



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

*25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102*

*Telephone: 651-266-6626
Facsimile: 651-228-3341*

Date: August 10, 2012
To: Kathy Lantry, Council President
Councilmembers:
Melvin Carter, III
Dave Thune
Chris Tolbert
Russ Stark
Amy Brendmoen
Dan Bostrom
From: Planning Commission
Re: Near East Side Roadmap and Zoning Study

On October 27, 2010, the Planning Commission initiated a small area plan and 40-acre zoning study for property along E. 7th Street between Mounds Boulevard and Johnson Parkway, lower Arcade, and Minnehaha Ave between Arcade and Payne Avenue, and established a neighborhood task force to develop recommendations for the plan and zoning study.¹ Dubbed the “Near East Side,” the study area includes properties in both Districts 4 and 5; the task force was co-chaired by a planning commissioner and a District 4 resident.

The “Near East Side Roadmap” and zoning recommendations developed by the Near East Side Task Force were adopted by the task force in February 2012 and the Planning Commission in August 2012 and are now being submitted to the City Council for consideration and adoption. Objectives and strategies in the plan address commercial and residential real estate (both buildings and vacant property), multi-modal streets, pedestrian-oriented improvements, community building, neighborhood and business capacity, land use, and rezoning. The plan is an implementation plan or work plan, and is therefore more detailed than a typical small area plan that might focus mostly on land use.

The attached draft Near East Side Roadmap for adoption as an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan was modeled partially on the “Smith Avenue Revitalization Plan” adopted by the City in 2011. Its format deviates slightly from the Planning Commission-approved addendum

¹ The 2010 resolution was based in part on a Planning Commission Resolution from 2005 that initiated a small area plan and 40-acre rezoning study for the Middle Section South (“Brewery” neighborhood) and Phalen Atlantic areas of the Phalen Corridor (Earl-Johnson Pkwy-Phalen Blvd-Minnehaha). This planning process never occurred. In addition, there was recognition that the recommendations of the Phalen Middle Section Plan Amendment [to the Phalen Corridor Development Strategy] were largely implemented by 2010 (affecting the area around E. 7th, Arcade, and Phalen Boulevard). Finally, there was a sense that E. 7th Street was in need of a commercial corridor revitalization strategy, including the area of the former 3M site (now Beacon Bluff).

plan format and focuses on objectives and action steps involving both the City and other implementing partners. The draft plan has been reviewed by affected City departments (Public Works and Parks and Recreation) for consistency with City policies and the Comprehensive Plan. Following City department review, the Near East Side Task Force reconvened on February 28, 2012, to review the attached draft plan and unanimously approved it with some minor edits.

Public Hearing

On May 18, 2012 a public hearing was held before the Planning Commission regarding the Near East Side Roadmap and Near East Side Zoning Study. Testimony was heard from 10 residents and affected property owners. Additional letters were received from Districts 4 and 5 and co-chair Jane Prince.

Testimony in support. Positive testimony was heard from Lorrie Louder with the Saint Paul Port Authority, Tom Cook with Metropolitan State University, Deanna Foster with District 4, Carol Carey of Historic Saint Paul (also a Dayton's Bluff resident), and Al Oertwig with District 5. All parties expressed satisfaction with the process and the outcomes and expressed interest in continuing to work in the study area to make positive change. Stefan Pomeranke, a Dayton's Bluff resident, also spoke in favor of the plan, and asked that an east-west bikeway be considered for the area, potentially on Margaret.

Testimony in opposition. More critical testimony was heard from two parties, both referencing the zoning study and the effect proposed rezoning would have on their property.

1. Richard Gardell, who represents 180 Degrees, a neighborhood organization providing youth development opportunities for neighborhood youth and their families, spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning of his property. Mr. Gardell stated that he purchased his property with the intent of using it for B3-permitted uses. He stated that he has already put more than \$30,000 into his property with the understanding that it could be used for the uses listed in the B3 use tables. Mr. Gardell said that he had a long-term commitment to Saint Paul and neighborhood youth, which would be negatively affected by a change in zoning from B3 to T2. Mr. Gardell stated that if his property (the old Martin Lumber site) is re-zoned, he will be unable to pave the lot to the east of his property due to restrictions on parking location in the T2 zone. In addition, Mr. Gardell stated his opposition to the properties at 1289 and 1291 7th Street E. being rezoned to IR from I1. This was a follow-up to a letter received 3/7/12. Mr. Gardell reiterated his organization's opposition to IR because it would not allow a retail storage facility (rental) on the property. The revenue stream associated with the use of the property is estimated to be \$70,000/year, and this was considered a source of revenue for ongoing maintenance and operation of the property when they recently purchased it.
2. Linda Gear, who lives at 658 Reaney, asked that her block not be changed from R4 to T2. She stated that her property is the only one on her block with a proposed change and she would like to keep the R4 zoning. None of the other four property owners in this island of R4 have commented on the plan to rezone their property.

Letters were received from Districts 4 and 5 and Jane Prince which support Mrs. Gear's concern for rezoning of her property. Ms. Prince also supports leaving Mr. Gardell's property as B3.

Planning Commission recommendation

180 Degrees. Mr. Gardell presents a compelling argument for retaining the current zoning at the 180 Degrees properties at 1289 and 1291 7th St. E and 1301 7th St. E. Retaining the existing I1 and B3 zoning would be consistent with the uses the property was purchased for and eliminates the need for future zoning changes or variances to the code should Mr. Gardell improve his property further. In addition, undue financial hardship would be caused for Mr. Gardell and his organization if the properties were to be re-zoned. The Planning Commission recommends that the zoning for these properties remain I1 and B3.

658 Reaney. Despite the community support for maintaining the properties on Reaney, including 658 Reaney as R4 zoned properties, the Planning Commission recommends that these properties should be rezoned to T2. These five small residential lots are currently zoned R4 and are an island of R4 within a sea of T2 and I2. Re-zoning these properties to T2 would make them consistent with the surrounding zoning. T2 provides for the existing residential uses as permitted uses, and also provides for new residential, office and commercial uses, compatible with existing uses in the area and appropriate at this location with good access via Payne Avenue. In addition, the more flexible uses allowed by T2 may be beneficial to existing owners of the 5 small R4 lots by providing for live-work options and small start-up businesses that would be appropriate in this location, thus making the lots more attractive in a tight real-estate market. The Planning Commission supports the task force recommendation that the zoning for these properties be changed from R4 to T2.

The Planning Commission forwards the *Near East Side Roadmap and Zoning Study* to the Mayor and City Council with a recommendation for adoption of the plan as an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and adoption of the accompanying zoning changes.

Attachments:

1. Planning Commission Resolution to adopt Near East Side Small Area Plan and Rezoning Study
2. **Near East Side Roadmap draft**
3. **Near East Side Rezoning Study** – PINs, addresses, proposed rezonings