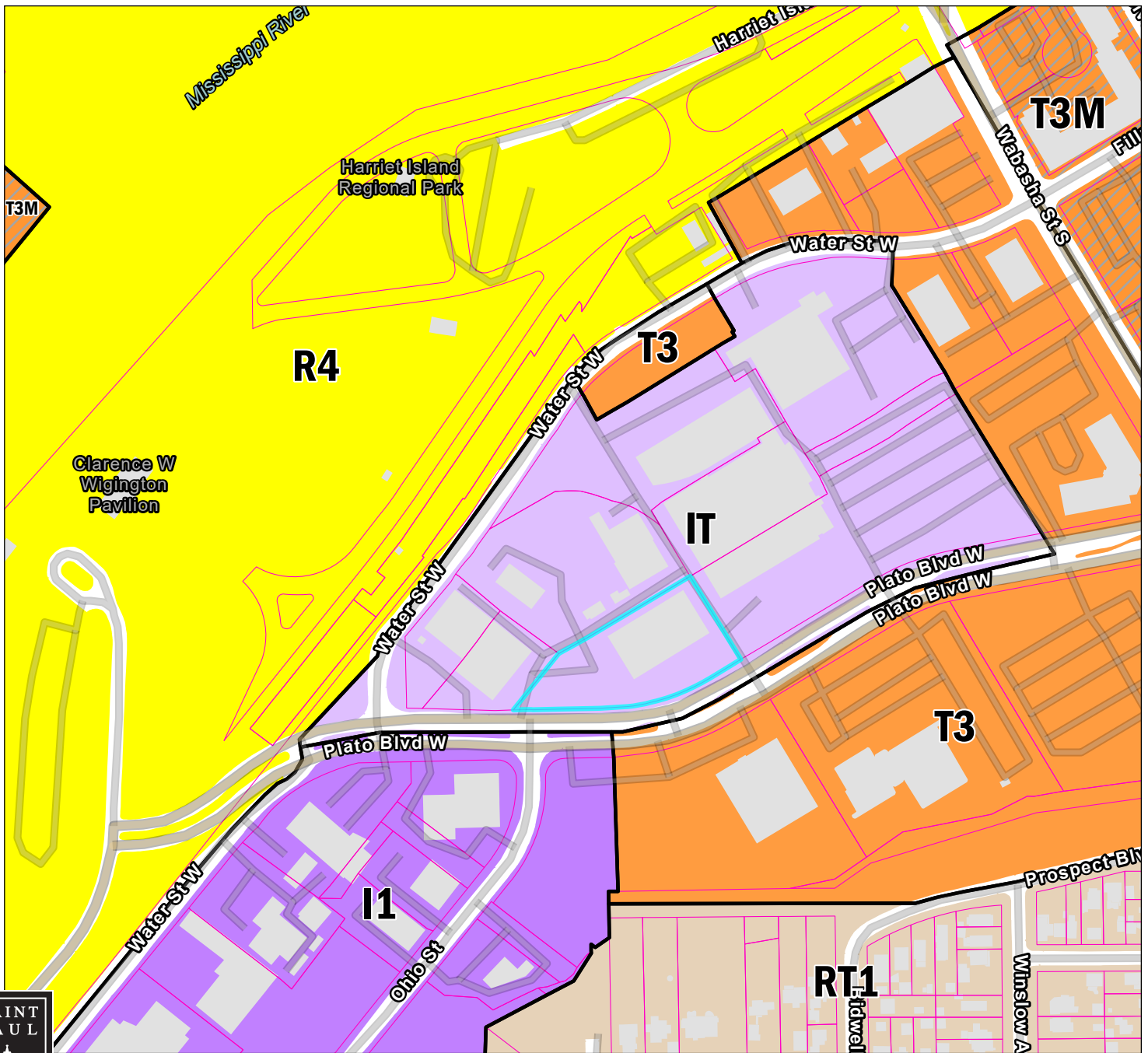
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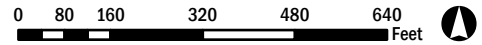
- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Farmstead | Mixed Use Residential | Major Highway |
| Seasonal/Vacation | Mixed Use Industrial | Railway |
| Single Family Detached | Mixed Use Commercial and Other | Airport |
| Manufactured Housing Park | Industrial and Utility | Agricultural |
| Single Family Attached | Extractive | Undeveloped |
| Multifamily | Institutional | Water |
| Office | Park, Recreational or Preserve | Parcel Boundaries |
| Retail and Other Commercial | Golf Course | |



FILE #22-035-950 | ZONING MAP

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Subject Parcel(s) Outlined in Blue

RL One-Family Large Lot	T1 Traditional Neighborhood	B3 General Business	F3 Residential Mid
R1 One-Family	T2 Traditional Neighborhood	B4 Central Business	F4 Residential High
R2 One-Family	T3 Traditional Neighborhood	B5 Central Business Service	F5 Business
R3 One-Family	T3M T3 with Master Plan	IT Transitional Industrial	F6 Gateway
R4 One-Family	T4 Traditional Neighborhood	ITM IT with Master Plan	VP Vehicular Parking
RT1 Two-Family	T4M T4 with Master Plan	I1 Light Industrial	PD Planned Development
RT2 Townhouse	OS Office-Service	I2 General Industrial	CA Capitol Area Jurisdiction
RM1 Multiple-Family	B1 Local Business	I3 Restricted Industrial	Parcel Boundaries
RM2 Multiple-Family	BC Community Business (converted)	F1 River Residential	
RM3 Multiple-Family	B2 Community Business	F2 Residential Low	