



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

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DATE: March 28, 2012

TO: Mayor Chris Coleman
City Councilmembers

FROM: Barb Wencl, Chair, Saint Paul Planning Commission

SUBJECT: District 9 Gateway Zoning Study

BACKGROUND

On June 22, 2011, the City Council adopted a resolution (CF #11-1213) asking the Planning Commission to undertake a zoning study to assess whether the zoning classification of several "gateway" parcels adjacent to the District 9 Commercial and Residential Zoning Study areas furthers the Jobs and Economic Development, and Housing strategies of the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* (adopted by the City Council in 2010). The City Council also adopted an interim ordinance (CF #11-74) prohibiting the issuance or approval of any zoning and building permits in the new study area that "would or could be inconsistent" with the *District 9 Area Plan Summary's* Jobs and Economic Development or Housing strategies. The development moratorium will expire on June 22, 2012, or earlier if the City Council takes action on the study recommendations prior to that date.

The District 9 Gateway Study Area is outlined in black on Attachment 1. All but two of the parcels (those currently zoned B3) within the study area were recently rezoned (October 2011) as part of the District 9 Residential Zoning Study and the District 9 Commercial Zoning.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The study area is currently a mix of auto-oriented commercial uses (Burger King and the vacant Mobil gas station) along Grand/Ramsey and lower-density residential uses to the southwest. Across Grand/Ramsey Street lies United/Children's Hospitals, and the 35E off-ramp is on the western edge of the study area. Existing zoning includes B3 General Business for the Burger King and Mobil properties, and a mixture of R4 One-Family and T1 Traditional Neighborhood for those parcels to the southwest. Surrounding zoning includes B5 Central Business Service for the United Hospital campus, T2 Traditional Neighborhood for the properties along W. 7th and at the Grand/Ramsey/W. 7th node, and R4 One-Family and T1 Traditional Neighborhood to the south of the study area.

PLANNING PRECEDENTS**District 9 Area Plan Summary**

The purpose of the zoning study and moratorium is to assess whether the B3 zoning for the "adjacent gateway parcels" furthers the *District 9 Area Plan Summary's* Jobs and

Economic Development Strategies while at the same time complementing the District's Housing Objectives.

The *District 9 Area Plan Summary* does not address the study area specifically, but promotes the retention of a thriving W. 7th Street as the neighborhood's major commercial corridor. The Plan notes that, while there may be satellite commercial areas (e.g., at the Randolph, Shepard and Chestnut intersections), they should not compete with businesses on W. 7th.

The key Plan strategies for Jobs and Economic Development that pertain to this zoning study are:

1. Support "nodes" of retail businesses at the intersections of W. 7th and Kellogg, Smith, St. Clair, Jefferson, Randolph, and Montreal/Lexington, rather than a continuous strip of retail throughout the length of W. 7th.
2. Investigate ways to incorporate the Fort Road Design Guidelines for commercial areas into City code, including as a city-wide requirement or as an overlay district.

The key Plan strategies for Housing that pertain to this zoning study are:

1. Maintain the character of existing residential areas by keeping zoning appropriate to residential neighborhoods.
2. Identify strategic areas to incorporate mixed-use and higher-density development in context with existing structures.

Land Use Plan

The Land Use chapter of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan designates W. 7th Street and the side of Grand/Ramsey Street included in the study area as a "Mixed-Use Corridor" adjacent to an "Established Neighborhood." Growth along Mixed-Use Corridors is to be achieved through development of housing and employment centers at a scale and intensity that support transit. Predominantly commercial corridors (such as this portion of Grand/Ramsey) are planned for housing interspersed with office and retail uses. The Land Use Plan calls for balancing several objectives along Mixed-Use Corridors, including accommodating growth, supporting transit use and walking, providing a range of housing types and densities that support transit, promoting a mix of uses, and providing pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjacent areas.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PED staff met with community residents and business owners organized by the Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association and Fort Road Federation to provide background on the zoning study, present planning precedents, discuss the neighborhood's vision for the gateway and get feedback on potential new zoning options. The group unanimously supported the following objectives for the gateway area:

- improve the visual appearance and vitality of the gateway area;
- improve Grand/Ramsey as a pedestrian connection between Ramsey/Summit Hill, Irvine Park and the Mississippi River through both private development /land use and pedestrian amenities in the public right-of-way;

- better integrate (provide a better transition between) commercial uses on the major thoroughfares with the adjacent residential neighborhood fabric;
- attain a more “urban” character to the gateway with less surface parking and more street enclosure via buildings that frame the street;
- increase density along Grand/Ramsey; and
- further larger neighborhood goals of livability and vitality.

The group also unanimously supported either T2 Traditional Neighborhood or T3 Traditional Neighborhood zoning to accomplish these objectives.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* Jobs and Economic Development and Housing strategies, the Land Use chapter of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, and the more site-specific future development objectives as identified by the community, The Planning Commission recommends that:

1. the two parcels zoned B3 within the District 9 Gateway Zoning Study area be rezoned to T3 Traditional Neighborhood; and
2. the remainder of the study area remain zoned R4 and T1, as these parcels were just rezoned to these classifications in October 2011 as part of the District 9 Residential and Commercial Zoning studies.

Further, T3 zoning is recommended because it:

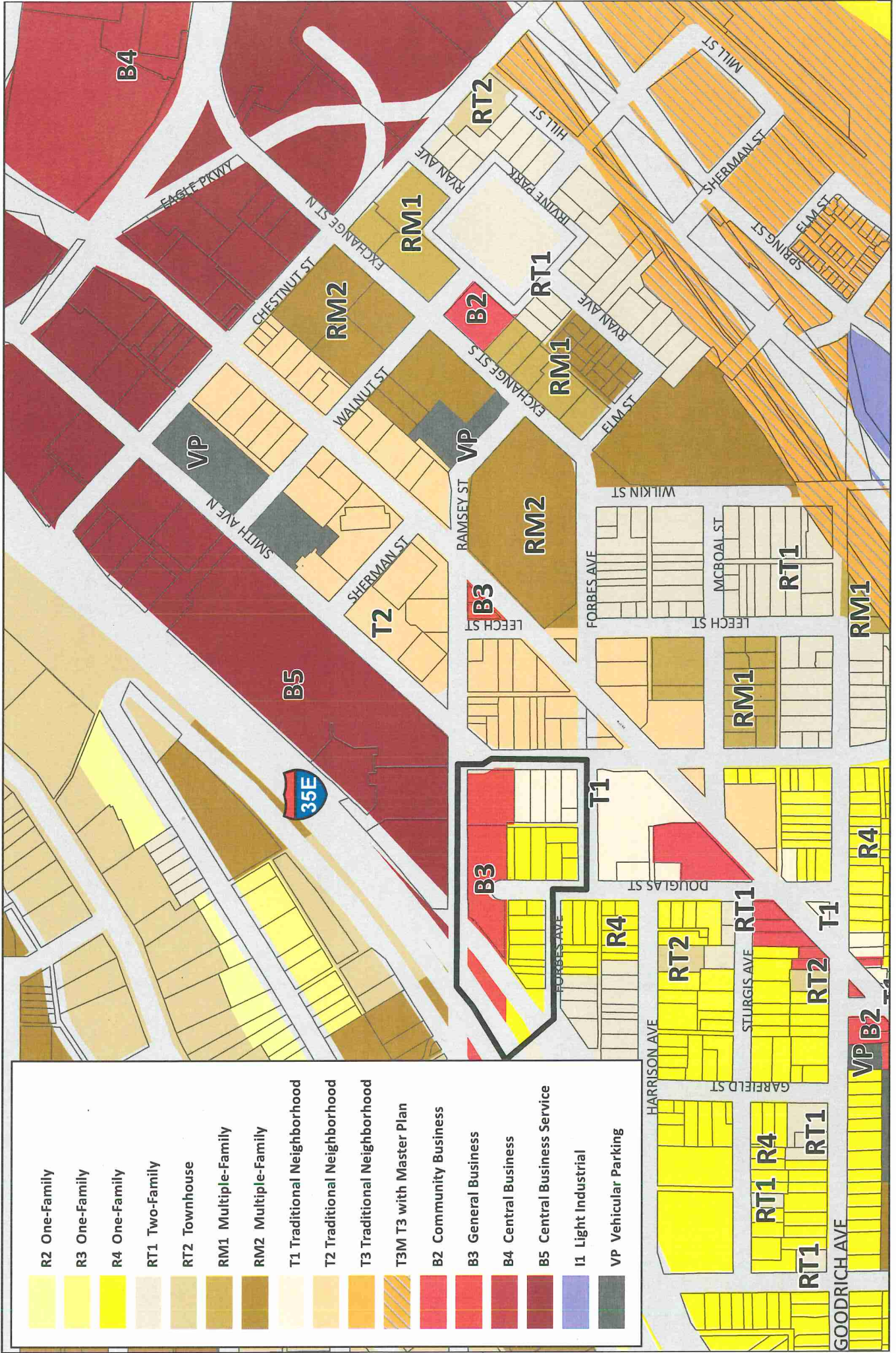
- allows a level of density and mix of uses appropriate to this higher-intensity gateway;
- is a good transition to the T2 zoning along W. 7th, and between the B5 zoning on the United/Children’s campus and the residential zoning/land use southwest of the study area; and
- requires compliance with design standards that will improve the pedestrian character of Grand/Ramsey Street, and soften the transition between commercial and residential uses.

The Planning Commission resolution, adopted on March 23, 2012, is attached.

Attachments:
District 9 Gateway Zoning Study Area
Planning Commission Resolution

District 9: June 22, 2011 Moratorium and Zoning Study

Attachment 1



city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____ 12-21 _____
date _____ March 23, 2012 _____

District 9 Gateway Zoning Study

WHEREAS, the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* was adopted by the Saint Paul City Council on July 7, 2010, and contains strategies in the areas of housing, jobs and economic development, community development, land use, historic preservation and aesthetics; and

WHEREAS, on June 22, 2011, the City Council passed a resolution requesting that the Planning Commission undertake a zoning study to assess whether the zoning classification of several "gateway" parcels near the W. 7th/Grand/Ramsey intersection furthers the Jobs & Economic Development and Housing strategies identified in the *District 9 Area Plan Summary*; and

WHEREAS, the study area boundaries were generally identified as Grand/Ramsey on the north and east, Smith Avenue on the south and east, Forbes Avenue on the south and west, and 35E on the north and west; and

WHEREAS, at the same time, the City Council placed a one-year moratorium on the issuance of zoning and building permits or approvals in the study area; and

WHEREAS, all but two of the parcels (those currently zoned B3) within the study area were rezoned in October 2011 as part of the District 9 Residential Zoning Study and the District 9 Commercial Zoning Study

WHEREAS, staff met with community residents and business owners to provide background on the zoning study, present planning precedents, discuss the neighborhood's vision for the gateway and get feedback on potential new zoning options; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission released the study recommendations on January 27, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the study recommended rezoning the two B3 parcels to T3 and retaining the R4 and T1 zoning for the remainder of the parcels in the study area; and

WHEREAS, the study concluded that T3 zoning: 1) is consistent with the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* and the Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan; 2) will allow a level of density and mix of uses appropriate to this higher-intensity gateway; 3) is a good transition to the T2 zoning along W. 7th, and between the B5 zoning on the United/Children's campus and the residential zoning/land use southwest of the study area; and 4) requires compliance with design standards that will improve the pedestrian character of Grand/Ramsey, and soften the transition between commercial and residential uses; and

moved by _____ Oliver _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____ Unanimous _____
against _____

WHEREAS, notice of the public hearing was published in the St. Paul Legal Ledger on February 13, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on March 9, 2012, at which all interested persons were invited to speak and were heard; and

WHEREAS, the public record stayed open until 4:30 p.m. on March 12, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission duly considered all public testimony.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission hereby recommends rezoning of the B3 General Business parcels within the District 9 Gateway Zoning Study area to T3 Traditional Neighborhood, and finds that T3 zoning:

- is consistent with the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* and the Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan;
- is consistent with site-specific future development objectives identified by the community, including:
 - improve the visual appearance and vitality of the gateway area;
 - improve Grand/Ramsey as a pedestrian connection between Ramsey/Summit Hill, Irvine Park and the Mississippi River through both private development /land use and pedestrian amenities in the public right-of-way;
 - better integrate (provide a better transition between) commercial uses on the major thoroughfares with the adjacent residential neighborhood fabric;
 - attain a more “urban” character to the gateway with less surface parking and more street enclosure via buildings that frame the street;
 - increase density along Grand/Ramsey; and
 - further larger neighborhood goals of livability and vitality.
- allows a level of density and mix of uses appropriate to this higher-intensity gateway;
- is a good transition to the T2 zoning along W. 7th, and between the B5 zoning on the United/Children’s campus and the residential zoning/land use southwest of the study area; and
- requires compliance with design standards that will improve the pedestrian character of Grand/Ramsey Street, and soften the transition between commercial and residential uses.