

A Walk from Desnoyer Park to University Avenue/Central Corridor



Why This Walk?

- The Port Authority and the Developer have argued:
- The area is “industrial”
- We need a buffer from Rock Tenn
- This development is in line with the other surrounding properties.
- Showed selective videos and pictures of area to try and demonstrate this.

This will show you many more pictures of the neighborhood, not just the ones the Port showed to try and demonstrate the area as “industrial”, but also the pictures they didn’t show you.



Glendale Street in Desnoyer Park

Directly across freeway from 650 Pelham. The real buffer from Rock Tenn is the sound wall, the freeway and the vegetation on the other side of freeway.



Pelham and St. Anthony

Facing North towards Pelham Bridge



On Pelham Bridge

The majority of the Rock Tenn complex, the most active, industrial part of the complex, is far from this location and well-buffered by the freeway and significant vegetation.



Pelham Bridge

Looking NorthEast from Pelham Bridge, directly over the 650 Pelham site, Rock Tenn is barely even in the frame because the majority of the plant is so much closer to Cretin Avenue.



650 Pelham

Vacant lots never look great, however, note how the closest Rock Tenn buildings to this site, which are actually quite a distance from Pelham Avenue, are office type buildings, with some trailer and truck parking. (Those Trucks exit Rock Tenn mostly via Cretin Avenue, not via Pelham)



650 Pelham Looking Northwest

Monarch Bus Company and Stork Testing, while they both have parking lots next to their buildings, they have buildings that are built right up to the sidewalk.



Pelham – All American Storage

All-American Storage does have a small parking lot along Pelham, but once again, the building for a significant portion of the way, is built up to the street



Pelham – Stork Enterprises

Another view of Stork being built right up to the sidewalk.



All- American Storage

The Block right next to 650 Pelham – built up to sidewalk with nice brick design and a two story building.



Pelham

Just north of All-American Storage, on the same block, less than a full block from 650 Pelham – residential!



Pelham

Same block as All-American Storage, a second residential building.



Memorial Blood Center

North of Stork Enterprises on Pelham, Memorial Blood Center does have a large parking lot in front, but it is also: two Stories, has a welcoming design with bricks and windows, a nice half circle curved portico.



Pelham and Myrtle

Looking southeast from Memorial Blood Center – this is the block directly north of 650 Pelham. About half that block is Residential.



Turned East onto Myrtle

Residential.



Myrtle, just west of Pelham

Another view of the residential on Myrtle. One block from 650 Pelham.



Myrtle and Glendale, looking Southeast

Residential and the Avalon School.



Glendale looking south

Avalon School, less than one block from site and it borders Rock Tenn with “no buffer”.



Glendale looking south

Residential along Glendale. Half the block north of 650 pelham is Residential.



Raymond Avenue, looking south

Commercial, and retail, built right up next to the sidewalk and right next to Rock Tenn.



On Raymond, looking north at University.

That's the walk!



Raymond Avenue

Right next to Rock Tenn. Built up to sidewalk. Newly remodeled. Note the sign "Office Space – creative/loft". No buffer from Rock Tenn.



Raymond Avenue

Next to Rock Tenn. "Office Space – creative/loft". No buffer from Rock Tenn.



Raymond

Minnesota Literacy Council, steps from Rock Tenn. This site is Northeast of 650 Pelham, (one block) and is directly across from the part of Rock Tenn that we are supposedly needing “buffering” from. It has no buffer.



Raymond Avenue

Building directly next to Rock Tenn site. Strong brick design and built up to street. Rebel Ink used to be located on Selby, moved over here. It is a retail space. No buffer from Rock Tenn. Retail right next to Rock Tenn. Because not all parts of Rock Tenn are “heavy industry”. They have offices and trailer parking also and that does not require any “buffer”



Glendale

All American Storage on the left, built up to street, and Avalon School on the right.



Glendale and Wabash

One full block in from Pelham, and we are still over a half block from the Rock Tenn office style building and trailer parking that we supposedly need buffering from. Note the vegetation, if we really need buffering, just plant some more trees along that property line because there is no heavy industrial usage there. Just trailer parking.



Back in Desnoyer

Looking south from Pelham Bridge into Desnoyer Park

Walk Conclusion

- This is not an Industrial Neighborhood.
- It is a mixed use neighborhood.
- There is housing – half a block of it, only half a block away from 650 Pelham.
- There is commercial/office
- There is retail
- There is a school

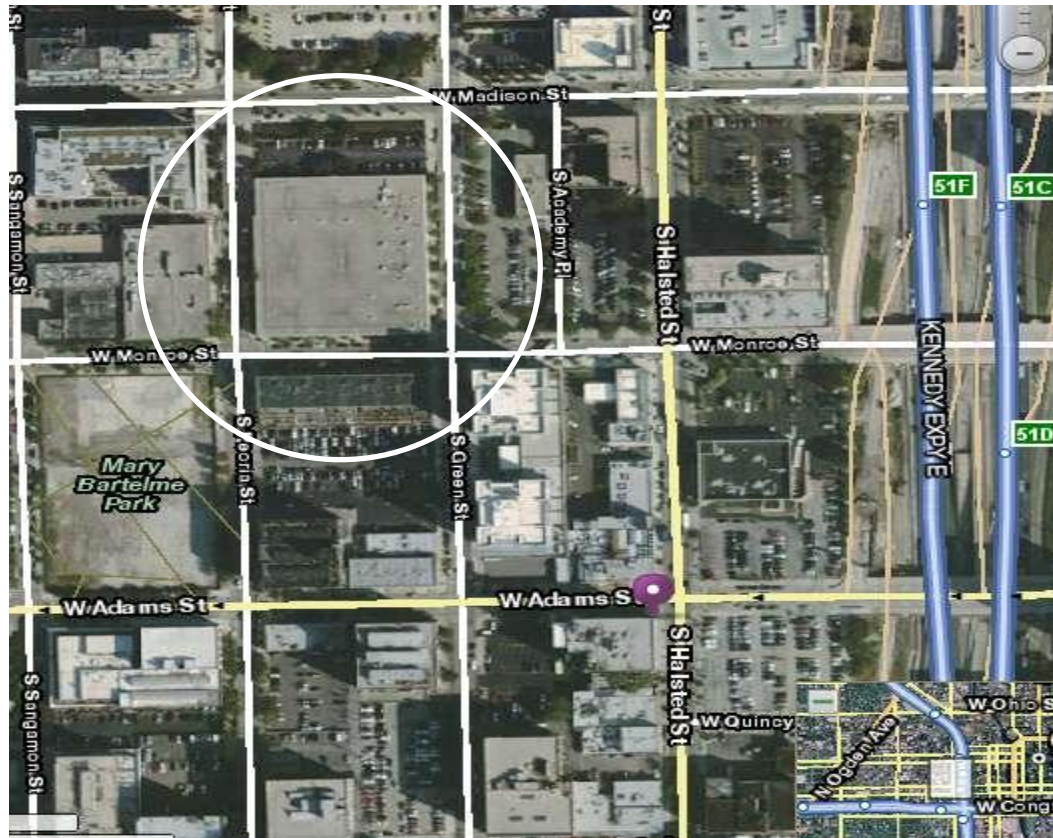
Design Example

- Light-industrial building that incorporates neighborhood-friendly design.
- Located in the Greektown neighborhood of Chicago - a mixed-use district that is rich in transit-options.
- The building was built around 2000.
- It is occupied by a single tenant - H2O Plus.
- This building has the following key features:
 - holds the corner on 3-sides
 - maximizes floor area to the benefit of the owner/tenant
 - provides parking area adequate for employees only
 - tilt-up concrete panels have window cut-outs and embedded blue squares to reflect the tenants business
- City (I believe) paid for part of the environmental clean-up of the site from the (Madison-Racine Industrial TIF District) and held the developer to a higher standard rather than allowing the bare minimum

Design Example



Example



Design Example



One side of building has two rows of parking, the other 3 sides are built up to the corner. This picture is of the side with parking.

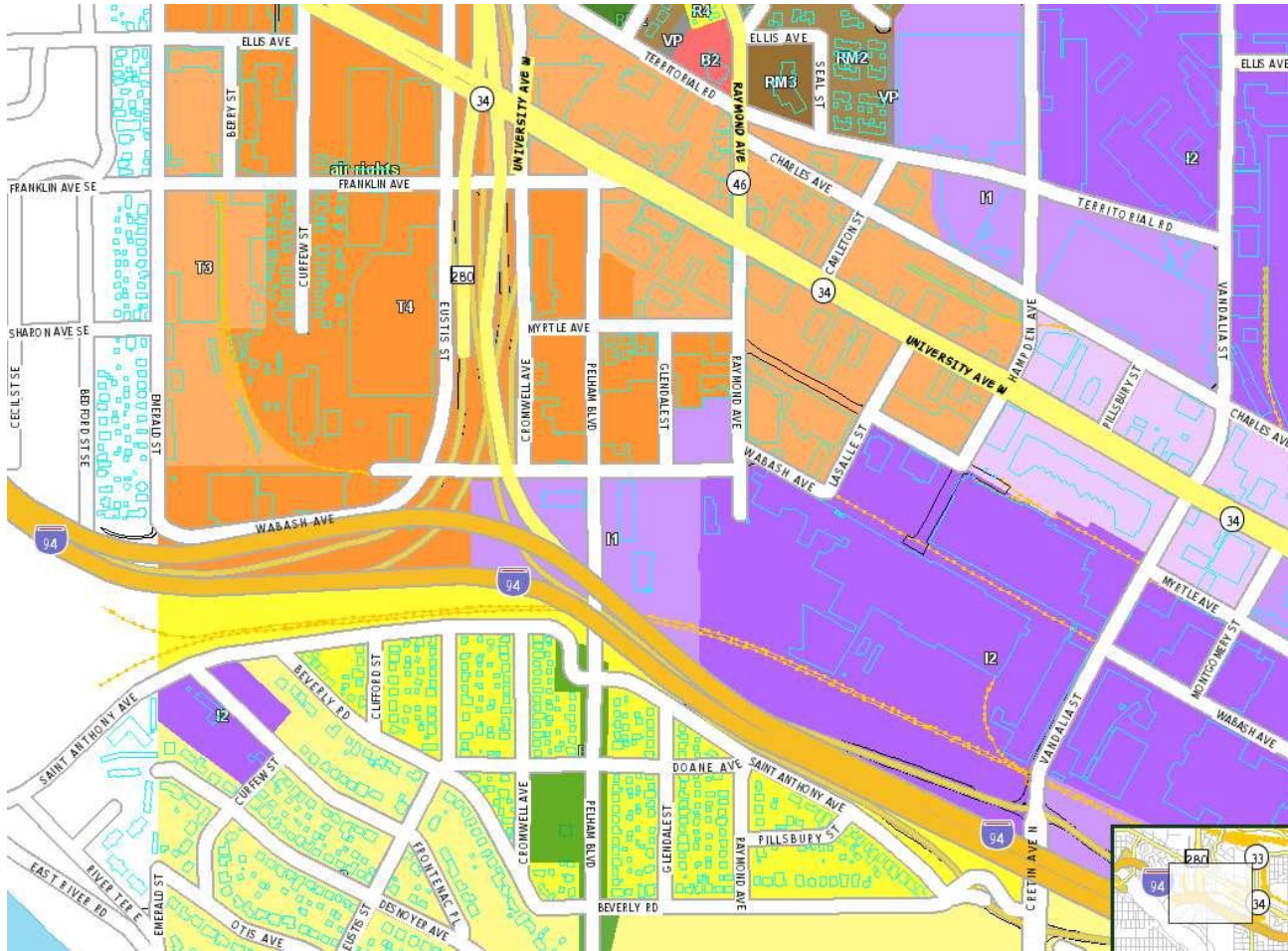
Provides parking area adequate for employees only.

Tilt-up concrete panels have window cut-outs and embedded blue squares to reflect the tenants business

Conclusion

- Creating a “buffer” at 650 Pelham, is actually not buffering, but breaking up a good urban land use pattern by putting the L1 between TN4 and Residential.
- What is being “buffered” is not residents from Rock Tenn, but Residents from the school, from the light rail and from shops on University.
- There is a school, retail and commercial sites that all don’t have a “buffer” to Rock Tenn and they were zoned TN4.
- Why is L1 the closest thing to the residential area, the closest thing to the major bike route and walking path to the light rail?
- Why are the residents being separated from the school and light rail with L1?
- Rock Tenn is a large complex with different levels of industrial usage. The area Pelham is closest to is not heavy industry that we need a buffer from
- How does it make sense to “buffer” us from what is at Rock Tenn, which is some offices and trailer parking, with more trucks? Trucks, that unlike the Rock Tenn trucks which exit Rock Tenn mostly via Cretin, will instead exit out through Wabash.

Zoning Map



Conclusion

The Port Authority and Developer have argued for what “our neighborhood needs”. They were and are very incorrect in what our neighborhood needs and have not shown an accurate and representative picture of our neighborhood in trying to put this cookie-cutter suburban style speculative, low density, low job creation design into our neighborhood.

An actual interesting twist here is that The Port Authority originally argued first that this I1 zoning and this type of site plan was necessary to buffer the residential of Desnoyer Park from Rock Tenn as I discussed in this presentation. And then, just last night, KSTP Channel 5 noted the Port Authority as saying:

“The Port Authority says it will actually be a nice buffer between the residents and the commercial light rail line”

And now the Midway chamber is arguing, in support of the Port’s site plan, that the real buffer between Rock Tenn and Desnoyer is the freeway and railroad track and that this development will have little impact on my neighborhood.

Which is it? Which is the convenient argument for today? They are buffering us from Rock Tenn or we don’t need a buffer from Rock Tenn or they are buffering us from the commercial light rail. The first argument, we need a buffer from Rock Tenn was and is convenient to help get the zoning/keep the zoning as I1. The second argument, it doesn’t impact Desnoyer Park Residents, is a convenient way to dismiss the concerns of Desnoyer residents. The third argument, that it will buffer residents from the light rail contradicts the Chambers comments about not needing a buffer. The arguments seem to be changing so as to conveniently fit what they need that day. It’s an ever shifting word play game.

Conclusion

So maybe the reality is: our community knows our neighborhood the best!

As a resident of Desnoyer Park, I live one block from Pelham Bridge, and literally a 3 minute walk from this site, We don't need a buffer from Rock Tenn, but this site does greatly impact Desnoyer Park residents and the wider community. I1 at this location actually serves as a barrier between TN4 and Residential. This site plan, contrary to what others are saying, does impact Desnoyer Park residents daily. It is ours and other parts of St.Paul's and Minneapolis' route to University Ave, to the light rail station at Raymond and to all the businesses and shops we frequent over there. I walk that route daily, and it is a heavily used bike route, what goes in there has a huge impact, in countless ways, on Desnoyer Park Residents, St. Anthony Park Residents and Union Park Residents. Maybe we can't get that zoning changed, but this council should at least insist to the Port and the developer that the site plan is more meaningfully in line with our comprehensive plan and that they meaningfully work with the community.

Conclusion

Our neighborhood has spoken loudly and clearly with a unified voice, through the St. Anthony Park Community Council, Union Park District Council and Desnoyer Park Improvement Association about what our community needs. We have tried to work with the Port Authority and Developer to get meaningful changes to this site plan. We have tried to compromise, but we have been forced into this appeal. This is our neighborhood, our city, our comprehensive plan. This is our route to the light rail. This is our strong, urban community that is trying to build for the future, create meaningful opportunities for job creation (not just job moving), and not just give in to what someone outside of our community says is “the best we can do right now”. If this is the best we can do right now, we have very low standards for what “best” is. Our community development should not be driven by developers who want the highest possible ROI, who are being given sweetheart deals because taxpayers funded the site cleanup but then those developers don’t work meaningfully with those same taxpayers to grow our community sustainably and to work within our comprehensive plan.

Conclusion

Our development should be driven by a comprehensive plan developed by the community where we work with developers who will be true partners for the long term in building a sustainable community, with a strong tax base, good real job creation and site plans that fit our comprehensive plan. This site plan does not fit our neighborhood. It does not resemble the other buildings, building types or site plans of the surrounding neighboring blocks. This site plan takes what could be an opportunity, an opportunity where the Port Authority and developer could have worked with the community to build something that fits, something that works. But instead we are getting the same cookie-cutter, cheap looking speculative development that litters the suburbs of the Twin Cities. This is Saint Paul, this is a 3 minute walk from the Raymond Avenue light rail station, this is not the best we can do. I urge this council to stand with the community, with our comprehensive plan, with our hours of hard work, planning, community development, and help us build for the future. We should all partner together to create, not just move in, meaningful jobs on a premier piece of property using a site plan that enriches the surrounding blocks and neighborhoods, not one that creates a precedent of cheap, developer driven, low density, low job creation design.



Pelham

Residential, half block north of 650 Pelham.