

To: Members of the St. Paul City Council

Thank you for imposing the development moratorium last August in order to consider zoning changes to prevent another huge private student dorm to be built on the block of West Grand between Cretin and Finn.

We have studied the draft recommendations for West Grand zoning changes that you are considering and believe they are going in the right direction by limiting mid-block development to 40 feet 4 stories with increased unit sizes to hold down density. As you make your decisions, please understand we would prefer the height limit be decreased to 35 feet 3 stories as an additional step down to the neighborhood. On the north side of West Grand the properties owned by UST are limited to 40 feet as agreed to by the CUP of 2004 in order to create a transition zone from the institution to the neighborhood. It makes sense to further step down a mere 5 feet on the south side of Grand to not overwhelm the rest of the homes on Lincoln as the Grand Finn building is currently doing.

We support the reductions in unit density recommended by the city planners to 2000 square feet for four-bedroom apartments and to 1750 square feet for three-bedroom apartments, not the 1900 and 1700 square feet respectively that you are considering. The 80 young adult students who are moving in to the Grand Finn building next fall will greatly increase human density on that block. Any additional development, if it should occur, should be significantly less dense. According to the development principles of the CDI workshops we attended, future development should serve people throughout the lifespan and should be built with appropriate scale and mass to surrounding buildings.

Regarding parking, we do not believe a density bonus should be provided for constructing structured parking but structured parking should be required. Parking in area 22 is already a serious problem and more development will add to that. As CDI principles made clear, a developer should come up with creative parking solutions for the area, not push more cars onto our residential streets.

The Grand Finn building is already destabilizing our immediate neighborhood. Five families on the north side of the one block of Lincoln adjacent to the project have moved or are in the process of trying to sell and move as a direct result of the Grand Finn building. We ask that you do everything you can to limit further damage to this neighborhood. This is how blight begins. Please help to preserve one of St. Paul's best neighborhoods not only for those of us living here now but also for future generations.

We also have concerns about your consideration of spot zoning changes at intersections on West Grand from B2, BC, and RM2 to T2. As we understand it, T2 could allow a developer to build something as high as 55 feet adjacent to neighbors' homes near the intersections of Grand and Cleveland and Grand and Fairview. In spite of design requirements for setbacks as height increases, the potential for 55 feet is unacceptable. T2 is not allowed anywhere else on Grand. Why should it be allowed on West Grand? We struggle to keep UST's development from negatively impacting the neighborhood. Please don't provide opportunities for more private development that will reduce property values and cause more neighbors to flee.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our opinions and concerns.

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